H. STAHL'S SCIENTIFIC CONTRIBUTION TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF ROMANIAN SOCIOLOGY

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Abstract

The first part the paper, wherein we offer a general perspective on *the history of Romanian sociology*, analysing *the inter-war Romanian sociologic school*, precisely *the monographic research* based on the `methodological experience` of the *monographic school* founded by the Romanian sociologist Dimitrie Gusti, is dedicated to the Romanian sociologist Henri H. Stahl. Along these lines, we configure the social-economical and the political contexts where `the historical sociology` and `the monographic sociology` generally appear and develop and, more specifically, the `Romanian social history` advanced by Henri H. Stahl, as `a sociologist with studies in History`.

The second part of the paper, starting with the `administrative data` of *The Sociological School in Bucharest*, which appeared in the inter-war period, we synthetically presented the main movements in the sociological thinking that were developed later by the sociologist and methodologist Henri H. Stahl within the historical background of *the Socialist movement of those times – the rural sociology* (`the sociology of the dependent organization`) and the *zonal development* – both being methodologically based on `the monographic movement`.

The conclusions of the present study lead to emphasizing the importance as well as the influences that Henri H. Stahl's theoretical and methodological approaches had in the development of Sociology as a science in Romania, taking into consideration both the *`cogitans*' and the *`militans*' sociological perspectives.

Keywords: Romanian Sociology; Sociological School; Social History; Rural Sociology; Zonal Development; the Monographic Method.

Résumé

Dans la première partie de l'étude dédié au sociologue Henri H. Stahl, nous proposons une vue d'ensemble sur l'histoire de la sociologie roumaine, en accordant, avant tout, une attention spéciale à l'École roumaine de sociologie interbélique, plus précisément, à la recherche monographique soutenue par "l'expérience méthodologique" de l'École monographique fondée par le sociologue Dimitrie Gusti. En poursuivant dans cette direction, on met en évidence le contexte socio-économique et politique dans lequel débutent et se développent "la sociologie historique" et "la sociologie monographique", en général, ainsi que "l'histoire sociale roumaine", particulièrement, proposée par Henri H. Stahl, en tant que "sociologue de formation historique".

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Dans la deuxième partie de l'étude, ayant comme point de départ "le cadre organisationnel" offert par l'École sociologique de Bucarest, de la période interbélique, nous avons présenté synthétiquement les principaux courants de la pensée sociologique développés ultérieurement par le sociologue et le méthodologue Henri H. Stahl sur l'arrièreplan du mouvement socialiste du temps – la sociologie rurale ("la sociologie du régime tributaire") et le développement zonale – appuyés méthodologiquement par "le mouvement monographique".

Les conclusions de cet étude convergent vers la mise en évidence de l'importance et de l'influence des approches théorique-méthodologiques proposées par le sociologue Henri H. Stahl, sur le développement de la sociologie vue en tant que science en Roumanie tant de la perspective de la sociologie cogitans que de celle de la sociologie militans.

Mots-clés: sociologie roumaine; école sociologique; histoire sociale; sociologie rurale; développement zonale; méthode monographique.

Rezumat

În prima parte, studiul dedicat sociologului Henri H. Stahl propunem o viziune de ansamblu în *istoria sociologiei românești* oprindu-ne, cu precădere, asupra *Şcolii românești de sociologie interbelică*, mai precis, asupra *cercetării monografice* susținută de "experiența metodologică" a *Şcolii monografice* fondată de sociologul Dimitrie Gusti. În acest sens, se conturează contextul socio-economic și politic în care debutează și se dezvoltă "sociologia istorică" și "sociologia monografică", în general, precum și "istoria socială românescă", în particular, propusă de către Henri H. Stahl, ca "sociolog de formație istorică".

În cea de-a doua parte a studiului, plecând de la "cadrul organizatoric" oferit de *Școala* sociologică de la București, din perioada interbelică, am prezentat sintetic principalele curente de gândire sociologică dezvoltate ulterior, de către sociologul și metodologul Henri H. Stahl pe fundalul *mișcării socialiste a vremii – sociologia rurală* ("sociologia orînduirii tributale") și dezvoltarea zonală – fundamentate metodologic de "mișcarea monografică".

