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# Contents

# Editorial Preface

The present issue provides a thematic overview of the history of sociology in Romania and Hungary over the past century. Although the individual studies in this volume are not intended to be explicitly comparative, the common features, research themes, goals, and scientific quests that characterize the sociology of the two countries together are clearly visible when the entire content is considered. In both countries, the challenge is the same: how to thematize sociology as an axiologically neutral science in the context of the two world wars, and then, in the face of the socialist regime, how to sustain sociological research that is tolerated by a totalitarian regime. Finally, a common element is how the sociology of our time rescues, recreates, and ultimately preserves the sociological legacy of the last century. These questions are answered in this volume as follows.

First of all, Zoltán Rostás's paper explicitly outlines the common features of the history of sociology in Central and Eastern Europe, as mentioned above, so that we can view the challenges of Hungarian and Romanian sociology in a broader regional context. Next, we are given an insight into the workings of the Gusti School in Bucharest, where Ionuț Butoi's paper documents the ideological, and in many cases even personal, conflicts that often accompany institution building and development. Theodora-Eliza Văcărescu examines the position of women researchers at the Gusti School, highlighting the age-old issue of gender inequality and the need to address the issue of the gendered nature of the research process.

Afterwards, Péter Harsányi will look at the history of sociology in Hungary, examining the content of the Hungarian Review of Social Sciences in the period of 1908–1918, in search of the answer to the question of how the issue of nationality was thematized in contemporary sociology. Éva Ale examines the development of sociography in Hungary, its scientific and institutional challenges, and its survival. Vera Szabari's paper also looks at the challenges of institutionalization in post-1956 Hungarian sociology in the specific contextual climate of the socialist system. Erzsébet Takács's study outlines approaches to the Hungarian sociological discourse up to the present day in the context of a specific topic, natalism. Lastly, Balázs Telegdy's review of Levente Székedi's book shows how Hungarian sociology in Transylvania formulated typical themes and survival options in the post-1945 period.

Reading these papers together, the issue thus aims to provide a snapshot of this characteristic slice of Central and Eastern European sociology while also highlighting how the schools of the time tried to address national, more specific themes in a way that could be integrated into the wider international scholarship.

# A Sociological Panorama after the Great War. A Central and Eastern European Comparatist Attempt

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**Abstract.** This article attempts to draw a general outline of comparative Central and Eastern European sociology. It focuses on the year 1918, when the Great War ended, and it explores the background and continuation of the (re)birth of sociology. The study is justified by the fact that the history of the national schools of sociology has been approached in correlation with Western centres, and therefore a regional approach is needed. First, the study differentiates between countries that were allied to the victorious powers in the First World War and countries that lost the war, between countries where sociology gained momentum and countries where science suffered. In the countries that were at an advantage – Czechoslovakia, Poland, Romania, and Serbia –, sociology was at very different stages of institutionalization, but it registered significant progress until the 30s. The countries that lost – Bulgaria, Russia, and Hungary – were not only more weakened after the war but also plagued by revolutions, civil wars, and retaliations; they were not a fertile ground for sociological production. Apart from Russia, it is only in the 1930s that sociology started to considerably develop in these countries. The article does not only compare the status of sociology in the seven countries, but it also explores the evolution of the relationships between them. After an understandable dependence on the Western academic centres, there was the possibility for a regional identity to form.

**Keywords**: couch sociology, field sociological research, revolution, war, monographic sociology, associations and institutes of sociology, Central and Eastern Europe

## Introduction

The goal of this study is to draw attention to the importance of a comparative analysis of the experience of some Central and Eastern European countries related to the (re)birth of sociology after the Great War. Traditionally, the object of

the studies was and still is the relationship with Western personalities, institutes, and departments. This is due to the fact that in Eastern Europe sociology – in different periods and in different ways – was inspired by Western scientific centres. Without denying the importance of such influences, we will draw attention to the fact that studying the regional perspective might yield surprising benefits. This analysis is justified for at least two reasons. Firstly, it is surprising how many connections existed between these relatively young sociologies in the first decades of the twentieth century. Secondly, knowing more and more about the social sciences activity in the neighbouring countries in Eastern Europe allows us to also understand our own sociology better.

The First World War paralysed international institutional communication in sociology, but it did not, in itself, influence the growth of the discipline. Its paradigms do not seem to change immediately under the influence of the political events that took place. But a long-term war, which shattered empires, brought about revolutions and the emergence or the enlargement of some national states rearranged the social sciences' networks and instilled a surprising scientific emulation.

It is true that the Great War, the confrontation between the Entente countries and the Central Powers, also polarized sociology, especially in France and Germany. But it was not a general phenomenon because, for instance, neither the Romanian sociologist Dimitrie Gusti (1875–1957) nor the Hungarian sociologist Oszkár Jászi (1875–1957) were hostile towards the sociologists from the countries at war. It seems that the French–German tension that extended after the war did not affect some of the Eastern European sociologies, which registered a strong impetus right from the end of the war. As a working hypothesis for our comparative analysis, we can note how strongly related the development of the social sciences was to the degree of development of democracy in each country. In the special case of the (re)start of the social sciences after the Great War, the first observation would be that the fate of the sociological movements was influenced by the status of the respective countries – whether they were winners or losers after the war ended. In Poland, Czechoslovakia, Romania, and Serbia, given that they had more or less strong backgrounds, sociology developed without the interference of the authorities, sometimes even with the help of state institutions. On the other hand, the countries that lost the war – such as Bulgaria, Russia, and Hungary – went through revolutions, uprisings, and major attacks, which led to the emergence of some political regimes that were hostile to sociology. Already well-established sociologists have been chased away from Bolshevik Russia and from Horthy's conservative Hungary as well, and the research of those who stayed were hindered or even completely banned.

# Unshackled Sociologies

If we were to draw a Central and Eastern European panorama of the state of sociology at the end of the war, we could be under the impression that the emergence of the Czechoslovakian state in the aftermath of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy's breaking up offered this science the greatest chance. The reason is simple. The person who struggled for the formation of the Czechoslovakian state and who became its first president was Tomáš G. Masaryk (1850–1937), himself a renowned sociologist. Moreover, his successor at the department set up at the new Czech university in Prague, Edvard Beneš (1884–1848), Minister of Foreign Affairs and then President, was also a sociologist. It is not by chance that Czechoslovakia was nicknamed the sociologists' republic.

Nevertheless, as Marek Skovajsa concluded from the literature in the field, after the war it is not the University of Prague that became the flagship of scientific sociology, as Prague remained stuck in the paradigm of national and state building, promoted by Masaryk before the war. On the other hand, at the University of Brno, Professor Arnošt Bláha (1879–1960) set up a modern education system focused on researching social reality with the help of Western – primarily American – methods. Starting as Masaryk's disciple, Bláha shared the ethicist approach of his master, but, given his allegiance to empirical research of social reality, he created a true sociological school in Brno, which influenced the social sciences in the country.

> It might seem that this polarity can, in large measure, be accounted for by the rivalry between the capital, Prague, and the regional centre, Brno, or, more appropriately, by the complex dynamics of centre–periphery relations within a nation-state. But, in fact, this geographical tension is of secondary importance. The conflict which defined the character and delimited the possibilities of interwar Czech sociology was the one between those who saw sociology as applied social philosophy in service of the national community, often with a moralizing and religious-based agenda, and those who wanted to practice sociology as an "objective", secular, and empirical social science. This was to a large extent a generational issue, pitting the students and followers of Tomáš G. Masaryk, born around 1890 or earlier, against the younger cohort born around 1900, which drew inspiration from the discipline's development in the most advanced Western countries. (Skovajsa–Balon 2022: 51–52)

Despite the inadequacy of Prague sociology with regard to the modern requirements of the science and despite the tensions between the Prague group and the Brno group, Czechoslovakian sociology also developed outside the

university framework, which, like most European universities, did not have funds for research – an indispensable activity for sociology. Thus, in 1928, the Ministry of Education took the initiative to set up the Prague Free School of Political Science, a post-secondary institution that offered training in social sciences and journalism. Here, Professor Emanuel Chalupný (1879–1958) taught sociology, alongside other ten sociologists, who taught several courses. Earlier, in 1920, the Social Institute of the Czechoslovakian Republic had also been set up, under the auspices of the Ministry of Social Welfare. It was a non-profit association that, besides the specialized expert consulting for the ministry, carried out social sciences research.

Besides the beginning of certain forms of sociological education and research, there also emerged forms of professional association intended to maintain the connections among these specialists. "The first professional association of sociologists in Czechoslovakia, the Masaryk Sociology Society (MSS), was set up in 1925, with the substantial support of the Social Institute, which offered the building, administrative support and a modest annual financial contribution (drastically diminished once the economic crisis started)" (Skovajsa–Balon 2022: 62). The *Sociologicka revue* [Sociology Review], set up in 1930, also thanks to Professor Bláha, had a great contribution to the institutionalization of sociology. This was the first year of the most fruitful period of sociology, which was going to be interrupted in 1938, once the Nazi Germany tore apart the First Czechoslovak Republic.

Despite the state being divided among the three European empires, the Polish sociology started early, in the nineteenth century, within informal intellectual environments, but not in universities.

> The most important achievement of the first period in the history of sociology in Poland was the book *System socjologii* [System of Sociology], written by Ludwik Gumplowicz and published in 1887. From the appearance of Supinski's work to Gumplowicz's dissertation, sociology in Poland was practised only in the convention of positive philosophy, inspired by Herbert Spencer, John S. Mill and Ludwik Gumplowicz. From the 1880s, the popularity of the sociology of Émile Durkheim, Gabriel Tarde, Wilhelm Wundt, and, above all, Karl Marx grew. A witness of these times noted: "Marx is the master of the future – not Spencer!" Parallel to theoretical reflection, empirical sociological research was also carried out, taking place within the framework of the Socialist and Social-Christian movement.
> Until 1918, sociology developed without any institutional setting. The postulate of a sociology lecture at universities, proclaimed at the first congress of Polish lawyers and economists from 1887, remained

unanswered. The attempt to set up a sociology department at the University of Krakow failed in the first decade of the twentieth century. However, a spectacular event was the organization in Warsaw of secret higher-level scientific courses, called the "flying university", where, in 1888, sociology began to be taught. The nascent sociology in Polish science failed to unite research efforts; the resulting works were the endeavours of "private scientists" acting alone. A sociological association of sociologists was not created. (Wincławski 2022: 84–85)[1]

When independence was restored, after 121 years of occupation, in 1918, even though the main task was to "reinvent" the state and reject the attacks of Bolshevik Russia, Polish sociology started to institutionalize, first of all with professors – who had until then worked in European universities – setting up sociology departments. Thus, two departments were set up at the University of Warsaw, led by Leon Petrażycki (1867–1931) since 1919 and by Ludwik Krzywicki (1859–1941) in 1921. Another department was set up in Poznań under the leadership of Florian Znaniecki (1882–1958) since 1920 and yet another one at the Free Polish University in Warsaw, led by Ludwik Krzywicki since 1920.

