

THE FIRST BOOK PRESENTING ROMANIAN SOCIOLOGY
IN THE AMERICAN SCHOLARLY LITERATURE –
ROBERT JOSEPH KERNER’S
BOOK OF 1930

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ABSTRACT

This study examines one highly significant event in the history of Romania’s sociology that until now has been largely unknown publicly for an astonishing long period: almost nine decades. The “hero” at the center of that event is the important academic book published in the USA in April 1930 by the American historian Robert J. Kerner, about the *Social Sciences in the Balkans and in Turkey*, based on Kerner’s visits to Romania, Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, Greece, and Turkey. The book contains a detailed, documented first hand, highly informative and robustly analytical chapter on the ‘state of the art’ in Romania’s sociology in 1928–1929. Cernea describes the serendipitous circumstances in which he discovered the book in 1979, – and realized that Kerner’s book contained the first and earliest presentation of Romania’s sociology in the USA. This discovery corrects the widespread but erroneous attribution of priority in this respect to Philip E. Mosley’s 1935 visit as a young American student to Romania. The study presents Kerner’s professional personality as an internationally recognized scholar, and informs that, at Nicolae Iorga’s recommendation, Kerner was elected in 1938 as Corresponding Member of the Academia Română (Romanian Academy). Cernea synthesizes Kerner’s importance for the history of Romania’s sociology in three essential features: a) his book is the first comprehensive presentation abroad of Romania’s sociology between WW I and WW II; b) the outstanding analytical assessment of its achievements; and c) Kerner’s comparative evaluation and ranking of sociology in România, leading to Kerner’s overall conclusion that “in România sociology is better developed than anywhere else in the Balkans.”

Keywords: Robert J. Kerner, Dimitrie Gusti, Nicolae Iorga, Sociology in Romania, Bucharest School of Sociology.

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SOCIAL SCIENCES IN THE BALKANS AND IN TURKEY

A SURVEY OF RESOURCES FOR STUDY
AND RESEARCH IN THESE FIELDS OF
KNOWLEDGE

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This paper aims to bring to public attention and discussion by Romania's sociologists of the first substantive study about Romanian Sociology published in an academic book in the United States of America.

The publication, richly informative and analytic, is Robert Kerner's book *Social Sciences in the Balkans and in Turkey*¹. By its content and value this book is unique, yet it has remained practically unknown in Romania. It is the product of first hand professional research undertaken in Romania and four neighboring countries 87 years ago, in 1929. Kerner, a distinguished American historian, had a special interest in the history and role of social sciences. This detailed book-size account, written immediately after his on the ground visits, came out in print in April 1930 from one of the highest-reputation academic publishers in the USA, the *University of California Press* at Berkeley. It has five chapters, each dedicated to a different country: Romania benefited from the volume's longest and informatively richest chapter. The other countries covered were Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, Greece, and Turkey.

Nonetheless, this landmark book has remained *unknown, unrecognized, and unexamined* in any of the publications dedicated to the history of Romania's sociology for over eight decades: practically, until now.

After discovering, in 1979, the existence of Kerner's book – as I'll describe below – I felt it my duty to bring it to the attention of the Romanian sociological community. But at that time, I was already established in the US, and no journal printed then in Romania could have published any article written by me.

Luckily, however, the opportunity to publish a paper on Kerner's book soon appeared: a jointly co-authored American-Romanian volume of anthropological and economic papers was under preparation at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst (UMASS). In mid-1973, a group of anthropologists from that University had started village studies in Romania's Braşov region, led by Professor John W. Cole. I had assisted John and his group of young PhD students when they set up their research in Romania, – at that time I was leading the department of the Institute of Philosophy of the Romanian Academy that had re-started sociological empirical field research. Cole's group was keenly interested in the experience of my Institute's department in producing the first sociological comparative monograph on two villages (Belinţ and Comana), published in 1970 and entitled *Două Sate*²: that was the first rural monograph after the long interdiction imposed on empirical

¹ Kerner, Robert Joseph. *The Social Sciences in the Balkans and in Turkey*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1930.

² Cernea, Mihail, Gheorghe Chepes, V. Constantinescu, H. Ene, El. Gheorghe, M. Larionescu; Editorial Committee – Henri H. Stahl, M. Cernea, Gh. Chepes. *Două sate. Structuri sociale și progres tehnic* (Two villages: Social Structures and Technical Progress), Bucureşti; 1970. That was the first work that broke the political prohibition of empirical sociological rural sociological research and resumed rural monographs; we openly stated in the book's *Foreword* that that monograph resumes and continues "the valuable tradition of rural sociological investigations in Romania linked with the prewar activities of the Bucharest School of Sociology led by Prof. Dimitrie Gusti". Our young team of authors invited the direct collaboration of the foremost members of the Bucharest School, alive and active then, like Prof. H.H. Stahl, and of a few other former researchers, such as Dr. Ion Nemoianu, G. Bucheru, and others.

sociological investigations by the country's socialist regime, which considered sociology a 'bourgeois science'. After my departure to the US in mid-1974s, the American researchers worked with Professor Mihai Pop, then the director of the Institute of Ethnography and Folklore in Bucharest.

Toward the end of their studies in Romania, in January 1979, the group held a conference on their anthropological research at the University of Massachusetts, in Amherst. Other American researchers studying Romania and five Romanian academics, including Mihai Pop, were invited. The papers of that conference became the UMASS Research Report volume, entitled *Economy, Society, and Culture in Contemporary Romania*³ (John W. Cole, Editor, 1984). Dedicated in honor of Mihai Pop, it contained 12 papers by American researchers and by several researchers invited from Romania. I submitted my paper presenting Robert J. Kerner's book for the conference volume since, although invited to attend, in 1979 I was spending a sabbatical year as Fellow in residence at NIAS in the Netherlands. But my paper was included in John Cole's volume, under the title "*The View of an American Historian on Romania's Sociology*". (Cernea, 1984)

Optimistically, I thought that at long last, after half a century from its publication, information on Kerner's 1930 book would become known to Romania's sociologists. Yet it turned out that my optimism had been premature...

