



## **A Sociological School from a Communicational Perspective. The Case of Dimitrie Gusti's Monographic School**

Zoltán ROSTÁS

The School of Journalism and Mass Communication  
University of Bucharest  
zoltan.z.rostas@gmail.com

**Abstract.** In the following work we shall look at the communication strategies perfected by Romanian Professor Dimitrie Gusti (1880-1955), the founder of the Bucharest Sociological School, in order to popularize his innovations in the area of university organization and new methods of fieldwork. Likewise, we shall examine the activity of the Prince Carol Royal Cultural Foundation and the method of promoting a new system of social intervention in the Romanian villages. At the same time, we shall analyze the process of promoting Romanian sociology abroad and of organizing an international conference of experts in the field. Finally, we shall not pass over the fact that it was Professor Dimitrie Gusti, in his capacity as commissar general, who conceived and executed the Romanian pavilions for the world exhibitions in Paris (1937) and New York (1939), which enjoyed great success.

**Keywords:** Dimitrie Gusti, Bucharest Sociological School, Romanian sociology, communication system

### **Introduction**

The history of sociology mentions Professor Dimitrie Gusti<sup>1</sup> as the author of a sociological system, the founder of a school of sociological monographs and, as a

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<sup>1</sup> Gusti, Dimitrie (1880–1955), sociologist, philosopher and politician. University Professor at Jassy and Bucharest. Parliamentarian and senator. Minister of Public Education, Religions and Arts (1932–33). Founder of modern sociological education and the Bucharest Sociological School. Under his

tributary of these, the creator of the Museum of the Village in Bucharest. Lesser known is his work, with many ramifications, in the capacity of reforming minister of education, in 1932 and 1933, and as innovative director general of rural development for the Prince Carol Royal Cultural Foundation, from 1934 to 1939. Likewise, it is probably very little known today that he was also a leading specialist in what we today call public relations and branding. Here, it is not a question of the invention, under the impact of contemporaneity, of one implicit attribute of the Professor's career, but of the revelation of one of the sociologist's areas of conscious concern. Consequently, in the following we shall look at strategies to popularize, through the press, university innovations, new methods of research in the field, and a new system of social intervention in the villages. We shall analyze the process of promoting sociology, the activity of the Prince Carol Royal Cultural Foundation, and the exhibition methods employed in rural, university, national and international environments.

After being awarded a doctorate in philosophy by the University of Leipzig in 1904, under the supervision of Professor Wilhelm Wundt, Dimitrie Gusti continued his studies in Berlin, where he prepared a second doctoral thesis, this time on the phenomenon of the press. On the basis of thorough studies, in the forensics seminar of Berlin University he gave a lecture entitled *Fundamental Ideas on Freedom of the Press*, which he published in 1909. The attentive reader of Gusti's introductory study will realize that he did not examine the institution of the press as a jurist, but as part of a broader vision, as a sociologist open to the praxis of modern social communication, conferring upon it particular importance. What emerges from this study is the fact that Gusti did not limit himself to observing the existence of the press as an institution and its causes and effects, but also thought about its direct and mediated uses. If we take together his knowledge of the press and his knowledge of social pedagogy, we may understand that the professor also trained for the praxis of strategic communication, aiming at precisely defined target audiences (Gusti, 1969: 123-225). Dimitrie Gusti was original, professional and efficient not only in sociology and in heading the only school of sociology in Eastern Europe during the inter-war period, but also with respect to his bringing research activities and results to the public eye. Moreover, the founder of the Bucharest Sociological School became, in the 1930s, a builder of Romania's international image when he held the position of commissar general of the Romanian pavilions at the world exhibitions in Paris in 1937, and New York in 1939 (Rostás, 2005: 137-147). Researchers today might discover in Gusti's

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direction, the *Encyclopaedia of Romania* (4 vols., 1938-1943) was published. Member of foreign societies in his field. As president of the Romanian Academy (1944-46), he laid the foundations for the National Council of Scientific Research.

strategies of communication, in his production of an image, a lesser-known inter-war model of European intellectual comportment.