From the same period, we could mention sociology courses at the Catholic University in Lublin, at the faculties of economy or political sciences in Warsaw, Cracow, Lviv, and Vilnius. But the consolidation of sociology in these universities was not an easy task. It had to overcome the mistrust and even hostility of old-school historians, psychologists, and pedagogues, and sometimes also the aversion to the methods of the German science. Given that the universities were not capable of providing the research requirements needed by the Polish society and state, the Central Statistics Office was set up in 1919, and in 1920 the Social Economics Institute was established based on the model of the old *Verein für Sozialpolitik* (set up in Germany in 1873).

The Institute – the author adds – was a scientific and social organization close to the ideological movement of the working class, which undertook first of all research regarding the working class and the impoverishment of the population caused by the economic crisis. The peasants were considered an urgent issue for the country. They represented a little over half of the population throughout the entire interwar period and mostly lived in poverty. The Faculty of Agrarian Economics was set up in the beginning of the year 1926 with the aim to carry out research regarding the social relations and living conditions in the rural environment. (Wincławski 2022: 88)[2]

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1    Translated by the author.
2    Translated by the author.

Besides these university departments and this institute, other research places were set up according to other criteria:

> Within the borders of the reborn Polish state, there were about 35% of citizens of a different nationality than Polish. The answer to such a large national minority was the establishment of the Institute for the Study of Nationality Affairs at the end of 1921. Its goal was to undertake research on national minorities and to develop social policy for these groups. They were entrusted to sociologists. A Jewish minority, 10% of the Polish citizens, created a network of their own cultural institutions, including educational and scientific institutions. The Jewish Scientific Institute "JIWO" was established in Vilnius, where social studies of the Jewish diaspora were undertaken.
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> Other scientific and research institutions for studying social issues were created: emigration, local self-government, and cooperatives. Regional research institutes were established, such as the Silesian Institute, the Western Institute, and the Baltic Institute, in which several sociological studies were undertaken. (Wincławski 2022: 88–89)[3]

The Polish research grew and diversified with every passing year, the Eastern European sociological research becoming most widely recognized in the Western scientific world.

When Greater Romania was formed, after the First World War, sociology also knew a vigorous development, but its strategy had already been outlined since the time of the Old Kingdom of Romania. It is intrinsically connected to Professor Dimitrie Gusti's initiatives, who in 1913, attempting to organize a social sciences journal, established the major tasks of the future research of Romanian social reality in a letter to the intellectuals of all fields and politicians of all orientations. Thus, Gusti wrote to the future contributors of the journal *Arhiva pentru Ştiinţa şi Reforma Socială* [The Archives for Social Science and Reform]:

> Undeniably, the lack of a thorough knowledge and correct assessment of the Romanian social reality contributed to a great extent to the four unheard-of events that shook to the roots the foundation of the Romanian State in only twenty-five years: the social revolution of 1888, the financial crisis of 1900, the social revolution of 1907, and the painful experience in the foreign policy of 1913! It is, therefore, high time to renounce the comfortable *laissez faire – laissez aller* and to analyse the causes that led to these national events and to thoroughly reflect on the means to restore and to prevent possible future events of this kind, in all the seriousness

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3    Translated by the author.

required by the gravity of the problems, using all the means that scientific thinking and method offer us. (Gusti 1934: 426–427)[4]

The Balkan Wars and the First World War cut these plans short. But even before the end of the war, with Romania being still under attack, Gusti set up the Association for Social Science and Reform in Iaşi (the refuge capital of the country) in March 1918, based on the idea that the country needed reforms, and these reforms had to be based on scientific research in different directions. In "A few explanations" included in the appeal launched in Iaşi in 1918 for the setting up of the Association, which later became an Institute, Gusti specified the "sections" which would allow the organization of a complete and methodical research of "the Romanian social life, under all its facets": „1. the agrarian section; 2. the commercial and industrial section; 3. the financial section; 4. the juridical section; 5. the political and administrative section; 6. politics and social hygiene; 7. the cultural section" (Gusti 1946: 29).

The reason behind setting up this Association was also the fact that – based on his experience – he was convinced that Romanian universities could not undertake field research and that only extra-university associations and institutions could start such an endeavour. An important moment in the institutionalization of sociology represented the January 1919 setting up of the journal *Arhiva pentru Ştiinţa şi Reforma Socială* [Archives for Social Science and Reform], which was at first the forum of all local and international social sciences, but which, after a few years, became the main disseminator of the results of Romanian empirical sociological research (Rostás 2005: 12–17). After Bucharest had been restored as the actual capital city of Greater Romania, Gusti moved to the University of Bucharest, where he also relocated the Association, transforming it into the Romanian Social Institute.

In Romania, the number of universities doubled, but the departments in the universities of Iaşi – led by Petre Andrei –, Cluj – coordinated by Virgil Bărbat and then by Constantin Sudeţeanu –, and Cernăuţi – set up by Traian Brăileanu – cultivated theoretical sociology, without any relation to the research of the social reality in the country. It was not only the Romanian Social Institute that favoured empirical sociological research but also Professor Dimitrie Gusti's setting up from the start of a *sui generis* sociology seminar (a creative workshop) for students. It is from this seminar that the first research on university life started in order to establish the real causes of the student uprisings of 1922. It was also from this seminar that the innovative multidisciplinary monographic research of Romanian villages began under the auspices of the Romanian Social Institute, based on Dimitrie Gusti's social theory and under his guidance. Thus, this research would soon produce the young members of the Bucharest Sociological School, such as

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4    Translated by the author.

Xenia Costaforu, Ștefania Cristescu, Dumitru C. Georgescu, Anton Golopenția, Traian Herseni, Henri H. Stahl, Mircea Vulcănescu, and many more, who took rural monographic research to a European level.

Gusti's sociological movement, which started and developed with the help of volunteers, received a royal/sate support only in the 1930s, thus widening its activity to include social intervention in villages. Based on these results, in 1937, Gusti was to be entrusted with the organization of the 14th International Sociology Congress, set to take place in Bucharest, which the organizers wanted to use in order to extend their relationships with peers from all over the world but first of all from the neighbouring Central and Eastern European countries.

The beginnings of Serbian sociology proceeded as a series of enthusiastic attempts that, after the promising first steps, were cut short by wars, lack of funding, political repression, inconstancy of the protagonists, or all of the above. Compared to the advanced European nations, and even to the closer examples of, say, Romania or Hungary, Serbian sociology was late to emerge, and even later to take hold. Its foundations were laid in the period between the two world wars, which, apart from giving rise to the first professional associations, journals, and university courses, also provided a convincing demonstration of how politics held sway over sociology's fate (Spasić et al. 2022: 11).

This is how the authors – actually well informed regarding the evolution of social sciences in the neighbouring countries – start their analysis of the beginning of Serbian sociology. Analysing how this field emerged in the given historical context, we can observe a notable difference from other regional experiences. Therefore, even though elements of Serbian sociological thinking had existed before the Great War, in 1918 they did not add up to the background for the institutionalization of sociology. The first great forerunner of sociology was Vuk Stefan Karadzić (1787–1864), who brought important contributions to the research of the extended family (*zadruga*), which remained a permanent theme of sociology even decades later. Jovan Cvijić (1865–1927) was more systematic and worked taking into account the literature of the period, and he cultivated a human geography that gathered recognition also in France. The history of Serbian science can pride itself on Valtazar Bogisić (1834–1908), an important law sociologist, who came to be even the chairman of the International Sociology Institute, but who worked outside Serbia and did not have a direct influence on the intellectual life in his country (Kovács 1983: 457–463). In 1912, there was an attempt to set up a society of sociologists, but it did not have continuity.

After the war and after the kingdom of the southern Slavs had been formed, the first sign of institutionalization was the setting up of the first Serbian sociological journal, *Društveni Život* [Social Life], at the initiative of Professor Mirko Kosić in Belgrade in 1920. Two years later, in 1922, the journal suspended its activity. The next attempt took place in 1930, when the renewed journal emerged at the

University of Novi Sad, under the leadership of the same professor from the Subotica School of Law. Not even this journal was published for more than a year. Nevertheless, in the 30s, the institutionalization of sociology gained momentum with the setting up of a department at the School of Law within the University of Belgrade and the setting up of the two associations that published their own journal, *Sociološki Pregled* [Sociological Review], in 1938, under the leadership of professor Đorđe Tasić. Therefore, despite the late start in the process of institutionalization, Serbian sociology made so much progress that it became possible for it to be noticed at an international level. It is not by chance that when the 14th International Sociology Congress of Bucharest was organized, the Romanian sociologists invited twenty-one colleagues from Yugoslavia, ten of whom also sent their papers in advance.

## Distressed Sociologies

It is less known that the end of the Great War also had a devastating effect on some of the Central and Eastern European sociologies. In the aftermath of the breaking up of empires, there appeared surprising phenomena related to sociology. For instance, there were similarities between Russia and Hungary: in both countries, sociologists supported the coming to power of governments with democratic intentions – the Alexandr Kerenski (1881–1971) government in Sankt Petersburg, the Mihály Károlyi (1875–1955) government in Budapest –, but they were both overturned by Bolshevik coups, and this forced sociologists to emigrate. Yet, there is a difference between the two developments, as the short-lived Soviet power in Budapest was replaced by Miklós Horthy's (1868–1957) conservative regime. But they both persisted in refusing sociology and sociologists: Soviet Russia for ideological reasons, Horthy's regime for personal political resentment. With a later start, Bulgarian sociology stagnated because of the distressed political life after the country had lost the war. In order to have a complete image of the Central and Eastern European social sciences, it is worth detailing these three cases of political and intellectual "paralysis".

The birth of sociology in pre-war Russia has its particularities due to the tsarist centralism. Any scientific institution required the approval of the tsar. As Professor Vladimir Bekterev's (1857–1927) Institute of Neurology obtained the approval to function in 1908, the first sociology department was set up within this institute. As a consequence of the tight political grip on sociology in Russia, the social science that developed here had strong civic and public accents. The first influential sociology teacher was Professor Maxim Kovalevski (1851–1916), under whose wing Pitirim Sorokin (1889–1968), K. Takhtarev (1871–1925), N. Kondratiev (1892–1938), and N. Timasheff (1886–1970) trained, who later reached

international fame. Kovalevski's untimely death in 1916, at 65, precipitated the will to institutionalize the science, and his disciples set up a society of sociology (it was not possible to set up a department in a university), which they named in honour of their master.

Physiologist Ivan Pavlov (1849–1936), winner of the Nobel Prize, and neurologist Vladimir Bekterev were members of this society, which demonstrated its tendency towards multidisciplinarity. In order to lend more prestige to the society, its first chairman was academician Alexander Lappo-Danielevsky (1863–1919), a history professor at the University of Petersburg, and after his death, in 1919, historian, sociologist, and academician Nikolai Kareev (1850–1931) became its chairman – but only for one year because the society was dissolved in 1920. The Institute of Sociology set up in 1918 did not have a better fate. It published magazines and books that popularized sociology, and it gathered the information for research plans, but under the attack of Marxist sociology and under the circumstances created by the civil war, its activity ended in 1921. After the fall of tsarism, the University of Sankt Petersburg also opened its gates to sociology, and Pitirim Sorokin (1889–1968) himself organized the department (another one was organized in parallel in Moscow, Kazan, and Yaroslavl).