My article on Robert Kerner was an informative discussion of the merits of his book. I intended that paper to signal to those interested in the history of Romanian sociology two important things: (a) the priority of Kerner's study over other subsequent contacts between sociologists from Romania and the US, and (b) his positive evaluations at that early stage in the formation of the Bucharest School of Sociology. To my knowledge, none of the studies on the history of Romanian sociology published in Romania after 1930 had ever presented Kerner's book, despite it being the product of the first American scholarly encounter with Romania's top sociologists, their institutions, and their activities.

Paradoxically, however, my article published in 1984 also had a bizarre destiny. It remained virtually unknown in its turn, since the UMASS volume was not circulated in Romania, because, I suspect, the political regime's suffocating and omnipotent censorship practices. John Cole's volume might have not met the approval of the country's 'thought police' of the time and thus was suppressed from wide distribution. It remains a sad fact that a volume to which both Romanian and American researchers contribute⁴, and which honored a preeminent scholar as

³ Cole, John W. (Ed), *Economy, Society, and Culture in Contemporary Romania*, Research Report Nr. 24, Dept. of Anthropology, Univ. of Massachusetts, Amherst, USA, December 1984.

⁴ The papers in that volume were written for the conference entitled "Anthropology in Romania", held on January 15–21, 1979 at the Amherst campus of the University of Massachusetts. In attendance were a group of young American anthropologists who had recently conducted their PhD research in Romania under the advisorship of Professor John Cole: Steven L. Sampson, David A. Kideckel, Sam Beck, Steven Randall, and Regina Coussens, while some invitees such as Gail Kligman and myself were unable to attend, but submitted papers. Another American anthropologist, Katherine Verdery,

Mihai Pop, remained unknown to those for whom it was destined. Despite the massive literature on sociology in Romania produced after 1984 and even more after Romania's revolution, knowledge of Kerner's book and its content as presented in the 1984 article remained absent (with the exception of one indirect mention in a bibliography of my publications⁵). This was despite Kerner's relevance as both the first "discoverer" and the earliest "scholarly ambassador" who brought Romania's sociology to the attention of the American and international communities of social scientists.

Hence, I decided to write a second paper about RJK's book.

The present paper examines Kerner's book in much more details than my first article, and also offers essential new data about Kerner's personality and his writings. It also informs on the meaningful way in which Romania's scholars decided a few years after his visit, in 1938, to honor Kerner's scholarship by electing him as Corresponding Member of the Romanian Academy. These new data supplement and reinforce what I wrote the first time about Kerner's place in the history of Romania's social sciences. I hope that this second – and more complete – paper will fill a long persistent gap and indeed reach a broad audience.

A MISTAKEN ATTRIBUTION OF PRIORITY

Many historians of Romanian sociology (Ovidiu Bădină, 1967; Constantinescu, Bădină and Gall, 1974; Zoltán Rostás 2000, 2003, 2005, 2006, 2009; Pompiliu Caraioan, 1971a, 1971b; Ștefan Costea, 1995, 1996; Maria Larionescu, 1996, 2000) have meticulously searched and recorded various mentions of "The Bucharest School of Sociology" made abroad by foreign scholars at different points in time. All these studies have repeatedly described Phillip Mosley's visit in 1935 as having been the first contact and the first evidence of an early international recognition of the Romanian sociology between WWI–WWII. Robert Kerner and his book have never been mentioned in the studies mentioned above, or in many others⁶. The

doing research in Romania, was also in attendance. Among the Romanian researchers attending were Mihai Pop, Ion Iordăchel, Ioan V. Totu, and Paul Simionescu.

⁵ The exception was a book by Maria Cobianu-Băcanu (2001, see reference list) about my own research and publications abroad on international development issues. That book's long bibliography listed the article about Robert Kerner in John Cole's publication. But that bibliographic mention itself remained unnoticed, though it clearly announced to whoever was interested that it is about an American Historian writing about sociology and other social sciences in Romania. Nonetheless, Kerner's book continued to be ignored and unaccounted for in Romania's literature.

⁶ Notably too is the fact that Pompiliu Caraioan, in vol. IV of the collection he edited under the title *Sinteze Sociologice*, reprinted a bibliography (apparently compiled by Paula Herseni) entitled *Works published in foreign languages about the Bucharest School of Sociology*. That distinct bibliographic list suggests that Gusti's group was interested, normally, in keeping track of what was written abroad about their work. That list is a rare document: yet again, several foreign publications,

erroneous attribution of priority to Mosley's 1935 visit became cemented by repetition. Moreover, Kerner was a fully established scholar and academic, while Mosley was a student, aspiring to being as a disciple for learning how to do sociological village-research. The intellectual weight of Kerner's visit, his personal interactions with Romanian scholars, and his immediate public book-size report about his findings, analysis and evaluations – as I will document further below – have been in a total different category than Mosley's visit.

This is why the persistence of the mistaken priority attribution and the oversight of Kerner's contributions need to be definitively corrected. The ignorance of his pioneering book remains puzzling, since, as I was able to ascertain recently, Kerner's 1930 book itself has been available in the Library of the Romanian Academy for decades after decades. Yet, the book remained publicly unknown.

A SERENDIPITOUS DISCOVERY

The circumstances of my coming across Robert Kerner's landmark book were accidental, yet of a kind that belongs to the desirable category of happy accidents. In 1979, being in the library of NIAS⁷ as part of a Sabbatical year fellowship and searching for literature on the peasant family (one of my research interests then), I had the big surprise of which we all as researchers dream, yet only rarely are fortunate enough to experience in real life: I did experience *serendipity*! Unexpectedly, I came across a library card with an author's name that did not ring any bell for me. But the book's title was intriguing: *Social Sciences in the Balkans and in Turkey*, followed by a long subtitle: *A Survey of Resources for Study and Research in these Fields of Knowledge*.

It was mind-boggling. I ordered the book.

The serendipitous discovery exploded in front of my eyes: the book contained a chapter about *Social Sciences in Romania*! It was the book's longest, among variably shorter chapters dedicated to Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, Greece and Turkey.

