Romanian Geopolitics: From the Geographical Approach to Gusti's School of Sociology

The *Coniunctionis Animae* Concept and Its Context

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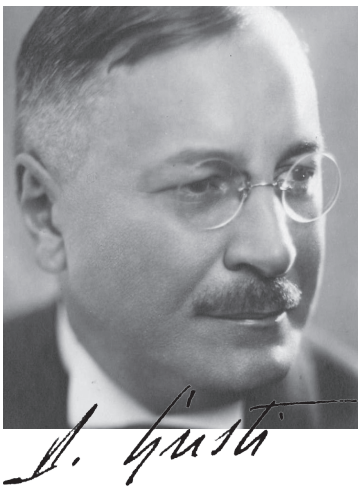

(1880–1955)

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Preamble

DIMITRIE GUSTI's School of Sociology was a significant component of the social infrastructure after War World I. The period in question was the only one in the last century in Romania during which social sciences could develop in full, receiving political support. The Sociological School also operated in a remarkably interesting context, as geopolitics was a point of scholarly focus for other sciences as well. Highly active were, for instance, renowned geographers such as Simion Mehedinţi and George Vâlsan. In what follows, we will discuss Romanian geopolitics from two vantage points: geographical and sociological.

On the Meaning of Geopolitics

This paper does not intend to discuss in depth the notion of geopolitics. The concept of geopolitics with which we shall operate is the power projection over a certain territory (Baltasiu 2011). It can be soft (cultural appeal) or hard (based on military deterrence). We note that the "original" concept coined by Rudolf Kjellén in the early 20th century states that geopolitics concerns the influence of geography over power relationships in international relations.[1]

There is a significant distance between the two definitions, since the current concept covers the complexity of cultural and behavioral patterns overlapping geography, while Kjellén's primitive definition of geopolitics stresses the role of geography itself.

The approaches of both the precursors and of Gusti's School predefine the contemporary social/societal approach to geopolitics, that is, the issue of security as both internal and external policies.

The Gustian line of thinking is *nationally* rather than societally centered. Society exists as a component of nationhood, and the state as well. Simultaneously, both the Copenhagen School of geopolitics and Gusti's School stress the importance of complete/complex and transdisciplinary thinking. The terms for this inclusive approach are "societal" and "monographic," respectively. The latter will be explored in the chapter on Gustian geopolitics. In keeping with the concept of societal security, "The security of human collectivities is affected by factors in five major sectors: military, political, economic, societal and environmental" (Buzan 1991, 38).

Ole Wæver also discusses the concept of societal security: "More specifically, it is about the sustainability, within acceptable conditions for evolution, of traditional patterns of language, culture, association, and religious and national identity and custom" (Şerban 2008, 61).

The Precursors: The Geographical Approach—Vâlsan and Mehedinţi

Both George Vâlsan (1885–1935) and Simion Mehedinţi (1868–1962) stress the so-called anthropogeographic aspect of geography: the relationship between the Earth and humanity, "the latter being seen as a biogeographical entity."[2]

Vâlsan: "The Geographical Individualities" Thesis

COUNTRIES ARE made of human individuals. Every country is also made of "geographical individualities"—the most important physical features embedded in the collective conscience. The Danube is one of the most important geographical individualities of Romania. The geopolitical axes of a country are also cultural components of a country's individuality, elements underpinning the spiritual orientation of a country's interests:

> *For me, a mountain, a plain, a river, a sea, are more important individuals, influencing each other to the extent of their power and, in the current stage of descriptive geography, I do not find anything more useful that can be done to clarify these individualities by detaching the characteristics and establishing relations with the neighborhood*. (Vâlsan 1935, 39)

The corollary of Vâlsan's approach is the importance of culture in foreign policy. The better we understand the intricate physical features and their cultural determinants, the better the country will be.