Concluziile prezentului studiu converg către relevarea importanței și a influenței abordărilor teoretico-metodologice propuse de către sociologul Henri H. Stahl, asupra dezvoltării sociologiei ca știință în România, atât din perspectiva sociologiei "*cogitans*", cât și din perspectiva sociologiei "*militans*".

Cuvinte cheie: sociologie românească; școală sociologică; istorie socială; sociologie rurală; dezvoltare zonală; metoda monografică.

1. An Introduction to the Social-Political Context of the Development of Romanian Sociology in the inter-war and post-war times

One cannot understand the process of the development of Romanian sociology in epistemological and theoretical-methodological terms unless one takes into consideration and also compares it to the international and the European contexts, to which the outstanding representatives who wrote specific exegeses in the history of sociology make reference. Hence, the Romanian sociologists actively got involved in scientific `bilateral` or `multinational` exchanges at an European or even international level, even since the second half of the 19th century. Although in the ante-war period, Romanian sociology had a `modest` involvement in the international exchanges through conferences or congresses, an `openness towards getting on top`, doubled by `collaboration and cooperation with other national schools and international sociological associations` is still to be noticed (Costea 1998, p. 349).

After the First World War, the changing of the international and implicitly European social-political context, having an influence upon the forming of the Romanian National Unitary State, and upon the establishing of the regional security, was like a launch pad for Romanian sociology, a domain that fully developed within the inter-war period. The promoting of the scientific international exchanges was exceptionally realized by the famous man of science Dimitrie Gusti (1880-1955), who was a known personality, recognized as a sociologist, a philosopher, an aesthetician, an academic and a political activist, amongst other prominent researchers who made journeys, paid visits, or went on scholarships and research mobility programmes, and for specialized training abroad.

Although the international and European context seemed to be discouraging, taking into consideration the 1932 world economic crisis which concurred the Romanian political crisis, the inter-war Romanian Sociological School went through a period of significant development under the main influence of its prominent representative personality of Professor Dimitrie Gusti, who was also the founder of the Monographic School, that is mainly a methodological approach, within the Sociological School of Bucharest. Practically, within this period (between 1910 and 1920) the specialized education in Sociology was concomitantly restructured in Iasi and Bucharest, by reorganizing the departments of Philosophy (Herseni 2007, pp. 146-164). Next, we shall underline several moments and crucial stages in the appearance and development of the specialized academic Sociology, as it follows:

- **1897**: This is a historical moment characterized by scholars as marking `the academic Sociology`, and which represents in fact the debut of teaching Sociology in our country, precisely in Iasi (starting with the year 1897) by C. Leonardescu (1844-1907), at a time when `many Western universities were still unjustifiably reserved towards this new science` (Herseni 2007, p. 68);
- 1910-1920 / 1921: This marks the stage of the `specialized academic Sociology in Iasi`, by reorganizing the `Department of Philosophy`. This period is related to the name of Professor Dimitrie Gusti who was a member of `The Department of History of the Greek Philosophy, Ethics, and Sociology` in 1910; within this context, as a Full Professor, Dimitrie Gusti taught the *course of sociology* at Iasi, at a time when I. Rădulescu Pogoneanu was professor at the same department in Bucharest (Herseni 2007, pp. 65-67);

- **1920-1948**: The stage of `specialised academic Sociology in Bucharest` is related to the name of Professor Dimitrie Gusti, the academic in Sociology who on 1st November 1920 was transferred to The University of Bucharest and appointed as a Full Professor of `The Department of Sociology, Ethics, Political Studies, and Aesthetics` within the Faculty of Philosophy and Letters of the University of Bucharest;
- **1925-1940**: It is the time when the Professor in Sociology Dimitrie Gusti, together with his students, started and developed the first *sociological explorations in the field* known under the name of `monographic researches`, from where the name of `the monographic school` was derived; further on, this way of doing research developed being qualified and known as `militans sociology`, as a huge `monographic movement`, because within the time almost 230 monographic campaigns were realized in 626 villages (Costea 1998, p. 345);
- **1948-1965**: 1948 is the year of the reformation of the Romanian academic system of education, starting `on new socialist bases`. From the very first, Sociology was integrated within the `Department of Dialectical and Historical Materialism` (Herseni 2007, p. 149), and afterwards this domain was completely removed out of the university curriculum;
- **1966**: This is the moment when the university curriculum reincluded Sociology and it started to be taught again. (Costea 1998, p. 338).

