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REVIEWS

Sanda Golopenția (ed.), Școala sociologică de la București The Bucharest Sociological School, special issue of the journal Secolul 21, no. 1-6/2012, București, 264pp.

Reviewed by Stelu Șerban

The articles in this volume represent the first part of a corpus of texts and images dedicated to the Bucharest Sociological School. They center around the groups of participants involved in the School's research campaigns. The editors intend to follow up with a second installment, which will be dedicated to the results of the School's activity, specifically to its publications, exhibits, and projects. This second installment is programmed to appear in the year 2013, also as a special issue of the journal *Secolul 21*.

The post-1990 reception of the Bucharest Sociological School has been characterized by ideological distortions. At times, these distortions have extended into outright mythicization (Larionescu 1996). This fact is explainable. The social sciences were practically disallowed during the last decade of communist rule in Romania. The School's prestige, as well as the complexity of its defining characteristics, led to its uncritical acceptance immediately after 1990 for the purposes of (re)legitimizing the social sciences. There also existed a tendency towards sociological „nationalism”; a current for whom Dimitrie Gusti's so-called „sociology of the nation” seemed to provide a perfect alibi (Mihăilescu 1998). The focus on Dimitrie Gusti's oeuvre elided themes that made manifest the differences which existed within the School. Such themes include the appearance of „dissidences”, particularly those of Henri H. Stahl and Anton Golopenția, the foundation of the

two regional Social Institutes in Banat-Crișana and Bessarabia, and the diverse political affiliations of the School's most prominent members, including those of Dimitrie Gusti. Likewise neglected was the tragic destiny of personalities such as Anton Golopenția or Petre Ștefănuță¹, who headed the two regional research institutes, and who perished, the first in Romania's communist prisons and the second in the Soviet Gulag. Finally yet importantly, there is the matter of Dimitrie Gusti's disappearance into anonymity (1955). Gusti refused offers to teach at prestigious universities abroad, remaining in communist Romania. It took ten years after 1990, due in large part to the works of Zoltán Rostás², for some of these themes to be properly covered and the destiny of the Bucharest Sociological School to be brought back into the realm of historical facts.

The opening article, Dimitrie Gusti și Școala de sociologie românească în secolul XXI [Dimitrie Gusti and the Romanian School of Sociology in the XXIst Century] (pp. 7-23), is signed by Sanda Golopenția, the editor of the volume. The purpose of the article is suggested by the title, which is to trace the continuity of the multi-faceted phenomenon that was the Bucharest Sociological School. The article starts with Dimitrie Gusti – the founder under whose authority the School grew and evolved – and concludes with contemporary sociologists and anthropologists. In one way or another, these contemporary scholars carry

1) In regards to Anton Golopenția, scholarship is evolving on a normal path. This is primarily due to the efforts of his daughter, Sanda Golopenția. On the other hand, the fate of Petre Ștefănuță and the Romanian Social Institute in Bessarabia still await their due consideration. Save for the editing of Ștefănuță's works, accomplished owing to the determination of the Bessarabian ethnographer Grigore Botezatu (Ștefănuță 1991), not much has been written on this subject.

2) First, there was the splendid series of interviews with Henri H. Stahl (Rostás 2000). Next was the publication of his doctoral thesis (Rostás 2001), followed by a number of other volumes.

forward the ideas, theories, methods, and research agendas of the School. Even though Sanda Golopenția only punctuates names and chronology, she convincingly shows that the legacy of the School continues to bear fruit. The article also summarizes the contribution of each author to the present volume (pp. 17-23).

