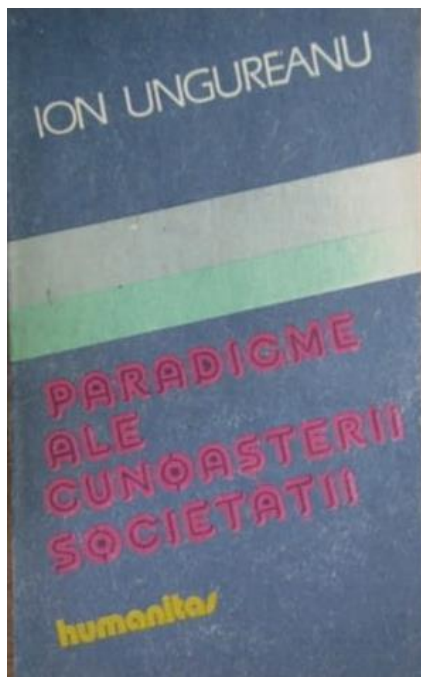


**BOOK REVIEW: Ion Ungureanu (1990). *Paradigme ale cunoașterii societății* [engl: *The paradigms of society knowledge*].
Bucharest: Humanitas, 260 p.**

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Motto: *I'm not afraid of death, I'm sorry it won't let me write everything I've accrued* (Ion Ungureanu)

Abstract: *This paper aims to review a fundamental book for any sociology student. In "The paradigms of Society knowledge" social scientist Ion Ungureanu organizes in an original manner the "theoretic core of sociology": sociology's main paradigms. He argues that sociology is a multi-paradigmatic science: it does not have an universal paradigm, but several paradigms which are competing for hegemony. The Romanian sociologist establishes the main fields of sociological studies: the constitution, organization, change and evolution of society. Although synthetic, the book is a vast one, and the review will be limited to the presentation of the links between some of the paradigms. Each paradigm has scientific potential, and from this point of view, Ion Ungureanu's work can open entire fields of research in Romanian sociology and beyond.*

Keywords: core of sociology; paradigms; sociological studies fields; Romanian sociology; sociologist model.

Ion Ungureanu was one of the most remarkable Romanian sociologists before 1990. Managing to distinguish himself from ideological influences, he devoted himself to sociology and won the appreciation of his colleagues (see no. 2/1992, "Sociologie Românească" journal). He was a professor of history of sociology at the University of Bucharest. Unfortunately, his life was short, and he failed to elaborate all the ideas he had been acquiring over time through his sociological activity. However, he managed to make remarkable progress in universal and Romanian sociology. Ion Ungureanu contributed to the shaping of a "... new interpretative vision on the genesis of Romanian sociology as science and on the role of exemplary cultural personalities in the affirmation of the sociological perspective in Romanian culture ..." (Tanase, 1992: 134). He discovered that this science is multi-paradigmatic. The result of this vision is "The paradigms of society knowledge". The book is part of the foundation for reestablishing the Faculty of Sociology in Bucharest after 1990 (Baltasiu, 2018: 127). The content of the review is similar to that of the book.

1. Book introduction

"The paradigms of society knowledge" aims to clear the scope of sociology and its means giving a new functional regime to the *paradigm*. An impressive number of

theories and authors are analyzed according to their allegiance to a certain statement – “the paradigm”, which is pivotal to the analyzed theory/author. This text is extracted by Ion Ungureanu from the scrutinized theory and commented by him, put into context and linked to other theories/paradigms. Though, the concept of *paradigm* has quite a more precise content than Kuhn’s meaning of paradigm – an overall pattern of organizing thinking and society (Kuhn, 23, and *passim*)⁴⁴. Ungureanu’s approach is somehow closer to Ritzer’s concept of paradigm – “a fundamental image of the subject matter within a science”⁴⁵ (Ritzer, 60), but much more tailored for *each* author/approach. If Ritzer identifies four broad determinants of the sociological understanding (macro/micro-social, objective/subjective approach), Ungureanu applies the term paradigm for every synthetic statement which summarizes the discussed theory. That is why for Ungureanu, there is no need to establish “an integrated paradigm” (Ritzer), since sociology is *multiparadigmatic*. Compared to natural sciences (which have a dominant paradigm, physics for example), sociology is multi-paradigmatic: “If the development of sociological science were to follow the same path as physics, for example, we could say that sociology is today only a pre-paradigmatic science because it does not have only a paradigm used as an “example” for defining and resolving all the problems that rise in the study of society.” (Ungureanu, 1990: 13). Thus, the book establishes the core of sociology according to this meaning of the paradigm. Ungureanu defines the paradigm in multiple ways. The paradigms “are fundamental statements in the socio-human sciences because, starting with them, many theories, theses, sentences and ideas concerning the lives of people in society have been and are derived.” (Ungureanu, 1990: 21). A paradigm is also a denomination for “... the complicated road that a sociological sentence goes through, from the first writing, through various forms of redrafting from the perspective of sociological theories other than the one in which it was originally born, and will be accepted or unaccepted in the end, as a sociological law ...” (Ungureanu, 1990: 14). Sociology comprises some dominant paradigms because all are in a race for hegemony: “But sociology is a multi-paradigmatic science because there is no universal paradigm in sociology, there are dominant sociological paradigms at most (more paradigms compete to win hegemony).” (Ungureanu, 1990: 10). The paradigms are organized into

