HENRI H. STAHL'S CONTRIBUTION TO THE SOCIOLOGICAL MONOGRAPHS OF THE BUCHAREST SCHOOL OF SOCIOLOGY
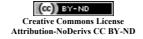
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ABSTRACT

This study is an attempt to shed light onto Henri H. Stahl's contribution to the sociological monographs that were the core of the Bucharest School of Sociology's activity. Stahl is presented as an active member of the School, bringing into it his own background and abilities, distinct or shared views, values and interests and then impacting it through his actions which, combined with other factors, distinctively change and shape its development. As such, the study is also not an attempt to summarize his theoretical developments and to compare and place them in rapport with those of other social scientists. The purpose of this study is to expose at least partially the degree to which the knowledge that Stahl generates and uses differs in shape and contents from that of Dimitrie Gusti, regarding the manner in which it is used in his course towards a certain role and status in the School, the manner in which his course in the School develops, and the manner in which his personal characteristics and options, group and organizational developments and the wider social context interact in order to shape published sociological knowledge.

Keywords: Henri H. Stahl, sociological monographs, Bucharest School of Sociology, knowledge.

THE SOCIOLOGICAL MONOGRAPH – THEORY, METHOD, PRINTED SCIENTIFIC RESULT

The following study is an attempt to shed light onto Henri H. Stahl's contribution to the sociological monographs that were the core of the Bucharest School of Sociology's activity. We aim not to reduce Stahl's status to that of a mere and modest contributor to the activities of an interwar School of sociology and to place

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a strict and engulfing label upon him – that of being just *another disciple* of Dimitrie Gusti. By presenting his *contribution* to the School's sociological monographs, we first and foremost acknowledge the reality of the moment, his status during the interwar period as a member of a group and an organization which had a complex and distinct development. Furthermore, we acknowledge his status as an active member of the School, bringing into it his own background and abilities, distinct or shared views, values and interests and then impacting it through his actions which, combined with other factors, distinctively change and shape its development. As such, the following study is also not an attempt to summarize his theoretical developments and to compare and place them in connection with those of other social scientists. The purpose of this study is to expose at least partially the degree to which the knowledge that Stahl generates and uses differs in shape and contents from that of Dimitrie Gusti, the manner in which it is used in his course towards a certain role and status in the School, the manner in which his course in the School develops and the manner in which his personal characteristics and options, group and organizational developments and the wider social context interact in order to shape published sociological knowledge. The study is, in fact, an attempt to answer two questions: How did his presence and his activity impact the School's sociological monographs? To what extent, in what manner and with what did he contribute to their specific characteristics and their results?

These are the central questions of the present study. But before we proceed in trying to answer our central questions, we must first and foremost answer a very important question: what is a sociological monograph?

As we shall see, this was a vital question for the School's members as well, one for which they had a hard time finding an answer. One may think that *a sociological monograph* had a single, clear definition, but it is not so – as the definition has changed over the years: the field research and personal contributions and interpretations reshaped D. Gusti's original vision and generated multiple ways of understanding, thus generating new versions of monographs. Perhaps the greatest source of divergence and diversity lies in the threefold meanings of the concept – the first layer of meaning refers to Dimitrie Gusti's paradigmatic theoretical vision, one that is centered on *the sociological monograph* as a holistic framework or paradigm for sociological analysis; the second layer of meaning refers to the actual research done by the School, also defined as being *a sociological monograph*; thirdly, the envisioned printed result of the School's research was also supposed to be *a sociological monograph.* And, as we shall see, *the monograph* changed over the years at all of its three levels of meaning.

Dimitrie Gusti's theoretical framework is perhaps the most stable of the three – but it also evolved, changing as the years passed, with the School's research experience and, most of all, School members' contributions gently reshaping it. We can emphasize here that, apart from the "official" theoretical framework, the School members' understanding, interpretation and acceptance of Gusti's theory

differed in various degrees. *Sociological monographs* as research practice greatly differed as the years went by, mostly because their methodology, derived from Gusti's theoretical framework, suffered an ongoing development, perfected on the site and in the School's Seminar after each research campaign. Monographs as research results varied in shape and contents, strongly influenced by a sum of factors, with some of the most influential ones being their authors' backgrounds and views on what a *sociological monograph* could and should be.

Other very important aspects defining the *sociological monograph* should be underlined here. In time, Gusti's original theoretical framework or paradigm was morphed by School members, invited and led by Dimitrie Gusti himself, into a research methodology and a specific type of research, that tested Gusti's theory and its effectiveness as a tool for exploring, understanding and explaining social reality, while gathering an unprecedented, highly valuable and large body of information on Romanian rural communities. And as the volume of data gathered grew, the idea of organizing, analyzing it and making the results public became a central concern of the School. Thus began the rise of the idea of a written *sociological monograph* as the School's main scientific objective, its main product. And so, from theory into practice and into written results, the *sociological monograph* envisioned by Dimitrie Gusti and his School took its threefold meaning and its varied shapes.

Having answered part of our question – what is a sociological monograph? – we can now see a clearer picture of our task. It becomes obvious that we must try to analyze Henri H. Stahl's involvement with the three dimensions of the monograph – theoretical framework, methodological translation into research practice, scientific results.

This is where our own theoretical framework comes into play, helping us in an analysis of the creation of sociological knowledge, of sociology. What makes a sociologist? What are the sources of his scientific endeavors? What are the factors that influence his work? How does he make his mark on the production of scientific knowledge and on the scientific world? In answering such questions we make use of a simple framework, built upon a paradigm that guides studies in various branches of social science, including sociological studies – the life course paradigm. (Giele & Elder, 1998; Elder et al., 2002) The life course paradigm is centered on the way in which individuals and the whole of society interact in generating individual and social change and it allows for a wide range of methods to be utilized in the research conducted. In life course studies, researchers link individuals with the groups that they belong to and also with the historical events and the developing social trends that they take part in, in trying to understand the ways in which society shapes individual lives and individual life paths or courses aggregate to generate social change. In many ways similar to Dimitrie Gusti's own theoretical framework, the paradigm gives individuals an active role within their social environment – although they are conditioned by it, they are able to respond to it, to create, to innovate, changing their own lives and generating change within

their social network and in the whole of society as well. Influences, action and change propagate from macro- to micro- level and in reverse, mediated by groups, by the social network into which individual lives are embedded. The theory also underlines the specificity in time and place of the context that is the media shaping and shaped by individuals and the need to take it into account in every analysis. Moreover, it stresses the lifelong plasticity and variability of individual life courses and the importance of the timing of events (at a micro- and macro-scale) impacting life courses. What we will try to do is to use elements of this framework to try and understand the way in which H.H. Stahl's own life course was shaped and the way in which its specificities influenced his scientific efforts and results, his actions and interactions in the Bucharest School of Sociology, making an impact on it as an organization and on its activity and shaping its scientific products – shaping sociological knowledge.

BECOMING A MONOGRAPHER

A few words on Henri H. Stahl's personal background are highly important in our journey towards a better and, most importantly, contextualized, knowledge and understanding of his contribution to sociological monographs. In doing this, we shall use two main sources – his memoirs, published in 1981 (Stahl, 1981) and the interviews that Zoltan Rostas recorded in the 1980's and published in 2001 (Rostas, 2001), following the structure of his memoirs, developing and deepening Stahl's recollections and discussing other significant subjects of his life and his experience alongside.

Stahl is born in 1901 and grows up in a social environment that is marked by pervasive nationalism and intensive questioning and exploration of the country's possibilities for development, especially in the context of a much debated, much speculated and regarded mostly in an ideological manner – the *rural problem*. There is much public talk of the peasantry in Stahl's formative years – a social stratum that represented more than 80% of the country's population, the peasantry was seen as both a deposit of great and many national values and potential and as a backward social class, whose way of life was, paradoxically, unknown to a large degree and disregarded if not despised. (Butoi, 2012) We may say that he simply became passionate, like many others, with the central elements on the era's public agenda – development or modernization in an age of nationalism and the role and fate of the peasantry during this process. But, to be more precise, we must underline that this passion, though surely tied to his own personal choice and character, was brought to life and mediated by his family and a few others, ones with which Stahl's family had close ties.

The first person that should be mentioned here is the historian Nicolae Iorga. A close friend of Stahl family (Stahl, 1981; Rostas, 2001), Iorga exerted a very

significant influence on Stahl, be it by the means of his published work that Stahl read and had access to it in his parents' library or through direct interaction. Beyond the fact that Iorga was a passionate and unequaled researcher of Romanian history, he was a passionate advocate of the peasantry. Iorga was one of the leading voices of the initially literary movement of "Sămănătorism" – a term that may not be properly translated into English but whose root bares the meaning of "sowing" or "sower". *Sămănătorismul* had as its foundation a socio-political view that abhorred the devastating effect of modernization and of the spread of capitalism in countries that had a very strong presence of rural life and rural communities and an age-old highly valuable and valued peasant culture. (Ornea, 1971) It glorified the latter and promoted the protection and promotion of national (folk or ethnic), peasant and communitarian values against the destructive force of the first. It gradually became somewhat more than a literary movement – its ideas spread, animating a social movement that promoted elevating peasant's living standards by the means of scholarly culture, all the while preserving, valuing and developing their original folk culture and their rural and communitarian way of life. Stahl embraced such views from early on, at least in part, and they were part of core beliefs and values up until his 30's – and even beyond this age. (Stahl, 1981; Golopenția, 2014)

With a growing interest for the peasantry and its history, Stahl also found in Iorga's work sound information and theories concerning its social history and its social organization, most importantly. He sought such information in connection to a preoccupation that was born out of the influence and consequences that another very significant relationship had in his life – the one with his brother, Șerban Voinea.

Voinea was a socialist, a social-democrat to be more precise. He was Stahl's older brother and he introduced him to the world of Marxian theories of history and development and to the use of Marxian methodology in social science. As Stahl studied law at the University, they discussed issues that preoccupied him, such as the nature and evolution of property rights, a subject that Stahl was interested in. Voinea is also the one who facilitates Stahl's acquaintance to members of the Romanian social-democratic movement that will have a very strong influence on his political and scientific views – people such as Ilie Moscovici, who Stahl identifies as the man who had a leading role in shaping his views. Given Stahl's sympathies for the peasant population and his interest in their history, Voinea will also lead Stahl to socialist Constantin Dobrogeanu-Gherea and his theory on the development of a capitalist economy in Romania and its effects on the peasant population. Stahl considers Dobrogeanu-Gherea's explanation for the development of Romanian capitalism viable but finds that his knowledge of the social organization of the peasantry was still insufficient. He thus felt that his understanding of Romanian villages and the process of their transformation is lacking in depth and detail and his statement that an Occidental type of feudal system had existed an error. Stahl found that Nicolae Iorga's theory on the archaic

social organization of the peasantry in its evolution in rapport to the other social classes of the country was more likely to be true.

In an exploration of the factors directing his life course towards the research subjects that he then pursued his entire life and towards his particular path as a member of Dimitrie Gusti's School, we may list a couple more important personal connections and influences. The first is that with his father, Henri Stahl, which took his son on his research walks through Bucharest, interviewing locals in trying to reconstruct the social history of the outskirts of the capital city. It was on this occasion that Stahl acknowledged the value and utility of fieldwork and some techniques for interviewing. Stahl then notes the influence upon his development that was exerted by Voica, the wife of a peasant friend and assistant of his father in the army. Voica is a remarkable personality, to whom Stahl's sister Henriette Yvonne will later dedicate a novel. Stahl joins her on several trips by foot, from Bucharest to her native village of Falaştoaca, and spends time with her and her family there, making his first contacts with peasants and their communities, one that impresses him so much that he would recall it even many years later as his original numinous encounter with the age-old way of life of peasant communities.

Finally, we may note that he found that he did not want to pursue a career in law after he had graduated and his curiosity for other subjects lead him closer to the subject matters of the Faculty of Letters and Philosophy, where he also attended courses. Moreover, as he had become a stenographer for the Parliament and, over the years, earned enough during its short period of annual activity to make a decent living, he ended up having the necessary time and resources to dedicate to his studies and to his future activity as a monographer and a central member of Gusti's School.