The first section of the volume, *Bilanț și perspectivă* [Assesment and Perspectives], is inaugurated by two re-edited articles. The first article is actually a lecture delivered by Gusti in 1940 during a conference at the Romanian Academy, while the second article is a fragment from a study authored by the renowned sociologist Mihail (Michael) Cernea. Cernea's study was published in Romanian in 1973. The other two articles in this section represent novel approaches. They are written by Frank Alvarez-Pereyere and Theodora Eliza Văcărescu. Dimitrie Gusti's article, *Considerații asupra unui sistem de sociologie, etică și politică* [Considerations Regarding a Sociological, Ethical, and Political System] (pp.26-47), contains a paradox encountered throughout his entire body of work. There is, on the one hand, a drive to theorize social existence as a system. On the other hand, one perceives here, as well as in other places, the freedom Gusti afforded himself not to complete this theoretical undertaking. Stated otherwise, the notion of a social system and its outline, which are interspersed throughout his studies, are only heuristic markers for the implementation of a research program focusing on interwar Romanian rural society. They do not constitute a finished, closed sociological system. It is true that most monographic surveys of village life are redacted according to the schema of the four frames (cosmic, psychic, biologic, historic) and their four social manifestations (economic, spiritual, cultural, political). But do they represent a canon, in the manner systematized during the communist period in the edited version of Gusti's collected works (*Opere*)³? The certainties we are left with are some fundamental conceptual and methodological principles, on the basis of which Gusti developed the institu-

tional ensemble he created.

One of these notions is expressed from the very beginning of Gusti's lecture, namely the idea that a „social unit” is much more than the sum total of its individual members (p. 30). Moreover, although individuals establish social relations amongst themselves, the relationships between social units are actually far more important, „because they extend beyond the structure of the [particular] social unit and place it into contact with other units” (p. 31). In this sense, the frames and their social manifestations are but the medium through which connections between social units develop. Other fundamental principles include the concept of „social will” – which conjoins the causality of social development with collective action and the achievement of its goals – and the notion of the „ethical ideal”. Always virtual, the „ethical ideal” hierarchizes the goals of collective action. These principles, too, extend the scope of Gusti's social philosophy way beyond the theory of frames and social manifestations. The junction between social theory and practice is accomplished in the domain of politics. From the perspective of the „ethical ideal”, politics has its own purpose, specifically the achievement of justice. Gusti understood justice as the „harmonization of individual, social, national, and humanitarian means and ends. Just actions [are those that] do not perturb the essence of individuals, nor that of social units, and neither that of national or supreme units, [namely] humanity, for only this way can political means lead to the creation of individual and collective personalities...” (p. 44).⁴

Mihail Cernea's article, reproduced from a 1973 edition published in Romania one year before the author's departure abroad, conveys the idea that Dimitrie Gusti did not elaborate a complete theory of the social system. Furthermore, the postscript added by Cernea for the reprint of the article in *Secolul XXI* emphasizes Anton Golopenția's dissident role in both in the School's institutional development and, more importantly, in transcending the frames and manifestations schema. In this regard, the per-

3) Gusti's collected works encompass seven volumes coordinated by Ovidiu Bădina, a participant in the monographic campaigns. Publication started in the 1970s and ended after 1990.

4) Many of the ideas and concepts deployed by Gusti in this conference are to be found in a political sciences work, more than sociological, published a long time before. (1920).

inent example constitutes the four volumes coordinated by Golopenția and D.C. Georgescu entitled *60 de sate românești* [60 Romanian Villages].

The next article in this section is the one authored by Frank Alvarez-Pereyere. It bears the title *L'Ecole sociologique de Bucarest: fondements, réception, héritage* [The Bucharest Sociological School: Foundations, Reception, Legacy] (pp. 58-79). The author is an ethnomusicologist and belongs to that well-defined group of western researchers – French and American – who, starting in the 1970s, debuted their professional careers by undertaking fieldwork in Romania, especially in Transylvania. Although his Romanian fieldwork took place in a specific area, namely Maramureș, the theme of Alvarez-Pereyere's article is strictly theoretical. The author analyzes the intellectual origins of Dimitrie Gusti's perspective regarding sociological research and traces the continuity in the realm of ideas of the Gustian legacy. During his years of studying in Germany, Gusti was primarily influenced by the psychologist Wilhelm Wundt, with whom he completed his doctorate in 1904, and the neo-Kantian philosopher Paul Barth (p. 62). Gusti's was also influenced by the French monographic sociologist Frederick LePlay. Alvarez-Pereyere notes that Gusti regarded LePlay's works much more critically than those of Wundt and Barth. The author argues that the contemporary relevance of the School's research style resides in its multidisciplinary and/or interdisciplinary methodology. The relevant comparisons are with French ethnologists who researched both native society (André Burguière, Françoise Zonabend, Isaac Chiva, Tina Jolas) and African areas.