⁴⁴ Ritzer comments on Kuhn’s perspective: “Kuhn sees a science at any given point in time as dominated by a specific paradigm (defined for the moment as a fundamental image of a science’s subject matter). Normal science is a period of accumulation of knowledge in which scientists work on, and expand, the reigning paradigm. Inevitably, however, such work spawns anomalies, or things that cannot be explained within the existing paradigm. If these anomalies mount, a crisis stage is reached, which ultimately may end in a revolution during which the reigning paradigm is overthrown and a new one takes place at the center of the science. Thus, a new reigning paradigm is born and the stage is set for the cycle to repeat itself. It is during the period of revolution that great changes in scientific status take place.” (Ritzer, 58-59)

⁴⁵ “A paradigm is a fundamental image of the subject matter within a science. It serves to define what should be studied, what questions should be asked, how they should be asked, and what rules should be followed in interpreting the answer obtained. A paradigm is the broadest unit of consensus within a science and serves to differentiate one scientific community (or subcommunity) from another. It subsumes, defines, and interrelates the exemplars, theories, and methods and instruments that exist within it. It is important to underscore the point that in my view a paradigm has four basic components: (1) an exemplar, or body of work that stands as a model for those who work within the paradigm; (2) an image of the subject matter; (3) theories; and (4) methods and instruments. Although a number of other components could conceivably be added (e.g. values), these additions would not increase significantly our ability to analyze the basic sociological paradigms.” (Ritzer, 60-61)

four main categories: the constitution, organization, change, and evolution of society. Each chapter of the book constitutes a part of a paradigmatic category. "Man in society: Sociality and sociability" is part of the society constitution study issue. "Anatomy of society: Structure" and "Social structures: Classes, stratification and social mobility" are part of the organization category. The category of social change and evolution is included in the chapter of "Evolution of societies".

2. Man in society: sociality and sociability

The building blocks of society's constitution are explained through the concepts of sociality and sociability. "Sociality is the quality of man to be a social being, and the property of society to be established as a form of people's inter-existence ..." (Ungureanu, 1990: 2) and sociability is "the ability of a man or a group of people to integrate into society" (Ungureanu, 1990: 23). Each paradigm covers one aspect of sociality or sociability as demonstrated in the next sentences.

Starting with the paradigms of sociobiology, Ungureanu explains why the human is a social being. Sociality is in human genes by natural selection and altruism is a condition for society's existence: "The human population is "genetically" forced to be altruistic and cooperative, because natural selection will facilitate those who help each other and cooperate, and will not facilitate those who refuse cooperation." (Ungureanu, 1990: 27). In the second paradigm ("The residues of sociability ") of Vilfredo Pareto, Ungureanu explains sociability as an effect of social discipline: "Pareto analyses sociability as a residual form of discipline, considering, as well as modern sociobiologists, that the latter is a "natural" trait of the human being, on account of its "herd spirit". Discipline is the manner in which the social actors stimulate, control and elaborate association or by which they repress actions that can undermine the association of individuals." (Ungureanu, 1990: 31). Society has other residues that consolidate the discipline of their members, residues like "the we sentiment", "need for uniformity", "mercy and cruelty", "altruism" and "asceticism". "The principles of social exchange" paradigm argues that sociality exists because of the social interaction through which people give and receive different kinds of services. The fourth paradigm of Emile Durkheim demonstrates that sociality is based on the dynamic/moral density of society. The growth of division of labour, Durkheim argues, may modify sociality. In primitive societies, the people were organized on the basis of their common traits, but in modern societies the difference between humans became the criteria of organization:" ... Durkheim sets out the law of the social division of labour as the law of human sociality using the following formula: the more of the collective human type and the rudimentary division of labour exist in a society, the more the rules governing interhuman relations become repressive; conversely, as the collective human type is differentiated and individual types are evolving and the division of labour expands, the rules of interhuman relationships lose their repressive character and take the form of restitution ("compensation" by compensating the victim)." (Durkheim, 1899-1900: 65-80 apud Ungureanu, 1990: 43).