> Pitirim Sorokin's contribution to Russian sociology was significant – Larissa Titarenko points out. During the 33 years he spent in Russia, he became widely known in the field. His first well-known sociology work was *Crime and Punishment. Heroism and Reward*, written in 1913, for which Sorokin is considered the founder of the Russian school of criminology. Yet, Sorokin's ideas came to be known in Russia only much later – in the post-Soviet period.
> During the first post-revolutionary years, Sorokin held sociology conferences regularly at the Institute of Neurology and at the State University in Petersburg, published scientific articles, edited a political periodical for a few years, held a public course (1920), and wrote an important theoretical book, *Sociology System* (1920). During this entire period, his thinking was mostly positivist. (Titarenko 2022: 117)[5]

But the strengthening of the Bolshevik power logically brought about a deadlock in communication with the majority of the academic elite. In the end, Lenin (1870–1924) issued a new regulation that replaced the death penalty with the expulsion from the country of the intellectual elite refractory to the new regime. Thus, during the summer and autumn of 1922, over 200 important intellectuals and scientists left by sea from Petersburg, Odessa, and Sevastopol and by train from Moscow – among them: Pitirim Sorokin, Nikolai Timasheff,

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5    Translated by the author.

Nikolai Berdeaiev (1874–1948), Semyon Frank (1877–1950), Peter Struve (1870–1944), and others. Those who stayed were marginalized, and some were even executed, as, for instance, Aleksander Chayanov (1888–1937).

> The expansion of Marxist sociology within the Soviet regime (1922–1930) began the moment non-Marxist sociological schools almost disappeared. The end of this period is associated with the strong party criticism by the most important Soviet ideologist and sociologist, Nikolai Bukharin (1888–1938). Soon after the end of this period, sociology disappeared even as part of Marxism and Leninism. The end of this period is marked by the beginning of the accelerated industrialization and collectivization processes, by the party's hunting down its hidden enemies, and by the ideological cleansing in science. These phenomena led to the end of empirical sociology studies, which had had a strong development until then. (Titarenko 2022, 120)[6]

In Hungary, the emergence of the interest in sociology at the end of the nineteenth century also produced the first signs of institutionalization. Thus, the Social Sciences Society was formed, under the leadership of Oszkár Jászi in 1901, an organization of first-rate intellectuals. Given that the conservatism of the university system did not accept sociology, the scientific activity was carried out within the framework of this association and its very influential journal, *Huszadik század* [The Twentieth Century]. As a consequence of the popularity of sociology, which was dedicated to fighting the feudal remains in the Hungarian society, the movement extended so much that in 1908 the *Galilei Club* of young sociologists was founded, and in 1914 the *Sunday Club*, which also gathered other intellectuals with similar ideals. Seeing how their influence expanded, the members of the Social Sciences Society also set up a "bourgeois-radical" party of democratic views, led by Oszkár Jászi, which advocated peace and understanding among the national minorities in the empire. At the end of the hostilities, under the circumstances of the empire's falling apart, Jászi became Minister of Nationalities in the first government formed by Mihály Károlyi after the Chrysanthemum Revolution in the autumn of 1918. Moreover, as a researcher, Victor Karády points out:

> Many of them and their sympathizers could consider that the time was ripe and the political conditions fulfilled for the realization of their plans of fundamental modernizing reforms of Hungarian society in spite of the collapse of the economy, the scarcity of consumer goods, the masses of refugees of all sorts arriving in the central parts of the country, and other everyday miseries of the transition from a middle-sized, administratively

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6    Translated by the author.

unified multi-cultural kingdom into a quasi uni-ethnic rump state. For many reform-minded intellectuals, especially those sympathizing with the efforts of cultural modernization as represented by the periodical *Huszadik század* [Twentieth Century] since 1900, this was a moment of great expectations. (Karády 2022: 138)[7]

It is no surprise that during the Károlyi government, the institutionalization of sociology also made a promising start with the setting up of some departments in Budapest. As this democratic regime lasted only until March 1919, when the Hungarian Soviet Republic was proclaimed, some sociologists were forced to emigrate. Oszkár Jászi was among them, for he did not agree either with the communist ideology or with communist politics. After Béla Kun's (1886–1938) regime had failed in July 1919 because of the counter-revolutionary and anti-Semite reprisals approved by Admiral Miklós Horthy, another great wave of intellectual emigrants left Hungary. Among them, there were Karl Mannheim (1893–1947) and Arnold Hauser (1892–1978), who achieved academic notoriety in the West. After the "Christian regime" was stabilized, the social sciences research stagnated for a long time, but for pragmatic reasons investigations started to be carried out in support of some social engineering projects such as those led by Lajos Illyefalvy (1881–1944), Béla Kovrig (1900–1962), Dezső Laky (1887–1962), Zoltán Magyary (1888–1945), Miklós Móricz (1886–1966), or Alajos Kovács (1877–1963). Even though they lacked the theoretical background of the works before 1919, they gathered important and authentic data regarding Hungarian interwar reality. The Hungarian scientific social thinking and research gained impetus only in the 1930s, yet not under an institutionalized form but through individual efforts. A particularity of this decade is the rural sociography of literary orientation, which emerged during this time, dedicated to exposing the consequences of the feudal remains in Hungary (Karády 2022: 137–173).

In Bulgaria, sociology was in an even direr situation at the end of the Great War. Bulgaria was a defeated, devastated country, condemned by the winning powers. Despite a promising start from every point of view in the first decade of the twentieth century, except for a few individual attempts like that of Dimitar Mihalcev (1880–1967) and of Hristo Todorov (1881–1954), Bulgaria could not have a continuity towards institutionalizing sociology. Under the circumstances brought about by the end of the war, there were not even aspirations or plans for the institutionalization of social sciences. Therefore, the state of sociology cannot be compared even to the one in Russia or Hungary.

The eight years of war were followed by a general crisis, which, according to all the analysts, lasted for almost twenty years. And yet, despite the attacks, political assassinations, civil war, the coups d'état, and the permanent political

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7    Translated by the author.

instability, there appeared books, conferences, and courses of sociology as early as the 1920s. Moreover, the first form of professional organization emerged with the 1925 setting up of the first Society of Philosophy and Sociology in Sofia, under the chair of Professor Venelin Ganev (1880–1966) and with Hristo Todorov as its secretary. The journal *Economic and Social Politics Archives* is set up in the same year, followed by many more publications. During the second half of the 20s, Nikola Aganski (1889–1959) and Ivan Kinkel (1883–1945) – the sociologists who, further to Dimitrie Gusti's invitation, registered to participate in the 14th International Sociology Congress scheduled to take place in Bucharest in 1939 – resumed or began their scientific activity. Summarizing the situation of Bulgarian sociology during the interwar period, researcher Svetla Koleva finds that:

> Well-known in the epistemic space of the Bulgarian sciences during 1920–1945, which is demonstrated by the scientific and the popularization publications, sociology hardly manages to obtain academic legitimacy. Besides the sociology courses and the public conferences mentioned before, there are neither university specializations in sociology nor groups or research institutes specialized in the field. Sociological practice is disorganized, it lacks the authority to acknowledge professional competences; sociological knowledge borrowed from abroad and adapted to the Bulgarian reality spread in the academic as well as in the extra-academic environment, as resources that allow the understanding, analysis of and support for some solutions to the problems in the society. (Koleva 2022: 30)

## Beyond Similarities – Relationships

Obviously, every national sociology develops according to the context and its own capabilities, but one can note, beyond the traditional unilateral connections with Western sociology centres, an increased mutual interest among the important representatives of certain sociological schools in the region. The meeting of Dimitrie Gusti and Oszkár Jászi in Bucharest, where the two noted the similarities between Jászi's association, who was fading away, and Gusti's new association, who was gaining momentum, remains memorable. A few years after Jászi had immigrated in the USA with Romanian help, the relationship between the young Romanian and Hungarian researchers of the villages in Romania and Hungary strengthened. This phenomenon clearly stands out from Victor Karády's research:

> From the second half of the 1920s, Gusti is massively quoted in Hungary, much more than his predecessors, who became classics of international sociology. His popularity in the press is similar to that enjoyed by Bergson

or Le Bon. This extraordinary result therefore appears in the years before the beginning of the „populist" movement of the "village explorers" in Hungary in 1931. After a slight decrease at the beginning of the 1930s, the frequency of the references to Dimitrie Gusti reaches a peak between 1935 and 1939. During this period, he is the most notorious personality among all the foreign authors in [Hungarian periodicals]. The height of public interest for Gusti corresponds exactly with the period of the "populist movement" [*népiesek*] in Hungary (1935–1938), marked by the most important publications of Ferenc Erdei (1910–1971), Géza Féja (1900–1978), Gyula Illyés (1902–1981), Zoltán Szabó (1912–1984), and those who shared their ideas ("the village explorers" [*falukutatók*]. It is exactly the moment of the great ideological confusion caused by the war preparations and the Nazification process. It starts with the second anti-Jewish law (after *numerus clausus*) of 1938. (Karády 2022: 168)[8]

The research of the Prague sociologist Marek Skovajsa shows that the references to the Bucharest monographic school are less frequent in Czechoslovak journal although Arnost Bláha from Brno and Anton Stefánek from Bratislava had close relationships with Dimitrie Gusti and his school.

Certainly, the most important attempt to strengthen the ties within Central and Eastern European sociologies and to showcase their importance in an international context was the organization of the 14th International Sociology Congress in Bucharest under the chair of Dimitrie Gusti. The professor broke his custom of inviting only the full and corresponding members of the International Institute of Sociology to the biannual meetings and took the initiative of nominally inviting all the specialists with experience in social sciences topics of the village and city, which became the main topic of the congress.

We cannot know exactly how many invitations were sent (according to some sources, there were over one thousand), but since Gusti asked that the texts of the communications be sent much sooner than the date established for the congress, in print, we have information regarding those who intended to participate in the debates. Thus, there would have been Nicola Aganski and Ivan Kinkel from Bulgaria, Streten Vukosavljevic and I. M. Peric from Yugoslavia, Florian Znaniecki and Stanisław Ossowski from Poland, and István Dékány from Hungary. A number of sociologists from Czechoslovakia certainly would have participated (Arnost Bláha, Emanuel Chalupný announced their intention), but in the meantime their country was threatened and then occupied by Nazi Germany. It is significant in that context that further to Professor Arnost Bláha's desperate letter, Professor Gusti, together with other twenty well-known sociologists, protested against the Nazi threats. For the same reason, the Bucharest congress could no longer take

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8    Translated by the author.

place further to the attack of Poland by the German troops and to the outbreak of the Second World War. But the fact that this congress was organized, the interest shown for this great meeting stands as a proof of the solidarity within the sociologists' guild, especially of those in Eastern Europe.