The "Romania" chapter listed subtitles announcing detailed information on: "*Romanian Universities. Social Sciences at Bucharest. Social Sciences at Cluj. Social Sciences at Iasi. Social Sciences at Cernauti. The Academy of Law at Pradea (sic) Mare. Observations. The Libraries. The Academy. Learned Institutions. Publications. Concluding Comments. Romanian Periodicals devoted to the Social Sciences. Publications of the Romanian Academy.*"

The specificity of these subtitles not just promised tempting information: it also betrayed an organized mind at work, announcing detailed coverage. I turned

including some by American authors, did make it into the list. Nonetheless, Robert Kerner's book was absent even from Paula Herseni/Caraioan's bibliography.

⁷ The Netherlands Institute for Advanced Studies in Social Sciences, based in Wassenaar.

again to the book's cover, to recheck its publication date: it was April 1930, and it had been published in California. That year was a full half-decade *before* the year 1935 that until then had been consensually regarded in Romania's sociological literature as the year of the first contact between American and Romanian sociologies and sociologists.

Indeed, all studies that I previously read on the history of sociology in Romania placed the first contact between American and Romanian sociologists in 1935. In that year, a young American student interested in rural sociology, Philip E. Mosley, visited Romania and connected with Gusti's group in Bucharest; he was exploring the possibility of becoming a disciple and learning about its research methodology. I was well familiar with what had been written in Romania about the history of Romanian pre-World War II sociology. To my best recollection, nobody had ever mentioned the visit by a scholar named Kerner. And yet, that visit did not evaporate ephemerally in the air without leaving any trace: on the contrary, it led to the production of a book containing a documented description of the "state of the art" in Romanian sociology, much before Mosley's first visit, who himself hadn't published anything on Romania years after his first visit.

In short, the priority of Kerner's book was obvious. The common belief about the first contact between U.S. and Romanian sociologists appeared suddenly to me as having been misdated and mistaken. But how could this error become entrenched, and endure so long? And, after all, who was Robert Kerner?

ROBERT J. KERNER: THE SCHOLAR

Finding out became my immediate, and exciting, purpose. Here is what I found out then, supplemented by what I learned gradually and more over time.

Robert J. Kerner (1887–1956) was an eminent American historian. He studied at the University of Chicago (1908–1909), went to Harvard University between 1912 and 1914 and then continued his studies in Europe – in Vienna, Berlin, Moscow, and Paris. His teaching career started at the University of Missouri; eventually, he became Sather Professor of Modern European History at the University of California. His research interest in Slavic Studies crystallized early, perhaps because he was born into a family of Czechoslovak immigrants to the United States. His research and teaching on Slavic matters gained him the enduring credit (as it turned out later, verbatim, also from Romania's foremost historian, Nicolae Iorga) as being the scholar who has introduced in the U.S. the study of the Slavic nations' histories. And as his book on *Social Sciences in the Balkans and Turkey* testifies, he had a particular penchant for the history and public role of social sciences. In 1919, Kerner was appointed as a member of the USA delegation to the peace conference in Paris. His international visibility as a scholar increased due to his coordination of 10 volumes of the *United Nations History Series* (1940–

1948). He also organized the Institute of Slavic, East European and Eurasian Studies at the University of California in Berkeley, afterwards becoming its director (1948–1954). Kerner also edited major scientific journals, such as the *American Historical Review* and *Journal of Modern History*, and authored a large number of books⁸.

The above information is more than sufficient to indicate that RJK was already a highly recognized scholar when he came to Romania.

AN OMISSION THAT ENDURED LONG

The discovery of Kerner's book and substantial "research visit" to Romania came as a total surprise to me because, only several years before my NIAS chance-discovery, I had carried out an extensive retrospective study on the history of sociological research in Romania and the practice of village micro-monographs, as part of my research at the Institute of Philosophy. That study was issued by my Institute in 1973 as a mimeographed publication of 82 pages.⁹ Thereafter, that work was expanded into a larger study authored in collaboration with Prof. Henri H. Stahl, Maria Larionescu and Ecaterina Springer, two young and talented researchers in the department that I was heading at the Institute of Philosophy. We prepared that larger study entrusted to me and my Institute by the Romanian Academy, which had obligated itself to submit it for an international comparative research project on "*Rural Community Studies in Europe*" conducted under the auspices of the European Coordination Centre for Research and Documentation in Social Sciences in Vienna¹⁰. The Centre published it in an English translation,

⁸ Prior to his study trip to the Balkan countries, Kerner had already written and published a full series of books researching issues related with Slavic populations in Europe and their neighbors. Among these books were: *The Historic Role of the Slavs* (1917); *The Yugoslav Movement* (1918); *The Social Beginnings of the Czechoslovak Republic* (1919); *Two Architects of the New Europe, Masaryk and Benes* (1921); *Austro-Hungarian War Arms in the Winter of 1915–1916 as Revealed by Secret Documents* (1929); *New Tasks before the Slavonic Peoples* (1929).

After his 1930 book, *Social Sciences in the Balkans and Turkey*, RJK published several other books among which: *Bohemia in the Eighteenth Century* (1932); *The Balkans Conferences and the Balkan Entente* (1935); *A Study in the Recent History of the Balkan and Near Eastern Peoples* (1936); *Northeastern Asia* (2 vol., 1939, editor and coauthor); *Czechoslovakia: Twenty Years of Independence* (1940, co-author); *The Slavic Peoples and the Second World War* (1942); *Poland* (1945, editor and coauthor); *The Urge to the Sea (Russia)* (1942); *The Russian Adventure* (1943); *The Russian Eastward Movement* (1948); *Yugoslavia* (1949).

⁹ Cernea, Mihail M. *Cercetarea monografică a comunităților rurale în sociologia din România*. Institutul de Filosofie al Academiei Române. București: 1973. Mimeographed.