Geography is the basis of the social, Vâlsan infers from Michelet. In our turn, perhaps, we infer that the quality of governance—whose result is "the homeland"—depends upon the symbolic perception of the territory. Vâlsan contends:

> *Without a geographical basis, the people, the historical actor, seem to be hanging in the air like the characters in Chinese paintings, in which the ground is missing. In addition, take note—says Michelet—that the ground is not only the framework for action. Through nutrition, climate, etc., it influences hundreds of facets. Like the nest for the bird, as is the homeland, so is the inhabitant.* (Vâlsan 1921, 18)

Vâlsan: The Geopolitical Constants Thesis

THE CLAIM whereby "Any geographical framework includes several possibilities for political development" (Vâlsan 1937, 25) is at the core of what we shall call the thesis of geopolitical constants. It stresses both the natural influence exercised by geography over the historical evolution, and the dimension of the public conscience of geography. The geopolitical constants consist of the important physical features (main rivers, mountains, etc.), the "façades"—the geopolitical doors of a country/society, as developed by Mehedinţi, shaping the historical political attitudes of the surrounding nations:

Is it a small thing for all Romanians to know that, on the edge of our country and within it, a great river flows—Napoleon called it the king of rivers in Europe—meant to become the main transportation artery of Central and Eastern Europe? Is it a small thing to know that we have an alternation of mountains, hills, plateaus, and plains, helping each other, complementing each other, like a symphony composed of several parts that create a harmonious whole? Is it superfluous to know that in the middle of the Romanian land, there is a great fortress with mountain bastions and wide water gates, a precious vessel from which the flowers of Romanianism spilled in all directions? And, in other words, . . . that we have a narrow façade, facing east, with an inhospitable sea, almost closed, a sea that gives us poor and flat shores, where only after twenty years of work we managed to create a good port, but too close to an irreconcilable enemy. Should we not always remember that beyond the smoldering Dniester, hidden in its twisted ditch, far beyond the lazy Tisza, coiled like a water snake between reeds, lie the monotonous steppes that shelter hostile people? Is it not good to remember that we are alone, far from our natural relatives, alone and yet stubbornly keeping our distinct nature, predestined to always break with our chests the waves from the East of a restless sea without a determined bed? (Vâlsan 1921, 19)

Vâlsan: "The Intensification of Consciousness" Thesis

A third thesis of geopolitical relevance is the intensification of consciousness, as a factor of statehood and national security, the consciousness of national unity, and the sacrifice required for it:

The current Romanian state is based not on the land and its geographical composition, not on its wealth, nor on its desire for greater well-being. All of these are secondary. At the foundation is first and foremost this impalpable thing, stronger than diamond: the belief in our national unity. Moreover, only because this elusive and magical thing is there, all the others are worth it. (Vâlsan 1937, 30)

The intensification thesis is linked with the current geopolitical "idea of state": "Without a widespread and deeply-rooted idea of state among the population, the state institutions by themselves would have great difficulty functioning and surviving" (Buzan 1983, 39).

At the core of this thesis is "the terrible sacrifice" of national reunification. That is, "the state-idea is not so much about the achievements of the order of civilization, as in Western nations, but comes from the perspective of social and national survival" (Vâlsan 1921, 11).

Mehedinţi: The Ponto-Baltic Isthmus Theory

SIMION MEHEDINŢI brings geography much closer to the realm of geopolitics. His theory on the Ponto-Baltic isthmus has a contemporary correspondent in the American-Polish geopolitics of "Trimarium."[3] The aim is the same: the containment of Russia by countries from the Baltic to the Black Sea and the Adriatic, the pivotal countries being Poland and Romania. The Ponto-Baltic isthmus theory stresses the geopolitical function of geography. In the geography of the continent, the isthmus stretches from the Baltic Sea to the Black Sea, following a line from Narva (Estonia) to Kiev and Odessa (Ukraine), on the banks of the Dniester River. Mehedinţi noted that this line contains a continental separation along several coordinates: climatic, related to the configuration of the terrain, and—more importantly—cultural, historical, and political ones. The mainstay of the Ponto-Baltic isthmus is the Romanian space, strengthened by what he calls the "Carpathian Fortress." The Ponto-Baltic isthmus became a geopolitical imperative, writes Mehedinţi, after Lenin and Stalin launched the thesis of the "permanent war" with the "capitalist world" in the 1920s. In this context, the main function of the isthmus was to separate and protect the "Europe of nations" from the "rogue state," the dictatorship of the USSR. Specifically, the isthmus is to fulfill the role of a "sanitary cordon," denying Russian access to the mouths of the Danube and to the Straits. The Russian aggressive drive is identified as "Moscovitism," "Pan-Slavism," and lately "Leninism."[4]