Beyond projects to popularize the activity of the Romanian Social Institute and the conferences it organized, the first inklings of public visibility for fieldwork are detectable as far back as the first monographic campaigns, i.e. those conducted in Goicea Mare (1925), Rușetu (1926), Nerej (1927), Fundul Moldovei (1928), Drăguș (1929), Runcu (1930) and Cornova (1931). The fact that Professor Gusti invited a professional photographer to accompany each campaign is not in itself surprising, given that photography is auxiliary to all social research. But in this case the camera lens was not pointed only at the subjects of research, but also on many occasions at the researchers themselves. Team members appear in larger or smaller group photographs, in the dining room or in carefully choreographed “compositions”, in which they can be seen working around a table, surrounded by standing peasant onlookers. The head of the School deliberately encouraged this practice, which was not scientific in nature, but which he considered necessary in order to construct an important component of the public image so important to the School.

The most eloquent example of a strategy to construct a public image is the famous photograph, republished many times over the decades, which provides infallible proof of Gusti’s status as a researcher. In the left of the photograph we see a young peasant woman, wearing traditional costume and wiping the nose of the child she is holding in her arms. In the right of the picture, Professor Gusti, as elegant as ever, is taking notes of the conversation between the two of them. What is the message of this photograph? In the first place, it is that the intellectual, the scholar, is bound to the folk, that he goes to the villages, that he bends his ear to the petitions of simple people. The photograph – the same as others of its kind – was intended to communicate the ideological position of the Gusti School, not to the village, to the peasantry, but to the political class and to the intellectuals. These photographs immortalize a construct of reality. The images in question are not research documents, but rather they document the intention to influence by means of the press, posters, exhibitions etc. a political medium upon which funding for research depended.

The well-known photograph of Gusti with a young peasant woman would have demonstrated in my eyes the evident quality of the professor as a researcher, had it not been for the fact that as part of my oral history project I obtained wholly different information from his disciples. In the 1980s<sup>2</sup>, I asked one of the

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<sup>2</sup> Besides Professor H. H. Stahl, as part of an oral history project about the Bucharest Sociological School, I also interviewed Lucia Apolzan, Ernest Bernea, Harry Brauner, Lena Constante, Ion Costin, Roman Cresin, Nicolae Dunăre, Gheorghe Focșa, Marcela Focșa, Coriolan Gheție, Paula Herseni, Gheorghe Macarie, Ștefan Milcu, Constantin Marinescu, Mihai Pop, Gheorghe Reteganu, Gheorghe Serafim, and G. Vlădescu-Răcoasa.

professor's closest collaborators, H. H. Stahl<sup>3</sup>, about the first methodological pointers he had received from Gusti with regard to the 1926 fieldwork campaign in Rușețu and was given an unexpected answer: "Gusti was unable to give me any pointers, because he did not have any experience in this domain. He was not a social researcher. (...) In Rușețu, for example, he did what he knew. He went to the village library, for example. Gusti had been the one who organized the Jassy University Library<sup>4</sup>. He was a specialist in the organization of libraries. (...) After that, he went to a stud farm near Rușețu, which interested him. He wanted to see it, to understand what such an enterprise was by speaking with the director and veterinarians there. Not with the villagers. He was able to speak with the veterinarians and was a good researcher at that level, not at the level of the peasants. (...) He was like a German professor. Very rigid, very distant. The poor man strove to be a man of the people, but he just wasn't able. (...) In both the town and the village, he always took pleasure in being well dressed. He was always immaculately turned out, with a buttonhole. He was amiable, affable, but he wasn't a researcher. The researcher has a different attitude. (...) At his age it was not even appropriate to act the 'simpleton', because that is what you sometimes have to do. To descend to the level of the peasant and lead the same life as them. He couldn't do it. He was a professor. Social research presupposes a whole series of roles, which do not fit with the dignified bearing of a professor" (Rostás, 2000: 52-53).