¹⁰ This "European Center" was sponsored by UNESCO and worked as an autonomous body of the International Social Science Council. It was founded in 1963 to encourage and promote cooperation among social scientists of European countries having different political and economic systems. The Center organized international research projects, round tables, and encounters among social scientists.

together with comparable studies from Great Britain, France, Ireland, Poland, Turkey, and Spain – see J.-L. Durand-Drouhin (France), L.M. Szwengrub (Poland), and Ioan Mihăilescu (Romania), 1984. For the preparation of our two studies, I had retrospectively explored the vibrant expansion of rural-sociological research and publications in Romania over several decades¹¹. I also scoured upside-down several large libraries in search of village-focused micro-monographs – many done by village teachers, priests, local geographers, rural physicians, a.o. Within our small group of co-authors of the 2nd study we held discussions, exchanged ideas and information – yet nobody among us, including Professor Henri H. Stahl, the most knowledgeable and a real “walking Encyclopedia,” – had appeared to have any knowledge of Robert Kerner’s visit and 1930 book. Only Mosley’s 1935 visit was repeatedly mentioned.

In sum, it was that long accumulated knowledge that gave me, at the very first sight, the sense and confidence that Kerner’s visit and book have never been signaled and discussed before by anyone among the main historians of Romanian sociology.

Kerner visited Romania in 1929 and specified that his book’s information reflected the situation of social sciences in Romania in 1928-1929. Although he did not explicitly list the scholars he interacted with personally, from the context of his Romanian chapter it appears that he did meet face to face Nicolae Iorga, Dimitrie Gusti, Petre Andrei in Iași, Virgil Bărbat in Cluj, and most probably many others. Obviously, his documentation came from multiple sources. His chapter on Romania names over 80 professors and other scholars and researchers in social sciences. Among the over 80 names he mentioned, the following were names of sociologists or faculty members who beside other courses lectured also in sociology: Dimitrie Gusti; Nicolae Petrescu; D. Prejbeanu;¹² Virgil Bărbat; C. Sudețanu; Petre Andrei; Professor Fedeleş; Traian Brăileanu; Eugeniu Sperantia; and Alexandru Tzigara-Samurçaș.

And yet, this long list may not contain all whom RJK might have met, such as Henri Stahl, Mircea Vulcănescu, Traian Herseni and others who at that time were still young assistants of Gusti, and where not yet faculty members formally teaching Sociology courses.

After the end of World War II, the political changes in Romania created an increasingly hostile environment to the practice of sociology; this culminated in 1948 with the full exclusion of sociology from the disciplines taught in the higher education institutions of Romania. The communist officialdom declared sociology a non-science, a bourgeois pseudo-science, etc. The scholars who had been the

¹¹ Such retrospective study also was then one of our main sources of learning how to do sociological research, since access to the western literature was hampered by official political prohibition.

¹² I could not track down detailed information about D. Prejbeanu. In addition to him being mentioned by Kerner I found his name listed by Florentina Țone (in an article about the monographist D.C. Georgescu) as a member of a committee of students of the Sociology Seminar conducted by D. Gusti.

most prominent members of the Bucharest School of Sociology were demoted, dismissed from their academic positions, marginalized and persecuted. Some were arrested and imprisoned for years, with or without trial, and some died in prison.

It took a decade and a half until some gradual political changes and growing convergent pressures made possible once again some sociological research and publications which could report empirically collected sociological data; among these publications, some managed to report truthfully some field-based observations and to do good analysis, yet were damaged through impositions, censorship, and were compelled to pay fake and ritual complements to the official ideology.¹³ As part of this limited permissiveness, also some studies on the history of Romanian sociology could be published. It was somehow more tolerable for the political authorities to allow publications about the past traditions of Romanian sociology, rather than allow and encourage free sociological research on Romania's reality of the day.

Among these writings on the history of Romanian sociology, the name of Phillip Mosley started again to be mentioned. Several studies and books on the history of Romania's sociology were written then by Ovidiu Bădină, who also reinterpreted and republished some of Gusti's works (see Bădină, 1967); a series of volumes titled *Sociological Syntheses*, initiated and edited by Pompiliu Caraioan, to which many other co-authors contributed, but in which the best analytical studies were authored by Caraioan himself (see Caraioan, 1971a, 1971b); several books tried to offer a comprehensive history of the history of Romanian sociology (for example, Constantinescu, Gall, and Bădină, 1974; Costea, 1995, 1996; Larionescu, 1996, 2007); and a very large number of articles in different scholarly journals, too many to be quoted here (for more details and titles see the references list at the end). The reason of mentioning all these publications is to simply signal the fact that Kerner's name never surfaced in them either. Though just a student at the time of his visit, Mosley remained the only American sociologist mentioned as having been in early contact with the Romanian sociology in the interwar period¹⁴.

¹³ Much has been written about the struggles and limitations of sociological research under Communism; one particularly remarkable piece was the substantial interview conducted by Florentina Țone with Professor Ștefan Rostás (2009). In that interview, Rostás manages to condense and describe, in a colorful yet apt language, that when it was carried out under political Communist impositions and censorship, even the best intended sociological research "*cannot function without being damaged*" in the exercise of its scientific vocation.

¹⁴ While Philip Mosley was usually mentioned more or less briefly, one study dedicated in its entirety to Phillip E. Mosley's person and activities stands out, in my view, through its analytical quality and much richer than usual information on the subject of Mosley's own work (see Vasile Pușcaș, 2007). This study is the best contribution published until 2007 about Mosley's substantive activities and relevance, based on what was known until 2007. Since then, a new treasure trove of documents about Mosley has been published by Sanda Golopenția as part of her rescue and restitution of Anton Golopenția's lifetime works and contributions to Romanian sociology. Most remarkable among the new documents are the personal letters exchanged between Anton Golopenția and Phillip Mosley, including even some draft letters from A.G. to Mosley, which possibly were never mailed and remained only as draft manuscripts now revived and published for the first time by Sanda Golopenția. These letters

WHY DID ROBERT KERNER TRAVEL TO ROMANIA?