The last article in the section belongs to Theodora Eliza Văcărescu and is entitled *Colaboratoarele înlăturate* [Dismissed Collaborators] (pp. 80-121). The title is deliberately provocative. The author applies a gender studies perspective, which is a relatively newly developed paradigm in the social sciences, to the phenomenon of women's participation in the activities of the School. We learn about

women's „massive involvement in these types of activities” from the very beginning of the article. Although women were not present in the research teams until the third monographic campaign (1927), in the next campaign at Fundul Molodovei (1928), which was also numerically the largest, 17 out of 60 researchers were women. Many of them were students, and they were segregated into a team that studied the „woman problem”. Văcărescu argues that the participation of women monographers did not result in the valorization of their talents, but in the „assumption and misappropriation of their work for the use and scientific recognition of the male researchers” (p.98). This hypothesis is tested by differentiating amongst several categories of women implicated in the School's research activities, as well as through several case studies. The author features Xenia Costa-Foru, Elisabeta Constante, Ștefania Cristescu, as well as the „invisible work” of typing, bibliographic research, translation, and data classification undertaken by Paula Gusty on behalf of her husband, Traian Herseni.

The second section bears the title *Tineret, Universitate, Ministerul Instrucției, Cultelor și Artelor* [Youth, University, and The Ministry of Education, Cults, and the Arts]. In the first article, *Tânăra generație interbelică* [The Young Interwar Generation] (pp. 124-144), Ionuț Butoi traces the chronological and intellectual development of this generation, youthful at the founding of the School in the mid-1920s, but who subsequently matured. The author pleads for the identification of the intellectual and social antecedents that laid the groundwork for the radicalization of the this generation of interwar intellectuals. Butoi underscores that there was such a thing as „before 1927”, the year Mircea Eliade published in the journal *Cuvântul* a series of articles-manifestoes for the young generation. After 1934, the „young generation” very apparently aligned itself politically, for the most part on the extreme right. Yet beyond this evident alignment resided a more complex motivation, with which the author engages in the second



part of the article by asking the following question: How did the young generation live? The author argues for the „individualization” (p. 42) of these intellectuals’ biographical trajectories. For this generation, the absence of a predictable and optimistic horizon engendered personal dramas, insecurities, and a drastic decline of confidence in self and others.

The section’s closing article, *Sociologia gustiană văzută de la Budapesta* [Gustian Sociology Viewed from Budapest] (pp. 149-158), is signed by Zoltán Rostás. It examines the ties between Hungarian sociologists and the Bucharest School, as well as the School’s image in Budapest. The article begins under the auspices of an excellent hypothesis. Rostás argues that the „rooting” of the social sciences in Eastern and Southeastern Europe took place almost exclusively on the „center-periphery” axis. The models were provided by „France, Germany, and England”, that is by the center. At the same time, dialogue between the peripheral countries was minimal or non-existent. A notable exception was the close influences between the Bucharest Sociological School and Magyar sociologists, from both Transylvania and Hungary. The author mentions Oszkár Jászi’s contacts with Dimitrie Gusti, both founders of social research movements, then details the experience of the young Budapest-based ethnographer Gábor Lükö. Having continued his ethnographic training at the University of Bucharest in the 1920s, he proceeded to publicize the activity of the Bucharest School in Budapest. It thus came to pass that, in the 1930s, a group of Budapest intellectuals led by László Németh came to Romania. However, Rostás also mentions the atmosphere of hostility and/or non-acknowledgment that surrounded these contacts in both countries. A short essay penned by the mathematician Solomon Marcus is interpolated between the first and third articles of this section.