All of the sources of influence in his life placed him on a particular path, determining him to hold particular views. He became interested in the social issues that were on top of the social agenda of the era-development orientated social change, imbued with nationalist ideals, and the role and fate of the peasant population of Romania. His deep preoccupation with these topics was mediated by his close social connections and gained certain particular traits – a preference for the social history of the peasantry (a social class that he saw as underprivileged and yet holding great potential) as a means of understanding present problems in the context of long term processes; a preference for knowledge that is grounded in scientific research, with Marxian historical materialism seen as a great methodological tool to be used; a preference for using in analysis data obtained through fieldwork, as a means of direct investigation of social realities that were otherwise inaccessible. It is within such a context that he heard from his brother in law, Ion Costin, of Gusti's team going on its first research campaign in 1925 in the village of Goicea Mare, a team of which Costin had been a part of. He was very interested in such an endeavor. Later, in 1926, when Gusti's assistant at the time, Gheorghe Vlădescu-Răcoasa (whom, we may suppose, he had probably met in the Faculty of Letters

and Philosophy or in the group of Romanian social-democrats that he was close to), invited him to be a stenographer for a conference that Gusti held in Brăila, and Stahl accepted the invitation. He thus met the Professor. Gusti wanted to find a jurist to join his research – and as Stahl was interested in research and was currently preparing for a doctorate in law, he received an invitation to join Gusti's research team. And he accepted it, thus beginning a very important period of his professional life, during which he became a central and highly influential figure within Dimitrie Gusti's School, a period dedicated to investigating the life of the peasantry and the means by which it changed.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK, THEORETICAL CONTRIBUTIONS

To begin with, before we proceed with our analysis, we must enrich our knowledge of the sociological monograph as a theoretical development. What is the theoretical framework initially developed by Dimitrie Gusti? Exploring the first layer or dimension of the monographs – their theoretical background – will help us start up a better understanding and analysis of Stahl's contribution.

Monographic sociology is the creation of Dimitrie Gusti, a Romanian scholar belonging to a generation of intellectuals marked by nationalist ideals and the social struggles of the peasantry, the two topics that prevailed on Romania's public agenda at the turn of the century – the end of the XIXth and the start of the XXth century. (Ornea, 1971) Having studied for some 10 years abroad in Germany and in France, Gusti returns to his hometown Iaşi in 1910, to be granted the title of professor in the Department of History of Philosophy, Ethics and Sociology of the Faculty of Letters. (Vulcănescu, 1998; Vlădescu-Răcoasa, 1936)

By 1910, Gusti had already envisioned the outlines of his theory, linking it to his teaching activity and his belief in the necessity of reuniting the knowledge and methods of the various social sciences under sociology's holistic approach and grounding reforms, social development and nation building on solid knowledge of the whole of social reality, knowledge that would be obtained through research. His ideas and convictions are stated in his inaugural lesson held at the University in 1910 and reiterated in his opening study for "*Arhiva pentru ştiinţa şi reforma socială*"[1] in 1919. (Vulcănescu, 1998; Stahl, 1936) These are of utmost importance for his whole activity. Their origin is most likely placed in the period he had spent abroad, a period during which Gusti came into contact with a series of elements which significantly influenced him – such as the German social policies and institutions which developed as a reaction to the problems generated by industrialization and urbanization and the threat of social and political instability, amplified by the spread of socialist ideas within this space. (Momoc, 2012; Muller,

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[1] Transl.: "The Archive for Social Science and Reform".

2013) We may also place in this category his contact with the German university model and his contact with theories and activity of German and French personalities – among whom the more significant would be Wilhelm Wundt, Karl Bucher and Henri de Saint-Simon. (Momoc, 2012) A. Momoc summarizes Gusti's resulting ideas in the following manner:

"*Modernizarea prin ştiinţă, în consonanţă cu idealul gustian, pare a fi proiectată în două direcţii: înspre societate, prin cercetare socială şi prin intervenţia (munca) culturală în comunităţile rurale şi mai apoi în cele urbane; înspre politică, prin profesionalizarea politicii prin ştiinţă, fie prin aducerea de specialişti în rândul politicienilor români, fie prin asistenţa tehnocrată pe care elita ştiinţifică putea să o asigure politicienilor*"[2]. (Momoc, 2012, 79–80)

The accumulation of knowledge and its transfer, through a developed network, into the Romanian rural space and in the political sphere through the recruitment of specialists or through consulting – this is the strategy that Dimitrie Gusti announces upon his return into his country of origin. It appears that, right from the beginning, Gusti aims to construct a group which could and would, through the use of knowledge, produce social change.

However, although the outlines of his theory as a framework for social analysis and research, intended to provide the necessary knowledge for efficiently designing and implementing social reforms, are set at a very early date, contents and nuances of it evolve along the years. They are gently reshaped as monographic research unfolds, testing and challenging the theory behind it, and as significant members of the School question, evaluate, reformulate and help reorganize elements of the initial theoretical framework. Among all the School's members, Mircea Vulcănescu and Traian Herseni had the most significant role in promoting Gusti's theoretical views, making it the object of their studies, publishing volumes that organized and developed its principles, making it more explicit, more easily comprehensible and comparable to other sociological systems or those of other branches of science. But Mircea Vulcănescu, of the two, had a more important role in the development of D. Gusti's theory – as H.H. Stahl explains in his memoirs, in 1928, during the monographic research campaign taking place in the village of Fundu Moldovei, Gusti asked some of his "senior" pupils – Mircea Vulcănescu, Dumitru Prejbeanu, Ion Costin and H.H. Stahl – to analyze and reorder the research plans and the questionnaires that had been used so far. (Stahl, 1981) Vulcănescu is the only one who takes up this task – and, in the end, working alongside the Professor, he manages to clarify and better define the lines of the theory behind the sociological monographs as research practice, redesigning it in part, in a manner

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[2] Transl.: "Modernization realized through science, in concordance with Gusti's ideals, appears to be projected in two directions: one of them is towards society, realized through research and cultural interventions (work) in rural and then urban communities; the second is politics, realized by professionalizing it through science, either by recruiting specialists amongst Romanian politicians, either by the technocratic assistance that a scientific elite could provide for politicians".

that differed from the first variant outlined by Gusti in his "Sociologia războiului"[3]. (Stahl, 1981) With the years that passed, further developments of the theory were accepted – in 1940, in an introduction to Stahl's monograph of the village of Nerej, one written for a foreign audience, D. Gusti presents his theoretical views in their latest and final form, one influenced by the contributions and activity of A. Golopenția, T. Herseni and H.H. Stahl. (Stahl, 1981, 389–390)

But what exactly was Dimitrie Gusti's theory and what were the topics or the elements that the School's members challenged, debated and perhaps reshaped in it? Below, we shall try to draw a picture of its main elements, as they presented themselves in the 1930's and in their final 1940 version. We shall then discuss the School members' understanding of it and their influence upon it, focusing on Stahl's influence in particular.

Dimitrie Gusti's sociological system is first and foremost one that is centered on gaining a holistic and integrated knowledge of social reality. In 1936, in his study *Dimitrie Gusti, profesorul*[4], quoted here from a later edition, Mircea Vulcănescu explains his Professor's ideas as follows:

"*Viața socială constituind în realitate un singur tot concret, din care științele particulare izolează numai fragmente, considerarea unui asemenea fragment, necesară analizei, nu poate duce niciodată, singură, la descoperirea rațiunilor suficiente. Pentru a le găsi, orice fapt social trebuie privit sintetic, în complexul împrejurărilor în care se produce, și cercetat paralel cu aceste împrejurări și cu manifestările ce-l însoțesc*"[5]. (Vulcănescu, 1998, 47)

Further along, Dimitrie Gusti identifies a particular type of relationship between individuals and the society they are a part of:

"*De fapt, întreg adevărul sociologic constă în aceasta: societatea există, natural, prin individ, pentru că pe acesta nu-l putem tăgădui și nu putem să nu-l luăm în considerare, fiindcă există; individul la rândul său, există prin societate, și numai în societate. [...] Însă și societatea trăiește în individ; el este creat de societate, dar în același timp este și creatorul societății*"[6]. (D. Gusti in *Sociologia Militans*, 1934, 198, apud Vulcănescu, 1998, 61)

For the School's sociologists, individuals are not entities that simply and passively suffer the influence of the social whole of which they are a part of.

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[3] Transl.: "The sociology of war".

[4] Transl.: "Dimitrie Gusti, the Professor".

[5] Transl.: "As social life is, in reality, a single and objective whole, fragments of which specialized social sciences isolate, to consider only one such fragment, as a part of analysis, can never lead on its own to finding its sufficient reason. In order to find its causes, any social fact must be dealt with in a synthetic manner, in the complexity of circumstances in which it appears, analyzed in parallel with these circumstances and the manifestations that accompany it."

[6] Transl.: "In fact, sociology's holistic truth is the following: society exists, naturally, through the individual, so we cannot deny individual existence and we cannot ignore it, because it exists; the individual, in his turn, exists through society and only exists in it. [...] But society as well lives only because of the individual; individuals are created by society and are at the same time its creators."

On the contrary, individuals are at the same time actors, creators of their social universe, as well as creations of it. In the words of Dimitrie Gusti, "*în orice experienţă individuală se oglindeşte o experienţă socială, pentru că tot ce formează conţinutul personalităţii este un product al societăţii; dar în acelaşi timp tot ce formează conţinutul socialului este o creaţie a personalităţii*"[7]. (D. Gusti in *Sociologia militans*, 1934, 12 apud Vulcănescu, 1998, 57) Individuals become social entities as parts of *social units.* As Gusti explains it, "*realitatea socială apare ca o îmbinare de nenumărate unităţi sociale, foarte variate şi împrăştiate pe tot globul. Aşa sunt familiile, satele şi oraşele, breslele şi tagmele, atelierele, şcolile, gospodăriile şi întreprinderile, care, la rândul lor, sunt îmbinate felurit în unităţile mai cuprinzătoare ale neamurilor, statelor, imperiilor*"[8]. (Gusti, 1940, 3) But social units are not simple conglomerates of individuals – the individuals that are part of them are connected by particular *social relations*; they are aware to be part of such a group; and they create, as they interact, a particular social structure, an organizing principle that attains an independent existence. (Gusti, 1940, 6) Social units are always more than a sum of individuals – but the additional social content is the result of synthesis and cannot exist in the absence of individuals; moreover, even though every social unit is a totality, its significance can only be found by taking into account and analyzing its components, namely its individual members. (Gusti, 1940, 6) *Social units* fall into three categories – communities, institutions and groups. (Gusti, Herseni & Stahl, 1999, 110–111) They are differentiated by the degree by which the social relations established within them are the subject of regulations, by the level of pressure for conformity and the freedom of members to introduce social innovations, to join and to finally eliminate them. *Social relations* are established not only inside social units but between them as well. *Social structures* thus emerge, defined as "*raporturile formale şi abstracte de dependenţă sau interdependenţă a unităţilor: coordonare, subordonare, supraordonare*"[9]. (Gusti, Herseni & Stahl, 1999, 111)

Gusti's vision further emphasizes the active and creative role of these social units. At the core of each social world, he finds, we may find its motor, its driving power – for Gusti, this creative force bears the name of *social volition*. Personality and society are born out of the exercise of individual and social volition, by both individual initiative and action and affiliation to social volition, in the context of

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[7] Transl.: "In every individual experience one may find a mirror of a social experience, because everything that forms the contents of personality is a product of society; but at the same time, everything that forms the contents of society is a creation of personality."

[8] Transl.: "Social reality is a combination of countless social units, varied and spread out all across the globe. Such units are families, villages and cities, guilds and brotherhoods, workshops, schools, households and companies, units that, in their turn, blend in various manners, forming larger units, such as nations, states, empires."