## In Lieu of Conclusions

The beginning of sociology after the end of the Great War was very unequal on the winners' side, as well as on the losers' side, but – except for Soviet Russia – all the countries we discussed made significant progress in the 1930s. The start of building this science was facilitated by the degree of democratization of the given countries, but the states did not get directly involved in promoting sociology and neither did (all) universities support the setting up of departments, not to mention field research. There seems to be a direct correlation between the invention and development of extra-university structures and the success of field research in sociology. We notice everywhere a predominant interest in the research of the rural world but with different methods and objectives. The correlation between the emergence of youth movements and the need to sociologically investigate one's own society is less known. Yet, it is certain that we are at the beginning of comparative endeavours, and it is also certain that by knowing others we know ourselves better.

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# Conflict and Cooperation within the Monographic Collective

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**Abstract.** This research is intended as an in-depth study of the contexts favouring the development of organizational and scientific cooperation practices, as well as of the contexts favouring the emergence of organizational competition and conflict practices within the Gustian School. I will follow how the respective practices emerged and consolidated within the above-mentioned sociological school. I will also discuss the organizational climate and how internal conflicts were managed in the school. Using this approach, I intend to explore and elaborate upon the directions already inaugurated by Zoltán Rostás in his research on the organizational development of the Gustian School.

**Keywords**: organizational sociology, organizational climate, Gustian School, history of sociology

## Introduction

The social history approach was not the only perspective used by the group of researchers of the Gusti Cooperative in getting to know the Bucharest Sociology School, in short, the Gustian School. The study of the School from the organizational sociology perspective is also a direction inaugurated by Zoltán Rostás (Rostás 2005). Among the institutionalization processes approached in this study, there is also conflict management (Rostás 2005: 123–130). Zoltán Rostás finds two main reasons for the emergence of conflicts within the Gustian School: 1) Dimitrie Gusti's type of *leadership* and 2) the School's ambiguity regarding its fundamental objectives: research vs social action. Regarding Gusti's type of *leadership*, Rostás considers it to be "charismatic" and insists only on Gusti's impulsive temperament, which is insufficient for an understanding of the mechanisms by which the leader exercised his authority over the group. At the same time, Rostás complements this first analysis of the conflicts within the School by identifying a destructive conflict, in the case of the so-called legionary

dissidence (i.e. the *Rânduiala* magazine group, which abandoned the School completely and publicly contested the monographic initiative performed by the School), and a constructive conflict, in the case of the campaign coordinated by Anton Golopenția according to revised methodological principles as compared to the standard Gustian project.

Recently, the publishing of some social documents, namely the correspondence addressed to Dimitrie Gusti, offered Rostás the opportunity to complement his observations regarding the emergence of conflicts within the Gustian School (Rostás 2020). The most important document is a letter from Traian Herseni to Gusti, in which the former asks the latter to remove Henri H. Stahl from the School, which is indicative of how serious the internal interpersonal conflicts got during the years between 1933 and 1934. Also, Rostás integrated the emergence of conflicts within the School into the wider phenomenon described as "the monographic crisis", which he considers to be an organizational growth/ development crisis rather than a stalemate of the group (Rostás 2013).

Henceforth, I intend to develop and complement Rostás's observations regarding the emergence and management of conflicts within the Gustian School, widening the organizational analytical framework and focusing on the emergence of conflictual cooperation and competition practices. Thus, I will approach the matter of the organizational climate and the way in which it deteriorated as a precondition for the emergence of conflicts within the School, and I will revisit the factors which favoured cooperation as well as conflictual interactions. I will also bring arguments for revising the type of *leadership* exercised by Dimitrie Gusti, which was not only charismatic but, as I will demonstrate, also *laissez-passer*.

# Cooperation and Conflict

## Cooperation and Conflict in Social Sciences

In the social thinking tradition, the emergence of cooperating practices, irrespective of the environment, is considered rather a rarity. We may think in this respect, for instance, of Mancur Olson's theory regarding the logic of collective action (Olson 1971) or of how rational behaviour is considered in the game theory, whether we refer to Nash's balance (2001) or to the prisoner's dilemma (Luce–Raiffa 1954). Cooperating in order to achieve a common good or in order to manage resources collectively is not "rational" according to these influential conceptualizations in social sciences. On the contrary, the "rational" choice would be passiveness in the context of collective actions and competitive-individualistic strategies in social situations that require cooperation. Ostrom

(2007) envisioned an alternative approach, showing that choosing cooperation for the common management of goods is a recurring strategy in certain sociocultural contexts. In a strictly organizational context, conflictual interactions, even though considered inevitable and, to a certain extent, potentially beneficial to the organizational life, depend on a series of other factors such as the quality of the organizational climate and the type of relationships among the members – cooperative or competitive.

## The Organization of the Bucharest Sociology School

The first difficulty regarding the Bucharest Sociology School[1] is related exactly to the nature of this group. Being more than a community of ideas and/or practices, and constituting a "live workshop", as Rostás characterized it (2005), this group is not an organization in the formal sense of the term, though. The Bucharest Sociology School did not exist in a formal-bureaucratic sense. Nevertheless, the group is identifiable through not only its leader, disciples, and practices but through the development of a group culture, of a hierarchy, of some recruitment practices, and of some common objectives. The existence of some institutional "vicinities", as Rostás called them, which overlapped or crossed paths with the life of the monographic group, as well as the existence of some relationships and involvements which went beyond the strictly classifiable area of the sociology school's specific activities, determined certain authors to come up with the formula "the Gustian archipelago" (Golopenția 2016). I, for one, prefer the term *monographic collective* in order to denominate the multitude of institutional contexts, actions, and relationships having as their nucleus the group formed around Dimitrie Gusti.

The monographic collective[2] starts to develop with the first monographic field campaigns organized within the framework of the Sociology Seminar at the University of Bucharest. Through these campaigns, the group gains momentum and notoriety. Starting from 1934, when the "cultural work" or the social interventionist dimension appears, the collective expands and consolidates

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1    Bucharest Sociology School is the name coined by Gusti and his collaborators in 1936 to designate the monographic group and its activities started in the early twenties of the interwar Romania.

2    D. Gusti initiated in the early twenties of the interwar period a series of field research, initially oriented to the villages, as an application of its monographic theoretical framework. Although the actual research practices developed gradually, its encompassing conceptual framework remained the same: in Gusti's theory, a social unit must be studied along its constitutive elements, *frames* and *manifestations*. The frames that conditioned a social unit were cosmic, biological, historical, and psychological, and the manifestations that correspondingly occurred were economic, spiritual, political, and administrative-juridical. His collaborators were mostly recruited from his former students from the University of Bucharest, such as Mircea Vulcănescu, Traian Herseni, and Anton Golopenția, or intellectuals interested in his rural studies such as Henri H. Stahl. For an introductory study on Gusti's monographic sociology, see Rostás (2020).

institutionally through the printing of the *Curierul Echipelor Studențeşti* [Courier of the Student Teams] and the *Sociologia Românească* [Romanian Sociology] magazines. Furthermore, it gains international validation through the organization of the International Sociology Congress (suspended because of the war), and it reaches its peak towards the end of the interwar period, when it prints the *Enciclopedia României* [Encyclopaedia of Romania][3] and organizes the mandatory Social Service.[4] Therefore, the components of this collective are, at the level of sub-groups, the nucleus of Dimitrie Gusti's disciples, i.e. the constant participants in the research campaigns and in the social intervention teams, as well as the circle of "sympathizers" or external collaborators, i.e. people already known in other scientific or artistic fields who joined the School in different ways. At an institutional level, the following organizations are part of the collective although in different degrees: the Romanian Social Institute, the Sociology Seminar, the Library of the Seminar, the Association of Monographers, the "King Carol" Royal Foundation, the Association for the Encyclopaedia of Romania, and the Social Service.

Given the composite nature of the monographic collective, the hierarchy, the work missions, and the operational objectives are quite diverse, creating the impression of ambiguity regarding the roles, tasks, and "jurisdictional" overlapping. The informal hierarchy of Gusti's closest partners in research, that is, in the fine-tuning of the research practices, in the drawing up or coordination of scientific publications, overlaps only partly with the hierarchy of those employed by the "King Carol" Royal Foundation or with the hierarchy in place at the drawing up of the Encyclopaedia of Romania. Yet, this diversity of roles and actions is rather an asset of the School and an opportunity to maintain the activity and involvement of the members less interested in the development of the interventionist side of the School, or of those who possessed organizational rather than scientific research abilities.

The "map" of groups and subgroups within the monographic collective is equally composite. One can distinguish several subgroups, or cliques, which do not correspond to some formal jurisdictions or to some role separations but

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3    *Enciclopedia României* [Encyclopaedia of Romania] was a project coordinated by D. Gusti and his collaborators that supposed to be a monography of Romania. Its objective was to synthetise and interpret historical and present data in a Gustian framework (the nation as a social unit with frames and manifestations). From the six projected volumes, only four were finally published: Volume I: *Statul* [The State] (1936), Volume II: *Țara Românească* [Romanian Country] (1938), Volumes III–IV: *Economia Națională* [National Economy] (1939–1943). For an introductory study concerning the Encyclopaedia of Romania, see the special number of *Transylvania Review* (nos. 10–11, 2014).

4    The Social Service project followed the voluntary cultural work of the students coordinated by Gusti and collaborators alongside the monographic campaigns. Unlike the previous experience, The Social Service was mandatory by law for all the students starting from 1938. The project was short-lived and was annulled in 1939.

according to interpersonal affinities. One such subgroup consists of Dumitru Georgescu, Henri H. Stahl, and Mircea Vulcănescu, who will be joined also by Anton Golopenția. Anton Golopenția is also a member of a subgroup that puts him together with Octavian Neamțu, Brutus Coste, and Picki (Victor) Rădulescu-Pogoneanu. Traian Herseni is rather the "lone wolf" of the School, and the subgroup made up by Ernest Bernea, Dumitru Amzăr, and Ion Ionică will be the only one to break away from the School and enter into a destructive and manifest conflict with the monographic collective. This is not an exhaustive map of the Gustian School subgroups, or cliques, but only a review of the most prominent and stable ones.

There are three stages within this intense process of institutional development and expansion: 1) the experimental period of the monographic field campaigns (1925–1931); 2) the period of social interventionism development and of organizational consolidation (1934–1938); 3) the peak period (1938–1939). The degradation of the climate and the emergence of interpersonal conflicts manifested during the period of transitioning from the experimental stage to the stage of institutional development. Are these, then, the result of the School's "growth" crisis, to cite Rostás (2013)? The answer is: not necessarily. Rather, as I will detail further on, these are by-products of the path chosen by Gusti for the institutional development of the School, added to the specific context of the early thirties and to the dynamics of the group which consisted overwhelmingly of students and alumni of the University of Bucharest. Thus, the degradation of the climate and the emergence of conflicts are driven primarily by the divergent interests and visions pertaining to the future of the collective that Gusti and some of his most important collaborators had. The pressure of the interwar economic crisis exacerbates the divergence. Many of the monographic collaborators had finished their studies and, consequently, experienced pressure to enter the "labour market." The fact that there was finally an opportunity to finance the monographic activity and to remunerate at least part of the group members added to the problem since Gusti decided to follow *his* vision and interests.