As I read Kerner's chapter on Romania itself, the satisfaction of having found this book only increased. Kerner's chapter focused more on sociology than on other sciences such as economics or geography, and contained unusually detailed information on the "state of the art" in Romanian sociology in 1928 and 1929, and his value judgment of its state was highly laudative (I will quote his statements on this in more detail further). Kerner's comparative book assessed the state of the art in five countries his book covered. Not only was the chapter on Romania the richest in information and the book's longest chapter space-wise, but Kerner concluded, verbatim, that at that time sociology in Romania was more advanced, more productive, and better organized institutionally than what he found in any of the other countries that he then studied first hand: Yugoslavia, Greece, Bulgaria, and Turkey.

But like with every good book, as I was reading it, new questions came up. I asked myself: why did Robert J. Kerner undertake such a complex trip to Europe's Balkans region and Turkey too? Why did he come to Romania? I tried to get a response, direct or indirect, from the book itself. I think I've teased this response out of his writing.

Robert J. Kerner undertook his elaborate trip in 5 countries not simply to gather academic information about the social sciences in the Balkans and Turkey. From the very first page of his book it clearly appears that Kerner was – and saw himself as – what we may call today a "*scholar with a manifest mission*". He was animated by his creed that social sciences as a group can play an active role in the lives and progress of nations. Consistently then, he decided to be a militant for this creed. And he also believed that the importance and specific roles of each individual science are changing with the times: in certain circumstances, one science might become more important and more immediately relevant than others.

Kerner himself was a professional historian. Despite this, he did *not* come to the Balkans to plead the preeminence of the science of history, his own discipline. Not mincing words, the two opening paragraphs of Kerner's book unhesitatingly articulate his view-point that history as a science and the role of professional historians had been more important in the past, during the struggle for national independence. But a decade after the WW I, at the time of his visit to Romania and the Balkans, Kerner had reached the conclusion that the societal role and contributions of *other* social scientists – not of historians – should be seen as *primarily and decisively* important in consolidating the new national states.

contain valuable historical material, which could be – and in my view should be – integrated with the material discussed earlier by Vasile Pușcaș (2007) into a broader, comprehensive and definitive study of Mosley's activities, taking note also of Mosley's valuable contributions made later, decades after his first visit, to making Romania's sociology better known overseas.

Let's offer the floor to Kerner himself. Here below are two categorical statements quoted from the first paragraphs of his 1930 book, verbatim:

"In the past, historians have played a dominant role in helping to achieve the national independence of the various nations in the Balkans."

"In the future, the other social scientists will play the decisive part in consolidating these national states and in enabling them to take their proper place among the nations of Europe." (R.J.K., p. 9; my emphasis – M.M.C.)

Clearly, these are major statements about RJK's philosophy of science. I find it noteworthy that he did not shy away from articulating his view so bluntly, contrasting the role of the newer social sciences in building the national identity and self-awareness of nations with the past role of his own discipline, history. We must admit that not every scholar is so outstandingly clear about their personal "point of view", based on which they are proceeding to do their research. His point of view was informed by convictions, also explicitly stated, about the roles played by the practitioners of historical sciences and the role which other social scientists are destined to perform in the future.

Here is the place to observe, parenthetically, that Dimitrie Gusti himself was in some respects on the same wavelength with Kerner, yet independently. Perhaps both were influenced by the same *Zeitgeist* hovering over some parts of Europe: the feeling that had grown in the winning camp of the WW I countries, that saw their main claims to national identity and state independence recognized. Once the states' borders appeared to be defined, it was thought that the time has come to call to the fore the sciences that could focus on the state of "the nation". One of his two fundamental books was entitled "Knowledge and Action in the Service of the Nation".¹⁵ Gusti had been advocating sociology as the science through which the "Romanian nation" can achieve a better knowledge of itself, self-awareness, overcome accumulated needs and thus influentially contribute towards further national development. Gusti was convinced that carrying out thousands of individual villages' monographs about Romania's rural communities may eventually produce the knowledge and "the science" about the Romanian nation. Today, we know that that was a generous, but rather utopian, thought. As the years unfolded, within the Bucharest School of Sociology itself a different view emerged of what village monographs can accomplish. Anton Golopentia was the pioneer, the flag carrier for these new ideas, introducing the concept of summary monographs, counting on statistic tools. He succeeded to prove the feasibility and efficiency of quantified approaches only several years after Kerner's visit, by producing his landmark book serial on the *60 de Sate*, co-authored with D.C. Georgescu. Not without initial

¹⁵ Gusti, Dimitrie. *Cunoaștere și acțiune în serviciul națiunii*. București: Editura Institutului Social Român, 1939.

resistance, others members of the School also gradually came to support Golopenția's innovative ideas and methodology¹⁶.

KERNER'S OBJECT AND RESEARCH METHOD. HIS INTENDED AUDIENCES AND TARGET GROUPS

Within the Pantheon of science, and at a time when budding new disciplines were beginning to emerge and differentiate themselves at the frontiers in-between the classic disciplines, RJK took care to define clearly the area of his research and book by defining what he specifically meant by "social sciences". He explicitly listed the disciplines on which he focused for the purpose of his study in all countries he visited:

"In this study, the social sciences are understood to include: Geography, Anthropology, Ethnology, History, Political Science, Economics, Sociology, and Psychology". (p. 9)

Further, he explained his research design and field trips by describing the method he employed, how he approached his chosen area of inquiry. It was a very broad area, divided in sub-domains, whose external borders were in expansion but whose internal mutual delimitations could not prevent some significant overlaps between the sub-domains. RJK tried to grasp his complex object in a virtually empiric manner. His "field procedures" in pursuing this ambitious endeavor were the same in all countries, and he described his own meticulous 'fieldwork' concisely as follows:

"In order to comprehend what was being done in each country it was necessary to visit the universities, to confer with their administrative officials and the leading professors in the Social Sciences, to examine their institutes and libraries, to get acquainted with the work of their academies and other learned societies; and to make an attempt to understand what is being done to encourage research in the Social Sciences by direct subvention and by the publication of results in scientific periodicals". (p. 9–10)

For what audiences did Kerner write his book? Who did he want to reach and influence?