[9] Transl.: "Formal and abstract relations of dependency or interdependence between units: coordination, subordination, superordination."

established social relations. The concept of *social volition* is a key element in Gusti's system. It is more than the sum of individual's volitions and it spawns from the socialization of individual volitions, as they are subordinated to a common goal. *Social volition* is both action and intention, it is both creative vision and action, the means by which society creates and transforms itself. And once social volition appears within a social unit – and this almost always happens to a larger or smaller extent – *totul se petrece ca şi cum societatea ar fi suportul unei voinţe autonome, având, cu alte cuvinte, o personalitate proprie*[10]. (Vulcănescu, 1998, 52)

Volition, as a one of humanity's defining features, makes it independent of "*determinismul cosmic*"[11], as Gusti puts it. (Gusti, 1940, 7) Volition guarantees the active and creative role of human individuals. Its exercise is at the origin of social units as well – without it, we find, social units "*ar rămâne simple deziderate şi simple proiecte, dacă voinţa nu le-ar traduce în fapt prin acţiune*"[12] (Gusti, 1940, 7). Endowed with social volition, any social unit seeks "*a se realiza pe ea însăşi prin creaţii de valori sociale, prin acte de producere de bunuri materiale şi spirituale şi care se petrec în făgaşele bine determinate ale unor reglementări şi instituţii*"[13]. (Gusti, 1940, 7–8)

However, any creative act in the social realm that has social volition as its vehicle is a conditioned one – though not a caused one, in a deterministic manner. It is conditioned by the existence of a series of *cadre* (*settings*), which are preconditions of any social existence. Gusti's system identifies four types of such settings – a cosmological setting, along with a biological one, a psychological one and a historic setting. The first two condition social existence as exterior forces, and are therefore assigned the tag *asocial*. The last two "*reprezintă influenţa faptelor sociale asupra societăţii*"[14] (Vulcănescu, 1998, 51) and are given the tag of *social settings*. In the process of social creation, social volition interacts with all of these settings simultaneously – and as it does so, it creates certain *manifestations*. Some of these are considered to be constitutive for social reality – this is the case for two categories of manifestations, *cultural* and *economical* ones. The other two types of manifestations are *moral-juridical* and *political-administrative* ones, also called regulative manifestations, which regulate social life. (Vulcănescu, 1998, 51) Manifestations, as we have underlined earlier, are not the result of a deterministic influence of settings. They are generated by an active reaction to the conditioning of the settings. As Mircea Vulcănescu explains it:

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[10] Transl.: "Everything takes place as though society is the vehicle of an autonomous volition, as if it had, in other words, its own personality."

[11] Transl.: "Cosmic determinism".

[12] Transl.: "They would remain simple desiderata and projects if it was not for volition to translate them into reality through action"

[13] Transl.: "To realize itself by creating social values, by producing material and spiritual goods, in a specific context, shaped by regulations and institutions."

[14] Transl.: "Represent the influence that social facts have over society."

"*Caracterul esenţial al vieţii sociale stă în faptul că formele de manifestare, deşi nu pot fi înţelese decât în cadrul factorilor cari le condiţionează, nu suferă totuşi niciodată pasiv influenţa cauzalităţii lor. Căci (...) cadrele nu determină societatea în mod mecanic. Societăţile reacţionează asupra cadrelor, cu ajutorul propriilor manifestări, putându-se sustrage influenţei lor, prin interferenţa acestor reacţii. Aşa că manifestările oricărei societăţi sunt, în acelaşi timp, elemente determinate şi determinante ale devenirii ei. [...] Cadrele apar mai curând ca nişte motive ale unei voinţe colective decât ca nişte cauze propriu zise*"[15]. (Vulcănescu, 1998, 52–53)

Gusti's system then includes a theory of *social processes* – these are processes that affect social units and are linked with the agency of social volition and the social relations established within and between social units. In his view, social change results not only from the active force associated with social volition but also from something Gusti coins as being a "*lege a paralelismului sociologic*"[16]. This law or principle may be understood as follows – no single or unique factor can be the sole or primary determinant of social existence or change; social units and their manifestations transform "*din cauza determinismului comun pe care îl suferă din partea societăţii, din partea întregului*"[17]. (Gusti, Herseni & Stahl, 1999, 113) Changes may appear at the level of any type of manifestation, with manifestations having partial autonomy as a characteristic. But what causes significant or structural change at the level of the whole lies not in the determinant role of one change or another but in the tendency of the whole to harmonize its components so that it becomes, once more, a homogeneous unit. In Gusti's own words, "*părţile totului social se desvoltă în acelaşi timp, nu succesiv, având între ele raporturi de interdependenţă, nu de subordonare*"[18]. A synchronous transformation ensures an inner equilibrium for social units, one without which they would "*pierde cu uşurinţă unitatea şi armonia interioară*"[19], while "*dezechilibrul* [...] *i-ar determina un grabnic proces de disoluţie*"[20]. (Gusti, 1940, 14)

Having sketched these essential elements of the paradigm, we may now try to shed light on the ways in which he imagined sociology and the process by which sociological knowledge should be obtained – the epistemic roots of sociological

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[15] Transl.: "The essential quality of social life lies in the fact that manifestations, even though they cannot be understood without the factors that condition them, are never passively caused by them. This is due to the fact that the settings of society do not produce effects in a mechanical manner. Societies react to their settings, in the form of their own manifestations, being able to reject their influence by the means of these reactions. So each society's manifestations are, at the same time, determined and determinant elements of its becoming. Settings are more like the motives of a collective volition rather than its proper causes."

[16] Transl.: "A law of sociological parallelism".

[17] Transl.: "Due to the determining force exerted by society, by the whole."

[18] Transl.: "The various parts of the social whole develop synchronously, not successively, as they are interdependent and not subordinate to each other."

[19] Transl.: "Easily lose their inner unity and harmony."

[20] Transl.: "Disequilibrium would determine a quick process of dissolution."

monographs. As sociology should be, in Gusti's view, a holistic science, analyzing social wholes and the social processes and relations established within them, it does not allow for "partial sociologies", namely specialized branches of sociology. Sociology should be one, a single whole, and a "monographic" one – it must gather and analyze data of a diverse nature, in a comprehensive and organized manner, treating them as parts of a social whole, using the skills of specialists but the methods of sociology, to be more specific the monograph. This was Gusti's original view, the one with which he set out the School's research.

This particular view changed a bit in the late years of the School, as we shall see below, in agreement with H.H. Stahl's own views and perhaps under his influence. The sociological monograph, turned into a particular research practice, had a distinctive note in its use of observation as a tool used by sociologists as well as specialists of different social fields, with fieldwork, as a means of direct contact with reality, being an essential part of sociological investigations. Apart from this, the monograph as an ideal body of sociological knowledge is focused mainly on the present situation of a social unit. Although it takes history into account as a specific type of setting conditioning the present social realities and sees social units as dynamic entities that change through social processes, Gusti did not design the monograph as a tool focusing on long term processes starting in some distant past. Which takes us to another important and final aspect of Gusti's projected ideal quest for sociological knowledge, which is its purpose – to shed light on the central force of social reality, social volition. Uncovering, understanding and describing social volition should have been the purpose of sociological monographs – and this should have been done by analyzing the rapport established between settings and manifestations, drawing conclusions on the active and the intended transformations that social units had made within their environment. Due to social volition's double nature – as action and as intention, ideal and realization – sociological monographs should then be able to shed light on social units' ideals and prospective evolution, so they are actually future and development orientated.

All of this extended introduction describing Dimitrie Gusti's sociological system is meant to hugely simplify an analysis of Henri Stahl's influence on it and the manner in which, having earned a central role in developing the School's methodology, he used and transformed it.

Stahl had a rather minor influence in shaping Dimitrie Gusti's own, official, published theoretical model of society and the means by which it may be known – the sociological monograph. What he had, though, was a significant amount of agreement with the general lines of the theory and several points of disagreement and the ability to contribute significantly to its transformation into a working research methodology, though shaping the resulting methodology so that it should be more in the lines of his own theoretical background and views.

As we have underlined before, it was Traian Herseni and especially Mircea Vulcănescu, who were in the largest measure in agreement with his theory.

Vulcănescu had, at one point, a significant role in clarifying and reorganizing its elements, especially its (now) centerpiece – namely social volition. And the both of them had an important role in emphasizing a particular quality Gusti's sociology had – the fact that its view and envisioned method differed from those of natural science and that it had to take into account not only forces that acted by the virtues of some determinism but human consciousness, intentions, actions and reactions; they stressed the fact that sociology may not simply explain the mechanisms by which social units function – that it had to comprehend individuals as they were creative agents whose actions had meanings. As Stahl puts it in his memoirs, they emphasized Gusti's "phenomenological" views. Stahl, on the other hand, with his Marxist training and views, had a rather different view on things. He gives little value to the idea of social volition and evades it in his research and in his studies. He found it to be, at least in the manner it was initially defined, a much too abstract notion, with little relevance for actual research – social volition, he writes in his memoirs, was "*o abstracţie îndoielnică, în niciun caz concretizabilă în ceva tangibil, de constatat la teren, prin obiecte, acţiuni sau opinii*"[21]. (Stahl, 1981, 101) This sort of thinking is quite typical of Stahl and his theoretical perspective – his formative years with Romanian social-democrats – had a deep influence in his theoretical thinking, his views on social reality. As a Marxist, Stahl finds social reality to be a stack of layers at the basis of which lie technical and economical (productive) developments. As they constitute the basis of society, these developments decisively influence the structuring of the other layers that are part of society. Moreover, and very importantly, these factors that have a decisive conditioning influence are material ones – this is the essence of the historical materialism that Stahl embraced as a most useful methodological tool. He found it to be very useful for conducting research and analyzing reality – and just that, not really embracing it as an ideological axiom. As he puts it: "*Am fost convins că materialismul istoric este o admirabilă unealtă de cercetare ştiinţifică, însă atâta*". (Rostas, 2001, 14)

Historical materialism is also the basis upon which Stahl developed his own unique tool for the analysis of social history – social archeology. He found that there is a correspondence between the physical traces of economic activity on the surface of the earth and socio-economical organization of the community inhabiting the humanized space – and that by analyzing the first, one can access, understand and explain the latter. Stahl also noticed that there exists a certain delay in the change of physical space in relation to the social life of the communities – so that the analysis of the inhabited space helps discover previous forms of social organization. Stahl's social archeology is the tool that he used to build the foundation for all of his theoretical developments. And as we follow the development of Gusti's theoretical views we find that, in 1940, in the preface to Stahl's monograph of

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[21] Transl: "A questionable abstraction, impossible to be materialized in something tangible, to be found during fieldwork, as objects, actions or opinions."

Nerej, D. Gusti mentions the use of his *social archeology* as a highlight of this published work which should have served as a *model monograph* – so Stahl's contribution, disregarding social volition and derived from historical materialism, was finally well received into the theoretical body of the School. This happened with a very indulgent disregard of the fact that Stahl's research had ventured far from Gusti's framework that gave little importance to the past, dealing with it only as a setting for the current state of a social unit. In fact, in his pervasive preoccupation with the long term social history of Romanian villages he had another important point of disagreement with Gusti's view.

Returning to our initial subject, the simple truth about Stahl's rapport to social volition during the days of the monographs is that he found little or no way to make it operational and measure it in the field and, sharing at least in part the Marxist view that individual and collective consciousness and action are only peripheral and mostly determined, not determinant, in the shaping of social systems, he gave it little or no explanatory power and importance in his research. Stahl admitted though that individuals and groups had active, reactive and self-organizing powers – but they weighed so much less in explaining social change than they did in Dimitrie Gusti's system. *Social volition* received very little consideration in the School's fieldwork as Stahl gradually became the bearer of the label of "the School's methodologist". Consequently of this and of other factors, in most of the School members' works this concept is seldom mentioned. Stahl himself ignores it almost totally in all of his works. In his memoirs, written in the late part of the communist era in Romania, he speaks of it in a critical manner, in many ways identifying it as a very weak point in Gusti's system – but perhaps this is due, as well, to the ideological pressures of the moment and the threat of censorship. In a more positive note, at one point he mentions that, at last, in the 1940's, Gusti redefined his concept of *social volition* in a more acceptable way, by describing it as a psychological quality of social units that are more or less endowed with the power of creative initiative. In reality, in his later years he had had a change of heart and thought. A few years later, in the private interviews he gave Zoltan Rostas, Stahl makes the following statement about the issue of *social volition*:

"*A fost greşit înţeleasă* [...] *nu se ştie ce-a vrut Gusti exact cu voinţa socială. Se crede că este o atitudine idealistă a lui. Câtuşi de puţin. El credea că în viaţa socială are o importanţă foarte mare acţiunea politică. C-o fi avut dreptate, n-o fi avut dreptate să pună accentul pe politică, nu ştiu. Dar că este o acţiune, este clar. Că partidul comunist este forţa conducătoare, păi, dă-mi voie, este acţiune, o voinţă socială din plin. Doar nu ne jucăm cu cuvinte. E voinţă socială. Eu nu-s de acord cu faptul că partidul este factorul hotărâtor. Cred că sunt multe alte împrejurări care-l determină pe partid să facă ceea ce face. Dar, că există voinţă socială, asta este clar. Adică, o acţiune socială. Omul acţionează, nu este numai un pion, societatea ca atare nu suferă numai injoncţiuni ale împrejurărilor externe.*

Care există, fără îndoială, te descurci față de ele, dar te descurci prin acțiune. Deci, voința socială există, nu se poate nega"[22]. (Rostas, 2000, 44–45)

He thus accepts it as a form of social action that is linked mainly to political action – to the power to intentionally produce social change and social order.