## Conflicts and Collaborations within the Gustian School

Henri H. Stahl describes the first period of the monographic collective in romantic tones in *Amintiri şi gânduri* [Memories and Thoughts] (1981) but also in his oral history interviews in *Monografia ca utopie* [Monograph as Utopia] (2000). Other members of the School interviewed by Rostás, even if they join the first monographic campaigns later, also share this view, at least partly. The climate that is inferred from these recounts is highly affective-positive and engaging. A short and concise description by one of the first monographers is illuminating: "It was like a jubilation… and a celebration, we were having a great time" (Ion Costin quoted by Rostás 2003). There are several factors that provided for such an

environment, as also appears from Henri H. Stahl's interviews, corroborated with the oral history interviews with the other members of the School (Rostás 2003):

– Dimitrie Gusti's charismatic personality, who in most cases recruited the participants in the campaigns personally and who knew how to give meaning to their own value and to the mission that they could fulfil;

– The eclectic and inviting environment of the monographic campaigns, especially starting from the Nerej campaign; for many participants, it was a unique environment that stimulated them intellectually,[5] widened their horizons, and offered the chance of cooperating with renowned scientists;

– The collegial manner of working in the field, the frequent and collaborative contact with the coordinators of the teams and with Gusti himself (the "luminous room" phenomenon);[6]

– Starting from a certain point, the reward of being part of a cultural group on its way to becoming prestigious and gaining more and more public notoriety;

– The absence of other immediate elements of social pressure (many of them are still students) and the feeling of freedom and adventure;[7]

– The village itself, as a research field, as a „terra incognita" was often a bonus, playing the part of a territory which had just opened to the "explorers".

It should be kept in mind that during this period the monographic campaigns were carried out only once a year, during summer, for a month. At that time, monography was literally experimental, in the sense that the unitary sociological theory and the research practices were elaborated during the campaigns by Gusti's main collaborators. This meant also quite enough freedom for the researchers. A peak of these adjustments made in the field was recorded in Fundu Moldovei in 1928. The research practices were essentially collaborative: the research themes, the field objectives, the data collection instruments, as well as the collected material were common resources. For some of the students, there was also the opportunity

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5    "If I managed to enter the intellectual society in Bucharest, it was only thanks to the monographies" – says another monographer, Roman Cressin (Rostás 2003: 97–98). Marcela Focşa also remembered: "There were the evening and afternoon meetings… They were thrilling! But they were no longer sociological. No. They were thrilling because it was such a human experience, meetings and getting to know people, collegiality, camaraderie, extraordinary relationships among people. Sociology was during the day. But in the evening, we were free. Each would do whatever they were good at. Mac Constantinescu had all kinds of amusing pursuits. Floria Capsali danced. There was another girl there from gymnastics, and she danced, too, and they made recitals. Others recited verses … This one, Costin, had a gramophone, and he brought it with him, with the discs, but discs of serious music, Beethoven. They were highly cultural evenings, not sociological, but highly cultural, you see?" (Rostás 2003: 111).

6    In the first stage of the monographic campaigns, Gusti organized at the end of the day an informal debriefing meeting in a room named by his collaborators "luminous room."

7    For some of the students, the monographic campaigns were not just about the freedom to research: "We were Macedonian children, brought up very tightly, we had not been allowed, we had not had friends, for me monography was a great adventure, so many boys, so many girls, freedom" (Lena Constante in Rostás 2003: 81).

– extremely rare in the context of the period – to get on the payroll of institutions related to the monography: Ernest Bernea is hired as a librarian of the Seminar, Anton Golopenția becomes Gusti's office secretary while a minister.[8] It is not only the monographic campaigns that offer a gratifying environment for the participants: at least during the first years of the third interwar decade, Gusti's Seminar at the University is also described as a stimulating, live, and engaging environment.

Further to these campaigns, the monographic groups stratify into a hierarchy of a rather charismatic type. There emerge the so-called "monography elders", or, to use and adapt Stahl's formula, "the monography on four elders" (Rostás 2000). These are Gusti's collaborators who had gained authority based on their monographic experience and their contribution to the development of the Gustian sociological "system": Mircea Vulcănescu, Henri H. Stahl, Xenia Costa-Foru, and Dumitru Georgescu. Later on, Traian Herseni and Anton Golopenția will join them as well.

Nevertheless, the repeated success of the monographic campaigns brought a series of challenges. Monography could not consist of only seasonal outings in the field, no matter how charming and engaging they were. The theoretical and methodological adjustment of the system also had to be proved through scientific publications meant to harness the fieldwork. After the year 1928, people feel the repercussions of the economic crisis. Most of the collaborators to the first campaigns finish their studies and face the decision of choosing a career, and it is not clear whether this career could correspond to the monographic vocation. In this decisive turning point came the leader's vision of the development direction of the monographic group. And Gusti's vision was sensibly different from that of his closest collaborators. It is not about Gusti's wide, sociological, and reforming social intervention vision, which was well known and assumed by his disciples, but about the way in which he articulated it into a concrete development strategy of the collective. If his disciples wished to institutionalize the monographic sociology by professionalizing it and by dedicating themselves exclusively to scientific activities, Gusti wanted to preserve the pedagogical character of the campaigns (seen as an extension of his Seminar) and to extend the monographic activities towards social intervention.

This is how Anton Golopenția describes the state of mind of the main monographers in 1933 to Gusti himself, "taking advantage" of his position as a secretary to Gusti's ministry office:

> The members of the department are somehow in a crisis, which sometimes bursts out even in front of strangers. They are no longer students, and they are all now at the quite critical age of choosing a career. The older leaders (Vulcănescu and Stahl) are already or will soon be 30 years old; on the

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8　D. Gusti served as a Minister of Education, Cults, and Arts (1932–1933) in the national peasant government.

verge of maturity, they are dissatisfied and irritated by the fact that they cannot dedicate themselves to the scientific career they crave after, being forced to pass their time with other occupations and no longer able to do two or three papers at the same time. (Golopenția 2012: 351)[9]

The solution, Anton Golopenția adds in his letter, consisted in "giving (them) the possibility to live only for science" (idem). Actually, in the same quoted social document, Golopenția transcribes a project for an "applied or concrete sociology" institute, different from the ISR debate forum set up by Mircea Vulcănescu.[10] Thus, the theoretical conflict mentioned by Henri H. Stahl in his *Amintiri*, between the "scientific endeavour and our cultural action" (1981: 225), was actually a clear difference of opinions regarding the further development of the Gustian School. In his oral history interviews, Henri H. Stahl is much more open about the conflict, which is presented this time in an interpersonal note:

> We used to say: the Monography will die, as Nicolai says in biology that the prehistoric species died, owing to gigantism.[11] It is a sign of decrepitude. We do not want this; we want to work with specialists, separately. Gusti got angry; he got angry, for example, with Picki (Victor) Rădulescu-Pogoneanu, who bluntly said this. I want to do a professional monograph! And you must find, Professor Gusti, the way to professionalize us. How and in what way, that is your concern. Gusti said: no, it is voluntary work. We do not need professionals. (Rostás 2000: 94)[12]

Also contributing to the degradation of the climate within the monographic group was what Anton Golopenția called Gusti's "estrangement" from the monography. His accepting of the ministry's responsibility determined Gusti to be rather absent from the monographic field campaigns. The "glowing room" had remained a beautiful memory from times that would never return. Moreover, Gusti did not organize the collective in such a way that it could function optimally even in his absence. From Anton Golopenția's correspondence, it appears that

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9   Translated by the author from Romanian.
10  Vulcănescu went so far as to even draw up the annual budget of the proposed institute, which would have been 1,170,000 Romanian lei, given that it could have engaged 15 employees with an income of 6,500 Romanian lei. The following monographers are mentioned: Dumitru Georgescu, Henri H. Stahl, Xenia Costa-Foru, Traian Herseni, Anton Golopenția, Ion Conea, D. C. Amzăr, Victor Rădulescu-Pogoneanu, Ernest Bernea, Ion Ionică, Gheorghe Focşa, Harry Brauner, Mihai Pop, and, of course, the author of the proposal, Mircea Vulcănescu. An interesting list, especially in view of the conflicts that followed later on.
11  Stahl (Rostás 2000: 94) describes the confrontation as taking place after the monographic campaign from Drăguş (1929) with no less than over 80 participants (hence the reference to "gigantism").
12  Translated by the author from Romanian.

there was a "crisis of authority" in the monography, resulting from the fact that there was no clear hierarchic chain in the absence of the leader, and, maybe worst of all, Gusti did not actually get involved in managing the conflicts that had emerged among his disciples. His lack of involvement in mediating conflicts and his absence from the fieldwork are features of a *laissez-faire / laissez-passer* style of leadership.

Things worsen so spectacularly that in only a few years the atmosphere, the internal relationships, and the monographic activities are described in terms radically different from the previous decade:

> – Professor Gusti is perceived in terms of his choleric and unstable temperament; "he somehow lost some of his prestige", Golopenția notes (2010: 117); moreover, he is suspicious of his most loyal collaborators, suspecting them of "dissident" intentions to his sociological system, and the more skilled he is when recruiting new monographers, the less capable to mediate in case of a conflict;
> – The monographic campaigns, which in the meantime had become not only research expeditions but also missions of social intervention in the field, become much more applied and more focussed on concrete results; the ebullience and the stimulating intellectual environment of the first campaigns are no longer characteristics;
> – Cooperation gives way to fierce competition for standing out within the group and for exercising an intellectual "monopoly" over certain research fields, leaving deep marks on the monographers, which persisted over the years;
> – Despite that the research practices remain collective, with the collected data being available to all, with the deteriorated climate and the exacerbated competition, this can become a pretext and a way of excluding and diverting the work of those perceived as a threat;[13]
> – To this extent, the way in which Golopenția describes the predominant atmosphere in the monographic group in his correspondence with Gusti is suggestive: "a savage and ego-filled thirst for self-assertion", "a fierce atmosphere", so "bad" that there is the need to "save the monography from the people's souls" (2012: 354–355). He also points out that even the Sociology Seminar lost its former charm: "the seminar languishes and it does not stand out very much among the other seminars of the University. Since the monographers are no longer students, it became a mere additional procedure for those who want to obtain a diploma. (Golopenția 2012: 366)

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13    It is the case of Ştefania Cristescu, whom Ernest Bernea and Ion Ionică exclude from the writing of the papers on the magical practices in Drăguş. See Theodora-Eliza Văcărescu's study on the presence of women in the monographer group (2018: 54–60).

The conflict spiral reaches extreme levels in at least two cases: that of Ştefania Cristescu, who is the target of the Ernest Bernea, Ion Ionică, and D. C. Amzăr subgroup's exclusion strategies, and that of the rivalry between Traian Herseni and Henri H. Stahl. Indeed, recent social documents show that Herseni went so far as to ask Dimitrie Gusti to exclude Henri Stahl from the monographic group, bringing extremely serious accusations against the person who had been his friend and close colleague (Rostás 2020: 43–52).

