

RURAL MONOGRAPH, PAST AND CURRENT PERSPECTIVES

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Abstract. This paper aims to present the specifics of the rural monograph, a research activity initiated in Romania in the interwar period through the Sociological School in Bucharest, coordinated by Professor Dimitrie Gusti. We also emphasized the importance of this field of research and its perspectives in the current context, considering that this sociological approach will represent in the future an efficient method for the complex knowledge of the realities of the Romanian village.

Keywords: monograph, sociology, rural, field research.

INTRODUCTION

The monograph is a comprehensive scientific study on a specific topic, treated in detail and multilaterally, from all points of view. Monographs are, in general, works of great complexity, operating with data and figures that cover all spheres of spiritual and socio-economic life of a wider locality or geographical area and their human communities.

As a result, their authors must be people with the capacity to synthesize, able to submit to a regime of long-term study, analysis and interpretation of documentary data that presents the past and present of a territorial community in a comprehensive perspective, approaching in a unitary style, integrator, the various elements that define that human entity.

MATERIAL AND METHOD

The method used in this study was the analysis of the documents referring to the rural monograph, the history of this research activity in the Romanian countryside, as well as its actuality.

The first Romanian monographs appeared in the 19th century, as monographs of some counties and nets. In 1893, in the newspaper *Foaia poporului*, a literary contest was established with prizes for the monographs of the Romanian communes from Sibiu county. As a result, 13 village monographs were made and those dedicated to the communes of Orlat, Gura Râului, Rehau were awarded. Later, other monographic works were made, some at the initiative of some teachers, priests and as well folklorists.

RESULTS

The rural monograph is related to the theoretical and practical activity of the School of Sociology in Bucharest, initiated by Professor Dimitrie Gusti. The rules of a good monographic research would be according to Dimitrie Gusti the following:

- ”A) theoretical training;
- b) sincerity and objectivity towards facts;
- c) the observation to be accurate and complete;
- d) the observation to be controlled and verified;
- e) the researcher to be documented and informed on the phenomenon he is researching;
- f) the research must be done by teams of specialists, so it must be collective;
- g) the researched phenomena to be compared with other phenomena.”

Elsewhere, Dimitrie Gusti lists the following rules specific to participatory observation made in the context of monographic campaigns:

- ”A) the observation must be sincere and objective;
- b) the observation to be accurate, ie penetrating and complete, to therefore embrace all the details in their variety, depth and unity;
- c) the observation, once collected, must be controlled and verified;
- d) the observation must be collective;
- e) the observation, in order to be scientific, must be informed and prepared;
- f) The observation should be intuitive.” (*Considerations on a New Sociological, Ethical, and Political System*, 1940, pp. 18, 315-320).

Thanks to Professor Dimitrie Gusti, the founder of the monographic school in Bucharest, started the study the in-depth scientific research of the Romanian village, on a modern theoretical and methodological basis. According to the sociological system, the rural would represent a set of economic, spiritual, legal and political manifestations that exist due to the frameworks (cosmological, biological, psychological and historical) being governed by the "law of sociological parallelism".

We briefly present these frameworks and events envisaged by Dimitrie Gusti in the light of a sociological research conducted in rural areas:

- cosmological framework (geographical location, climate, hydrosphere, lithosphere and biosphere); his study highlights the connections of the village with the geographical environment;
- biological framework (population census, its movement, hygienic-sanitary conditions); the research of this “framework” follows the relations between the social life of the village and its biological situation);
- the psychic framework (the soul solidarity of the village, the social cooperation, the personalities, the circles of sympathy) emphasizes the correlation between the soul life of the inhabitants and their social life;
- the historical framework (the village's past, the attitude of the inhabitants towards this past) pays attention to the village's connections with its own past, its relationship with the traditions.

Economic manifestations refer to the material life of the village, the directions of economic activity, nature and capital, tools, land improvements, profitability, trades and trade);

- spiritual manifestations define the general cultural state of the village (language, school, religion, library and cultural center, folklore and ethnography);

- ethical-legal manifestations express moral life (concepts and norms, deviations, moral sanctions) and legal life (customs, legal customs, contracts, inheritances, civil and criminal proceedings).

- the political and administrative manifestations refer to the attitude of the village towards the political life (parties, elections) and administrative (local, county and national).

The "social units" recommended by Gusti to be studied sociologically are: family and household, fundamental social categories for the rural area. Dimitrie Gusti observes that in order to talk about the monograph, we must talk about a well-defined social field, which would allow the method of direct observation to clarify the unknowns of that field.