The discrepancy between the photograph which was circulated in the press, books and posters and the actual work of Gusti in the rural setting was therefore also conscious; it was intended to legitimize research at the political and intellectual level. As such, the procedure was neither surprising nor an isolated case in the competition for resources between different intellectual groups. What might nevertheless be surprising is the fact that the history of Romanian sociology has not perceived this discrepancy between the discourse of the photograph and the reality of Gusti's abilities. It seems that this has not been due to any lack of information, but rather the deliberate attempt to create a myth around the figure of Gusti has been preponderant in the perpetuation of this image/advertisement. Having begun in the 1930s, this

<sup>3</sup> Stahl, Henri H. (1901–1991), sociologist, historian, jurist, academician, Dimitrie Gusti's principal collaborator, and Professor of Sociology at the University of Bucharest until the discipline was abolished in 1948. Leading participant in the re-establishment of sociological teaching and research after 1965. He played a decisive role in the elaboration of the methodology of monographic fieldwork. He took part in almost all the School's monographic campaigns, and in 1939 was the author of the first complete monograph, about Nerej. He was the founder of Romanian sociological history. Likewise, he was the first in Romania to use statistics and the methods of historical archaeology in historical research. He proposed a new periodization of Romanian history.

<sup>4</sup> Disgusted at the lack of professionalism at the university library, in 1913 he wrote a study entitled "The Need to Reorganize the Central Library of Jassy University" and in 1914 a further study entitled "The Establishment of the Library and Seminars of Jassy University: A System of Proposals with Numerous Appended Documents and Plans" in *Opere* vol. 3, Editura Academiei RSR, 1970, pp. 39-56.

process of myth-building was resumed in the 1960s in the context of the rehabilitation of the sociological and monographic school headed by Gusti. The image constructed in the spirit of the transition from the principle of the class struggle to that of the incipient national communism of the 1960s persists to this day, without taking account of the legitimacy of the surprisingly modern and effective inter-war praxis of communication promoted by the Gusti school, on the one hand, or the anachronism of its contemporary reproduction, on the other. Knowledge of inter-war social history in and by means of the modern study of the Gusti School therefore requires the identification of the promotional manifestations of the school's activity and its derivations of social intervention, in order to examine, albeit summarily, the school's forms of communication. This investigation refers to the method of external organizational communication, which was directed both at the national and international intellectual sphere and at the archaic environment of the Romanian village. It likewise refers to the fact that the School as a team of experts contributed both to the promotion of Romania in international exhibitions and to the dissemination of the cultural policy of King Carol II of Romania within the framework of the Prince Carol Royal Cultural Foundation.

### **The School's forms of communication**

The following is a succinct presentation of the School's forms of communication, as they were developed from when Gusti took up his post at the University of Jassy in 1910 until the outbreak of the Second World War, which massively reduced the School's influence.

1. If we examine the relevant facts about the activity of Dimitrie Gusti and his monographic School, we can identify possible "roots" of communicational thought and praxis during the 1910s in the concern to modernize the university in Jassy and at the same time to present to western university circles the efforts to reform the university library and to found a sociological seminar. It is clear that Gusti was not content merely with the reform of a university structure, but strove for information about this to be disseminated in reviews published in Germany, where he had been a student<sup>5</sup>.

At the end of the First World War, Gusti regarded as essential the access of members to international scientific literature and the re-establishment and expansion of direct links with western scholars. To this end, he founded, on 16

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<sup>5</sup> See, for example, *Ein Seminar für Soziologie, Politik und Ethik an der Universität Iassy. Ein Beitrag zur Universitätspädagogik* in *Vierteljahrsschrift für wissenschaftliche Philosophie und Sociologie*, 1912/10

April 1918, *The Association for Social Science and Reform*<sup>6</sup>. He invited university professors from France, Germany and Britain to Bucharest to give lectures at the Romanian Social Institute (the result of transformation of the Association for Science and Social Reform, in 1921) and in his turn visited them on various scientific and political occasions. (Bucuța 1936). In a word, he created a veritable culture of communication between the social sciences in Romania and international scientific life. It is no wonder that in the period up until 1929 Célestin Bouglé, Eric Drumond, Guillaume Leonce Duprat, Edouard Lambert, Gaston Richard, Albert Thomas, Henry Gruchy (France), Werner Sombart, Ferdinand Tönnies, Leopold von Wiese (Germany), William Smith Culbertson, James T. Shotwell (U.S.A.) were elected honorary members of the Romanian Social Institute<sup>7</sup>. Having succeeded in making known the experience of the monographic campaigns carried out in the villages since 1925, in the 1930s he began to invite western students, doctoral candidates and young university professors to take part in such research.