Muzafer Sherif highlights Pareto's idea in the paradigm of "The effect of the social norm": discipline is essential for sociability. In this sense, sociability varies by compliance with the social norm. Ungureanu explains starting from the paradigm "The pyramid of needs and their social derivation principal" (B. Malinowski) that both sociality and sociability are essential pillars for society's survival. The social and

cultural structures are “derivate needs” that satisfy human needs (A. Maslow). However, is it contemporary sociality a servant of human needs? Based on T. Veblen and J. Baudrillard, Ungureanu's answer is negative. In the seventh paradigm, of J. Baudrillard (“The consume of signs”), Ungureanu develops an answer and thus describes negative sociality. In contemporary society, people consume signs instead of satisfying their real needs: “What is meant in the traditional society by satisfying a need, whether elementary or derived, in the consumer society simply becomes the consumption of signs in which the object is no longer valued by its usefulness or by its worth for use, but is arranged in the context of meaning, in what J. Baudrillard calls social logic or sign logic.” (Ungureanu, 1990: 58-59).

The eighth paradigm – Merton’s “anticipative socialization” paradigm - reveals the correlation between conformity and socialization: conformity to the values of a reference group insures the preadherence of the individual to the social order. Based on Robert K. Merton’s theoretical approach, Ungureanu argues that by socialization, individuals become part of different human organization forms (sociality). Alternatively, the efficiency of socialization influences the sociability degree of individuals. The “law of sociability” paradigm (the latter in the chapter) synthesizes the variables of sociability starting from Stefan Odobleja’s “cybernetic” thinking called “consonantist psychology”. Odobleja’s approach is a first in cybernetics – which he founded ten years before Wiener’s game theory. Odobleja states that sociability is made of the following factors: psychological consonance, reciprocal compensation, personal differences and specialization, division of labour, personal divergences, competition and mutual rejection, social abuse ... (Ungureanu, 1990: 64).

3. Anatomy of society: Structurality

In the introduction section of this chapter, Ungureanu defines the structurality of society. It is like a scheme of society and is “a total of constant relations, relatively unchanged, through which the social life manifests itself” (Ungureanu, 1990: 69). The scientific anatomy of society cannot be possible without the functions of society’s structure: stability and predictability. The paradigms of society anatomy are linked, and the author highlights the complementarity between them instead of their differences.

The first paradigm of Structurality is A. Comte’s “The law of material force’s preponderance” which defines society as a form of condensed social forces: material, moral and intellectual forces: “. . . society is possible because of “social condensation of individual forces”, in a word, because of sociality ...” (Ungureanu, 1990: 73-74). The purpose of the social forces’ concentration is the survival of society. The intellectual and moral forces are volatile, Comte argues, and to comprehend the anatomy of society the scientist should focus on material forces. Moreover, intellectual, and moral forces are results of the decomposed material force.

The decomposition of material force in intellectual and moral ones led to a typology of social rationality. Intellectual force is characterized by a “technical” spirit, while moral force by an “aesthetic” spirit. Generally, the disjunction of social rationality is one of the modern sociology research subjects. In the second paradigm of this chapter (“The law of Community and the paradox of society”), Ungureanu presents an extension of Comte law. The paradigm’s author, F. Tönnies, discovers the typology of social structure: either community or society. A community is based on “organic will”

(which corresponds to “aesthetic” spirit) while society is founded on the “reflexive will” (related to “technical” spirit). The next paradigm is Spencer’s “The law of integration and differentiation of society”, where the social typology is described by the criteria of differentiation and integration. Vilfredo Pareto introduces the idea of functional relation between society’s structural components. In “The cycle of mutual dependency” paradigm (V.Pareto), Ungureanu highlights that every part of society has an important influence on social structure. Comte has assumed that only the material forces influence social structure. Also, Pareto explains that every part of society’s structure is in a dependency relationship, all the components can have an important influence on others in a cycle. The next paradigm of T. Parsons argues that between society’s structural parts exists an informational exchange with energetic and control dimensions. In the “Law of sociological parallelism”, the paradigm of Dimitrie Gusti, Ungureanu strengthens the idea of structural parts’ dependency with Gusti’s concept of parallelism. Gusti argues that a social unit consists of four frames (“cadre”) (cosmic, biological, psychological, and historical) and four activities (“manifestări”) (economic, spiritual, political, and judicial). Frames and activities (components of the society’s structure) are correlated rather than being in a causality relationship. The paradigms of G. Zapan and P. Andrei extend Gusti’s discoveries. The “surface” and “substratum” concepts (P. Andrei) nurture Gusti’s theory of actualization of frames by human activities. Also: Andrei highlights that the social process is a differentiating process. Parts of society exist because of a permanent differentiating process.