Stahl's partial agreement and partial disagreement with Gusti's theory go even further – and the influences, again, show up more in his translation of Gusti's paradigm into a research method and its appropriate instruments. When it comes to the problem of settings and manifestations, Stahl accepts them as a valuable list of factors and dimensions that one must take into account when analyzing a certain problem. He is attracted to Gusti's work and theory as he sees it through the lens of Marxism and historical materialism – Gusti's system as well as that of Marx emphasized the need to take into account and correlate the multiple dimensions of social reality while studying it. But Stahl went further in his disagreement with the Gusti framework. In an article published in 1936 in "Arhiva pentru știința și Reforma Socială"[23] (Stahl, 1936) he challenges Gusti's *law of social parallelism* and its statement that no particular factor has the role of independent variable in the process of social change, that the various manifestations change synchronously in relationship to their settings as a result of a tendency to re-establish harmony inside the whole of the social unit. He does so in a subtle but clear manner – he speaks of an experimental approach in analysis and in formulating theory and of Gusti's law only as a starting point in which all variables are taken into consideration. Stahl underlines, "*se poate foarte bine întâmpla ca răspunsul pe care-l primim din partea realității să ne ducă la stabilirea unei anumite ierarhii între factorii sociali, de pildă, dând unuia dintre ei o valoare funcțională deosebită, de variabilă independentă, a cărei schimbare atrage după sine o serie de alte variații concomitente*"[24]. (Stahl, 1936, 1133)

Stahl mentions that Gusti's view is most appropriate for the stage of field research – but also that, for later data analysis and theory building, a more experimental-

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[22] Transl.: "It was misunderstood [...] one does not know exactly what Gusti meant with social volition. One often thinks it was the result of an idealistic attitude of his. Not at all. He believed that in social life political action is of great importance. Was he right, was he wrong to emphasize politics. I don't know. But it is clear that social action exists. It is obvious that the communist party is a leading force   and that is, let me say, action, active social volition. We are not making word games. It is social volition. I don't agree with the fact that the party is the determinant factor. I believe that there are many other factors which determine the party to do what it does. But, there is clearly social volition. That means social action. Man act, he is not only a pawn, society does not only suffer the injunction of external factors. Those do exist, without doubt, and you have to handle them, but you handle them through action. So social volition exists, one cannot deny it.

[23] Transl.: "The Archive for Social Science and Reform".

[24] Transl.: "It may well happen that the answer we receive from reality should lead us to establish a certain hierarchy between social factors so that, for example, one of them is discovered to have a special functional value, that of an independent variable, one whose change triggers after it the covariance of other factors".

explanatory line of thought rather than a comprehensive-phenomenological one would be more appropriate. Moreover, in the same article, he states that the categories which are defined as settings and manifestations in Gusti's theory have only *un rol mnemotehnic*[25] (Stahl, 1936, 1133) and that they help the researcher go through all the necessary questions as she investigates a certain research problem. This is a pretty bold, heretical and important affirmation as well, as Stahl diverts from the idea of analyzing the whole of a social unit to the idea of choosing a particular problem and analyzing it in the context of the whole. Even more so, the whole that Stahl envisions, although multidimensional, is, as historical materialism might suggest and as we have seen above, of a different nature than that of Gusti's theory and functions in a rather different manner, as we have explained above.

Finally, there is the question of the nature of sociology and the means of acquiring sociological knowledge – as time passed, the initial formulation of Dimitrie Gusti, that sociology must be a holistic science, gathering data and theorizing about the whole of society within the framework of the monograph, received some new and clarifying details. By 1940, influenced by the fieldwork accomplished and the methods developed, Gusti clarifies the nature of his sociology – it is still a separate and holistic science but it is better defined when it comes to its rapport to other social sciences and their methods. While sociology remains a synthesis of knowledge specific to various fields of social science, Gusti makes clear that building this knowledge is possible only by gathering data with the specific methods of the separate sciences, using the skills of various specialists and not only of those that are labeled *sociologists*. (Gusti in Stahl, 1939; Stahl, 1981) This idea is one that Stahl agrees with and is the result of the years of research practice and methodological development during which Stahl's contributions had a strong and distinctive impact.

To end this chapter of our analysis we may say this – as far as Stahl's relation to Dimitrie Gusti's theory of the sociological monograph goes, he may be seen as a moderate heretic who had some impact on the later developments of Gusti's framework. His Marxian views were a reason to find Gusti's theory attractive and, at the same time, full of points of more or less explicit disagreement. His propensity for solid methodological tools to be used in fieldwork and for building theory based on the concrete findings of this fieldwork further set him apart from Gusti's initial theory, as he found that it was lacking in various points as a framework for investigating and explaining social reality. As we shall see, this lead him further into his "heresies" as he transformed Gusti's framework into a working research methodology that strayed to various degrees from the School leader's initial vision on the nature of society, the means of acquiring and the ideal formula of sociological knowledge.

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[25] Transl.: "A mnemonic role".

DEVELOPING A METHODOLOGY, BECOMING
THE SCHOOL'S METHODOLOGIST

Even from early on, when he had not yet fully developed his system, D. Gusti intended it as a means of filtering and understanding social reality in a direct confrontation with it – so the idea of field research was embedded in his framework right from the start. But it was only to be found in his theory in an embryonic state, as an intention to use observation as a tool for gaining knowledge of the whole of a social unit. The details of the ways in which his theory could be used to gain sociological knowledge were not there – when the problem of putting his theory to the test by performing field research finally arose, there were very few ideas on how it could all actually be done.

Around 1922, just a couple years after moving to Bucharest to become a Professor at the Faculty of Letters and Philosophy, Gusti received a proposition from his assistant, Gh. Vlădescu Răcoasa – to put into practice his desideratum of gaining direct knowledge of social reality, one that he had enunciated some years earlier in his inaugural lecture and in his activity program, announced while in Iaşi (Vlădescu-Răcoasa, 1936). Gusti accepted the challenge and gave Răcoasa the task of working with students in a special seminar in order to prepare a research campaign – and so they did. They started with a very general plan, following the lines of the Professor's theory and continued by developing questionnaires in 1923 and 1924. They intended to begin their fieldwork starting from 1924 but some problems stopped them from doing it – so the School's research could only begin the following year, in 1925, in Goicea Mare. As Răcoasa recounts, they spent a week in this village, interviewing villagers and studying their households, visiting the local school, the church and town hall, organizing an evening sitting with the locals. In his memoirs, Stahl recalls informing himself about this campaign from some of the participants. He found out that the research team was instructed by the Professor to analyze Goicea considering all the settings and manifestations – but that, being most likely overwhelmed by this task, what they ended up doing was to approach a certain fragment of the research plan, a "*research problem*" that either corresponded to a personal preoccupation or was a significant aspect of the local life (Stahl, 1981). The resulting data was way too fragmented to be used in a reconstruction and understanding of a social whole. Moreover, Stahl notes, each team member had noted her observations in individual notebooks that ended up looking more like personal journals than like research folders (Stahl, 1981, 27). As to the projected result of the research campaign – it was not clear to anyone yet, one knew that a synthesis had to be made, but it was still very unclear how, by whom and with what means.

Stahl informed himself about such matters in 1926, before participating in his first research campaign. As we have seen, he joined the monographs with clear research interests in mind – he hoped that, working in the field, he might find

answers to his questions concerning the social history of the Romanian peasantry. He found Gusti's work and system attractive and had similar interest and sympathies as Gusti and his students for the subject of the research – peasant communities.

By 1926, the Seminar had a more detailed research plan containing 25 pages. (Stahl, 1981) The research campaign was organized in Ruşeţu, a village in the county of Brăila, and the team spent two weeks there. 14 members of the Seminar participated and they were organized in teams and were assigned each night, by Gusti himself, research tasks that followed the lines of his system. But these teams, Stahl notes, quickly transformed into teams focused only on fragments of the dimension of the social reality they were assigned to investigate – on *partial research problems*. The notes and observations were still written on notebooks. On the positive side, the main methodological innovation of this campaign was, Stahl recalls, organizing meetings each night, during which they analyzed the methodological and technical problems which they encountered during the day. These meetings were methodologically fruitful and contributed significantly to the character of *laboratories for methodological creation* that Stahl later attributed to the campaigns. (Stahl, 1981)

In 1926, Right from the beginning, Stahl began to think of the ways in which the work of the research team could be improved – on the one hand, he tried to envision what could be done so that it may be better coordinated in gathering data; on the other, he thought of the ways in which one might improve the quality, better organize and facilitate the synthesis of all the data gathered. (Stahl, 1981, 31–32) Finding that the nightly meetings were not enough to attain such improvements, he decided to focus his attention on finding a solution for this problem. But his contributions to the debates and methodological developments of the Seminar, during the campaign of Ruşeţu and in the interval that followed it up until the campaign of 1927, have remained anonymous. As he explains about the work of the Seminar:

"De altă parte, creaţia noastră originală era colectivă, rod al unor dezbateri seminariale, în care un dascăl diriguia un grup de ucenici, aşa că nu se mai putea şti cine e autorul unei idei. Chiar dacă cineva avea totuşi o idee personală, ea era creată în atmosfera prielnică a echipei de cercetare colectivă"[26]. (Stahl, 1981, 33)

Still, his status in the informal hierarchy of the School was an ascending one – as time passed, his position in the School became a central one. As he explains at the end of the chapter of his memoirs that covers his experience in Ruşeţu, the Professor gradually diminished his role in the Seminar, leaving a few selected and important School members to take his place and act within their assigned roles in the School. By 1929, Stahl will have become the School's leading methodologist, with the Professor assigning him the task of teaching a seminar on research

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[26] Transl.: "On the other hand, our original creation was a collective one, the fruit of seminar debates, during which a teacher guided a group of apprentices, so that one no longer knew who is the author of which idea. And even if someone had a personal idea, it was created in the encouraging atmosphere of a collective research team".

methods for those who wanted to join in the research campaigns. He will also be the one who will be asked to write a manual describing the techniques and methods of research used by the School. But until Stahl's course inside the School reaches such points, we must further explore and analyze the preceding stages.

In 1927, it is decided that a new research campaign will take place in the village of Nerej, in Vrancea. Up until then, the criteria used for choosing a research site were mainly connected to the ease of access in the area and the community – for example, the origin of any Seminar member in the area or next to it was a great advantage, significantly easing access to it. But in 1927 this began to change. After Ruşeţu, H.H. Stahl had clarified some of the lines of his own quest and decided that what he needed to research were free peasant communities that preserved some archaic traits – it was in such communities that he hoped to find some answers for his most burning questions, ones that mainly referred to the manner in which peasant communities had changed under the impact of an expanding capitalist system. In choosing Vrancea and Nerej for that year's campaign, Stahl's preoccupations and desires were very important. Alongside them, the fact that another participant was from that area and had visited the region taking photos of it, showing them to the members of the Seminar afterwards, counted as well. But, as Stahl recalls, the plan he devised in order to solve his own research problem weighed in quite a lot in choosing the next locations for the research campaigns in the course of the current and the following years:

"*N-aş vrea să afirm că programul cercetărilor monografice care au urmat, câţiva ani de zile, a fost determinat exclusiv de mine. Totuşi, cuvântul meu a trebuit să aibă o greutate oarecare, căci nu a putut rezulta din simplu hazard faptul ca după Ruşeţu a fost aleasă Vrancea ca loc de studiu, adică o regiune care avea faima de «răzeşie» clasică, socotită de Cantemir drept «republică ţărănească», după care a urmat «Vechiul Ocol al Câmpulungului Moldovenesc», adică cea de-a doua republică pomenită de Cantemir, apoi «Ţara Oltului», de asemenea ţară clasică a composesoratelor româneşti, apoi judeţul Gorj, în care masa satelor libere era copleşitoare şi, în sfârşit, Orheiul, de asemenea regiune de puternice sate de ţărănie liberă*"[27]. (Stahl, 1981, p. 46)

His influence in choosing the research sites may very well be seen as proof of his consolidating reputation and position as a mastermind in organizing fieldwork.