2. The Main Contributions of Henri H. Stahl`s to the Development of the Romanian inter-war and post-war School of Sociology

As the main commentators show, The School of Sociology of Bucharest developed as a *sociological scientific community*, following `the four steps pattern`, as it were the cases of `the established schools of sociology` of those times: The Chicago School, The French Sociological School (Émile Durkheim), The School of the English Reform (Charles Booth) (Costea 1998, pp. 295-296). Dimitrie Gusti's sociological conception is based on the theoretical-methodological paradigm of `the experimental society`, based in its turn on `pilot studies and social experiments` which makes *the prime mover of social change* towards a `scientific humanism` out of the science of sociology, within `an auto reflexive process` (Costea 1998, p. 300).

The founder of the Monographic School, Dimitrie Gusti, became famous during the two world wars for institutional restructuring, systematic thinking, renewing of the sociological method, the themes that he considered, and tutoring. He is the only one of the group's leaders who used all of the five ways in order to establish one's leadership as the head of the sociological school: The Seminar of Sociology, The Social Romanian Institute, The Ministry of Education, The Cultural Foundation, The Social Services – all these being the institutions that Dimitrie Gusti guided and also used in order to launch and make the Romanian sociological school famous (Sandu 2007, p. 2). At the beginning of the 30s, youngsters around Dimitrie Gusti, along with the entire young intellectual generation, tended to `enter the Agora`, the public, intellectual and political life, the majority of them finishing their academic studies, and looking for an outlet in their social and professional lives. Within this context, the professional communities group around the `monographists` which, although build their common identity, also differ significantly from one another by their personal approaches.

2.1. `Historical sociology` and `Sociological monographism` as Conceived by Henri H. Stahl

Professor Dimitrie Gusti's students, his closest disciples and collaborators, such as Mircea Vulcănescu, Henri H. Stahl, Traian Herseni, Anton Golopentia brought significant contributions that concretized either by an `encoding of monographism` or by shaping new methodological ways, in such a way as to contribute to `the typological diversification of the monographic researches` (Herseni 1940 / 2007, p. 300). Hence, Henri H. Stahl is considered by the exegetes and the famous commentators of his time to be, first of all, a `historically educated sociologist`ⁱ (Herseni 1940 / 2007, p. 229), whose thinking is under the influence of Nicolae Iorga's thinking, as well as formed by his graduate studies in Law, Letters, and History.

Henri H. Stahl `graduated from Law, Letters, and Philosophy in 1921. In the 30s, he was a devoted collaborator of Dimitrie Gusti`s, as a Teaching Assistant at the Department of Sociology. Within the mentioned period he was also the director of The Royal Cultural Foundation. He published plenty of academic papers, especially on *rural sociology*, but also about the methods of sociological research. In 1939 he was appointed the director of the Department of Administrative Statistics at The Institute of Statistics. In 1943, The Department of rural sociology was formed, wherein he first became a Lecturer, and then he took over The Department of General Sociology, as well` (http://enciclopediaromaniei.ro/wiki/Henri_H._Stahl).

From the point of view of *social history*, Henri H. Stahl is rather considered to be the defender of the *materialistic-historical conception* which represents the fulfilment of the view of the school that Constantin Dobrogeanu-Gherea founded, the interpreters in *the history of Romanian Sociology* bestowing him with attributes such as those of a `social historian` or a `Marxist technicist` (Herseni 1940 / 2007, p. 229). Even if these appreciations are justifiable because Stahl took over the course in Marxist Sociology that his former professor Dimitrie Gusti used to teach between the 29^{th} of January and the 11^{th} of April 1946, yet we

have to mention that this sociologist imposed himself in the post-war period, conferring *continuity to the enquiry* of the `historical-sociological through the monographic method` research. (Costea 1998, p. 337).