I. Ungureanu finishes the chapter with Thomas’ theorem. Every part of society’s structure is a form of people activity’s regulation. As long as people define these regulations (components of the social structure) as real, social system will continue to exist: “Furthermore, the historical dimension of the structure of society makes possible its transformation, the “transient” nature of social forms and, in fact, all the structures of society, from the economic ones to the institutional and cultural structures, are under constant construction and reconstruction because they exist objectively only through the practical social work of humans and social groups.” (Ungureanu, 1990: 125).

4. Social structures: classes, stratification and social mobility

The third chapter explores the sociological problem of social stratification: what are its components? What are the types of relations between their parts? In chapter two of the book, Ungureanu analyses society parts at a macro-level, following in the third chapter to introduce the reader in a micro-level of social anatomy analyses.

The first paradigm of Max Weber explains how the interaction between classes and social status produce social order. The class is a “group with maximum societal significance” (Ungureanu, 1990: 134) and its contribution to social order is derived from economic activity: “This (class structure) obviously corresponds to the activity and rational relationship “of purpose”. As the activity determined by the rationale of the purpose is again similar, even if it is not identified with economic activity, it means that class structures are determined by the economic order of a society.” (Ungureanu, 1990: 138). Society is more than economy and Weber demonstrates that the social status also contributes to social order: “The status criterion is, as Weber stated, the privilege or “claim for social consideration” and the privilege arises from a way of life, a type of education or professional prestige.” (Ungureanu, 1990: 142). The next

Dahrendorf's paradigm on "The pluralism of social conflict" is an example of using the Weberian analyses of social strata. It states that the intensity of class conflict will be weaker as the relationship between authority and economic status is weaker.

After "The pluralism of social conflict" paradigm, Ungureanu begins the discussion about an essential process of social structure: social mobility. Before presenting its principles, typology and laws in the P. Sorokin's paradigm, Ungureanu brings to bear the Eminescu's of a "negative" social selection/mobility progress: "In a social and national environment corrupted by foreign influence and domination, elements that passively adapt, easily and quickly to the corrupt social environment will be promoted in the social hierarchy." (Ungureanu, 1990: 125). Eminescu explains that in a dependent country, the elite will be "selected" by negative criteria (positive ones are knowledge, professional competence ability, faith and work). A country governed by negatively selected elites will be on the underdevelopment path.

Social stratification's domain studies the relation between the component groups of a hierarchical structured society. Using the paradigm of "The Social Imitation" (G. Tarde), Ungureanu demonstrates through a theoretical analysis that imitation is an important cultural relation in a stratified society.

In the second half of the 21st century, Western countries raised the question of whether education is an important variable of growth for an individual's vertical mobility: "When transition is made between positions at the same level of the social hierarchy, mobility is horizontal, but when levels are different, we are dealing with vertical mobility, which can be ascending (social climbing) or descending (social sinking)." (Ungureanu, 1990: 163). The paradigm "Paradox of Anderson and the devaluation of diplomas" (R. Boudon) offers an answer: desynchronization between social structures and the increase in education accessibility will produce diploma inflation. The importance of education's role in social mobility persists in contemporary society. In this context, Ungureanu presents the law of social intelligence growth by Spiru Haret. If a society has organic elites (positively selected, according to their valuable contribution to the society) intelligence will grow double geometric: "What is the factor that determines the multiplier effect of smart growth? The maximum intelligence of society, "represented by individuals with superior intelligence who broaden the average intellectual field of society and raise its level ..." (Ungureanu, 1990: 186).

The last paradigm of this chapter is called "The law of the requisite hierarchy" (A. Aulin). It states that hierarchy is fundamental for society survival. The emergence of a radical revolution or reform that overrides the "old" hierarchy will not prevent the creation of a compensating hierarchy because it is a fundamental component of society. Even if it is a necessity, a high hierarchy volume can block society, though.