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[27] Transl.: "I wouldn't want to say that the program of the research campaigns that have followed in the next few years was determined exclusively by me. Still, my desires must have had some weight in the decisions, because it could not have been simple hazard that, after Ruşeţu, Vrancea was chosen as research site, namely a region that had the fame of being a classic «răzeşie» (free community), one that Cantemir had called a «peasant republic», and it was followed by "The Old County of Câmpulung Moldovenesc", which was the second republic that Cantemir mentions, then by «Ţara Oltului», also a classic Romanian region of common ownership, then by the county of Gorj, one in which the mass of free villages was overwhelming, and then, finally, by Orhei, also a region with a strong presence of free peasant communities."

Once in Nerej, the methodological development of the monographs continued. Now the team comprised 22 people, and was better organized, in Stahl's view: the work was more systematically done, with the tasks given more clearly while the leadership was a more firm one. (Stahl, 1981, 48) Given that the team had more members now, it was taken the decision to undertake a census of the village – and as they had no statistical form developed for it they created one on the spot. This time Stahl mentions the author of this form – it was not his creation and it was not a collective one either. Another methodological development of this campaign was a system of writing down the observations of each researcher on individual sheets of paper that could be then grouped by theme. Also, given the difficulties encountered in the interactions with the villagers, monographers were forced to develop their interviewing techniques, so that they may be able to earn the trust of the villagers and extract the necessary information from them. Stahl's role in these circumstances is unknown – he does not mention anything about it in his memoirs anyway. As the research unfolded, the team found it necessary to further develop and enrich with details the questionnaires used to investigate the various dimensions of the settings and manifestations. Stahl mentions working on two types of questionnaires alongside other monographers – covering the theme of "family" as a social unit and "families" as the threads that made up the fabric of the village and also the problem of the legal and administrative organization of the local community.

An important fact that we must underline as we reiterate this part of his experience is that, although only one year had passed since he had joined Gusti's team of researchers, Stahl's role in the School's activities had become apparent to both himself and to others. He mentions that in Vrancea he felt that he began to clearly see his role in the research team:

"*Rostul pe care mi-l găsisem în viaţa echipelor începuse a se preciza: era de a-i pune la curent pe cât mai mulţi cu problematica specifică unor cercetări sociologice, concepută aşa cum o vedea profesorul Gusti, ca o analiză multifactorială a celor patru cadre şi manifestări, aplicabilă în cazul fiecărei cercetări parţiale, ca şi în întreaga cercetare a satului ca 'unitate socială*"[28]. (Stahl, 1981, 53)

Stahl speaks of researching not only the whole, as Gusti's theory seemed to recommend initially, but also parts of social reality, by taking into account the four settings and manifestations in their interaction with the particular research issues. By 1927 it had become an accepted fact that researchers might specialize in their research, by dealing only with a particular aspect of the investigated social reality. Obtaining sociological knowledge of the whole social unit under analysis and the manner in which it functioned – the envisioned monograph – had become a matter of

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[28] Transl.: "The role that I had taken on in the activity of the groups of researchers had begun to be clear: it was to inform as many as possible with the specific issues of sociological research, as Professor Gusti had designed it, namely as a multi-factorial analysis of the four settings and four manifestations of social life, applicable in the case of each partial research and at the level of the research of the whole village, thought to be a ‹social unit›."

connecting the partial studies of the various researchers in the team. In fact, it had become necessary and was considered to be a sign of competence by supposing that each researcher would find his own research problem(s). A single researcher needed not think of coordinating his work with that of all the others so that in the end a holistic body of publishable knowledge would be obtained. At the moment, there was no such concrete, realistic plan or intention. We have no undeniable proof that Stahl had a significant influence in determining what was to become a deepening specialization of the work of team members in solving particular research problems in detriment of working to build an understanding of the whole. In it, Stahl surely found a point of affinity – after all, he was there mainly to find answers to his own research concerns. And, as he stated and reaffirmed, he found the four settings and four manifestations to be more of a very useful checklist in the analysis of a particular research problem (rather than the only actual and holistic object of research, in an attempt to identify the social volition of a social unit). His divergence from the idea of limiting research to the study of the whole of a social unit and his desire to reorient research, centering it on research problems is best expressed in the following fragment of the interviews with Zoltan Rostas:

"*Până la urmă socotesc că încercarea de a face o monografie de sinteză din toate punctele de vedere într-un singur discurs este utopică. Şi inutilă. E irealizabilă şi inutilă. Pentru Gusti ar fi fost util să dovedească veracitatea teoriei lui pe cadre şi manifestări. [...] Că unul s-a dus într-un sat, o echipă polimorfă, şi medici, şi economişti, şi ecologi, şi de toate, şi istorici, ca să scoată... ce? O imagine a satului. Imposibil. Un doctor s-a dus de a studiat sănătatea, şi altul a studiat formele de rudenie. Păi, cum să faci sinteză între astea două aspecte care nu se pot îmbina? Adică, oamenii n-au ştiut ce caută. Or, noi am ştiut ce căutam. Adică, am vrut să studiem probleme, să dezlegăm probleme. Nu să dau o monografie a satului, ci să dau analiza sociologică a unei probleme. Să aleg o problemă. [...] Această problemă o aleg după credinţa mea, ce cred eu că e interesant. Această problemă: însă, ca să fie rezolvată, trebuie să fie rezolvată după o analiză pe cadre şi manifestări. [...] Trebuie să te axezi pe probleme. Numai aşa se poate face o treabă serioasă. Problema aceea – repet – analizată pluridisciplinar*"[29]. (Rostas, 2001, 76)

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[29] Transl.: "In the end, I think that the attempt to obtain a monograph that synthesizes everything into a discourse that represents a single point of view is a utopia. And it is useless. Unachievable and useless. To Gusti, it would have been useful to prove the veracity of his theory, with the settings and manifestations. [...] The fact that one went into a village, with a polymorphic team, with doctors and economists and ecologists and historian so that one would obtain...what? An image of the village. Impossible. A doctor went and studied health issue and some other went and studied kinship. How could one synthesize these two aspects that cannot be combined? I mean, people did not know what they were looking for. Or, we knew what we looked for. We wanted to study problems, to solve problems. To choose a problem. [...] And this problem I choose because I believe it is one, because I find it interesting. A problem: but, in order to solve it, you have to analyze by relating it to the settings and manifestations. You have to center your research on problems. This is the only way to do serious work. And that problem should be analyzed in a multidisciplinary manner".

When recalling Nerej, he states that some of the monographers, the most apt ones actually, the ones "*care aveau în ei darurile necesare pentru asemenea depăşiri a empiriei*"[30] (Stahl, 1981, p. 51), had found their own research question or problem – but others, not so well regarded by Stahl, did not. He speaks of them in the following manner:

"*Nu toţi erau însă la acest nivel de pregătire şi talent (căci există şi în ştiinţă talente şi netalente). Nu uit atitudinea jalnică a unuia dintre echipieri, care mă ruga: 'Domnule Stahl, nu ştii dumneata cumva o problemă?'*"[31]. (Stahl, 1981, 52)

We may see in the way that the student addressed him that he was already regarded as some sort of a resourceful authority – someone that could offer solutions and guide others. And he was becoming an authority that encouraged such a specialization of research. So, to conclude, what we may say is that he encouraged this manner of working – in his youth and in his elder days. And what he encouraged as a young leader, as we shall see, will affect not only the working methodology of the School but the actual published results of the research campaigns – the published monographs. But until then, we must follow the methodological development of the monographs a bit further.

Nerej is also the site where Stahl takes his first steps in the development of his own tool – social archeology. His fieldwork here is marked by major breakthroughs in understanding the archaic social organization of Romanian peasant communities and the manner in which it transformed – and it becomes clear to him that his own research path, centered on processes that stretch over a long period of time, is one that diverges from Gusti's. But he remains dedicated to his system, at least apparently.

We can now move on to 1928 and the research campaign in Fundu Moldovei. This particular village was, as we have shown, one that used to be the center of a "peasant republic", a free community of small villages. By 1928 though, it had changed significantly under Austrian-Hungarian rule – so Stahl did not find much to research here. In consequence, he spent his time concentrating on methodological issues. He elaborated a plan for the study of the historical setting and of legal manifestations. He tried to clear in his mind the manner in which sociological knowledge could be acquired by working in interdisciplinary teams and the qualities and qualification that a sociologist must have. As the research team grew bigger – counting 60 participants, amongst whom 17 were already specialists in various fields of expertise – the problem of organizing their work and of the manner in which the data they collected could be analyzed grew bigger as well. Social units, Stahl concluded, could best be studied in the holistic manner that Gusti envisioned if the teams were comprised of specialists in various social

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[30] Transl.: "Which had in themselves the gifts that were necessary to overcome empiricism".

[31] Transl.: "Not everyone had this level of raining and talent (because in science we may also speak of talent and lack of talent). I cannot forget the pathetic attitude of one team member that came to me asking for help: <Mr. Stahl, do you know, by chance, of a problem that I could study?>"

scientist and sociologists that, beyond sociological training, were specialists in at least one field of social science and had acquired some knowledge from the rest of the branches of social science as well. A research problem, he concluded here, after the experience in Vrancea, could only be thoroughly analyzed "*prin folosirea simultană a tehnicilor tuturor ştiinţelor sociale particulare*"[32]. (Stahl, 1981, 87) This is what he had tried to do in Vrancea, in Nerej:

"[...] *Studiind 'formaţiunea socială a răzăşiei' din punctele de vedere ale tuturor ştiinţelor sociale particulare. Îmi explicam acest tip social al 'satului devălmaş' prin consideraţii de geografie umană, de demografie şi biologie socială, prin baza sa economică, mergând de la analizele tehnologice pastorale, silvice şi agricole până la studiul relaţiilor de producţie, prin studiul formelor juridice, a creaţiilor culturale şi administrativ-politice*"[33]. (Stahl, 1981, 87)

Stahl finds that the group of specialized researchers that were members of the research team in Fundu Moldovei was doing a fine job and was the core of the research done. However, he finds the presence of a large number of students in the research campaign to be problematic, given their relative lack of skills and the difficulties of organizing and coordinating their work. This added up to the fact that the reason behind their presence there had become unclear – were they there to contribute to the research or were they there to learn how to do research and become monographers themselves? There was no clear, single answer to this question and a hierarchy developed, separating those that had more experience and skills from those that were still only apprentices. And with this, the tensions between what was now a fractioned team of monographers started to grow. In Fundu Moldovei, as Stahl recalls, several more experienced monographers, including himself, Mircea Vulcănescu, D.C. Georgescu, Xenia Costa-Foru and Constantin Brailoiu jokingly labeled themselves as "bătrâni" – translated as "elders", namely a group of ancestors of the various family lines that existed in one village. They then labeled other team members of the younger, less experienced group, as "fii" and "nepoţi", namely sons and grandsons. The idea of a lineage of monographers was a playful metaphor for the emergent hierarchy, with the elders having become teachers and guides for other members of the team. But the division was marked even further with another metaphor – that of two hypothetical sides of a village inhabited by monographers, "Fundu de sus" and "Fundu de jos" – which could be translated as the upper and downhill sides of Fundu Moldovei. Such a divide inside one village is another characteristic of archaic Romanian villages but it was used within a word game, with the upper side of the village actually

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[32] Transl.: "By simultaneously using the techniques of all the specialized social sciences".