Definitely, his audiences were very much the communities of social scientists who he interviewed and with whom he interacted in each country. While he documented himself collecting data, he also shared his opinions with his colleagues and social scientists. He had also inquired about, and understood their material and

¹⁶ See a more detailed discussion on the theoretical and methodological tensions and differences about summary monographs inside the School in Sanda Golopenția's excellent 'Introduction' to the IIIrd volume of *Rapsodia epistolară*.

intellectual needs (e.g., professors' low salaries; lack of funds for research; and poor libraries with insufficient books). As I shall point out further down, he empathetically, he highlighted these needs in practically every chapter, regardless of the country discussed, and in his book he explicitly expressed, on record, his support for them in what he wrote.

Yet, there was also another crucial audience that Kerner, as an engaged scholar, purposefully aimed to reach and influence. He stated upfront that he envisaged his study to be read and be of benefit not only to scholars themselves, but also, explicitly, to the "*leaders of educational systems and institutions*" in the countries he visited.

Consistent in his intellectual militancy, Kerner wanted – to put it in today's terminology – "to have impact on decision and policy makers" He was not at all shy about his goals, as the following excerpt testifies. RJK described his desire for impact in modest terms; nonetheless, he stated that "*however humble and elementary it may be (it) will do good in that direction*" if those leaders would listen to his argument.

At stake, he crisply wrote, was nothing less than "*the future of social sciences.*"

"Before this study was undertaken – Kerner stated – the attention of educational leaders in these countries had not been called to the fact that it might be of value to gather this information and to take an inventory of resources along these lines. It is certain, therefore, that this attempt, however humble and elementary it may be, will do good in that direction. The element of consciousness will enter into the matter.

Heretofore, a strong individualism on the part of the professors, even within each of the separate fields of the Social Sciences, has thrived to the detriment of the normal development of that particular subject. When one intimates that the future of the Social Sciences is undoubtedly concerned with cooperation among social scientists from all these fields, he is discussing something which platonically may be interesting and even desirable, but which on account of the strong individualism within a number of these fields is not even attainable at present within each of the subjects themselves.

Therefore it is doubly significant for these scholars to have it pointed out that even with their limited resources, more could be done if they made an end of some of their duplication of work, and if they consolidated their endeavors in research with conscious objectives in view. These possibilities may be seen more easily by outsiders than by those who are bound up intimately with the complex of conditions and traditions which maintain the existing situation".
(p. 10–11)

To speak specifically about the RJK's long chapter on Romania, one indisputable merit of Kerner's study is that he succeeded in giving a well-informed bird's eye view of the "state of the art" in Romanian sociology in 1928-1929. He systematically reports on activities ongoing in the main academic centers – Bucharest, Iași, Cluj, and Cernăuți – and calls by name a large number of

Romanian sociologists that worked in those centers, giving their locations, main activities, and responsibilities at that time.

The question inevitably pops in our minds: did Kerner visit all the research centers he mentioned or only some? With whom, among the most prominent Romanian social scientists, had he met personally?

An explicit/direct answer to these questions is not contained in RJK's book. We don't know how much time RJK spent in Romania. He also avoided to link specific information with the name of the persons who provided it (with one exception: Virgil Bărbat). But the careful reading of his text made me confident that he visited at least Bucharest and Cluj, and perhaps Iași too, but not necessarily all the other localities he mentioned in the book.

It seems also that Kerner met personally at least with three or four of Romania's most prominent scholars at the time.

The first is, naturally, Nicolae Iorga, about whom he offers more information than about anybody else at two different places of his book (p. 47; 62–63). Kerner even mentions that, at that time, Iorga was engaged in completing his *Essay de Synthèse de l'Histoire de l'Humanité*, of which 4 volumes had been already published by then.

Kerner met also personally Prof. Dimitrie Gusti, whose leading role as the “guiding spirit” is described in his book repeatedly:

“Professor Demetrie Gusti is the guiding spirit in the Social Sciences at the University of Bucharest. He holds the chair of Esthetics, Ethics, Sociology and Politics. He is the Director of the Institutul Social Roman (of which more later), and the editor of its Review, Arhiva pentru Stiinta si Reforma Sociala. He offers courses in the field of Sociology and directs the seminar of Sociology, Ethics, and Politics, with the assistance of D. Prejbeanu”. (p. 48)

Later in this chapter RJK will again write about Gusti, when he highlights “the leading work done” by Gusti's Institute – ISR.

Kerner also records that “at the Bucharest University Professor Nicolae Petrescu gives a course on *Comparative Sociology*”; but there is no indication that would lead us to assume that the two met and interacted personally.

Another scholar whom RJK certainly met face to face and discussed in detail about social sciences, and sociology in particular, at the University of Cluj, was Prof. Virgil Bărbat, himself a sociologist. We know this with certainty since Kerner included a source-referencing footnote stating: “I am grateful for this information personally to Virgil Bărbat.” (p. 53) Kerner noted that Professor Virgil Bărbat was the chair of *Sociology and Ethics*, and was also offering two other courses: one on *Social Doctrines*, and another on *Method in the Social Sciences*, attended by about 40 students. His teaching assistant was C. Sudețeanu, the author of *An Introduction to the Sociology of Auguste Comte*. (53) Bărbat was also the Director of the Oradea

Mare branch of the University of Cluj, and Kerner noted that he “*has done much to popularize sociology*” (p. 53).¹⁷

Writing about the University of Iași, RJK considered that “*Sociology is well represented by Professor Petre Andrei, who keeps abreast of Anglo-Saxon literature in this field.*” (57) Kerner’s comment that Petre Andrei “*kept abreast... of the literature.*” betrays that the two of them met and had a professional conversation which allowed Kerner to make one of his book’s pointed personal observations. He also knew that “*Professor Petre Andrei [had been] a pupil of Professor Gusti*” and that at the University of Iasi Petre Andrei was offering “*the courses in Sociology and Ethics*”. (56)

Surely Kerner had many other personal contacts. Conversely, a good part of the book’s information looks as having been received from secondary sources, not directly. Overall, the documentation offered by Kerner is impressive by its coverage and analyses, making Kerner’s report a unique panorama of the state of social sciences in Romania at the time of his writing.

In these parts of his book, Kerner *compared* what he found in the 5 countries he studied.