Therefore, the main "rule" of the monographic method would be the delimitation of a theme or region and the descent into the field to study it on the spot (which in anthropological methodology is called "participatory observation").

The structure of a classical monographic study, the plan of the monograph of the village Nerej (Henri H. Stahl, 1939):

- volume I -

"I. The cosmic framework: 1. Physical geography 2. Human geography 3. Considerations regarding man's struggle with nature

II. Biological framework: 1. The population of Vrancea 2. The natropological structure of the population 3. The history of the family descendants 4. The demographic analysis of the area 5. The food of the inhabitants 6. The dwellings

III. Historical framework: 1. The village - elementary form of life of the Razes 2. Hive villages and swarms 3. The quasi-organization of Vrancea 4. Social struggles in Vrancea 5. The emergence of the current village Nerej 6. The process of dissolving the social organization in Nerej.

IV. The psychic framework: 1. The peasant psychic community

- volume II -

I. Spiritual manifestations: 1. School 2. Church 3. Folk theology 4. Folk science 5. Folk art: architecture; literature 6. Ceremonies and customs

- volume III -

II. Economic manifestations: 1. Economic categories in the village of Nerej 2. Tillage 3. Exploitation of natural pastures 4. Livestock farming 5. Logging 6. Various industries 7. Trade 8. Economic units: household and peasant budgets

III. Moral and legal manifestations: 1. Legal life in the past 2. Procedural life in Nerej 3. Forest Code

IV. Administrative manifestations

V. Social units: 1. The family 2. The household and the family 3. Roma people

VI. Social processes and trends: 1. Invasion of common ground by private property."

The systematic field researches, initiated by Dimitrie Gusti, brought together over time specialists from different sciences and, later, the "royal student teams". Such researches were made at Goicea Mare (1925), Rușeșul Brăilei (1926), Nerej (carried out in 1926, the researches from this commune will be published in the monograph *Nerej - un village d'une region arhaïque* - 1938, the coordinator being H.H. Stahl), at Fundu Moldovei from Bucovina (1928), Țara Oltului, especially Drăguș commune (1929, 1932,

1933 when 89 researchers participated and the results of the investigations were finalized in volume Drăguș - a village from Țara Oltului, coordinator Tr. Herseni), Runcu - Gorj (1930), Cornova in Bessarabia (1931), Șanț - Năsăud (1935, 1936), Dâmbovnic (1939), Hodac - Mureș (1945), the latter under the leadership of A. Golopenția. Interrupted after the Second World War, the researches of concrete rural sociology were resumed after 1965: in Belinț, then through the monographs of the urbanization of Brașov, Slatina and Iași areas.

Extensive field campaigns, in the spirit of the interwar ones, took place in Buciumi - Sălaj (1968 - 1969), concluded by volume *Buciumi - a village from Țara de sub Munte* coordinated by O. Bădina, D. Dumitriu and Oct. Neamțu), at Gârbou - Sălaj under the leadership of I. Aluaș, G. Em. Marica and I. Venczel. Later, through the school of sociology of Cluj, regional sociological researches were undertaken in Țara Oașului (1974 - 1976) and the Apuseni Mountains (1980 - 1985), both led by professor Ion Aluaș.

Among the recently published monographs (2020), we can mention the work "Sălaj at the Centenary" (coordinated and edited by professor Traian Vedinaș) is a valuable study that combines in the scientific approach the Gustian model, focused on the theory of frames and manifestations, with new, complex elements, specific to the sociology of development (which represents a comprehensive approach essential in the elaboration and implementation of sustainable development projects at the level of different types of human communities). With a number of over 570 pages and containing numerous photographs or maps, the volume is structured in seven chapters, each of which records a varied number of articles signed by various prestigious specialists who contributed to the study. Also, the work is made according to the authorial preferences in various discursive styles, presenting theoretical studies, essays, case studies, evocations, etc. The volume represents a reference monographic study, with interdisciplinary profile, coordinated according to sociological principles. Thus, going through the pages of the volume, we will know the past of this county, its demographic, geographical, economic, cultural, tourist, political or heritage dimensions, aspects related to infrastructure or education and we will find out its outstanding personalities.

CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, it can be said that the Monographic School in Bucharest made important contributions to the systematic knowledge of the Romanian village remaining as a model of Romanian - and European sociology of the countryside.

It remains for the actual researchers to carry with responsibility the beautiful history of this sociological activity based on monographic research, harmoniously combining the tradition with the modernity of the Romanian village, studying and respecting its values and identity.

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