[33] Transl.: "By studying ‹the social formation of the free peasantry› from the point of view of all the specialized social sciences. I explained the social type of the 'free communal village' taking into account elements of knowledge and analysis that belong to human geography, demography and social biology, following with its economical basis, going as far as analyzing pastoral, forest and agricultural techniques and studying production relations, then studying legal manifestations, cultural and political-administrative creations".

signifying a stratum of team members that was a sort of "upper class", closer to Dimitrie Gusti and occupying a higher position in the hierarchy. Marcela Focşa, one of the younger and less experienced monographers, explains it in the following manner:

"*Noi acolo ne-am despărţit în două tabere: Fundul de sus şi Fundul de jos.* […] *Scoteau o revistă, şi ăia de la Fundu de jos au scos şi ei o revistă. Fundul de sus erau tot ăştia care îl înconjurau pe Gusti şi cu care Gusti avea relaţiile cele mai amicale şi mai profesionale: Stahl, Nel Costin, Mitu Georgescu, Vulcănescu* (*n. ns.*, A. J.). *Fundul de jos erau ăştia mai tineri, mai neomogeni, mai sărăcuţi cu duhul, mai oropsiţi de soartă, fără farmec personal.../râde/ Păi, crezi că nu contează afinităţi din astea? Contează foarte mult.* […] *Toţi cei de la Fundul de Jos erau frustraţi. Erau mai mulţi. Stratificarea asta s-a făcut aşa... spontan*"[34]. (Rostas, 2003, 129–130 and 133)

The "Upper Fundu" stratum of the team was more numerous than this and it started to play a leading role in the research campaigns. But dealing with the large number of untrained youths and with their work and all the data that they collected became problematic, Stahl recalls. The evening meetings were no longer efficient as far as checking and coordinating their work went. This is why Stahl proposed a better version of the system that had been devised for taking notes – from now on, all the individual sheets of paper containing the research notes would be delivered during the evening meetings to a "central unit" that would then classify them by theme in separate folders. They were accessible to anyone for consultation and citation and the leaders would be able to more easily keep account of the data gathered and intervene in order to further coordinate the activity. Finally, one other development of the campaign, linked to Mircea Vulcănescu's activity, is the aforementioned reordering and development of the plans and questionnaires used in the research.

In 1929, the research campaign is set to take place in Drăguş. Stahl mentions in his memoirs that this campaign was the peak of the School's research activity. In his own words:

"*Drăguşul înseamnă punctul culminant al cercetărilor noastre şi prin marele număr de participanţi, 86 în total, dar mai ales prin faptul că satul Drăguş fusese foarte bine ales, cuprinzând în sine o complexitate de probleme cu totul deosebită, ceea ce a permis monografiştilor să analizeze şi să elaboreze tehnici de cercetare*

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[34] Transl.: "While we were there we parted in two groups: "Upper Fundu" and "Lower Fundu" [...] The ones in the upper side printed a magazine – and then the ones in the Lower Fundu class did the same. Upper Fundu was made up of all the ones that were around Gusti and with whom he was closer both professionally and personally: Stahl, Nel Costin, Mitu Georgescu, Vulcănescu [i. e. the older monographers]. The Lower Fundu category was comprised of the younger ones, groups that were less homogeneous, less competent and less fortunate, without personal charm... (he laughs). This kind of affinity does count, you know? It counts a lot. [...] And all those in the Fundu de Jos category were frustrated. There were many in this category. And the stratification that took place was a spontaneous one".

extrem de variate, experimentându-le până în cele mai mici amănunte, astfel încât Drăguşul a constituit un adevărat laborator de creaţie metodologică şi tehnică"[35].
(Stahl, 1981, 119)

However, he mentions very little in his memoirs and in the interviews with Rostas about the actual methodological achievements of this campaign and his contribution to their realization. What he mentions is that during this campaign the research framework reached its maturity and that the methods used here were to become the "classical" ones for the monographs. One innovation that he mentions contributing to was that of the "sociological movie". He also recalls that, given the goal of this particular campaign, namely that of becoming the first "complete" monograph and the large number of participants, most of which were newcomers, deepening further the specialization of the teams was necessary, so that they may cover a larger and deeper share of the whole of the social unit. The monographers were organized in teams and sub-teams, by research topics, following the structure of settings and manifestations, as reflected in the interview and observation guides or questionnaires that had been created so far in order to make them operational. Such a thorough investigation of Drăguş as a social unit came not only from the need to find and organize work for the large team of researchers that had come here – it had as a source both the Professor's plan to train more researchers that could investigate social reality, contributing to a broader use of sociological monographs as a theoretical framework and as research tools, and an emergent desire and need to realize the first complete monograph, one that could perhaps have published results. (Stahl, 1981; Rostas, 2001)

But the Professor himself, starting from Drăguş, began to slowly retreat from his role of leader and coordinator of the activity of the team, interacting less with the larger body of it and more with his now most trusted followers, his lieutenants in guiding the newcomers. Stahl actually laments this, as he felt that the Professor's management abilities were unsurpassed by any of his followers and were unequaled in his absence, leaving the team without an important nucleus of coordination and control. The large team to be coordinated, controlled and lead was a big challenge for the "Upper Fundu" stratum and a source of debate and divergence with Gusti's views and intentions concerning the manner in which the research should be done – many of the more experienced monographers, amongst which Stahl himself, believed that quality research could only be done with fully trained and skilled specialists.

As for his circle of "elders" and close collaborators it was here that, as Stahl recalls, many of them found their calling and their specialization – and some

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[35] Transl.: "Drăguş is the peak point of our research, even considering the large number of participants, 86 in all – but mostly because of the fact that the village was very well chosen and it was the site of a special complexity of problems, a fact which made it necessary that the monographers analyze and elaborate extremely varied research techniques, experimenting with them up till the smallest details, so that Drăguş was a real laboratory for methodological and technical creation".

received duly confirmation for their roles and efforts so far. Stahl was of the latter – he received recognition as methodological leader inside the research team and from the Professor himself. That year he was entrusted with the task of organizing and teaching a Seminar on research methods, dedicated to those who wanted to work in the field, striving to obtain sociological monographs. He received a position of "honorary assistant" in the department that Professor Gusti leaded. Moreover, he was offered, alongside other central figures of the School, like Xenia Costa-Foru and Mircea Vulcănescu, a position in a newly created higher education institution for training in social work – "Şcoala Superioară de Asistenţă Socială"[36]. But not everyone received this sort of confirmation of status and role and gratification for the efforts – after the campaign of Drăguş, much of the "Lower Fundu" stratum of the team did not have access to a position in the emerging institutionalized structure of the School. And amongst the members of this stratum were some that were not only valuable researchers and future scientists but ambitious, hardworking and highly competitive. They strove for affirmation. Such was the case of monographers like Anton Golopenţia, Ştefania Cristescu, Ernest Bernea, D.C. Amzăr, Ion Ionică, Lena Constante, Harry Brauner, Marcela Focşa, Gheorghe Focşa and others. And their efforts for affirmation had, besides those that might be identified as personal, social and organizational roots. (Golopenţia, 2004, 2010; Butoi, 2012a, 2012b, 2015; Rostas, 2001, 2003; Sdrobiş, 2015)

As the School earned more recognition, prestige and funding and started to crystallize its organizational structure, as their experience inside the research teams and dedication to the research subject grew and the socio-economical crisis and its effects unfolded, they began to aspire for a more stable or permanent position in the School. This tendency developed and was reinforced within the context of social change, insecurity and instability and a narrowing of job opportunities for those who had just graduated, as the Romanian socio-economic scene was struck by the far reaching effects of the Great Depression, such as an increase in economical difficulties and a shortage of opportunities, an increase in poverty, socio-economic and political tensions and conflicts. The younger generation of the School simply needed and was more motivated to strive more for a position inside the School. Taking into account the informal but clear affirmation mechanism inside the School structure, set in the lines of specializing in some research problem and excelling at it, the narrowing of opportunities, increase in competition, individualization of life courses and the general atmosphere of the era, namely that of patriotic dedication of the youth to national development by the means of personal contributions to science and culture, we may understand why this stratum of School members struggled more for a position inside the School. They competed for affirmation in a more difficult environment, with relatively more and desirable opportunities inside the School and less opportunities outside of it, with strong incentives to acquire

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[36] Transl.: "The Social Work Higher School".

skills and a certain specialization and excel in their activity, so as to come closer to the desired goals of personal affirmation and acquiring a position inside an organization in whose structure only a deserving elite could find a stable place. For Stahl and others of his stratum, securing a place in the School's structure was ensured from the year of the campaign in Drăguş – for the others, it will take some more time and their course will be harder and rougher, with 1929 being only the starting point of their journey. Many or most of the youth involved in the Drăguş campaign gave up on sociological research afterwards. For those that wanted to stay within Gusti's School, as we have seen, the road was more difficult, given the emergent context – and for some, competition turned into tensions and into conflict, divergent views and even a separation from the School.

For Stahl however, the course towards affirmation flowed easier. Even his very age or his belonging to an older birth cohort was a basic advantage in rapport to this stratum of struggling youth. He could more easily secure his higher position in the School's hierarchy. His status as an elder who had already completed his studies and had more experience and expertise differentiated him from the younger participants, giving him a competitive advantage, facilitating his assertion of a leading position. Ending this part of our analysis, we may underline that the School's organizational development and the context in which it was shaped then impacted the research work done and, most of all, as we shall see, influenced the shape and contents of the published works of Gusti's School.

To come back to the issue of methodological development and Stahl's contribution to it, we may now stop to examine the campaign in Runcu, in 1930. In his memoirs, Stahl mentions no remarkable contribution to this campaign. The most important fact of this period is that, inspired by Traian Herseni's decision during this campaign to republish some of his articles presenting Gusti's theory in a single volume, Stahl has the idea of writing a study of his own, presenting the techniques used in the research campaigns – but he is still to put it into practice. In 1931, in Cornova, as the sociological monographs viewed as research practice had reached methodological maturity ever since Drăguş and as opportunity came, Stahl developed his own tool, that of social archeology. He acquired significant knowledge of the techniques and terminology of peasant geodesy, knowledge that significantly helped him in linking social to territorial organization and finding traces of social development and history in the relationship between the two, going back from the present to the past. He did so by interviewing a local man that was one of the few in the country that still had knowledge of such techniques and terminology. He further developed his social archeology starting from this, by linking, ordering, analyzing and synthesizing data obtained through interviews, field observations and written historical sources.

Some years will pass before the next research campaign, the one in Şanţ in 1935–1936, a campaign which generally follow the model of the others as far as the research methods employed. In the meantime, the Great Depression unfolded,

development gaps and social problems became more evident, social and political tensions intensified. Having knowledge of the difficulties of rural life, gained through research, an old and ever more pronounced desire to contribute to social development, a growing prestige and an invitation from the Monarchy to take over the management of its development program within the difficult social context of the moment, the School takes its activity further, leaping from social studies to social intervention. Apart from this, the idea of the necessity of publishing research results slowly escalates after 1929, as the years pass. Monographers start by publishing fragmented studies in the School's reviews – up to 1936, when the first number of "Sociologie românească"[37] is out, and they publish their studies mostly in "Arhiva pentru ştiinţa şi reforma socială"[38]. Stahl too publishes studies concerning his research subject as well and becomes involved in the School's social intervention program, dispatching voluntary teams of students to villages to promote community activation and development. Moreover, in keeping with his methodological preoccupations, his teaching activities and his idea of 1930, Stahl writes his methodological guide in 1933 and publishes it in 1934. (Stahl, 1981)

Entitled *Tehnica monografiei sociologice*[39] (Stahl, 2001), the volume is a rich step by step guide for those who desire to become field researchers and generate sociological knowledge in the framework of sociological monographs. Before we proceed to a very short review of its contents, we must place a strong emphasis on a very significant term missing from this volume – there is virtually no mention of *social volition* in it. This is a highly significant fact, as it is an important indicator of Stahl's influence and impact on the School's research practice and on its results. Recalling the 1928 campaign and Vulcănescu's contribution to clarifying and reformulation of the concept of social volition, Stahl says the following:

"*Este necesar să subliniez de îndată că acest mod de a pune problema, cu consecinţa practică a necesităţii formării unor echipe deosebite, nu numai de «cadre» şi de «manifestări», ci şi una închinată «voinţei sociale» îmi era complet străin. În special formarea unei echipe care să strângă material documentar privind «voinţa socială» era metodologic absolut irealizabilă, «voinţa socială» fiind o abstracţie îndoielnică, în nici un caz concretizabilă în ceva tangibil, de constatat la teren, prin obiecte, acţiuni sau opinii*"[40]. (Stahl, 1981, 101)

We have quoted part of this statement before, when exploring his views on the professor's theory – as we know that in his youth he rejected the concept and it

[37] Transl.: "Romanian Sociology".

[38] Transl.: "The Archive for Social Science and Reform".

[39] Transl.: "The technique of the sociological monograph".