The sociological theory originated in Socialism is mentioned under the name of `new slavery` in the writings on the history of Romanian Sociology (Costea and colab. 1998, pp. 192-195), and it is a doctrine or a movement imposed by the scientific research, especially the theoretical one, in the field of the social and political sciences (Political Economy, General and Political Sociology, Philosophy), as well as in the fields of the theory of culture, literary criticism, and that of the sociology of literature (Scientific Socialism, The History of Society, Anthropology, Essayistics etc.), elaborated by Constantin Dobrogeanu-Gherea (1855-1920), as a `theoretician of Socialism as well as a practicing sociologist in the Socialist succession` (Costea and colab. 1998, p. 192).

Mainly, `new slavery`ⁱⁱ, as a Socialist Romanian Sociologic theory brings forth `the most controversial`, both `theoretical and practical` matter of the time (the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century), which is the following: `the evaluation of the level of development of the Romanian society` and `the legitimacy of the Socialist movement in an underdeveloped rural country` (Costea and colab. 1998, p. 193). As a consequence, the question that the sociologist Costantin Dobrogeanu-Gherea addressed – "What do the Socialists want?" – which cannot remain without an answer because it is still acutely actual, finds its answer in the study `On Socialism in underdeveloped countries` (1911).

Thus, along with *the theoretical-methodological innovations* in the research of `the mechanism by which the social global organism works` and in this case by which the Romanian society of the 19th century functions, Constantin Dobrogeanu-Gherea theoretically founded the programme of the `Romanian Social Democracy` by formulating his conception on `the development of the underdeveloped countries compared to the developed ones` which insists on the *temporal gaps* in the evolution of the `backward` countries compared to the evolution of the `forward` countries, as well as on *the character of these parallel evolutions*, which are fundamentally different compared to the two kinds of societies (Costea and colab. 1998, pp. 195-196).

As a consequence, the interferences and interdependencies among `social fact`, `historical fact`, and `sociologic fact`, as the contemporary sociologists show, are the base of the relations between sociology and history within the social sciences, the historical fact appearing simultaneously `as a dimension of general sociology, but also as an object of a more specialized Sociology: the Sociology of history` (Ionescu and Stan 1999, pp. 62-64). From this point of view, *Stahl`s historical-sociological perspective* represents a strong *cause of the continuity* of the Romanian sociological tradition during the Socialist age and of course an important contribution to the development of *the Sociology of history*, as an independent domain in our days.

The big challenge for Gusti's disciple, Henri H. Stahl, within the political context of imposing the Socialist doctrine in our country, was that of *continuing the*

process of reshaping the monographic knowledge because of `the requests of the social-cultural reform, the attracting to Socialism of the young students, in the same time with the encouraging the efforts of self organization of the villages by means of inventing the community centers and the rural schools, naming the role of the experts on transforming the local communities` (Costea and colab. 1998, p. 300). Although `The Monographic School` follows the specific lines of the theoretical approaches of `The Sociologic School`, which were promoted by the sociologist Dimitrie Gusti, according to some views (Bădina 1973), there seem to be `differences` between the two schools, and these differences are induced by the influences of the `materialistic and dialectic views` of some of the researchers that took part into making the monographic explorations; the avoiding of such errors was made possible by the respecting of certain methodological principles imposed by The Sociological School, such as `the thesis of the sociological parallelism (Miftode 2003, pp. 53-54).

Even since 1940, Dimitrie Gusti defined `the sociological monograph` as some `simple means to know reality thoroughly and detailed`, meaningly, as a `sociological system` and at the same time as `a working tool` (Gusti 1940 *apud* Costea 1998, p. 292). The sociologist from Iasi, Professor Vasile Miftode, talks about `the rural monographs` realized by teams guided by Dimitrie Gusti in the 3rd and 4th decades of the 20th century within a `larger sociological enquiry` on the Romanian *rural society*. The `*theoretical, methodological and technical*` arguments that are brought forth refer to the fact that a correct monographic research respects `*the rules of the exploration in the field*` which use a `*series of* adequate and diverse *techniques*, suitable for the researched matter, such as `the direct observation`, as well as using the *interdisciplinary* procedure when approaching the subject of research (Miftode 2003, pp. 52-57).