Mehedinţi: The Theory of Geopolitical Façades

THE GEOPOLITICAL façades are strategic openings, important terrain features, fostering nation-building and endowed with cultural significance. Some of them, like the sea, are a natural factor of expansion: "Every people goes to the nearest sea. . . . The sea means 'freedom and light'; the shore of the sea is the most favorable façade for any state, and all nations that want to have a great future go to the sea and the ocean" (Mehedinţi 1943, 163).

Others are at the core of nationhood—the Carpathians (the Carpathian fortress, on its Transylvanian side):

> *Transylvania is the orographic center of the Romanian land . . . As a core of the Carpathian fortress and as a geographical entity, it forms the last bastion of Europe in front of "Greater Siberia." . . . Transylvania is for us the kernel of an orographic whole, whose parts organically merge.* (Mehedinţi 1943, 187, 191)

In all, the Romanian territory has five façades—geopolitically relevant coordinates. Four of them—the Mountains, the Forest, the Danube, the Black Sea—are the "close façades," and the last one, the Straits, is "the external façade," since the Straits are an extension of the Danube façade:

> *The life of our people has had two coordinates: on the one hand, the Mountain and the Forest, on the other hand, the Danube and the Sea. Whoever mentions the Danube must immediately mention the Black Sea. However, there is more, for they must also add the Bosphorus (which is just an extension of the Danube), then the Dardanelles . . . The Danube cannot and must not be separated, not for a moment, from the Black Sea and the Straits, with which it forms a "fundamental coordinate" for the past and future destiny of our people.* (Mehedinţi 1943, 150)

The Geopolitics of Gusti's School of Sociology

Geopolitics went through an organic stage of development via the contributions of Gusti's School of Sociology. Having far more instruments available at their disposal—ethics, philosophy, sociology, economics, psychology, anthropology, and statistics, alongside geography—the geopolitical branch of Gusti's School would have become a mature, distinct discipline if communism had not been forcibly imposed by the Red Army in Romania after 1944. We may say that one of the starting points of sociological geopolitics is Gusti's analysis of the European Union project in the early 1920s (Kalergi and Briand), and at the other end of the axis of development of the new science is the integrated paradigm of geopolitics and geohistory from the magazine *Geopolitica şi Geoistoria: Revista română pentru Sudestul european* (Geopolitics and Geohistory: The Romanian Journal for Southeast Europe), published between 1941 and 1944. We shall discuss here the European Union's prospects and the *Coniunctionis Animae* Project—"the unification in soul" of Greater Romania.

Gusti's School of Sociology explicitly develops geopolitics not so much as a science of state power, as it was in German geopolitics. Geopolitics is a preoccupation with the inner reconstruction of an ethnically and historically determined space, a "problem of the soul" from which derive political power, the shape of the state, and the extension of its borders. We call this approach "internal geopolitics," while the classical approach belongs to what is now commonly known as the "science of international relations." Beyond the borders, this geopolitics aims at strengthening and protecting the historical communities (the "consanguineous" policy) and at building special policies with foreign countries to protect the borders of the Kingdom of Romania.

The last stage of maturation is dominated by the younger generation—Anton Golopenţia, Mircea Vulcănescu, Ion Conea, and G. I. Brătianu. From this perspective, the geopolitical and geohistorical stage is post-Gustian, centered around Iorga's thesis of Romania—a state of European necessity. In this way, a Romanian geopolitics that owes a lot to the studies of Iorga on Byzantium and on Balkan peoples comes full circle, going back to its roots after being enriched by the interdisciplinary approach.

We shall briefly highlight some of the geopolitical concerns of the School.

On the Feasibility of the European Union (1929)

GUSTI[5] IS favorable to the project of European unification at the beginning of the 20th century: "A union of European states . . . is needed. It is necessary because the federal union is a stage of natural evolution and it is necessary especially in the tragic circumstances that Europe is currently experiencing" (Gusti 1934 (1929), 266).