INSTITUTIONS, LIBRARIES, JOURNALS, AND PROFESSORS’ SALARIES

Advancing towards the conclusions of his book, Kerner shifted to more evaluations and comparisons. In line with the subtitle he gave his book – a “*Survey of Resources for Study and Research in these Fields of Knowledge*” – Robert Kerner evaluated the *institutional capacity* for carrying out work in social sciences, created in each country. By ‘resources’, RJK meant the following major factors: Universities; Research institutions, distinct from universities; Libraries and their endowments; Scientific Journals; and material condition and salaries for academic faculty and researchers.

About Romania’s overall institutional capacity for training and social research Kerner’s evaluations are predominantly favorable, though he signaled also serious drawbacks in the official support for academics. He summed up his findings in a categorical statement:

“In Romania sociology is better developed than anywhere else in the Balkans” (p. 67, my emphasis, M.M.C).

¹⁷ Virgil Bărbat died prematurely and his work is insufficiently known today. Interesting data were communicated in the session convened by Prof. Zoltán Rostás in the paper on Virgil Bărbat presented by Alina Ioana Branda: “*Works and Lives: A Lesser Known Sociologist as Author*” (National Conference of *Societatea Sociologilor din România*, Cluj, 2015.)

Kerner further documents this very positive comparative assessment of the “state of sociology” in Romania by examining and characterizing each one of the key components of institutional “resources for study and research”. While reading him, I had the feeling that the author is in front of me and is mentally deconstructing the architecture he observed in Romania’s sociology and social sciences into his impressions and opinions on each one of this architecture’s components.

On universities, Kerner speaks to us as follows:

“Taking it all in all, the impression one has of these institutions is that they do excellent undergraduate work for the licentiate; but probably only the last year of that, and the work for the doctorate, should be regarded as advanced and research work”. (p. 58)

On research institutions in sociology he continues this way:

“If we turn now to the institutions and organizations which encourage work in the field of the Social Sciences, we find the Rumanians well organized... In Sociology the leading work is done by the Rumanian Institute of Social Science (Institutul Social Român), whose director is Professor Dimitrie Gusti of the University of Bucharest. The Institute organizes each year a series of lectures on economic and sociological subjects, which it puts out as separate volumes.” (p. 61, 65)

“With greater funds, more cooperation among the professors, and a consciousness of objectives in research, Rumania would soon obtain a position in the Social Sciences worthy of her size and possibilities.

Especially important are the three excellent beginnings to be found in the Rumanian Institute of Social Science, the Institute of Administrative Sciences, and the Rumanian Institute of Economics, which await only financial support to become of considerable value to the Rumanian people and to the cause of science”. (p. 68)

On the quality of libraries Robert Kerner once again unhesitatingly is ranking Romania highest among all 5 countries, yet he also regrets professors’ low incomes. Consequently, the professors do not have enough income to buy the books they need.

“As has already been mentioned, the library facilities of Romania are better organized and more evenly distributed than those of any other Balkan country. With the exception of Cernauti, they are also well housed and in the case of the Library of the Carol Foundation, splendidly administered. The most valuable library in Rumania is that of the Romanian Academy in Bucharest...”

The activity and the publications of the Romanian Academy have been famous for a long time. Founded in 1866, it has published a long list of valuable documentary collections and monographs, an outline of which is appended to the present chapter.” (p. 59, 62, my emphasis, M.M.C.)

“The salaries of university professors are very low and the funds for the purchase of books small. Rumania is, however, better equipped with library facilities of a modern nature and more recent works than any of the other Balkan countries.” (p. 46, my emphasis, M.M.C.)

“There is lacking, especially, a good library covering the field of Sociology and excepting the library of the Rumanian Economic Institute, most of these libraries need books published since 1914, especially those in English... The seminar libraries of the University of Bucharest are generally small, though useful, but lack funds for the purchase of recent works. Very little can be bought in high-priced currencies with one hundred or two hundred dollars.” (p. 60–61).

On the scientific journals being published in Romania at that time, Kerner is particularly enthusiastic about the publications issued by the Academia Română:

“The activity and the publications of the Rumanian Academy have been famous for a long time. Founded in 1866, it has published a long list of valuable documentary collections and monographs, an outline of which is appended to the present chapter.” (p. 62)

“In addition, it [the Institute of Social Science] publishes the quarterly Arhiva pentru Reforma Socială (1921–) which is a first-class sociological review, coming out under the editorship of Professor Gusti.”

On salaries for social scientists, however, Kerner did not hold back his criticism. He deplored the fact that university faculty members received what they, and he, regarded as very low salaries:

“The professors are paid very low salaries, preventing them from buying books and making trips of investigation during vacations, and forcing them, as in the other Balkan countries, to seek additional employment as lecturers in other institutions or as advisers of the government, or to enter politics. Too many of them are thus too busy with other things to carry on active and persistent research.” (p. 66–67)

This comment sounds as RJK’s plea to the Romanian state, so to say, on behalf of Romanian social researchers, giving voice to what he was told and likely agreed too.

Besides the lack of government financial support and other drawbacks, Kerner noted also a methodological critique. In his view, there was too much “individualism” in how the social sciences community conducted its work.

“There is as yet no consciousness among the professors that they could get together in the Social Sciences and pool their resources and energies for the purpose of cooperative research. Small as are the funds, and limited as are the resources, it is probable that more could be done along these lines by the professors concerned. There exists as yet too powerful an individualism which makes cooperative work even inside any one of the sciences impossible. In addition, it should be noted that here, as elsewhere in the Balkans, Political Science and Economics are treated more as auxiliary to Law instead of independent sciences, whereas History, while well developed, is too often linked with Philology or Geography.”

Sociology is better developed here than anywhere else in the Balkans... Psychology is too little developed and so, too (p. 66–67), Anthropology and Ethnology.” (67–68)

I think that Kerner referred in the above paragraph to two aspects of this individualism: inter-disciplinary and intra-disciplinary. First, Kerner felt that there was not enough inter-disciplinary cooperation between the scientists belonging to different social disciplines. His idea – stressed also elsewhere in his book – was that cooperation between social sciences is indispensable for their progress. This argument is indeed correct.

