

SADU – SIBIU COUNTY. A BRIEF DIVE INTO THE THEORETICAL APPROACH OF THE RESEARCH

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ABSTRACT

During July-August 2022, the Vulcănescu Summer School of Sociology conducted field research in Sadu, county of Sibiu. It resulted a complex Research Report of which we will extract a few pages. The “Purpose and Methodology” are of particular importance since they envisage a unified theoretical perspective: the Gustian modernized procedure. The second chapter illustrates some findings from all methods used – quantitative and qualitative. The community of Sadu is an urbanized settlement with old historical roots with active cleavage between modernity as prezenteism and tradition as a sort of idealism.

Keywords: Sadu, research, interpretative methodology.

PURPOSE AND METHODOLOGY

The research had in mind the determination of the vitality of the community, the community’s potential for growth, in Sadu commune, Sibiu County. Through community potential or vitality, we sought to determine the ability to adapt to challenges, both from the present and possible ones, the ability to coagulate for collective action and the premises. The term “vitality” denotes, therefore, the ability to adapt, but also the ability to function by preserving identity. These elements were operationalized in a database, according to Dimitrie Gusti’s law of parallelism, by determining the frameworks (potential-*cadrele*) and manifestations (transformation of frameworks into actuality, manifestation of social will - *manifestările*).

The “intersection” between frameworks and manifestations, the extent to which the geographical and human context is transformed into reality, expresses community potential, community vitality. We sought to understand this potential through the associative capacity, an aspect considered by the beneficiary of the research, Sadu City Hall. An expression of community potential is the associative capacity. The potential of association for the valorization of local resources, as a means and expression of community coherence, is the practical purpose of this research.

The sociological term by which we understand the associative coagulation of communal energies (human and non-human) is called dynamic density (Durkheim), expressed by the increased rate of interactions and the quality of encounters.

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The quality of these interactions constitutes the “moral density”⁹⁶ of a community, as opposed to its volume – the number of members. We will attempt to understand this potential through the variables that make the association possible and that denote the quality of community coherence.

The dynamic density is expressed through the associative potential, and this, in turn, through the peasant production marketed locally but also regionally/nationally, in products of a certain symbolic value (“tasty” food products but not only). What is the connection between the associative drive and the peasantry? “Peasant” means a way of being, based not only on a settled personal household, but on the exponent of a quality – that of a man of the country, of a strong community. So, the peasantry, the village, contain in them both a strong, free individuality, and a community founded in this way, of free people, strong. Therefore, the community of Sadu, if it decides to “go to market” with something specific, it must be with a “peasant” product, which, in turn, presupposes the community. And the community put to work means association - the economic core of a commune, otherwise almost devoid of its own economy, with increasingly weakened households, from which more and more people are thinking of leaving to find a job, as the research shows.

With the completed Association, the commune will enter a virtuous circle of strengthening its own vitality, its own coherence, being an almost mandatory condition for the survival of its peasant character, and even its existence, threatened with the loss of identity by the industrialized conurbation around Sibiu.

Dynamic density refers to the quality and frequency of interactions among members of a society/community. Dynamic density increases whenever the division of labour imposes specializations involving quality production, responsibility, and mutual trust. Here, the environment where trust is relevant is the agricultural production association – from the local gastronomic point to stores, which have associated networks of production, distribution, marketing, etc. We sought to identify the elements of this dynamic density with the help of the “Romanian Dimension of Existence” (Vulcănescu, „Dimensiunea românească a existenței”) and through the ontological model of being (Noica), through approximately 149 sociologically adapted indicators (quantitative and qualitative).

The teams of the Summer School of Applied Sociology “Mircea Vulcănescu” researched the Sadu commune in July 2022, both quantitatively and qualitatively. The following instruments were used: the “objective sheet of the locality”, the questionnaire, respectively, the focus group, mental maps, elements of the psychosociology of colours, photography, and observation, including participatory observation.

The locality file refers to statistical data on several basic vitality indicators, such as the labour force situation, infrastructure, demographic evolution, land

⁹⁶ Emile Durkheim, *Regulile metodei sociologice [The Rules of Sociological Method]*, Bucharest, Scientific Publishing House, 1974, Chapter V.

situation, diseases, housing, budgets, cadastral division. Some of these have been correlated with the rest of the data, or are to be analyzed in further, deep research.