Nevertheless, the monographic group survived this transition period characterized by a high negative-affective climate, marked by hostility and a conflict spiral that threatened to break friendships and cause major fractures within the monographic group. During this period, some of the monographers, such as Mircea Vulcănescu or Dumitru Georgescu, distanced themselves discreetly, while others, such as Anton Golopenţia, tried, rather unsuccessfully, to mediate and attenuate the conflicts. However, the competition between different subgroups constituted a precondition for the self-exclusion of those who later became known as the "*Rânduiala* group", or the "legionary dissidence", who will openly challenge the Bucharest Sociological School.

## Discussion

What is the explanation for the survival of the collective through this internal crisis? The question is all the more important when obviously it was not just a matter of simple interpersonal conflicts that could be reduced to "misunderstandings", but it was a matter of organizational life. I hint at some explanations in this paper, although these will make the object of a separate study. A first explanation is that despite the differences of opinion regarding the development of the School, the path that Gusti chose continued to hold opportunities for the old as well as for the new members. The access to a more consistent financing further to Dimitrie Gusti's appointment at the "King Carol" Royal Foundation allowed the employment of new members and the expansion of the monographic activities. Despite the fact that the atmosphere was far from that of the beginning, enthusiasm was nevertheless maintained in the case of the new recruits, as it is understood from the oral history interviews with the team members from after 1934 (Rostás 2006, 2009).

The focus on tasks rather than on the monographers ensured a continuous scientific productivity and made it possible to publish a new sociological magazine, *Sociologie Românească*. The old members adapted to the new circumstances, adjusting their expectations and pursuing their own research interests in the meanwhile, as in the case of Henri H. Stahl, or they continued to be loyal to the Gustian project in different ways, as in the case of Herseni or Vulcănescu. Yet, the professor's rigidity was felt in the case of his cooperation

with Anton Golopenția, whose innovative views raised Gusti's suspicion and caused his restraint and led to his marginalization. In this regard, I consider that the more latent conflict between Gusti and Golopenția was not so much a constructive one, as Rostás described it. It did not reach a resolution and did not produce enduring and positive effects in the research practices and interaction patterns of the monographic collective.

Consequently, the Bucharest Sociological School, or the monographic collective remains one of the most interesting cultural groups in the recent Romanian history also from an organizational sociology perspective. The practices of cooperation in the scientific work were preserved despite the transition crisis of the 1930s, and they yielded positive results even though the climate was never again that from the beginning of the monography adventure.

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# The "Matilda Effect":
# Women in Interwar Romanian Sociological Research and Social Intervention

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**Abstract.** In the late 1920s and throughout the 1930s, several sociological monographic campaigns were carried out in a few villages in Romania. It was for the first time that a large research group from Romania investigated rural social life using an integrated theoretical system and interdisciplinary methods and instruments. In the second half of the 1930s, a different kind of rural-oriented endeavour started to be undertaken: the "royal voluntary student teams", whose work in Romanian villages was more oriented towards social action than social research. In October 1938, the Law of the Social Service was issued, providing that all of Romania's university graduates were compelled to participate in organized cultural work in villages. In most of the activities undertaken by the Bucharest Sociological School and coordinated by Professor Dimitrie Gusti, women participated in large numbers – yet another new feature in Romanian scientific practice. In this paper, I explore how gender, conceptualized as a social, political, and material category, configures power relations within a research group, and I provide tentative and inherently partial answers to such questions as: What combination of social, economic, and political factors led to women's massive involvement in the sociological monographic campaigns? How did women's participation contribute to the research endeavours? What are the disciplinary and institutional mechanisms and personal strategies that produced women's inclusion in, and later exclusion from, the research group?

**Keywords:** interwar Romanian sociology, women's history, gender in science, history of social sciences

## Introduction

In the second half of the 1920s and throughout the 1930s, several sociological monographic campaigns were carried out in a few villages of Romania. Each such campaign gathered dozens of students and researchers who explored rural

life using an integrated theoretical system and multidisciplinary methods and instruments.[1] In the second half of the 1930s, a different kind of rural-oriented endeavour started to be undertaken: "the royal voluntary student teams", whose work in Romanian villages was more focused on social action than on social research. In October 1938, the Law of the Social Service was issued, providing that all university graduates of Romania, irrespective of their subject, were compelled to take part in organized cultural work in villages. All these activities were carried out within various organizations for social research, reform, and intervention, established by Professor Dimitrie Gusti and known under the more general and inclusive name of the Bucharest Sociological School. And in virtually all these activities women participated in large numbers. Women's significant involvement in these endeavours was unusual for that period and has so far been virtually unnoticed, much less investigated. Consequently, in this article, I want to briefly indicate the way in which gender, conceptualized as a dynamic social, political, and material category (Scott 1999a: 28–50), configures power relations within a research group.

Therefore, I explore women's massive involvement in these activities, looking at their contributions and following their professional trajectory, and I offer possible answers to questions such as: What combination of social, economic, and political but also personal factors led to women's massive involvement in the sociological monographic campaigns? How did women's participation contribute to the research endeavours? What are the disciplinary and institutional mechanisms, as well as the personal strategies, that produced: a) women's inclusion in, and later exclusion from, the research group; b) their restriction to professional areas defined as "appropriate" for women; c) even the misappropriation of their work for the benefit of their male research colleagues? How were these women's lives and professional careers influenced by their participation in the activities of the Gustian organizations?

The objective of my research is twofold: on the one hand, I seek to follow a gendered perspective on the research experience and practice and, on the other hand, to explore how gender shaped social research and social work in interwar Romania. Certainly, the two levels are interdependent and can only be separated for explanatory purposes. It is, therefore, important to point them out distinctly. This is because each of them responds to a different theoretical and political necessity. Briefly put, women's history is a scholarly endeavour seeking to render

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1    The first series of sociological monographic campaigns took place in the following villages: Goicea Mare (Dolj County, 1925), Ruşeţu (Brăila County, 1926), Nerej (Vrancea County, 1927), Fundu Moldovei (Bukovina, 1928), Drăguş (Făgăraş, Bukovina, 1929), Runcu (Gorj County, 1930), Cornova (Orhei, Bessarabia, 1931) (see Stahl 1936: 1130–1165). The second series of sociological monographic campaigns took place in the following villages: Şanţ (Năsăud, 1935 and 1936), Drăguş (Ţara Făgăraşului region), Nerej (Ţara Vrancei region), Plasa Dâmbovnic (1939), beyond the Bug River (1943) (see Rostás 2006: 7–11).

visible and include women's lives, experiences, and contributions in the history record (Bock 1991: 1–23, 2002). The first aim of this paper corresponds to this understanding of the field, and therefore my investigation will contribute to the broadening and deepening of women's history in interwar Romania and to the history of sociology in Romania.

However, women's history does not function on the simplistic model "add women and stir". It does not only aim at inserting women as an annex to history but has the objective, on the one hand, to interrogate the fundamentals of women's virtual exclusion from the historical record and the socio-political and historical categories and hierarchies that produce discriminations and inequalities. On the other hand, it endeavours to destabilize these categories and hierarchies and to eliminate discriminations and inequalities (Scott 1999b, Offen 2000, Miroiu 2004, Paletschek–Pietrow-Ennker 2004). This necessitates constant attention to other structuring axes of difference and inequality such as class, ethnicity, race, sexuality, etc. (Reinharz 1992, Smith 2000, Simonton 2006). Thus, the second aim of my paper corresponds to this epistemological and political necessity, through exploring how gender shapes and influences personal and professional relations, experiences, choices, and trajectories. It also interrogates how gender is constructed within personal and professional practices and representations. In this way, my broader research project is situated within the field of gender history and will contribute to the re-conceptualization of the relationship between gender, history as lived experience, and the historiography of interwar Romania. It does so by examining the dynamics of women's participation in and contribution to the production and dissemination of sociological knowledge, as well as to social work and in the implementation of social policies.

I proceed from the general premise that every societal project mobilizes certain gender ideas and arrangements. In any society, at any given time, there exist several projects in competition with each other. Moreover, even within the context of a given project, there can be transformations during its existence. Depending on the perceived necessities of those in power, gender ideas and conceptualizations of women's and men's roles are fluid and can be changed in such a way as to serve the objectives of that particular societal project at a given time. These ideas and conceptualizations of the gender category do not, however, function in isolation. First, they are always interwoven, locally and globally, with other axes of difference and asymmetries of power (i.e. class, ethnicity, race, etc.). Second, they are influenced by arrangements and transformations within the category of gender itself: at the local level, by the competing societal projects, and/or by the anti-systemic social movements unrelated to the societal project in question. At the global level, they are affected by the changes which occurred in the conceptualization of the category of gender in its material, political, social, and symbolic dimensions.

Consequently, I believe that there is always a constellation of available gender ideas and arrangements, from which, according to the perceived necessities of a given time, the dominant groups mobilize and deploy a particular set that they utilize in an attempt to accomplish their goals. Although gender asymmetries and inequalities are constantly (to a greater or lesser extent) produced, legitimized, reproduced, and even reframed by most societal projects, in most cases there exist spaces that allow for negotiation and movement. These spaces permit individuals and groups with no formal power to advance if only in a limited way, their own gender goals, ideas, and arrangements within the very societal project that engages them. We are talking, therefore, about a multidirectional mechanism that, by way of simplification, could be summarized as stating that both dominant and dominated groups apply the same set of gender ideas and arrangements to fulfil their own agendas.

My present investigation about women's work and their contributions to social sciences and intervention on the one hand and about their professional careers on the other hand starts from the hypothesis of a combination of disciplinary and institutional mechanisms, social necessities, and political and personal strategies. To answer the above questions, I primarily use "personal" sources, such as oral history interviews carried out with some of the participants in sociological research and social intervention, the correspondence of some of the monographers, and a few memoirs and personal journal fragments that belong to the people involved in the Gustian School. The interviews undertaken by Zoltán Rostás with Henri H. Stahl and with the first and the second generation of monographers, as well as the participants in the student voluntary teams (Rostás 2000, 2003, 2006, 2009) constitute the documentary core of my research.

I also use studies, articles, and chronicles published in the academic and organizational communication journals edited by the institutions in which members of the Bucharest Sociological School were involved, as well as archival documents. As a primary research method, I use documentary and discourse analysis, mainly from a gender perspective and with an integrative approach. Thus, I constantly refer, on the one hand, to the activities, contributions, (non-) recognition, and professional careers of the women and men who were part of the Bucharest Sociological School. Moreover, I refer to women's involvement in activities dedicated to social research and change in other countries. I pay attention and I integrate these diverse social research and intervention enterprises, as well as women's participation in the social, cultural, and political context of Romania during the first half of the twentieth century. In addition, I briefly investigate and include all these activities in the broad context of women's and feminist movements that had an ample, active, and visible character in the ante- and interwar periods in the territories (also) inhabited by Romanians.