Second, his impression was that also within disciplines, including within sociology, there was not sufficient collective work and cooperation among practitioners of the same discipline. I think that in this second critical point Kerner was mistaken, or not fully informed, with respect to, at least, Romania’s sociological community. Even at that time there was already practical evidence that this collective approach was actually practiced. For instance, 2–3 years before Kerner’s visit, there were several *team* research projects ongoing such as, large-scale, team empirical sociological studies were already underway in several village communities (at Nerej in 1927, at Fundul Moldovei in 1928 and at Drăguș in 1929).

ROBERT KERNER IS ELECTED INTO THE ROMANIAN ACADEMY

A fact that convincingly proves that Romania’s scholarly community of the ’1930s was well aware of Robert Kerner’s stature and publications as an American scholar of international repute was Kerner’s election as Corresponding Member of the Romanian Academy in 1938. This was only 8 years after the publication of his 1930 book and 9 years after his personal visit to Romania.

The formal proposal for electing Kerner as Corresponding Member in the Romanian Academy was made by Romania’s greatest historian, Nicolae Iorga, and was presented in the June 1, 1938 plenary session of the Romanian Academy held on.

Nicolae Iorga’s recommendation stated:

“Professor Robert J. Kerner of the University of Berkeley (California) is the one who introduced in America the study of Slavic nations and of the nations neighboring them. His works in this field serve as the texts that introduce American students to it. More than once has Mr. Kerner’s interest focused on our nation with special sympathy. In this respect there is only one other scholar that may serve as a term of comparison: the young professor Joseph Roucek, whom we might have to honor sometime with the same distinction.

I propose Robert Kerner as foreign Member Correspondent of our Academy.”

Nicolae Iorga

(Academia Română. *Anale. Tomul LVIII.*
Ședințele din 1937–1938, p. 190)¹⁸

The Academy’s plenary elected Robert J. Kerner with 21 votes ‘for’ and 3 ‘against’. The then President of Academia Romana , Alexandru I. Lapedatu, a historian, placed the result on record and “*Proclaimed Robert J. Kerner as Member Correspondent of Academia Română*”. (op. cit.)

THE UPLIFTING VIBRANCY OF OUR SOCIOLOGICAL HISTORY

In summing up, I’d like to point out that Robert J. Kerner’s book adds to the thesaurus of Romania’s sociology a rich document important by its substantive, documentary, and symbolic values. From all that we know until now, Kerner was the first American scholar to call the attention of the American and the international social sciences communities to the extent and quality of the sociological activities carried out in Romania. Through his book we see our sociology at a point on its growth-curve as it was reflected in a mirror held to it by an empathetic and far-sighted scholar.

The importance of Kerner’s chapter on Romanian sociology is, in my view, three-fold.

First: *A State of the Art Overview*. Kerner’s study was the first detailed description of activities ongoing in Romanian sociology, and of the main sociologists of that time, that has been ever printed in the United States. He informed on the teaching of sociology, on relevant institutions and publications, creating an indelible record of what an early and objective observer has found at the threshold year – 1930 – between the third and fourth decades of the 20th century, and considered worthy of recording.

Second: Evaluation. Kerner did not just describe: he also made value judgments, evaluating the state of sociology in Romania as “excellent” even at that early time (1928–1929), while also recording the difficulties that Romania sociologists were facing at that time in terms of limited funding and lack of access to foreign literature.

¹⁸ Nicolae Iorga’s formal recommendation was read into the Academy’s record of the plenary session by another Romanian historian, himself a member of the Romanian Academy: Acad. Nicolae Bănescu.

Third: Comparative Ranking. Since during the same visit Kerner assessed the state of sociology in 4 neighboring countries (Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, Greece, and Turkey), he was equipped and willing to rank Romanian sociology as having reached a better developed level than he found in any of the other 4 countries that he surveyed was a remarkable assessment.

I hope that the knowledge of Kerner's book will become another catalyst, next to the many other, and much more important new texts that have appeared by Romanian and foreign¹⁹ authors in the recent two decades, some of which we did not know before and that enrich our self-knowledge and awareness of the past history of our science.

But we are fortunate to have immensely more than the book presented above. In my view, recent and ongoing work in the subfield that we call "The history of Romania's sociology" has become and is now perhaps the most vibrant sub-area of our sociological work front, next to the best sociological volumes dedicated to the research of Romania's profound transformations in the last three decades.

This vibrancy results in good part from discovering – and from reflecting on – the kinds of publications and studies that are coming out of a rich intellectual past. They are telling illustrations of this vibrancy and of sociology's relevance for human life and for social life. Among these publications are the extraordinary intellectual treasures being restituted to us through the work that Professor Sanda Golopenția is bringing back into Romanian sociology as the rescued intellectual heritage of the exceptional scholar that Anton Golopenția was, and remains for future generations, too. Not only entire huge volumes, like the two tomes titled *Români de dincolo de Bug*, vol. I and vol. II, totaling between them over 1,600 pages, but also *Îndreptar pentru tineret*, as well as the countless jewels contained in the volumes *Rapsodia epistolară*, represent an intellectual and spiritual enrichment of the substance of sociology in Romania of which we couldn't have even dreamed to still possess before they were rescued, restored, and published from cobwebbed trunks chalk full of manuscripts lovingly hidden and protected for decades by the Golopenția family, as well as from the files the security police kept for decades in inaccessible steel vaults. Now we are fortunate to be able to enjoy these newly accessible riches, learn from, share, and delight in them endlessly.

I am confident that Romania's sociological community will rise to the opportunities offered by these extraordinary new treasures, and use them critically and creatively for both the present and the future generation of sociologists in Romania.

¹⁹ See, for instance, among many others: Serageldin, Ismail. "Themes for the Third Millennium: the Challenge for Rural Sociology in an Urbanizing World." Keynote Address at the 9th World Congress of Rural Sociology, held in Bucharest, Romania, which contains also an insightful and present day perspective on Dimitrie Gusti, Henri H. Stahl, and the Bucharest School of Sociology.

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