The efforts toward integration into European scientific life also required the participation of Gusti and his pupils at western sociology congresses. After the First World War, however, it was difficult to rebuild the previous international institutional ties of sociology. The series of international congresses organized by the International Institute of Sociology was not resumed until 1927, after a hiatus of fifteen years. The resumption of these events constituted for Gusti an opportunity to make known the sociology he was cultivating in Romania. Given that his university assistant, Gheorghe Vlădescu-Răcoasa<sup>8</sup>, was also Romania's delegate to the World Organization of Labour, he assigned him the task of maintaining links with the International Institute of Sociology<sup>9</sup>. Thus, as early as 1929, Vlădescu-Răcoasa published an article entitled "La sociologie en Roumanie" in *Revue Internationale de Sociologie*<sup>10</sup>. Thenceforth, Romanian sociologists did not miss any international congress, with other researchers such as Xenia

<sup>6</sup> See "Apelul făcut în aprilie 1918, cu prilejul întemeierii Asociației pentru Studiul și Reforma Socială" ("Appeal made in April 1918, on the Occasion of the Foundation of the Association for Social Study and Reform", *Arhiva pentru Știința și Reforma Socială*, year I, no. 1/ 1 April 1919, p. 291-293.

<sup>7</sup> *Arhiva pentru Știința și Reforma Socială*, year 7, no. 4/ 1929

<sup>8</sup> Vlădescu-Răcoasa, Gheorghe (1885-1989), sociologist, economist and politician. Assistant to Professor Dimitrie Gusti after 1920, participant in the first monographic research expeditions. Representative of Romania at the International Bureau of Labour in Geneva. After the war, Minister of Nationalities in the Groza government, Romanian ambassador to the USSR, professor. From 1922, he made extensive contributions to the press.

<sup>9</sup> Due to this, a series of articles were published in the daily press, as well as in the *Archive for Social Science and Reform*, on the International Institute of Sociology and its conferences.

<sup>10</sup> Gheorghe Vlădescu-Răcoasa, "La sociologie en Roumanie", *Revue Internationale de Sociologie*, nos. 1-2, 1929.

Costa-Foru<sup>11</sup>, Henri H. Stahl, Gheorghe Vlădescu-Răcoasa et al. attending alongside Gusti.

Parallel to gathering the signatures of foreign scholars, Gusti took care to promote the School in the Romanian press. Because monographic research was ignored by the press, the professor also organized public events which were widely reported by the newspapers of the day. If we trace the evolution of press coverage, we can see that it grew in frequency from occasional mentions at the beginning of the 1920s to weekly appearances by 1932. By 1939, Gusti and his institutions were a daily presence in the pages of the press and on radio broadcasts. This growing visibility was also enjoyed by the foreign sociologists invited by Gusti to Bucharest.

2. Communication problems of a wholly different kind appeared when, in the 1920s, Gusti organized each summer a team made up of students and specialists to work on multidisciplinary monographs. After a few failures early in the campaign – failures in communication – the team's leadership came to the conclusion that the first logical manifestation of any research is to provide clear elucidations, within an agreeable framework, of the reason for the visit to the village. Such meetings for clarification purposes became institutionalized relatively quickly, under the term *sittings*. The manner in which H. H. Stahl describes, in 1936, the team's meeting with the village is by no means accidental: "We felt the need to ease our labours by informing the villagers about the aims we were pursuing. The handiest means to do so was to gather the villagers together and talk to them. In order to make this communication of ideas more pleasant, we would choose the occasion of a cultural sitting, given by us, the monographists. This sitting could not, however, be an improvised sitting, but rather it had to be a model sitting. So we strove to find the best methods of organizing the sittings. (...) The same system of blending the pleasant, the amusing, with short speeches to educate the villagers about health, work or elevating their hearts and minds. The same attempt to make the villagers actively participate in a sitting, by all kinds of methods, including giving out books as little prizes to those who could answer the quickest in quizzes, always proved to be the most effective" (Stahl 1936: 1164).