## Educational and Organizational Contexts

At the beginning of the 1920s, the proportion of women students who followed university courses in Romania was 17% (Cresin 1936: 644); however, their numbers continuously grew, doubling by the end of the third decade: from 5,101 women students in the academic year 1924–1925 (22.79%), in 1929–1930, 10,400 women students attended university and special school courses (27.86%). By the mid-1930s, the number of women students remained relatively high, constituting a little over a quarter of the total number of persons enrolled, i.e. 9,933 women students out of a total of 37,771 (Bozgan 2004: 173). At the University of Bucharest, during the academic year 1930–1931, women students represented 28.1% of the persons registered. Most attended the courses of the Faculty of Philosophy and Letters, where they constituted the majority, i.e. 58.5% of the student body, and almost 40% of the total of women attending all specializations at this university (Cresin 1936: 646). In fact, the preponderance of women students at the Faculty of Philosophy and Letters is not only typical to the 1930s; women students became the majority at the beginning of the 1920s, their proportion constantly ranging between 55% and 65% (Cresin 1936: 647).

The numerical superiority of women students who attended the courses of the Faculty of Philosophy and Letters is justified, on the one hand, by the transformations that occurred in the economic and social contexts, which drew a great number of women, predominantly from the middle urban class, to look for lucrative occupations outside the family, and, on the other hand, by the specific configurations of gender roles, which were attributed to women activities in the areas of care, social work, and education. Therefore, the outcome of these social changes – commenced at the end of the nineteenth century in the provinces also inhabited by Romanians and intensified after the First World War – was an increase in women attending higher education, particularly in the fields that would allow their access to paid professional areas, predominantly as teachers/educators. Of course, these are the general characteristics of the period that only partially justify women's involvement in the School's sociological research and social intervention activities (for a more detailed study, see Văcărescu 2014: 135–161).

Thus, the clarifications of women's participation in the field investigations must be searched for at the intersection of the antecedents of social studies undertaken by women – either individually or within associations established and led by women –, the research necessities made evident during the two sociological monographic campaigns, and the scientific aspirations and personal desires of the women students. In what follows, I will show the existence of social research practices undertaken by women already at the beginning of the century, and I will point out some possible motivations of the group's dynamic

and personal options that led to the involvement of a considerable number of women students and researchers in the sociological campaigns.

Women started undertaking studies concerning the conditions of life and work of the poor population of Romania, especially of women and children – thus educational and social work activities constituted a constant trait beginning in the second half of the nineteenth century and increased in the first years of the twentieth. This dominant feature of women's and feminist associations both shows that the inclusion of some women students and researchers in the Gustian endeavours did not take place in a vacuum and that there was a history of social studies undertaken by women, and it supports the hypothesis that Dimitrie Gusti was aware of not having assumed and integrated some of the research themes, objectives, and strategies of social intervention – at least in the areas of the family, of women's lives and work, of child-rearing, of the domestic industry – already initiated and exercised by women's and feminist organizations (see also Văcărescu 2022: 198–232).

Research activities centred on rural life and carried out by the participants in the sociological monographic campaigns were from the beginning part of a vast social change project, in which nation-building ranked high. Thus, they represented the scientific substantiation, based on studies in the field, of a set of activities and social interventions with the goal of improving the life and work conditions of the rural population and, to a lesser degree, of the urban population as well. Therefore, conceptually and organizationally, the social research and intervention activities undertaken by the institutions created and/or coordinated by Gusti were influenced by similar activities and organizations from other countries. At the same time, they were determined by the social, economic, and political context of Romania and inspired by the social change efforts existing on the territories inhabited by Romanians. Within these latter endeavours, I argue that women's and feminist associations figured high as sources of inspiration for the Gustian activities – an aspect that has not been observed, much less discussed, in the analyses of the Bucharest Sociological School.

Although they are missing from the mainstream historiographical discourse, there were numerous women's and feminist organizations, and their active and visible involvement in public debates, social work and philanthropic activities starting in the nineteenth century and during the first decades of the twentieth was a persistent feature of public life. Thus, along with the emancipatory discourse related to the change in the juridical and political status of women, the hundreds of women's associations had as fundamental objectives the betterment of life, education, and work conditions, especially those of women and children in rural and urban areas.[2] Space does not allow for a thorough exploration of

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2    A few studies, edited volumes, and collections of documents that show the importance and visibility of women's and feminist movements in the second half of the nineteenth century

the ties between the activities of these organizations and the social research and change enterprises carried out from the end of the 1920s and during the 1930s by the broad group led by Gusti. However, I believe it is important to indicate a few points that show the areas of intersection of the objectives and strategies utilized both by women's associations and by the Gustian institutions.

Women's and feminist associations studied women's life and work conditions with the aim of finding the means to improve them. Thus, there were women's associations that not only had the goal of improving poor women's lives through various means but also based on the necessity of their efforts and included in their programme the research concerning women's living and working conditions. Such an example is *Asociaţia Femeilor Române "Sprijinul"* [The Romanian Women's Association "Support"] founded in Bucharest in 1900 by a group of women led by Ecaterina Arbore. This organization shows the kind of social consciousness and action-orientated attitude that some of the intellectual women in Romania had before the First World War. The activities of the Romanian Women's Association "Sprijinul" between 1900 and 1913 were numerous and had a broad reach. The Association organized periodical popular conferences in primary schools from the peripheral neighbourhoods of Bucharest on such topics as hygiene, puericulture, children's education, women's juridical rights, natural sciences, etc., which included sometimes concerts and had a large public.[3]

Along these initiatives and many others targeting women's education and work, studies on women's living and working conditions were carried out. Such an example is Ecaterina Arbore's *Industria şi sănătatea lucrătoarelor* [The Industry and Working Women's Health] published in 1907. In her study, Arbore predominantly investigates women employed in industry and shows their harsh working conditions, as well as the fact that their work was exploited to a greater extent than men's work (Arbore 1907).

Two additional interrelated areas of overlap between the activities of women's organizations and the Gustian reformist and interventionist endeavours are those of social work and "social service" although the latter was somewhat differently conceptualized by social and feminist activists. There are already studies that confirm the predominance of associations founded and coordinated by women in the areas of social work and social care (known, especially in the nineteenth century, in Romania and other European countries under the label of "philanthropic" or "benevolent associations") during the last decades of the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth.[4] I will only mention the

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and in the first of the twentieth include: Botez (1920: 25–84, 1923b: 218–224), Câncea (1976), Mihăilescu (2001, 2002: 198–227, 2004), Cosma–Ţârău (2002), Ciupală (2003), Miroiu (2004), Băluţă (2008, 2014).

3    See, for instance, Mihăilescu (2001, 2002).

4    For other European countries, especially western countries, see Bock (2002), Fuchs–Thompson (2005). For Romania, see *L'Assistance Sociale en Roumanie* (1938), Cheşchebec (2003: 35–44),

fact that according to the publication *Indicatorul instituțiilor de asistență socială publică și privată din România pe 1924* [The Register of the Institutions of Public and Private Social Work in Romania for 1924], out of the 629 social institutions registered, 50 belonged to the state, and the rest constituted private initiatives, most being coordinated by women (*Indicator al Instituțiilor de asistență publică și privată din România pe 1924* [Summary of Public and Private Relief Institutions in Romania for 1924] 1925: 6).

The interests, goals, and means of these women's associations coincided to a great extent with those of the Gustian organizations. There was even an institutional collaboration recognized and supported by the Romanian Social Institute, through its Feminine Studies Section, the Sociology Seminar from the University of Bucharest, and the Romanian Women's Christian Association in the establishment and organization of the educational activities of the School of Social Work "Princess Ileana".[5] However, there were also other women's associations whose goals, strategies, and activities at the beginning of the 1920s were highly similar to the Gustian social initiatives of the mid-1930s. For instance, there are remarkable resemblances between the efforts of social work and social protection undertaken by *Asociația Cercurilor de Gospodine* [Association of Homemakers Groups] and the activities of a social intervention designed and partially accomplished by *Fundația Culturală Regală „Principele Carol"* [The Royal Cultural Foundation "Prince Carol"] through the voluntary student teams and the Social Service Law.

Asociația Cercurilor de Gospodine was founded in April 1920 by Valentina Focșa and represented, according to its originator, "a manifest proof of the way in which women understand to collaborate – in this period of turmoil – to the new organization of our people" and "a tool that aims at the rising of our villages and slums through the permeation of a better existence". The Association's main ideas about the means to "raise" the life of the "people of the lower classes" will be found, albeit in a much more elaborate and systematized way, in the Gustian social intervention project (Focșa 1921–1922, reprinted in Mihăilescu 2004: 126). The practical-demonstrative activities, the integrative approach to village social life, as well as the idea of a "model household" can also be found in the social intervention projects elaborated by Gusti almost two decades later. Furthermore, Asociația Cercurilor de Gospodine concerned itself with promoting domestic industry through the creation of cooperatives, with proposals to syndicate production and selling, with trade exhibits, etc. A decade and a half later, the Gustian student teams would engage in the same type of pursuits.

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Diaconu (2002: 11–37).

5    The Superior School of Social Work "Princess Ileana" was established in the fall of 1929, and it showed the Gustian School's institutionalization of social research, education, and intervention in the urban area (Costa-Foru Andreescu 1980: 338–346).

As a result of the positive outcomes of the social work and social relief activities undertaken by many women's associations during more than half a century, by the mid-1930s there appeared several proposals for the introduction of mandatory social service for women, modelled on the military service for men. One example is the 1934 project for organizing social work in Constanța, devised by the President of the Constanța branch of *Asociația pentru Emanciparea Civilă şi Politică a Femeii Române* [The Association for the Civil and Political Emancipation of the Romanian Woman], Maria Dimitriu-Castano. She proposed a bill that would mandate the satisfactory completion of one year of social service (including courses in household economics and puericulture) by the wife, along with a certificate attesting the honourable discharge from the military by the future husband, prior to marriage (*Ziarul Nostru* 1934 and 1935 – quoted in Diaconu 2002: 20). Many other women's and feminist organizations made similar proposals, recommending laws equivalating the mandatory social service for women with military service for men.

Certainly, through these efforts to introduce a compulsory social service for women, women's emancipation movements endeavoured to construct and legitimize – based on women's contributions to society in the areas already recognized and in agreement with the gender roles prescribed by the ideological national-patriarchal discourse of the time – women's participation in the consolidation of the national state and thus in their equal political rights. Regardless of the specific goals pursued by women's and feminist organizations in their proposals, it is obvious that the idea of social service, even if somewhat different than the one promoted by Gusti at the end of the same decade, existed for at least five years in advance and was even exclusively targeting women. Consequently, the mandatory stipulation for women provided by the Social Service Law of October 1938 should not be interpreted as an absolute novelty (*Legea pentru înființarea Serviciului Social* – reprinted in Gusti 1939: 263).