Taking into consideration the perspective of *the fundamental types* of hypotheses of the monographic research (Costea 1998, pp. 292-293) – `the hypothesis of the exhaustive monograph'; `the hypothesis "based on a key issue"'; `the hypothesis of "the resuming monograph on villages" focused on four themes`; `the hypothesis of the sociological monograph with or without a pilot village`, as well as `the hypothesis of the thematic monograph` – we remark the special contribution of Henri H. Stahl on the realizing of a *thorough or exhaustive monographic research* which was finalized as a published paper that is remarkable for its field and that appeared in a four volume encyclopedia – *The Romanian Encyclopedia* (coordinated by Dimitrie Gusti). In this way, the text that H.H. Stahl published – `The Social organizing of the villagers` – carries a suggestive name, in relation to the methodological and thematic meaning intended by the author (Herseni 2007, p. 230).

In Henry H. Stahl's opinion, 'the sociological monographism' can be expressed by a *strictly technical approach* in the concrete realizing of the

monographs, finalized by the elaboration of a `real *methodological guide*` that serves for realizing *monographic explorations*, such as (Miftode 2003, pp. 55-56):

- a. `Observing and recording social problems`;
- b. `Solving sociological issues`;
- c. `Organizing group field work`;
- d. `Practical advice to make monographs`.

Among the important books where Henri H. Stahl presents the methodology of the realizing of an *exhaustive monographic enquiry*, giving the examples of `village monographs`, we enumerate in chronological order the following volumes:

- 1934 The Technique of the Sociological Monograph;
- 1936 The Monographic Sociological School;
- 1939 Nerej. A village of an Archaic Region. Sociological Monograph conducted Henri H. Stahl (the `social item` of analysis is situated in Vrancea area) – it is a monograph in three volumes: I. The Cosmological, the Biological, the Historical, and the Psychological Contexts; II. The Spiritual Consequences; III. The Economic, the Juridical and the Administrative Consequences. Items, Processes, and Social Tendencies.

The novelty that Stahl mentions after `over 40 years of active research`– the experimenting of the theoretical researches directly in the field, in relation with his scientific and academic involvement at the university, to which his activities as a `professor, a social investigator, a in the field systemiser, and a cultural activist` – consists in the fact that `sociology made an important progress from being considered a "philosophical discipline" towards becoming seen as a "scientific domain". (Stahl 1974, p. 5). The main idea around which Stahl constructs his *methodological approach* is based on the fact that *the scientific sociological enquiry* has to prove its usefulness in the domain of *planning of the social policies*, this being seen as `an elementary duty of the scientists` (of the sociologists, as we add), when it comes to fighting against `spontaneous sociology` and against `improvised investigations` (Stahl 1974, p.15).

2.2. `Rural Sociology` as Conceived by Henri H. Stahl

The entire scientific and academic activity held by Henri H. Stahl in the domain of scientific sociology was based on completing his initial studies in Law, Letters, and History, with studies in Philosophy, and with a *PhD in Sociology*, to which we may add the fact that he went through all the hierarchical academic ranking structure and accomplished to get all the following university titles: Teaching Assistant in The Methodology and the Technics of field work; Lecturer (1943) in the Department of Rural Sociology at The University of Bucharest, and afterwards he also took over The Department of General Sociology at the same university. He launched new perspectives in *rural sociology* based on the way The Sociological School of Bucharest was organized. The Sociological School of Bucharest was

founded by the famous sociologist, Professor Dimitrie Gusti. In this way, `Gusti`s sociological system represented a real launching pad for the development of different branches in the domain of sociology, in this case, of *rural sociology* and of *the sociology of towns*, because it had as a scientifically accurate objective "the interweaving between the sociological analysis and the social activism", having as a practical finality "the changing of the social communities, especially of the villages" (Costea and colab. 1998, pp. 289-302).

To the social-economic, political, and cultural context that we have already presented, we may add the influence of Western-European Capitalism. The interest that Henri H. Stahl showed for the historical patterns of Romanian social life, especially on joint villages makes him a `ruralist`, meaning a sociologist which is specialized in rural sociology and zonal development (Miftode 2016). Moreover, his conception on the evolution of village social life and the influences of the migration to towns is based on methodological arguments obtained as a result of field work within the monographic movement of the rural areas. In this way, `the thematic monographic research', where H.H. Stahl combines 'the historical method' with 'the sociological method' in order to realize a real 'social archaeology` (Herseni 2007, p. 231), represents an important contribution of his as a collaborator and successor of the *monographic movement* developed by Dimitrie Gusti. Out of the many monographic works that he realized during the post-war period (1958-1965), the one in three volumes entitled Contributions to the Study of Romanian Joint Villages is most representative because herein he does a research of the ways of village social life, making `the most urgent of all the missions that a sociology researcher of the Romanian realities can establish` (Stahl 1940, p. 337) out of it.