[40] Transl.: "It is necessary that I underline here the fact that this way of viewing things, with the practical consequence of having to organize special teams, not only teams that researched *settings* and *manifestations* but also a special team dedicated to researching *social volition*, was completely different from my own. I found that forming a team that would gather data on *social volition* was particularly impossible to accomplish, as *social volition* was a questionable abstraction, impossible to be materialized in something tangible, to be found during fieldwork, as objects, actions or opinions."

is known why: he found that organizing a team that would test the presumed existence of social volition was impossible, as it was presumably impossible to turn it into something somehow detectable and measurable. And, indeed, there were no such teams during the campaigns. We may now add up this fact to his high position in the School's hierarchy, namely that of methodological leader, guide and teacher and formulate the hypothesis that such an important absence in the School's research is linked to his status and to his opinions and actions – or perhaps lack of action in this sense. We may not know for sure if it was the exercise of his power inside the organization that led to this. What we may say is that what was supposed to be a central concept became a marginal one in practice and in the published results. An absence of its translation into an operational concept reverberated into the research practice of the School in an absence of research teams dedicated to it and then into the School's published results, where there is very little talk of social volition – and it is by no means the central concept and force that Gusti, Vulcănescu and Herseni envisaged it to be. Stahl's role in this can be pointed for certain at least as far as his teachings go – in short, he did not teach anyone how to research it. He did not attribute any potential explanatory power to it and did not consider it as a potential independent variable in the experimental model that he promoted. He promoted and perpetuated its marginal status.

Finally, we can attempt a short presentation of the contents of his book of 1934, *Tehnica monografiei sociologice*[41]. (Stahl, 2001) It can be pinpointed as a detailed guide for doing mostly qualitative research, fieldwork to be more specific. Stahl devotes generous space to explaining in detail the best manner in which a researcher could proceed in observing, doing interviews, taking notes, so that the data collected data remains as objective, as relevant and useful and as authentic as possible. He gives detailed recounts of the techniques that should be employed to ensure informers' trust and openness and to extract valuable information from them. He explains and gives examples of the best practices when it comes to the collection of data – writing down only factual and observable data, without personal evaluation or interpretation; observing the actual facts or actions and not collecting recollections of them, as much as possible; writing down expressions of opinions and of recollections as they are, with as much detail as possible and with as little personal evaluations and interpretations as possible; using stenography, notebooks for first hand notes and individual sheets of paper for later transcribing and classifying data by themes, into folders. He explains the manner in which quantitative methods may be used and their utility. Alongside observation and interviewing he lists and describes other methods for collecting relevant data – collecting objects, sound recording, photographing, filming, drawing and sketching. He then moves on to describe the manner in which the data may be selectively collected, organized and analyzed – one must proceed to work starting

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[41] Transl.: "The technique of the sociological monograph".

from a hypothesis, having a certain research problem in mind; the research problem should be as exhaustively investigated as possible, establishing all the relevant connections between it and the settings and manifestations that make up the context in which it exists; one must use an experimental model in understanding the social reality investigated and seek to establish the manner in which its various dimensions are correlated and co-vary. At last, Stahl presents the manner in which researcher teams should be organized. Closing the book we will find a chapter dedicated to local intellectuals who wish to study their communities using the sociological monograph as a technique. In it Stahl defines the elements of Gusti's framework to be used for research and offers operational plans for researching settings, manifestations, social units, social processes, etc. The whole book is filled with hearty examples of research practice and of data collected, illustrating the right and wrong manner in which things can be done and perhaps introducing students to their research subjects and their social worlds.

On more mention would be necessary here – in 1940, the School publishes a voluminous body of work entitled *Îndrumări pentru monografiile sociologice*[42] (Gusti, Herseni, 1940), coordinated by Dimitrie Gusti and Traian Herseni. It contains a detailed presentation of the theory of sociological monographs (thus covering the concept of social volition as well) and of the research plans and questionnaires used, presented by settings and manifestations. The research instruments presented are authored by a series of monographers, with Stahl being just on of the, contributing with those to be used for researching the cosmological setting (coauthored with Traian Herseni), the historical setting, customs and ceremonies (as part of spiritual manifestations, a part coauthored with Constantin Băriloiu), juridical life and trials, familial law and propriety (as part of juridical manifestations), vicinities and peasant households (also coauthoring with M. Vulcănescu and T. Herseni). A quick review of the contents of this volume contributes to strengthen an essential idea, one that is also suggested by the fact that he gives little details of his contributions during the campaigns in his memoirs – the idea that Stahl, far from being the only or the main author of the research tools used, stands out thanks to his remarkable abilities for organizing the research activity of the teams and the efforts to collect data. And the analysis so far suggests that, indeed, it was in this area of the research efforts that his impact was a significant one.

To end this lengthy chapter of our paper we may resume some of the essential conclusions of it. Sociological monographs, as research practice and as a collection of methods, developed along the years, as fieldwork and the following discussions and creative work of the research team unfolded. During this time, H.H. Stahl gradually achieved a leader status, specialized in methodology, at first informally recognized, afterwards formalized as the School's organizational development and

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[42] Transl.: "A guide for sociological monographs".

crystallization took off. His merits and contributions in developing the School's methodology and practice for fieldwork, some known, some yet unknown, were thus gratified. As to his major contributions to the School's research practice and methodology, we may identify five essential ones, beyond his general leading role and other developments – the first is that of encouraging a specialization of research work and a consequent fragmentation of it, one that was nonetheless due to other factors as well, besides his own influence; the second one, connected to the first, is that of a significant contribution to reframing the general scope of the monographs, so as to include not only analyses of the whole of a social unit but analyses of a certain research problem as well, connecting it to the relevant parts of the whole of the social unit where that problem exists; the third one is a significant contribution to the marginalization of the concept of social volition from research and, as we have seen and shall see in the following pages, published results; the fourth is the development of his own method, that of social archeology, a highly original one, accepted by the Professor within the body of the School's tools for gaining sociological knowledge even though it was used to research the past and long term social processes, a fact that derived considerably from Gusti's initial vision and intentions; at last, the fifth is a very concrete one, namely the book he published in 1934, a very substantial, useful and valuable manual for any student wishing to go out in the field and conduct sociological research, along with the contributions included in the 1940 guide for conducting sociological monographs.

H.H. STAHL AND SOCIOLOGICAL MONOGRAPHS AS PUBLISHED WORKS

As we have seen earlier, the idea of actually publishing a sociological monograph came up at a later stage of theoretical consolidation, research practice and methodological development. It was still rather vaguely defined as a goal, as a result of research, and it was preceded by the publishing of a large body of partial studies in the School's reviews. This matter had multiple causes, with Stahl's influence in the organization of the fieldwork weighing in rather heavily. On the one hand, there was the question of the specialization of researchers in certain research domains and, moreover, specific research problems. This was a natural consequence of their varied trainings and interests and of the need to divide the research of the whole into accessible and more easily to coordinate chunks. Specialization was encouraged as well, as being the best practice, as we have seen. Moreover, Stahl contributed to these matters. On the other hand, specialization grew into fragmentation, for more than one reason, not all of them connected to Stahl. The ever-growing size of the team posed more and more coordination problems, especially since the Professor gradually left his position in the research

and transferred his responsibilities to followers that did not match him in his skills, with Stahl being one of them. Moreover, there were the issues posed by the emerging structure of the School, with its hierarchy and stratification (in which Stahl had a central position), and the competitive, conflicted and more challenging environment of the period beginning with the campaign of Drăguş – a context that led researchers even further astray from cooperating at a larger level, gathering coherent and linkable data and building blocks of holistic studies of social units. During the first years after the campaign in Drăguş, efforts were made to encourage and coordinate the writing of sociological studies and perhaps even the sociological monograph of Drăguş itself. But with the growing tensions and the emerging conflicts inside the organization, especially at the level of the team that was supposed to produce these studies (Golopenţia, 2010, 2014), this attempt failed and until the late 1930's no other such attempts were made. Coordinating holistic research with a large, highly specialized, largely inexperienced and growingly divided team, while having insufficient skills and resources for it, was one important issue – coordinating the production of scientific studies afterwards, by the various researchers, using specialized data, usually acknowledging some links of the research problems dealt with to the greater social whole but not necessarily coordinated with the studies of the others so as to create a coherent whole, was an even bigger one – a huge one actually.

One more very important factor for the School's digression from publishing a holistic study of a social unit lied in the Professor's own attitude towards publishing – as Stahl recalls, he was a perfectionist, postponing or rejecting the publishing of the School members' work until he felt that it was good enough. And with only uncoordinated and insufficient pieces of the puzzle of the whole available, publishing a complete monograph would be delayed, with the sociological monograph reuniting the results of research remaining a distant and insufficiently defined ideal.

In the first few years of the 1930's, the School went through an internal crisis, associated with the social, economical and political tensions and challenges that the youth of the era acutely experienced. The second half of the decade was a period of organizational recovery and then general ascent, culminating towards the end of this period. The School and its leader earned a lot in visibility and prestige. In 1934, capitalizing on the School's acknowledged competence, Dimitrie Gusti is appointed manager of the "Fundaţia Culturală Regală Principele Carol"[43], an institution of the monarchy that was dedicated to social development. He employs several members of the School here and together they plan, organize and deploy teams of voluntary students to implement in several Romanian villages a community development plan designed by Gusti. The work goes well and in 1938 the School's social intervention model and work is extended nationwide and participating in it becomes compulsory for graduates. Also during the 1930's,

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[43] Transl.: "The Prince Carol Royal Cultural Foundation".

Dimitrie Gusti is appointed in various important public positions, is entrusted with organizing a Romanian Village Museum, the Romanian pavilions at international exhibitions and with organizing in Bucharest the International Sociology Congress of 1939. It is with this occasion that the idea of the published sociological monograph is revived and finally realized.

A few monographers are entrusted with the task of coordinating the project of publishing *model sociological monographs* to be presented at the International Congress – H.H. Stahl is appointed coordinator for the monograph on Nerej and Traian Herseni is appointed for that of Drăguş. Ion Conea is given the task of preparing for print his monograph of Clopotiva while the younger Anton Golopentia is invited to present the printed results of his *summarized monographs*, namely of the research he did with the help of students in 60 villages in 1938, using a *summarized version* of Gusti's framework. An analysis of the fate of the first two endeavors will shed light onto Stahl's contribution to shaping the printed sociological monographs, while discerning the impact had by the differentiated personal and social contexts in which they were created. We will thus shed a bit of light onto the manner in which the shape and contents of printed sociological knowledge is molded.

H.H. Stahl manages to fulfill his task of coordinating and authoring the sociological monograph of Nerej in time for the Congress and his is the only one of the two monographs in focus here that contains a thread connecting all the different parts and contributions in it. This thread is generally made up of his interventions inside the three volumes of the monograph, connecting the different studies as if they were paragraphs of a single demonstration or of a single theoretical construct. For this reason, one can say that he did his coordinating job admirably, making sure that the pieces of the study were well connected and had a meaningful inner coherence – but he did it in his own, personal manner, as we shall see. As we find in his memoirs (Stahl, 1981, 372–387), at first he proceeded to gather the data needed to be processed for the monograph   he retrieved the data collected during the campaign in 1927, then 3 folders of data collected by students working in the community development program and all of the studies that had been published so far. He made a plan of the monograph and checked if there was enough data to cover the whole structure of settings and manifestations that the Professor wished to be present in the contents of a model sociological monograph. He took note of what was missing and of the needed updates, then organized a small team of specialist researchers with whom he went back to Nerej and the nearby region for a research campaign that lasted two months – from June 15th to September 15th 1938. Once there, they followed a rigorous work discipline and distribution of research tasks, following a plan of the projected monograph that had been established before and processing the data and writing studies on the spot. Once back in Bucharest, he set out to write and edit all the materials needed to assemble

the monograph, a task that he completed within 3 months of work. For this task he was offered – by the School, in essence, but he mentions little of the precise source of the resources – an office that was specially organized for this task, with a typist secretary that could type in a grammatically correct French, a drawing workshop and a photographic archive, statistics specialists and the services of the typewriting and printing department that Anton Golopenția coordinated. The texts, written in French, were reviewed by French specialists. Only 2,000 copies of the three volumes of Stahl's monograph of Nerej – entitled *Nerej, un village d'une region archaique: monographie sociologique*[44] (Stahl, 1939) were ever published. And in them, as he tries to use the studies to construct a coherent whole and to build sociological theory, he attempts to explore and explain the process that is at the core of his research interests, his main *research problem*: the pervasion of capitalism into a non-capitalist peasant social system and its devastating effects. He tries to use the available data to reconstruct an image of an archaic free peasantry and then explore the mechanism by which its social world endured for ages to then enter an ongoing era of decay. A huge volume of information that might at first sight have no connection to social reality – such as data collected by physical anthropologists or geologists – or cannot easily or apparently be connected in a coherent theoretical vision – such as studies of local art with administrative studies – was processed to find relevant information to be connected within this image of a changing and decaying community. Stahl's analysis does not limit its conclusions though to the case of a single, unique community – theorizing the social organization of Nerej and of the surrounding region of Vrancea, he identifies the lines that define a certain type of peasant community and the somewhat general mechanisms by which they change. The image is still not complete, though, and, in order to complete his understanding and explanations, Stahl will later on further analyze and synthesize the data collected during the research campaigns organized by the School and confront and combine them with historical data to be found in archives, constructing a sociological model of evolving types of rural communities. In fact, analyzing and synthesizing data from various fields of research and knowledge to construct a sociological theory is one of Stahl's essential merits and contributions to the School's results and he attributes his success to his use of Marxian tools. As he puts it:

"*Ei, asta exista, în cadrul însuşi al monografiilor se spunea că trebuie să lucrezi pe cadre şi pe manifestări. Dar niciunul nu a ajuns la concluzia că rostul adevărat al sociologiei este o sinteză de discipline sociale particulare. Singur eu am susţinut treaba aceasta. Sutele de oameni care au trecut prin monografiile sociologice nu au ajuns la asta. [...] Fiecare a făcut bucăţica lui. Dar niciunul n-a îndrăznit să întrebe: dar o corelaţie între toate acestea nu există? Eu am pus*

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[44] Transl.: "Nerej, a village from an archaic region: a sociological monograph".

problema şi sunt convins că am pus-o pentru că aveam şi informaţie marxistă. [...]
Te obligă marxismul să faci această sinteză între toate disciplinele sociale particulare"[45].

Beyond the theoretical conclusions though, the huge bulk of data included in the three volumes that is without theoretical relevance is somewhat of a nuisance for Stahl. The volumes are comprised of studies that construct a very detailed image of the specificities of Nerej – their reader will find inside them detailed (and relevant) information about a huge array of specific aspects of this community. From the geological composition of the ground on which the community of Nerej is situated, to the architecture of its people's houses and the number of children that they usually had and the times of the year during which weddings were more likely to take place, from the food they ate to the medium amount of plum brandy they produced yearly, from their occupations and their rituals, from physical anthropological analyses to analyses of state administration or of households and families – everything is included. Nerej's monograph has a very strong descriptive side, one that Stahl finds rather problematic. In a self-review of the monograph published in a 1942 issue of *Sociologie românească*[46] (Stahl, 1942), he poses some important questions concerning the way in which published sociological monographs should present themselves, his questioning of their format being, apart from other things, a symptom of a still malleable ground in respect to what a published sociological monograph should be. He admits that any sociological investigation should take into account the full array of factors that make up a conditioning context for the research problem and that the framework of settings and manifestations is great for collecting data during fieldwork in this respect – but he asks if, once the collection of data is complete, the published result of the research, namely the sociological monograph, should include studies presenting the data on which the theoretical conclusions were drawn, as was the case with his own monograph of Nerej. Or should they include only the theoretical conclusions of the research? The answer he finds is a compromise between the two approaches:

"*Părerea la care am ajuns este următoarea: o monografie trebuie să fie şi una şi alta. În primul volum să înfăţişeze rezultatul sociologic propriu-zis, opera de sinteză, în care elementele de fapt să apară în ordinea necesităţii demonstraţiei, iar nu în aceea a culegerii. Iar altă serie de volume să prezinte, pe cadre şi*

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[45] Transl.: "Well, this exited, within the very framework of the monographs there was the idea that one should work by settings and manifestations. But non other reached the conclusion that the true purpose of sociology is to create a synthesis of specialized social sciences. I am the only one that suggested and did this. The hundreds of people that participated in the campaign did not reach to this conclusion. [...] Each of them did his piece. But not dared to ask: but is there not a link between all of this? I was the one that put things in this manner and I am sure that I did it because of my Marxian training. [...] Marxism makes it compulsory that you reach a synthesis of all the isolated social sciences."

[46] Transl.: "Romanian Sociology".

manifestări, materialul brut cu ajutorul căruia s-a elaborat sociologia respectivă"[47].
(Stahl, 1942, 626)

To conclude, what Stahl tries to do in the monograph of Nerej that he coordinates is to follow the Professor's plan of presenting the whole, while still concentrating on a particular research problem – the latter approach is the only way in which he finds that it is possible to find a connecting thread between such heterogeneous data and studies. But he finds this approach unsatisfactory as well – and in the end he shares his own view on how a sociological monograph should be presented. The admirable fact, Stahl then notes, is that the Professor, as he did with others' developments, accepts in the end his expressed opinion and the variant of a sociological monograph that he produced and that he proposed as well. It is thus due, to an important extent, to the Professor's acceptance and flexibility that the published sociological monographs had many variants – that of Stahl, that of Herseni, that of Ion Conea, that of A. Golopenția, that of C. Grofșoreanu and even others. This is the point in which we can emphasize the Professor's own role in allowing for his School's members to pursue their own paths as long as they produced high quality sociological studies that were affiliated to his system. His flexibility appears in the end to be a virtue – as he put his theory to the test and accepted modifying it in adaptation to research findings and the valuable theoretical contributions of School members; he allowed for creative use and development of his analysis framework, making his initial theory a fertile theoretical starting point, open to evaluation, critique and creative development.

One last piece of our demonstration has its place here, allowing us to conclude on the underlying mechanisms shaping sociological knowledge and Stahl's overall influence. We shall stop to briefly analyze the fate of another published sociological monograph, that of Drăguș. It is to a large degree different from that of Nerej. It is in fact comprised of a series of 9 isolated studies, baring the title of "*Drăguș, un sat din Țara Oltului*"[48] and a subtitle indicating the particular subject that they deal with. 8 more studies were announced to be soon published in the 1944–1945 – but this did not happen, in the end. (Apolzan, 1945, I.Ș.S.R., 1944) As we have seen, its coordination was entrusted to Traian Herseni. Herseni was, as Stahl and others recall, a brilliant, very ambitious, productive and, most importantly, very isolated researcher, with virtually no experience in organizing and coordinating research teams. (Rostas, 2001) He wanted to extend the research leading to a published monograph to the whole region of Olt (Stahl, 1981, 388) – and so the research team he assembled had its members working in

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[47] Transl.: "My conclusion was this: a monograph should be both. Its first volume should present the sociological results, the synthesis, in which the facts are presented in an order that follows the demonstration that should be done, not the order in which they were collected. And another series of volumes should then present, by settings and manifestations, the raw material upon which the sociological theory was built."

[48] Transl.: "Drăguș, a village from the Olt Region."

isolation, separated by physical distance and with very little control and coordination, due to the difficulties of bringing them together in common meetings. To this we may add Herseni's lack of coordination experience and the fact that the work was done in lines of the highly specialized work that the previous research campaigns and their methodological developments had produced as a model, a fact to which Stahl had contributed. Moreover, some of the studies were centered on specific research problems and followed Stahl's preferred and recommended approach – that of dealing with specific research problems and reviewing them in their connections with the community's settings and manifestations. They strove to cover the whole of the community as well, by settings and manifestations – but there was no unifying thread running through all of the studies, to produce an overarching theoretical synthesis, as is at least in part the case with Stahl's work on Nerej. The causes of this fact, beyond the team members' deep specialization and isolation and Herseni's lack of proper coordinating conditions and skills, lie in the larger context of the moment as well. The studies will be published separately and with great difficulty as the occasion appeared, due to the initial delay of publication and the cancellation of the Conference with the beginning of the Second World War, bringing with it great financial difficulties for the School and the drafting into the services of the army of Herseni himself and of other researchers that were part of his team. So it was not only differentiated backgrounds and skills that made these two products different – but also the resources to which the coordinators had access to, the timing of the efforts to publish them, the group dynamics and social connections of the actors involved and the larger social context of the period when they acted. To conclude, after noting the different results that differentiated conditions and influences had on the publishing of these two bodies of sociological knowledge, we can emphasize once again the larger mechanisms by which sociological knowledge is produced and made available to the public. Personal backgrounds and skills have a strong influence in its creation and shaping – but social connections, group and organizational dynamics and the larger social context of the particular moments when the process of knowledge creation and publication takes place are also factors which make their significant and important impact on the finished body of knowledge.

OVERVIEW AND ADDITIONAL CONCLUSIONS

The social environment in which Dimitrie Gusti begins his activity is marked by ongoing social change. The process of change is high on the public agenda and different stakeholders attempt to take control over it and direct it in their own manner, giving it a modernizing scope. Peasants are the highly problematic element in this context – as they represent the vast majority of the population, and a large share of the country's economy as well, and now having the right to vote as

well, they become the main topic of public debates; their folk culture is invoked and manipulated in various nationalist discourses and projects; their social existence is questioned and its future debated. On his path towards the sociological monographs, Stahl acquires some defining influence from his social environment, mediated by a social network or intermediary group. He is drawn by the activity of Dimitrie Gusti's School, with which he shares values, preoccupations, sympathies and scientific principles. Once he joins the members of Gusti's School, he becomes part of an enterprise which aims to turn sociological knowledge into the foundation of a more carefully and strongly directed process of social change. Dimitrie Gusti is the creator of an organizational strategy aiming at such an outcome, one which was quite successful up to the last years of the 1930's. During its implementation, as the research activities of the School progress, a process of organizational structuring begins. This process is influenced by external factors and by the actions of School members, among whom those of Henri H. Stahl weigh in significantly. The process of organizational crystallization brings about a process of stratification – thus in the resulting hierarchy Stahl manages to occupy a dominant position and to exercise a significant and transforming power. From this position he influences the activity of the research teams, the collection of data and the structure and contents of the published results of the research. The particular impact he has on the School's research practice and results is to a large extent connected to his Marxist methodological preferences. Nonetheless, despite his "heresies", Stahl remains faithful to his Professor's ideals, strategy and purposes, further participating in the research efforts of the School and in the efforts to include sociological knowledge in the process of social change.

A recent and highly significant work on Stahl's theoretical developments – namely that of Ştefan Guga (Guga, 2015) – stresses and exaggerates, in our opinion, his differences from Dimitrie Gusti and the other members of the School, reclaiming him for Marxist sociology in a manner that excessively opposes and separates *Stahl the Marxist* from the School and Dimitrie Gusti. The truth is though, as Stahl repeatedly remarks in his memoirs and in his interviews, as research on the School's collaborators, their published works and Gusti's own ideas may show, that the Bucharest School to which Stahl belonged was very open to Marxist sociological views and even to socialist ideals, not to mention members of the Romanian socialist movement – to what extent and in what manner it remains to be further studied. The fact remains though that, as a group, School members became part of an effort to act and produce social change on a public scene through the use of sociological knowledge.

The discussion on a group strategy of the School is still open and its results so far need to be presented with more nuances and details. It first refers to an understanding of the generational structure of the members of the School and the different strata within it. For example, as Balazs (Balazs, 2013) demonstrates, 3 distinct generations are active within the School – that of the Professor, that of

the first disciples and that of those who were part of the teams involved in the School's social intervention actions. Within the second generation, Balazs underlines, multiple groups developed, among whom conflicting relationships sometimes emerged. Butoi also studies the interwar young generation and accomplishes a nuanced analysis of it (Butoi, 2012a, 2012b, 2014, 2015). Butoi also outlines the development and dissolution of multiple groups, one of which, reuniting a number of constant collaborators of Dimitrie Gusti belonging to different age cohorts, remains dedicated to the professor's ideas pertaining to the social role that sociological knowledge should play. Even though the public affirmation of such a group failed in the end, we find, that it existed indeed and included mainly those who were involved in the School's social interventions, without excluding, though, members of the same School such as Mircea Vulcănescu. H.H. Stahl is part of such a group, one that, beyond everything else, has remained faithful to the efforts aimed at, presenting and representing on the public stage a more real, sociologically well known, peasantry.

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