Besides sittings, the campaigns were sprinkled with small-scale events: competitions for the most beautiful traditional costume, the best-kept household, readings, etc. The inauguration of a cultural club or a sitting to enhance a co-

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<sup>11</sup> Costa-Foru, Xenia (1902-1983), sociologist, collaborator of Dimitrie Gusti from the monographic campaign of 1927 onward, having specialized in social work in Germany and the USA. From 1929, co-founder, professor and director (from 1935) of the Higher School of Social Work until its abolition in 1950. Within the framework of the monographic section of the Romanian Social Institute, she headed the team conducting monographic research into the family. Her work *Monograph Investigation of the Family* is regarded as the most systematic work to have been dedicated to research into the family as part of the Bucharest Sociological School.



operative were events at which the photographer could not be absent. We may also include in this category the social medicine campaigns.

Beyond their function of winning the villagers' good will, these events constituted inexhaustible sources of images to be diffused in the School's publications and mass-circulation newspapers and magazines. After Gusti took over as head of the Prince Carol Royal Cultural Foundation in 1934, the sittings – together with other activities to develop a culture of health and hard work – became obligatory occasions in the activity of the student cultural teams. Within the framework of the Social Service for young people, the sittings also took on a propagandistic role, becoming the teams' most important activity.

3. The main tools for propagating a public image of the activity of the Monographic School among the country's elite were naturally *the print media*. The School's first magazine was *Archive for Science and Social Reform*, which was established in 1919 and was the organ of first the Association for Social Science and Reform and then, after 1921, the Romanian Social Institute. In the 1930s, with the growth in Gusti's international prestige, the review also became the organ of the International Institute of Sociology. Given that it was a review of a very high level, appearing intermittently, the *Archive* was known only in specialist circles. For this reason, when he became the head of the Royal Cultural Foundation, and when cultural action gained a predominant role in the School's range of concerns, Gusti agreed, at the proposal of his monographic students, to found *Romanian Sociology*, a popularizing magazine. *Courier of the Student Teams* (and its successor *Courier of the Social Service*, after 1939), *Culture Club* and *The Bee* legitimized the School mainly from the point of view of cultural action. It is little known that the monographic phenomenon, not only in the form of research but also cultural action, was present (whether polemically or approvingly) in the newspapers of the time, through articles published in *Adevărul* (*The Truth*), *Credința* (*The Faith*), *Curentul* (*The Current*), *Cuvântul* (*The Word*), *Dimineața* (*Morning*), *Ultima oră* (*The Latest*), *Universul* (*The Universe*) and magazines such as *Azi* (*Today*), *Axa* (*Axis*), *Boabe de Grâu* (*Grains of Wheat*), *Dreapta* (*The Right*), *Excelsior*, *Lumea Românească* (*The Romanian World*), *Porunca Vremii* (*The Commandment of the Times*), *România literară* (*Literary Romania*), *România Satelor* (*Romania of the Villages*), *Seara* (*Evening*), *Sfarmă Piatră* (*Smash Stone*), *Societatea de mâine* (*The Society of Tomorrow*), *Stânga* (*The Left*) etc. The University Radio Broadcast – founded by Gusti in the period when he also held the function of president of the Radio Broadcasting Company – often hosted the monographists. It is therefore possible to argue that the School's image, as well as that of the highly varied concerns of Gusti and his collaborators, was noted by the public opinion of the time. Besides wielding an ideological influence on the young teams, the *Courier of the Student Teams*, founded in 1934 at the suggestion of H. H. Stahl and Octavian Neamțu, also played a practical role. Some unified means of



communication has become a requirement for guiding the dissemination of cultural teams' all over the country. The *Courier* became the first Romanian cultural-scientific newsletter (Văcărescu and Rostás, 2004)