The questionnaire was applied to a quasi-random sample, through a sampling step, consisting of 120 people, from Sadu and Tocile. The absolute novelty of the research consisted of the simultaneous application of the questionnaire by all teams, directly in an active online database, in a participatory Excel document. The operationalization was carried out, as I have shown, according to the law of parallelism, some variables were operationalized, however, not so much in relation to Gusti as to connected theories, such as those developed by Mircea Vulcănescu, regarding the “Romanian dimension of existence”, through which I called “neointerpretive sociology”⁹⁷.

The focus group targeted a particular situation (of the locally produced bread), intended to complete the quantitative analysis through an explicit survey of the attitude toward one’s own locality. Moreover, the attitude toward one’s own locality was also determined by the technique of mental maps – a tool by which the interviewed people graphically represent their perceived order in the locality (internal maps), or of the locality in relation to other countries, towns, and villages (external maps). Thus, the qualitative research was completed by the technique of mental maps, a tool through which the research can discover the accents regarding the state of the community order and the predispositions of the inhabitants regarding its coherence.

At the border between quantitative and qualitative research was the *instant* association between colours and certain words or linguistic structures that have relevance in relation to the order and the perception of the future. Colours are decisive for the type of psychological availability and energetic vectoring of people in a community context.

SOME FINDINGS

- Sadu is a commune undergoing urbanization, marked by cultural cleavages between tradition and modernity manifested as presenteeism and the reduction of reality to financial interest, for about half of the population.

⁹⁷ Neointerpretive sociology is based on Dimitrie Gusti’s theory of frameworks and manifestations and the law of parallelism, as well as the Weberian theory of social action – as an act performed by an actor with the awareness of the fact that it impacts the other (comprehension and ideal-type). The objective of the study is also the subject. The world is seen, with equal justification, locally (the plane of local truth), and from Bucharest (which has the role of cultural main locus). The purpose of the research considers, in addition to various particular objectives, the vitality, the problematic of the community, in general, what Toynbee calls “the ability to respond to the challenges of history” – as the final indicator of the ability to preserve. Against these theoretical premises, neointerpretive sociology operates very quickly in the field, through new data collection techniques compared to the Gustian monograph, in Radu Baltasiu, Ovidiana Bulumac, Simona Motoroiu and Gabriel Săpunaru, “Metodologia neointerpretativă. Planurile analizei în teren. Raport de cercetare pe comunitatea lipovenilor din Dobrogea” [“The neointerpretive methodology. Field analysis plans. Research report on the community of Lipovans in Dobrogea”], in *Romanian Journal of Sociology*, 1–2/2009.

- The commune is considered rich, even if, individually, very few consider themselves so.
- The Sadu commune has two residential ecosystems: Tocile and Sadu. In Tocile lives a relatively rich middle class, detached from tradition, but interested in traditions.
- The economic ecosystem in which the Sadu commune is located, no matter how dynamic, is external to it: it takes the workforce, uses it, does not value it.
- Sadu has untapped potential. This will only be possible through the emergence of an economic product on a cultural vector that incorporates the identity of the area. Identity, in turn, implies the fruition of the potential for peasant cooperation. Intra-community cooperation calls for: 1) the identification (reactivation) of the idea that gathers around it like a flag, with mobilization capacity; 2) a leader, 3) the culture and ethos of the association, in turn based on pride in belonging to Sadu, not individual pride.

The associative potential is weakened. Measured on several dimensions, we note that:

- More than half of the sample does not consider it necessary to create a product collection network/association since one already exists.
- If the absolute majority is satisfied with the management of the commune, why would they like to improve it?
- A large majority do not help their neighbours, basic social relations being quite fragile.

However,

- An absolute majority is also proud to belong to the commune (“the pride of being from Sadu”),
- And a slight majority is interested in working especially for money, living in the present. Apparently, these two traits – pride and working for money, are at odds, but both are powerful driving forces of economic behavior if the message will highlight the pecuniary interest clearly enough and arouses *pecuniary emulation*.

A major obstacle to association, from the qualitative research data, is *fear*, the fear given by the confusing and oppressive-perceived *legislation*, but also by *the other*. Thus, the quantitative research showed that the legislation confuses more than half of the interviewed, while the qualitative study revealed extensive lines of intra-community fracture, generated by generalized mistrust and fear of the other.

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