Surpassing the historical-juridical perspective on the ownership of the villager, as well as the opposite theoretical views about this particular issue, Henri H. Stahl comes forth with a *mostly sociological* approach which would `place our village inhabitants` in `certain forms of social life`. Starting from A. Tschuprow`s ideas about making a research subject of Sociology out of *the form of social life* (1902), H. H. Stahl defines the concept of `village` in a `clear and distinctive` way, precisely `a certain type of village` – `the joint village` – which is characterized by the coexistence of two distinctive elements: on the one hand, there is a plurality of associated households, and, on the other hand, the households are a totality, each having the right to intervene in one another's businesses (Stahl 1940, p. 320).

Declaring one's mission as a sociologist, Stahl also puts it into practice. His mission declaration starts from the bare reality of social inequity which is created by the fighting between the village and the more privileged, i.e. the nobleman, a situation that stopped the process of development for the Romanian villages during those times. In this way, his large monograph created a hypothetical working frame, starting from the typology of the Romanian villages classified upon the criteria of `their internal social structure`, which shows the complexity of

combining the `two series of types of the joint village`. So, Stahl identifies two `types of villages` – the first type is `the free village` and the second type is `the village ruled by the landowners` – as well as more `subtypes` classified by the gradually passing from `one type of village to another`, as it follows (Stahl 1940, pp. 336-337):

- a. `The village of a group of free peasants;
- b. The village of a group of free villagers, letting strangers enter the group, but imposing a special tithe regime;
- c. The village of some free peasants who were taken over by a nobleman as a ruler;
- d. The noble village, where since the old times the community of peasants was ruled by a master;
- e. The colonial village, recently founded by a boyar, taking the community;
- f. The village of the double joint community, out of which one belongs to the noblemen, and the other to the peasants;
- g. Finally, the village where the community of the rich merged the one of the peasants`.

As **a conclusion**, `the "village" phenomenon` is associated in Henri H. Stahl`s opinion to `the plurality of joint households` which visibly differ from `the family phenomenon` or from `the coexisting of isolated farms on the same territory` having the status of `Capitalist autonomous enterprises`. To put it differently, `the joint village is but the connecting of households together within a unique "community" or "group". From this point of view, Stahl uses scientific arguments, especially sociological ones, in favour of the *independence* between *the social fact of people living together within a joint village* and the preexistence of any "rules" establishing their freedom or the ownership` (Stahl 1940, p. 321).

Hence, as the author himself sustains, because `the joint village` becomes `the main objective of explorations in the field`, we can draw the conclusion that the results of *rural monographs* from the inter-war and post-war periods can be considered the scientific base of *rural sociology in the present* and, as a consequence, the premises for *developing a sustainable rural / urban community*. Therefore, sociology, as Stahl shows, advances from a strictly theoretical, originally philosophical and historical approaches, towards a practical and applicative approach by `directly exploring realities`. In this way, Henri H. Stahl remarks, by calling upon the name of Ion Ionescu de la Brad – `the creative genius of militans sociology` a sociology of social assistance` as a `branch of a concrete sociology` of the modernity develops. (Stahl 1974, p. 6)

Considering the arguments that we previously presented, we can say that `the Historical sociology` and `the Monographic sociology`, advanced by Henri H.

Stahl in the inter-war and post-war ages of the development of Romanian sociology, can be noted down as *factors of continuity* of the famous contributions that Dimitrie Gusti brought within The Sociological School of Bucharest, including The Monograph School. The results of the sociological activity of Professor Henri H. Stahl are the more obvious the more the influences and social-political pressures of his time did not manage to distract his attention from the objectives that he declared involving the development of `cogitans` sociology, combined with those of `militans` sociology.

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