4. Whereas the events organized in villages, their diffusion through photographs and publications of the School, had an ephemeral character, the permanent open-air exhibitions produced lasting effects. As early as their first research expeditions, the team members gathered materials for a museum of monographs, laid out first of all in the villages investigated, then in the Seminar Room of the University. At the inauguration of Drăguș (the village where the most successful monographic campaign was conducted) sociological museum on 25 November 1929, within the framework of the Sociology Seminar, Professor Gusti declared openly: "By today's manifestation, we first of all aim at making propaganda, drawing attention and awakening a general interest in monographic works" (after Neamțu, 1936:1021).

This kind of advertising took on an even broader scope when Gusti became director general of the Foundation. As is well known, he set as the goal of the Royal Student Teams the establishment of Cultural Clubs in the villages, which, besides guiding cultural actions, were also tasked with housing the village museum and the material collected by the monographic teams. Although this plan could only have an impact at the local level, the construction of the Museum of the Village in Bucharest meant the most impressive illustration of the exhibition techniques of the Monographic School. However improbable it might seem today, the open-air museum on Kiseleff Avenue in Bucharest was built (from the dismantling of peasant houses in dozens of villages to their reassembly in Bucharest) in just one month, under the supervision of sociologist H. H. Stahl and playwright, director and set designer Victor Ion Popa<sup>12</sup>, one of Gusti's collaborators at the Foundation during that period. It is true that this museum of the village remained unfinished, because for Gusti and Stahl the institution was meant to become a large social planning workshop, not merely a grandiose exhibition of the past of Romania's villages (Stahl, 1981:316-333).

5. After the antecedents in organization of sociological exhibitions and museums large and small, it is no wonder that in the 1930s Gusti was entrusted with the post of commissar general for the Romanian pavilions at the major international exhibitions. In this way, a strategy of communication employed for the Monographist School would be put into practice in the national interest. Of course, in conceiving the two pavilions, members of the School made their contribution, but beyond this, by means of the exhibits and informative panels, visitors were able to enter into direct contact with the results of the School's

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<sup>12</sup> Popa, Victor Ion (1895-1946), writer and playwright, university professor at the Conservatory of Dramatic Art in Bucharest, director, painter, set designer, inspirer of popular theatre.

research activities. After the smaller-scale exhibitions in which Romania had taken part in the inter-war period (in Belgrade, Barcelona and London), the most successful Romanian pavilions were created for the world exhibitions in Paris (1937) and New York (1939)<sup>13</sup>.

6. The most solid promotion of the Monographic School was to be the Fourteenth International Congress of Sociology, which was to take place in Bucharest. Beyond the event, planned for 1939, the actions of preparation were in themselves a complex process of communication, whose starting point was the festive moment at the Paris World Exhibition in 1937, when Bucharest was nominated congress organizer. There followed the official launch of invitations, which took place in Bucharest, in the presence of René Maunier, professor at the University of Paris and president of the International Institute of Sociology. The text of the invitation, just like the documents attached to it, reveals the considerable level of professionalism of which Gusti's team was capable when it came to organizing such a scientific congress. The congress's very broad theme, "Village and Town", opened the possibility for attendance on the part of a large number of sociologists and experts from connected fields. It is worth mentioning that the invitations – as an implicit means of communication – were sent not only to the one hundred full members and two hundred associate members of the International Institute of Sociology, but also to a further two thousand noted specialists in the domain.