First, writes Gusti, we must know what "Europe" means? "Europe is a rational and activist idea, culminating in scientific creations and their technical applications, which dominate and absorb other human cultures" (Gusti 1934, 256).

Gusti describes in detail two of the major European projects: Richard von Coudenhove-Kalergi's Pan-European Movement of the "European confederation"/"Europäischer Staatenbund" (1923), and Briand's "Memorandum on the Organization of a Regime of European Federal Union" (1930).

Enthusiastic but astutely realistic, Gusti identifies seven categories of problems that the European project must address:

- culturally, Europe has little confidence in its "mission" and its cultural supremacy is over;
- politically, Europe is no longer a primordial factor in world politics;
- economically, the masses of Europe are on the verge of poverty, and continental chaos looms because of internal aggressive protectionist policies;
- poverty and cultural weakness will have geopolitical consequences: "Europe will become a vassal of one of the three unified white blocs: the American Union, the British Union, or the Russian Union" (Gusti 1934, 260);
- demagogy: elites consisting of intellectuals and politicians are spending too much time in seminars and conferences;
- intracontinental geopolitical cleavages among the French, German, Italian interests;
- internal fragmentation: "While . . . the non-European world unites into strong political and economic federations, Europe remains permanently torn apart in 27 states" (Gusti 1934, 257).

European unification is necessary in order to solve these problems. Still, is it feasible? The stumbling block is the character of Europe—a Europe of nations: "If we have European states and peoples, can we talk about a Europe? This is the problem. This is Europe's problem" (Gusti 1934, 256).

There is a fallacy in Gusti's discourse: when listing the greatest European problems, the main one seems to be the intracontinental tensions—that is, the clash of ideologies and of the colonial and protectionist European powers. Gusti should have known that these are not one and the same thing with "the peoples." Peoples and nations are suffering from poverty. That is, the nations are affected by ideology, not the effectors of the ideological divide of the great powers. To be correct, the European problem should have been stated as follows: "Can we speak of a united Europe while the great European powers are divided by geopolitical interests? This is the problem of Europe."

To sum up this tragic dilemma, Europe is torn between the unification imperative of survival and the geopolitical divide among its major powers. On top of the European issues is the demagogy of the European elites. The cost is geopolitical weakness and poverty, and, in the long run, the barbarization of society ("a barbaric Europe") (Gusti 1934, 260).

To surpass this quagmire, writes Gusti, Europe must build its own federal identity, that is, "a European consciousness" and a "European patriotism." Both would be based on "psychological security"—a concept foreshadowing the "societal security concept"[6] which we have already described. Meanwhile, the pan-European intellectuals must solve the sovereignty issue: "Sovereignties cannot be organized without some limitations. Sovereignty is not a myth. Any commitment is a limitation of sovereignty" (Gusti 1934, 271). By limiting the national sovereignty, the European project must give up its legitimacy in front of the peoples. In other words, the cost of European unification is dramatic for it consists of its own legitimacy, which lies with the peoples, not with the elites.

The *Coniunctionis Animae* Project (Since 1922)

Coniunctionis animae/*unification in soul* is, perhaps the main geopolitical contribution of Gusti's School of Sociology. It is more than a concept, it is a project, a component of *sociologia militans*—the militant sociology project. In the geopolitical terms of power projection over a certain territory, we may read the unification in soul project as follows: power comes from the soul and the ability to project power over a territory is unification—the unification of the "nation's soul."

The unification in soul is the imperative, the *next* country project after the successful realization of the Greater Romania. Sociology is not an abstract enterprise. It is an applied, assumed, militant academic endeavor in relation to the most important priorities of the nation. Therefore, sociology is *militant* and *monographic*—aiming at the whole of reality. At the core of this sense of wholeness is the soul, the collective soul of the nation. Once again, we recall the "idea of state" concept of modern geopolitics (Buzan).