A third section is dedicated to *Cercetări monografice* [Monographic Investigations], and is opened by Ionuț Butoi with an article on the theme of interwar intellectual stereotypes about the „undiscovered village”. În căutarea

satului necunoscut. *Monografiștii lui Gusti și sociologia satului românesc* [In Search of the Undiscovered Village. Gusti’s Monographists and the Sociology of the Romanian Village] (pp.160-176) shows that the leading monographists sought to dispel these prejudices. The author reviews the theoretical constructions articulated by leading personalities during the interbellic period; namely university professors and opinion-makers such as Lucian Blaga, A.C. Cuza, Nicolae Cornățeanu, and G. Zane, who wrote about the „backwardness”, „misery”, and „darkness” of the Romanian village, or Ștefan Zeletin, who saw the peasant as a „social parvenu” (p. 163). Butoi dismantles these clichés. They were part of a „modernizing-paternalistic” perspective (p. 169) that negated the specific socio-economic rationality of the village and, following Mircea Vulcănescu’s ideas, kept the rural world in another type of neo-serfdom characterized by „the dependence of the peasantry on intermediaries (large markets) and banks” (p. 171).

The section’s most consistent article is written by Florentina Țone. The article is entitled *Francisc Rainer. Campaniile monografice de la Nerej, Fundul Moldovei și Drăguș* [Francisc Rainer. The Monographic Campaigns at Nerej, Fundul Moldovei, and Drăguș] (pp. 177-202). It examines the health of the rural population investigated by the campaigns. Research in this sphere was directed by another great monographist, Francis Rainer. This research was undertaken not only in view of elaborating public policies that would meliorate this critical problem in interwar Romanian vilages, but also in order to articulate the direction of future scientific developments in Romanian physical and medical anthropology. These lines of inquiry remain relevant today. By reconstructing the stages of Rainer’s professional formation, the author shows that Rainer was already an accomplished and known personality by the time Gusti invited him to participate in the campaigns. The details of Rainer’s participation are conveyed both through the prism of his published studies and by utilizing the unpublished collection of Rainer’s letters ad-



dressed to his wife.

The third article in the section, (Auto)portrete fotografice [Photographic (Self) Portraits] (pp. 202-214), is signed by Raluca Mușat. It examines the dual role of photography as a tool of academic research and a means of representing social reality, including the daily life of the monographists in the villages which they studied, in shaping the overall image of the School. The author evokes the names of professional photographers such as Iosif Berman or Aurel Bath, who participated in the monographic campaigns but are almost unknown today. Furthermore, the monographists themselves took pictures, either of a personal nature or for purposes of publication. There also exist photographs taken by people who came into contact with the campaigns on a more or less random basis. Mușat emphasizes that, especially in the case of the professional photographers, „the images speak not only about the sociologists and their way of seeing the village, but also about the photographers themselves” (p. 203). She likewise identifies several categories of photographs. These comprise pictures of monographists during fieldwork or in daily life, photographs taken in order to facilitate „cultural work”, and images that convey a message of social protest. The photographs in the latter category, whose principal author was Aurel Bauh, reveal a sophisticated technique that sought to create an emotional impact.

The last section, Echipa regale studentești. Serviciul social [The Royal Student Teams and the Social Service] contains a single article authored by Dumitru Sandu. Entitled Village-managed Development. Ideologies and Practices in Interwar Romania, this study examines the interventionist policies and social practices of the student teams formed starting with 1934. Although the activities of these teams are relatively well-known, the author emphasizes that the multiple dimensions of their project are themes that still require further elucidation (p. 217). He means by this more specifically the voluntary nature of students' participation, their ideologies and so-

cial practices, as well as the attempt to institutionalize social activism through the enactment of the 1938 Social Service Law. All of these key issues are examined separately. The first theme, namely that of voluntary participation, is analyzed in terms of recent models of community development (p. 220). Although one cannot properly speak of community development programs during the 1930s even if one looks to other parts of the world, Sandu argues that the interventionist actions of the student teams constituted an avant la lettre community development model. Of particular relevance here are notions of „village-based development”, institutions such as the „Cultural House”, and strategies of persuasion through dialogue. The analysis of this development model is extended throughout the second part of the article, Între voluntariat și obligativitate [Between Volunteerism and Compulsion] (p.227-234). Here, one of the principal themes is inquiring into the reasons why the institutionalization of this model failed.