Following the launch, there commenced the race to send out letters and to prepare the conference and its logistics. Details of these preparations are hard to

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<sup>13</sup> The organization of Romanian pavilions at various international exhibitions was a lesser-known concern of Gusti, in particular after he took over the directorship of the Prince Carol Royal Cultural Foundation. O. Bădina and O. Neamțu published commentaries on this activity in D. Gusti, *Opere*, vol. 3, Editura Academiei Republicii Socialiste România, București, 1970, pp. 442-563. H. H. Stahl also writes on the subject in his memoirs, pp. 342-350. There are frequent references to the issue of exhibitions in the volume of letters published by A. Golopenția, *Ceasul misiunilor reale (The Hour of Real Missions)*, Editura Fundației Culturale Române, București, 1999. From the following excerpt of a letter dated 2 August 1936 and sent by Gusti to Golopenția, who was studying in Germany, the thorough manner in which the Professor approached the exhibition phenomenon once again emerges: "Your proposal to visit the *Deutschland* exhibition is wonderful. I wanted in any case to send someone to Berlin. Of course, the current regime is at the forefront of decorative manifestations worldwide. / Until such time as I send an architect or someone else, this is my proposal: *Write to me saying how much you need for your trip to Berlin*, and send me everything you can when you get there: catalogues, drawings, plans, photographs, the new method of conceiving scale models, dioramas, statistical diagrams etc. If you can, leave for Berlin immediately and I will send you as much money as you need. Please stay in Berlin for this museum study *as long as required*. You would be doing me a great service. For the Paris pavilion I need suggestions and the latest results of *presentation technique*. *Maybe you can find a book on the subject*. Send it to me immediately. And include it in the expenses." From the letters published in the volume cited we can see just how interested the whole School was in connecting the construction of an image for research with construction of an image for the nation.

reconstruct, inasmuch as the disestablishment of the Social Service and the Romanian Institute of Social Research scattered the congress archive, and what was left behind in the Foundation and the headquarters of the former Romanian Social Institute, after the installation of the communist regime in 1948, was destroyed, together with documents connected to Gusti's School. From the few available memoirs, letters, oral history recordings, and brief press articles, we can conclude that Gusti wanted to demonstrate, through original works and through the communications of the young monographists, the legitimacy of his sociology, as well as the originality and efficiency of the methodology of cultural work in the villages. It was for this reason that he placed emphasis on the mobilization of his young collaborators in preparing for the congress.

In his capacity as minister of state and president of the Social Service, Gusti had access to even greater funds and increased the number of his collaborators. Inasmuch as the congress was organized under the high patronage of King Carol II, all the preparations also implicitly served royal propaganda, both at home and abroad. This circumstance increased the funds allocated to the meeting, and the congress attracted a surprisingly large number of persons accepting invitations.

Besides preparations with regard to management of the communiqués sent out, the organizers also introduced innovations compared to previous congresses, namely they held international exhibitions of sociology books, bibliographies, and the proceedings of previous congresses. A second type of exhibition was mounted in four rooms and presented items of folk art, with the necessary scientific explanations and connected research methodology. It was also in these rooms that materials illustrating the monographic campaigns carried out since 1925 in various regions of Romania were displayed. One of the exhibitions was held not in Bucharest but in the town of Făgăraș and presented the results of research in Olt County. Nevertheless, the most important objective of the planned excursions was the aforementioned village of Dioști in southern Muntenia, where the participants at the congress would have seen the *model village* designed under the auspices of the Prince Carol Royal Cultural Foundation (Gusti, 1970: 102–106).

As it is well known, given the tense atmosphere in the period leading up to the Second World War, the congress was cancelled. But in the two years of preparation for it (for Gusti had obtained the right to organize it in 1937, at the World Exhibition in Paris), such a significant effort was made, including a large number of new publications, that we might argue that its success was half assured even before the postponement. The fact that prior to the event, 108 works were sent out – six times as many as those presented at the 1930 Berne congress – is eloquent testimony of sociologists' interest. Of course, the congress – with a schedule including visits to villages that had been the object of research, documentary field trips, presentation of monographic sociological works translated into the languages

of participants – would have launched the Bucharest Sociological School in the scientific world.