The project was launched in 1922, under royal auspices:[7]

> *The marvelous integration between Wallachia and the liberated lands brought with it a series of problems, decisive for our national and state life. Culture is one of the undeniable issues. Our nation had to endure, under the dominations imposed by the vicissitudes of history, the influence of three cultures, quite different from the one established in the free country: in Bessarabia, the Russian culture, and in Bukovina and Transylvania, the German and Hungarian ones. Each of these cultures sought to compose its own soul in the fragment of the Romanian nation at hand. We would have found ourselves, if the process had followed its path to the end, four strangers and brothers centrifugal to each other. The cracks in this realm of the spirit are the most dangerous, and, in order to end and eliminate them, nothing must be spared, no sacrifice is too expensive, no matter how hasty. Thus, the most important of the socio-political aspects of our cultural problem is today the unification in soul.* (Gusti 1934, 442)

We shall examine the intended sociological plan to study Romania from this perspective.

There are many other levels of thinking and sociological action attached to the imperative of unification in soul:

- *the cultural personality*;
- *the cultural state*;
- *the uplift of the nation*;
- *the Cultural House*.

Summing up these layers of thinking, we may say that, to *truly* achieve the unification of Greater Romania, the two concomitant imperatives to be fulfilled are the cultural state and the cultural personality. That is, the state should draw its power from a society in which individuals are educated to achieve their best according to the highest values (cultural state and cultural personality imperatives). The cultural state subordinates politics to culture (knowledge, i.e., science) in order to have good governance (social justice). Social justice means "uplifting of the nation," that is, encouraging each person to live according to their own

"calling"—vocation, mostly through proper education. The main institutional instrument employed to elevate the people and to promote the unification in soul of the nation is to be the Rural Country House: "Finally, the Cultural Center is the one that must watch over the uplifting of people through a livelier Christian life, through an understanding of beauty and goodness, and through the proper use of the Book" (Gusti 1939, 200).

The New Science of Geopolitics (1937) and the *Geopolitics and Geohistory* Project (1941–1944)

In Romania, geopolitics as a system was established by Ion Conea and Anton Golopenţia in the framework of Gusti's School of Sociology. There were some breakthrough studies published in 1937 and 1939, most of them in the journal *Sociologie românească* (Romanian Sociology), others in geographical journals or books. Golopenţia's contributions were collected by his daughter, Prof. Sanda Golopenţia, as the *Opere complete* (Complete works), vol. 2, *Statistică, demografie şi geopolitică* (Statistics, demography, and geopolitics), published in 2002, and vol. 5, *Statistică, demografie şi geopolitică, postume* (Statistics, demography, and geopolitics, posthumous), published in 2019. During the war (1943–1944), Anton Golopenţia led a team of 17 researchers of the National Institute of Statistics behind the front lines. The studies were retrieved and published in 2006 by Sanda Golopenţia in *Românii de la est de Bug* (Romanians east of the Bug River), in two volumes. Of particular interest is also one of his last papers (1949), which is also connected with his assassination in prison: "Suggestions for the Governing Program of the Future Regime," published in *Ultima carte* (The last book) (2001).

In the confined space of this article, the historical writings of interest are "The Contribution of the Social Sciences to Conducting the Foreign Policy"[8] (Golopenţia), "A New Science: Geopolitics"[9] (Conea), "Notes on Defining the Concern Called Geopolitics"[10] (Golopenţia), and "Foreword: Geopolitics" (Golopenţia, Conea, and M. Popa Vereş).[11]

Geopolitics, the State and Social Science. Golopenţia states that geopolitics is a refinement of sociology, a social science applied to the business of state affairs, more exactly in foreign policy. It is national since its object of study is the understanding of other nations from the perspective of one's own national interests. Golopenţia identifies eleven coordinates of geopolitical thinking. For instance, geopolitics must be conducted in monographic fashion, by analyzing *the whole*, "all constitutive factors of the state: territory, nation, population, economy, so-

cial structure, culture, the way it is governed, its political environment. Geopolitical research . . . is at the same time geographical, demographic, economic, social, cultural, political" (Golopenţia 2002, 536).

The main objective of geopolitics is to identify the states' potential and to be able to inform in order to serve. Geopolitics is a direct administrative tool based on its own research considering the national priorities and perspective in international matters. Sociological theory and research are the basis and the premise for geopolitics. Given its broad field of interest, geopolitics is to be a synthesis of national scientific thinking, to be studied in a dedicated institution, as foreseen by Gusti: the Faculty of Social Sciences (Golopenţia 2002, 538).