5. Evolution of society

The latter chapter of the book is shorter for the study of social change and revolution is not yet properly matured, wrote Ungureanu. In the chapter's introduction, Ungureanu defines the essential concepts of society's evolution: social and societal evolution, social development, modernization, progress, revolution, and social change.

The first three paradigms are related to a particular structural change: the evolution of society as "progress". In the first paradigm, the one of A. Comte, Ungureanu

states that modernity is different from other historical epoques by increasing rationality in society. Rationality is specific for economic action. From this perspective, capitalism is the cause of the evolution of modern rationality. The emergence of capitalism was explained by M. Weber in the birth of Protestant religion. Protestantism has supported the capitalist spirit of bourgeoisie, explicitly linking *salvation* to work efficiency and capital accumulation. Therefore, M. Weber demonstrates in his paradigm, that the modernization of Occident civilization is an effect of the birth of Protestant religion. In the third paradigm of the chapter, H. Mendras explains how social innovation (e.g., the spirit of capitalism) can spread across society.

The issue of social development was raised by Ungureanu through W.E. Moore, J. H. Steward and E.R. Service paradigms. The first identifies ten evolutionary curves. The second explains their diversity through the principle of multilateralism. Any society has a different evolution path from the others. The principle of phylogenetic discontinuity of progress (E. R. Service) points that every evolutionary path can be a source of social innovation.

The next concept analysed is social development. W. W. Rostow proposes a social model of economic development. The Rostow's take-off paradigm of development clarifies the very moment a society enters the process: when "the economic growth becomes automated" (Ungureanu, 1990: 222). No society is isolated. Therefore, the social development of one society can be influenced by its interaction with another, that is, the development in lagged-behind countries is somewhat different. These ideas were explained through the paradigm of Constantin Gherea and Eugen Lovinescu, who analysed the evolution of modern Romania. Lovinescu's paradigm is about how development is possible by large-scale imitation, the so-called "synchronization theory", while Gherea's "orbiting paradigm" states that modernization in backward countries is compulsory but pushes for more backwardness and superficial institutional development. Modernization is an instrument of social development and control. Ungureanu exposes the positive and negative consequences of this instrument in W. Moore's paradigm.

Structural changes in society can suddenly occur through a revolution. In the paradigm of J. C. Davies, Ungureanu details a principle for the start of a revolution: relative deprivation: revolutions start when a long period of economic growth is suddenly followed by a reversal.

The last paradigm of the book analyses the concept of social change. In the "cultural gap" paradigm (W. F. Ogburn), Ungureanu illustrates the process of change within the components of the company. A social innovation that has emerged in one part of society will be delayed in another part of it. In the latest paradigm of the book: A. Sorokin argues that social change is imminent, and its variations are limited – establishing the "principle of immanence of change": "any system is changing as a result of its functioning" (Ungureanu, 1990: 270).

6. Conclusions

The book should be the Bible for any researcher interested in the theoretical underlying of Sociology. By reading Ion Ungureanu's masterpiece, we have access to the very complexity of the fundamentals of the sociological thinking with fair simplicity, lucidity, clarity and accuracy.

Ion Ungureanu managed to organize all of the theoretical fundamentals in 260 pages. Thus, the book represents the “core” of sociology, and the essence of this science. Compared to other sociology textbooks, Ion Ungureanu does not confine himself to presenting the main sociological trends (functionalism, conflict theory, symbolic interactionism, etc.). He succeeds to give autonomy for every paradigm to a sociological trend and thereby turning every paradigm into a possible new field of study. Additionally, the book brings to the fore the Gustian fundamental idea: society must be studied in interdisciplinarity. Sociology integrates other social sciences because only in this way it can study society-as-a-whole. Some sociological paradigms derive from scientific domains such as economics, psychology, or sociobiology.

Sociology is in constant change for there are constant internal competitions and struggles between various paradigms. Ungureanu demonstrates that there is no universal sociological paradigm, but only a multiparadigmatic perspective. From this point of view, each paradigm is valid and has potential for development, as long as it is theoretically sound. The theoretical masterpiece of the Romanian sociologist is becoming an act of national conscience, too. He shows that sociology in Romania can excel by developing its own inherited paradigms, such as those of Mihai Eminescu (“The negative social selection”) or Constantin Dobrogeanu-Gherea (“Law of the social orbiting”), Odobleja’s consonantism or Gusti’s parallelism paradigm.

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