Overall, the volume edited by Sanda Golopenția is praiseworthy, even if does not mark a turning point in the scholarship regarding the complex phenomenon called „The Bucharest Sociological School”. Certain ideas, however, point towards future developments. For example, Zoltan Rostás only sketches his thesis regarding the tension between the established Western European models and the dialogue between „peripheral” countries that characterized the development of the social sciences in Eastern and Southeastern Europe. As has already been suggested, the comparison can be extended further (Jackson 1974; Rizescu 2000). Also insufficiently analyzed are the paradigmatic influences which leading monographists, including Dimitrie Gusti, assimilated and relocated in the ideatic structure of the School. The influence of Hans Freyer on Anton Golopenția, for instance, is barely mentioned in Dumitru Sandu's article (p. 226), although this influence was profound (Cotoi 2011: 147-159). To be sure, these observations in no way diminish the quality of the volume.



4) In Dumitru Sandu's article, Constantin Argetoianu's *Însemnările zilnice* [Daily Reflections] are cited as „Argetoianu și Neagoe...”, but the latter was only the post-1990 editor of Argetoianu's journal. Argetoianu was a politician and one of the most interesting personalities of the interbellum period. In the same article, a study authored by Antonio Momoc is absent from the final list of references. Unfortunately, there are more examples in the same vein.

But what is indeed bothersome is the neglectful aspect of the citation style. There are articles that lack a list of references (those of Alvarez-Pereyre and Florentina Țone), while in others the references are confused or do not appear in the final list⁴.

Translated by Ion Matei Costinescu

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Smaranda Vultur, *Francezi în Banat, bănățeni în Franța. Memorie și identitate* [The French in Banat. People of Banat in France. Memory and Identity]. Timișoara: Marineasa, 2012.

Reviewed by Ana Pascu

It is almost 20 years since Smaranda Vultur, professor at the Faculty of Letters, History and Theology of the West University of Timișoara, has been researching - using predominantly the methods of oral history - the issues of interculturalism, the identity dilemmas and the ambiguities of the memory of different ethnic communities from Banat, focusing primarily on Swabians of German origin and Jews¹. Smaranda Vultur's in-depth research extends on the horizontal spatial axis, in various towns, even going beyond the borders of the Romanian Banat, but also on the vertical temporal axis, covering a century of local multicultural history.

Smaranda Vultur and the team of researchers and students she coordinates are interested mainly in the specific cultural model of Banat, but also in the dynamics of the relationships between memory and identity. Thus, they are considering the study of memorial practices as means of reinventing the traditions of local ethnic communities and their re-

lationship with the other cultural practices (folkloric, literary, historiographic, political) of the respective communities. At the same time, she tries to capture the social dynamics, the mentalities and behaviours associated to memorial practices, the way in which they enact identity. And this is because the various groups' competition for memory implies regularly revisiting and recreating the symbolism of the past.

Smaranda Vultur studies the sinuosities of the memory of the generations at the beginning of the century, but she does not shrink from researching the Communist period, the deportations to Bărăgan or the former USSR, the 1989 Revolution of Timișoara, the collectivization, the memory of urban life in Banat, the theme of old age or death, relationships, and more recently, the memory of the war refugees from Bessarabia and Bucovina, who, thanks to the quirks of history, ended up all the way in Banat.²

1) From this point of view, seminal are the following works by Smaranda Vultur, *Germanii din Banat prin povestirile lor* (Germans of Banat in their stories) (Editura Paideea: Bucuresti, 2000); *Memorie salvată. Evreii din Banat, ieri și azi* (saved memory. The Jews of Banat, yesterday and today) (Polihrom: Iași, 2002).