The relationship between nation and state is central to the analysis. There is also the new concept of "close relatives"/"consanguineous groups," which are to be given great importance in foreign affairs. This is how he approaches the relationship between the nation and the close relatives:

> *The nation is not to be confused with the clearly outlined unity that lies within the borders of its state. Every nation extends beyond the borders of its political organization.*
>
> *Each of these extensions increases a nation's power and possibilities of assertion in the world.*
>
> *Consanguineous groups across state borders can become the ramparts of these borders, if they are placed next to them, and mediators with the foreign nation that shelters them in case they are further away. . . .*
>
> *Citizens who are earning a living abroad multiply the living possibilities of the nation, gaining additional space [for it]. . .* (Golopenţia 2002, 528)

The state is another revisited concept. The state is "the freedom of the nations to govern themselves in a given territory, through the leaders they give themselves…" (Golopenţia 2002, 528). The mutual conditioning between state and freedom means that statehood is a constant effort to contain the permanent aggression of other countries. From this point of view, concludes Golopenţia, nationhood, as the necessity of freedom, is also a matter of public consciousness.

Another component of geopolitics is *education*, which should be treated as a source of the nation's power:

> *Education is the source from which the strength of peoples flows, the graduate of each high school being one of the centers around which it crystallizes, pervaded by the consciousness of its life meaning, . . . of the amorphous multitude that constitutes the substance of all nations; . . . all schools are . . . when they fulfill their purpose, the reservoir of all energies.* (Golopenţia 2002, 299)

With Golopenţia, geopolitics stretches from the individual consciousness to the power projection of the nationhood over its consanguineous groups.

Conea's geopolitics—the situational awareness thesis: "If there is a disturbance somewhere, we must consider it in our midst . . ." (Conea 1937, 403)

With Ion Conea, "geopolitics became a focal point for the Romanian scientific thinking, too" (Golopenţia 2002, 535). Again, the same concern for the whole. Geopolitics is the science of constantly reducing distance and increasing intensity in international relations: "Geopolitics will not study individual states but will study the political game between states. . . . Therefore, from what we have said so far, we can deduce that geopolitics is the science of the planetary political environment" (Conea 1937, 411). The geopolitical knowledge consists of the following: the neighboring states area, their demographics and economic geography, divergences and common interests with the neighboring states, their historical political traditions, and other current factual data (ibid., 412).

Geopolitics and Geohistory: The Romanian Journal for South-East Europe was the last institutional line of development of the Gustian and post-Gustian thinking in geopolitics before its abrupt termination by the Soviet occupation of the country (Sept. 1944). After 1944, most of the contributors were either imprisoned or killed during detention, few of them managed to flee to the West (the most notable was Sabin Manuilă), some were marginalized and denied employment, and very few survived unscathed by the instauration of the communist regime.

We filed *Geopolitics and Geohistory* under Gusti's School of Sociology, even if the paradigm was more post-Gustian and much more transdisciplinary. Out of the five members of the editorial board, three were young Gustian sociologists (Golopenţia, Vulcănescu, and Conea), one was a young historian close to the French Annales School (G. I. Brătianu), and one was the founder and director of the modern Institute of Statistics (Sabin Manuilă). The journal was published under the aegis of the Romanian Society of Statistics and its offices were hosted by the Romanian Central Institute of Statistics.

In this interdisciplinary project were involved, alongside the ones mentioned above, renowned young Gustian sociologists (H. Stahl, O. Neamţu), well-known historians (C. Daicoviciu), demographers and statisticians (S. Manuilă, D. C. Georgescu, N. Dunăre), anthropologists (V. Mihăilescu), geographers (C. Brătescu), etc.

The Program of the journal states that thinking geopolitically means to understand Iorga's idea that Romania is a state of European necessity:

> *Romania has the good fortune—and the misfortune, of course—to stand at such geopolitical crossroads. We are what Nicolae Iorga called a state of European necessity. . . . Our Romania lives and speaks here not only for itself. . . . It means,*

therefore, that more than anywhere else, the watch at such [key] points must always be awake (your watch, that of the properly seated one). (*Geopolitica şi Geoistoria* 1, 1 (1941): 4)

Geopolitics is about "the great geopolitical fords" of the planet, where conflicts brew and business are conducted. The state should be able to monitor these international pulsations and take care of their interactions with their internal order.