7. Finally, also under the heading of image production we should not forget the *paramilitary ritual* of the Social Service after 1939. Developing the external side of the activities of the Royal Student Teams – easily perceptible to the wider public – the Social Service introduced uniforms, mess rooms, flag raising, patriotic hymns, and marching, thereby integrating itself into the cultural and youth policy of the royal dictatorship installed in 1938. This new direction was received with disappointment by many young intellectuals, and even by Gusti's most faithful sociologists. The way in which Constantin Marinescu<sup>14</sup>, a former team leader and later a Foundation inspector, comments on this deviation is nevertheless interesting: "This is what they said: we cannot counteract the Iron Guard except by using their methods. Which is to say, their procedures. They hold summer camps, we'll hold them, too; they labour, we'll labour, too; they use a certain terminology, we'll use a certain terminology, too. You understand? All that atmosphere of solidarity, of comradeship (wasn't this what our soldiers called each other: comrade?) – the Iron Guard boycotted the term. We would say, 'comrade commandant'. There were some who knew how to combat the Iron Guard by avoiding various turns of phrase. Neamțu<sup>15</sup> and Mihăilă<sup>16</sup> said, 'not using their methods, because they're not theirs. They're methods they've profaned. (...) These are things I have been meditating on my whole life. I discussed it with Neamțu so many times, at my house and at his. I even goaded him. These were my puzzlements. Why do we say 'comrade', I used to ask, when those villains say it. 'No,' he told me so many times, 'by using the term ourselves, we counteract them using their methods.' They would dig a well and make out that the Captain [Corneliu Zelea Codreanu] did it. Like hell was it the Captain. They did it by forced labour, in fact, and as a political show. (...) We didn't do it for political reasons – to come back to Neamțu's idea – but to educate the peasants" (Rostás, 2009: 131-135).

<sup>14</sup> Marinescu, Constantin (1914-2002), graduate in Theology and Literature, leader of the Royal Foundation team, inspector at the same Foundation.

<sup>15</sup> Neamțu, Octavian (1910-1976), sociologist, close collaborator of Professor Gusti, his successor as head of the Royal Cultural Foundation. He took part in the monographic research expeditions at Drăguș and Cornova, and headed the student cultural action teams (1934–1939). Together with H. H. Stahl he took part in the establishment and running of the *Courier of the Student Teams* periodical. He also took part in organizing the publication of *Romanian Sociology* and the campaign of social research and action named *60 Villages Researched by Student Teams*.

<sup>16</sup> Mihăilă, Iacob, doctoral studies in physical education and ergonomics in Hamburg, professor of the physiology of physical education at the National Academy of Physical Education (ANAF) in Bucharest, commandant within the framework of the Social Service in 1938-39.

### Concluding remarks

After this sketchy enumeration of image production methods, a succinct explanation of the above-mentioned practices is warranted. In my opinion, any intellectual group that wants to make a place for itself in the network of organizations and institutions of the age must develop a public image strategy. In the case of an *emergent* group, one with the aim of practicing a *new* profession – sociology – legitimacy cannot be obtained, for many years, except through scientific works. To do this, what is required (at least in the initial phase) is an uncontested leader and actions that can garner positive attention, but from official representatives of the villages and “sponsors” external to the village. The leader, in the person of Gusti, was the most appropriate, for the reasons already laid out. And it was Gusti who had the merit of discovering those strategies, whereby he succeeded in drawing attention to the importance of the summer campaigns with students. Moreover, Gusti managed to convince public opinion of the beneficial role of the research campaigns, not only for students but above all for villagers, who in their turn were grateful to the monographists and above all the Professor.

Following on from the above, which brings to our mind the practice of public relations today, we might ask ourselves whether Gusti was conscious of this strategy, pursued with such perseverance. We might likewise pose the question of whether this strategy of legitimization had been planned or whether it was improvised. Obviously, it was something planned and much improved over the course of time. In the famous appeal of 1918 for the foundation of his Association, alongside the research centre and the documentation centre, the third centre is for propaganda. It is by no means accidental that in this appeal of a few pages Gusti dedicates a paragraph to the following concern: “Besides scientific activity, the Association will organize a propaganda service to bring about social reform – to be decided upon by the Association – and social education of the masses through conferences, courses, meetings, and publications that together will make up the ‘Library of Social Propaganda and Education’” (Gusti, 1934:22).

This programme was not only implemented but also raised to a professional level deserving not only of praise but also more thorough research. Without this “art of legitimization”, neither the School nor the other endeavours would have existed.

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