The five critical elements of this situational/geopolitical awareness are the following:

- the rim idea—Iorga's concept, which states that borders are more than administrative limits, being a cultural process, where different societies interfere with one another;
- economic power projection;
- some degree of autarchy;
- political independence.

All of them must work in parallel, both at the level of state officials and at the level of citizens with individual conscience—"like an obsession."

Geopolitical thinking means situational awareness both at the decision-making level and in the broad sense of civic culture. The geopolitics of Gusti's School is precisely what we mentioned at the beginning of this paper, an approach to the security of the whole society as a nation, a forerunner of the geopolitics of contemporary societal security and, we believe, something more than that.

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Notes

1. "Geopolitics is the teaching of the state as a geographic organism or a manifestation in space: therefore, the state as land, territory, district or, most obviously, as an empire. As a political science it has the state unit constantly in its focus and wished to contribute to the understanding of the essence of the state; political geography, on the other hand, studies the earth as the site of human communities in their connections to the other properties of the earth." Kjellén, quoted in Christopher Richard Wade Dettling, "Rudolf Kjellén: Statecraft As a Form of Life," *American Idealism*, 10 Dec. 2018, accessed 17 March 2021, https://medium.com/@christopherrichardwadedettling/the-state-as-a-form-of-life-the-aim-of-statecraft-b270a16b5804.
2. S. Mehedinţi discussing the concept of anthropogeography introduced by Friedrich Ratzel (Mehedinţi 1943, 60).
3. See Friedman 2017 and *World Atlas*, "What is the Three Seas Initiative?," accessed 17 March 2021, https://www.worldatlas.com/articles/what-is-the-three-seas-initiative.html.

4. See Mehedinţi 1943, 268–307, especially the chapters "Fruntaria României spre Răsărit" (Romania's eastern border), and "Geneza celui mai mare stat continental—Observări geopolitice" (The genesis of the largest continental state—some geopolitical observations).
5. "Problema federaţiei statelor europene [1929]," in Gusti 1934, 255–276.
6. For a review of the concept see Şerban 2008.
7. "Memoriu înaintat Preşedinţiei Consiliului de Miniştri, în urma Înaltei dispoziţii a ASR Principelui de Coroană Carol, din partea Direcţiei generale a Casei Culturii Poporului, la 16 iunie 1922," published in Gusti 1934, 442–447.
8. "Contribuţia ştiinţelor sociale la conducerea politicii externe," *Sociologie românească* (Bucharest) 2, 5–6 (1937): 193–196, published also in Golopenţia 2002, 527–532.
9. "O ştiinţă nouă: geopolitica," *Sociologie românească* 2, 9–10 (1937): 379–385.
10. "Însemnare cu privire la definirea preocupării ce poartă numele de geopolitică," *Anuarul Societăţii Studenţilor în Geografie "Soveja"* (Bucharest) 10–11 (1937–1938): 110–116.
11. "Cuvânt înainte: Geopolitica," in Golopenţia 2002, 539–540.

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Abstract

Romanian Geopolitics: From the Geographical Approach to Gusti's School of Sociology: The *Coniunctionis Animae* Concept and Its Context

Geopolitics is not a superfluous field, secondary to the social sciences. It is a necessity as long as societies have states, and states are sovereign. Romania solved its first historical imperative—the realization of one state, one society/nation in 1918. After 1918, a second imperative emerged almost immediately: the "unification in soul" of the liberated provinces, as D. Gusti called it. We shall call it *coniunctionis animae*. These two geopolitical emergencies were approached from historical, sociological, and geographical perspectives long before becoming part of a Romanian geopolitics designated as such. The *coniunctionis animae* was of particular concern for Gusti's School of Sociology, with some important ramifications related to the historical communities of Romanians abroad, to the geopolitical role of the state, etc. We also highlight some important contributions to Romanian geopolitics coming from forerunners such as Simion Mehedinţi and George Vâlsan.

Keywords

Gusti School of Sociology, state, society, power, administration, consanguinity, European Union