## Gendering "Collaborative Work"

At the first two field campaigns of the Bucharest Sociological School (the one in Goicea Mare in 1925 and the one from Ruşeţu in 1926), no women participated. However, starting with the third sociological campaign (taking place in Nerej in 1937), the presence of women monographers became constant and substantial. The third campaign was carried out in Vrancea County, and nine women students and one woman researcher took part in it out of a total of 41 participants, i.e. a quarter of the total number of monographers (Stahl 1936: 1146).

The next year, the monographic research took place in the village of Fundu Moldovei (Bukovina). The team comprised 60 persons, 17 being women. It

is important to emphasize that a team was formed during that campaign that investigated "the woman problem" and that other teams researched the household, domestic industry, and the family. According to the sources I identified, besides feminist or women's organizations, this is the first attempt to explore women's lives with an assumed, stated purpose and with scientific methods. The other topics, although partially within the private sphere, had certainly been investigated before. This time, however, the research was undertaken by a multidisciplinary team, in the context of a structured, collective effort and with scientific theories, instruments, and methods. Moreover, women participated in these campaigns, and at least one of them coordinated the work of a team.

Over 80 persons took part in the fifth monographic campaign at Drăguş (1929, Făgăraş). At least 17 students and researchers were women. The next two campaigns unfolded at Runcu (Gorj County) in 1930 and at Cornova (Orhei, Bessarabia) in 1931. Runcu gathered over 60 monographers, out of which 20 were women students and researchers, while Cornova assembled 55 persons, including 14 women (Stahl 1936: 1149–1158).

At the level of the organizational practices of the research group, I argue that the teams comprised exclusively of male researchers met with difficulties in investigating some of the phenomena, situations, and institutions of village life and realized that these could be more easily and efficiently approached by women researchers. Moreover, these areas of social life, although integrated into the conceptual system developed by Dimitrie Gusti, are likely to have appeared as less important and thus less attractive for male researchers, who chose topics that were considered "serious" and that benefited from scientific legitimacy. Henri H. Stahl, without explicitly acknowledging the difficulties encountered by male researchers in gathering data on certain aspects of rural social life, unequivocally articulates the general perceptions about gender differences in establishing research topics: "[Xenia Costaforu] was a sociology graduate. […]. She didn't have a [research] issue of her own; she just came to see what it was all about. I think I infected her with the idea of the family because there was no one dealing with this issue. In my opinion, this is an issue very well suited to a woman sociologist, much better than to a male sociologist. And I told her: do this topic. You will study the family" (interview with Henri H. Stahl in Rostás 2000: 245–246).[6]

Besides "guiding" women students towards specific research areas – either more difficult to investigate by men or uninteresting to them –, Henri H. Stahl identifies another type of functional necessity apparent in collective fieldwork and in which the gender component played an important part. According to the Gustian theoretical and methodological system, the social life of the village had to be documented in the totality of its manifestations and functioning. Consequently, a large volume of work was needed to gather the vast amount of data necessary for

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6    Translated by the author.

the monographs. Considering, on the one hand, the gender perceptions according to which women were more suited for a detailed and repetitive but less creative activity and, on the other hand, the gender expectations and roles that defined women as less competitive and their professional aspirations and opportunities as different and inferior in comparison to men's, I argue for the utilization of women's work in the service of advancing the research goals and the careers of some of the male monographers. This gendered component of "collaborative work" was candidly expressed by Stahl in several instances during Rostás's oral exploration of the activities of the School.

> There were many [women in the sociological monographic campaigns]. We worked well with them. I systematically worked with girls. I got along with them very well. None of them was brilliant, but *they were very useful in the field*. They did the job as it was supposed to be done. [...] And at some point during the campaigns, we even utilized undergraduate students from the School of Social Work. [...] And this group of girls had a significant experience in doing sociological investigations. We also used them, we used them in the Cornova campaign. Sabin Manuilă used them too in his campaigns in Fibiş. [...] They were good field investigators. But in matters of sociology, undoubtedly, they did not have a vision, a conceptual framework, nor a research question of their own. *Only executants*. One would tell them: do this, do that, and they did it. [...] First, one could work in multiple teams only in this manner, for there were lots of situations when one could not be present as an observer everywhere – things happen in various places, with various individuals, and then, when there are more investigators, you follow that one, you the other, you another one... Then you gather everything that has been collected. One needs this kind of *second-hand character*. (interview with Henri H. Stahl in Rostás 2000: 86–87; my emphasis)[7]

Marcela Focşa, a participant in the monographic research starting with the campaign from Fundu Moldovei in 1928, also notices the aspect of this type of "assistance" work for the benefit of the (male) others: "Zizi [Elisabeta Constante] at Fundu Moldovei did what I also did. They told us to do statistics, we did statistics; they told us to do family questionnaires, we did family questionnaires. That's what we did at Fundu Moldovei. What they required us to do, we did" (interview with Marcela Focşa in Rostás 2003: 128).[8] Lena Constante recounts that she knew Mac Constantinescu from the School of Arts and that he was the one who "co-opted me in his team to make copies and to gather data" (interview with Lena Constante in Rostás 2003: 81). There existed, therefore, a gender

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hierarchy well set in place with respect to the distribution of work, in which the "employment" of women and women students' "utilization" in research "only as executants" is strikingly evident, and their position as "second-hand characters" did not constitute an unarticulated subtext, but, to the contrary, it was a manifestly affirmed and common practice.

One could easily presume the effects of this kind of group relationships and gender expectations which, combined with the virtual absence of women models in scientific research, contributed to women students' acceptance of the inferior place assigned to them and, in many instances, their abandoning of a scientific career. Hence, the collective work and the collaboration between the monographers, idealized in the interwar texts and debates, as well as in subsequent exegeses, can be contested from a gender perspective, as I will further argue.

## Contributions and (Non-)recognition

Women's work and contributions to the scholarly output of the Bucharest Sociological School can never be determined with certainty. To some extent, this is understandable given the specific characteristics of group work, and this is particularly applicable in the case of a large research collective. Nevertheless, one cannot ignore the overwhelming predominance of volumes and articles bearing male signatures. Likewise, it is well-nigh impossible to overlook the scholarly, administrative, and political careers and positions that many male monographers benefited from – at least until 1948. By the same token, the recovery and valorization of men's contributions to social research occurred to a much greater extent than those of women after the rehabilitation of sociology as an ideologically acceptable academic subject during the mid-1960s. Therefore, viewed through the lens of gender studies and women's history (especially the theories and findings in the history and sociology of sciences), I consider the interrogation of the bases, mechanisms, and strategies that produced women's virtual exclusion from the record of social scientific achievements to be imperative.

Below, I discuss the contributions of women researchers recognized through publication. I also explore some of the mechanisms and strategies that led to their marginalization and even displacement from positions that could have amounted to competition with their male research colleagues. I include these phenomena in the broader framework of disciplinary and institutional scientific dynamics. In order to investigate these aspects, I offer possible answers to questions such as: How did women's participation contribute to and affect the activities of the Gustian organizations? What were the sociological research and social intervention areas that women researchers and "cultural activists" approached? What disciplinary and institutional mechanisms, as well as personal strategies produced both

the inclusion and, later, the exclusion of women and the restriction of certain professional areas defined as "appropriate" for women? How were women's lives and professional and personal trajectories affected by their involvement in the activities of the Gustian organizations?

There is a vast literature that tackles the gender dynamics of science. Studies in the history of sciences and the history of disciplines and, generally, the public discourse until the 1970s were virtually blind to gender and certainly did not critically interrogate the quasi-absence of women from sciences, arts, and literature. During the second wave of global feminism, a burgeoning number of historical, socio-historical, sociological, and philosophical explorations from women's and feminist standpoints rediscovered and reclaimed women's participation in and contributions to various scholarly domains. These studies put forth hypotheses, theories, and explanatory models for the phenomena of exclusion, erasure, and exploitation of women's work and contributions (Rossiter 1980: 381–398, 1982; Fitzpatrick 1990; Frank Fox 2006: 441–457).

At the beginning of the 1980s, numerous studies were published, demonstrating how gender influences participation, position, and recognition in science. Women have participated in the production of knowledge in various sciences, but they have most often been placed in inferior positions, in disciplinary and institutional areas that benefited from low prestige. Hence, their gratification and scientific recognition were not only radically lower than those of men scientists, but their work was often misappropriated and their contributions assumed by men (Sicherman–Green 1980, Alic 1986, Bailey Ogilvie 1986).

Of special interest for my study is a phenomenon uncovered in many studies concerning various scientific and literary domains, which consists in the non-recognition, elimination, and even appropriation of women's work and contributions by men. Margaret Rossiter investigated this phenomenon in diverse scientific domains and designated it – on the model of the "Matthew Effect" noted by Robert K. Merton (Merton 1968: 56–63) – the "Matilda Effect", following one of the first historians of women's movements, Matilda Joslyn Gage.

> For everyone who has will be given more, and he will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what *she* has will be taken from *her* (Matthew 25:29; gendered version).

Rossiter argues that the "Matthew effect" refers first and foremost to the first verse of the biblical quote, which postulated the enrichment of those already rich, and fails to notice the second verse – the one which posits the further impoverishment of the already poor. The historian locates the gendered functioning of the mechanisms of scientific recognition, recompense, and valorization precisely in this second part. Rossiter condemns the non-recognition,

indeed the very erasure from the public records and, therefore, the collective memory of women's contributions to scientific knowledge production (Rossiter 1993: 325–341). For Rossiter, it is vital to unmask the fact that within the social structures that influence the distribution of public recognition and scientific authority, gender works as the fundamental determinant of this asymmetry.

The historian illustrates the profoundly unequal distribution of recognition and rewards with various examples drawn both from historical records and scientific fields. The mechanisms and strategies whereby women are excluded from and/or circumscribed to certain occupations within the scientific field are rooted in institutional and disciplinary dynamics, as well as in the distribution of resources and the localization of social, economic, and political interests. From the perspective of my subject, these phenomena and the theories on the involvement of women in sociological and social change activities are not unique to Romania. Rather, they fit into a larger complex of global social, economic, and historical processes, especially associated with industrialization and urbanization, social change and reform activities, as well as nation-building projects.

My exploration of women's work and contributions and of their consequences for social sciences, reforms, and interventions on the one hand and for the professional trajectories of the women involved on the other starts from the premise of a combination of disciplinary and institutional mechanisms, social and political necessities, and personal strategies. I presented the arguments of the previous section that support the hypothesis of women students' co-option in the sociological monographs following the realization both of the existence of some aspects of rural social life that could more effectively be studied by women and the necessity of a larger number of persons who would gather data in the field, but who would not necessarily have professional aspirations of their own. Women students were both deprived of professional models that would encourage them to aspire to scientific recognition and confronted with a lack of support from the research group for their scholarly development. As such, women constituted the group deemed best suited for the role of research "assistants" and information "gatherers."

These tendencies, however, should not be understood as unidirectional. Women who participated in the research should not be understood exclusively as a manipulated, passive, and uniform group upon which the group of male researchers – well-structured and with a clear plan – imposed their will. Such an explanation would be simplistic and reductive. There were women researchers who refused the role of auxiliaries, which was appointed for them, and who attempted to tackle research topics that their male colleagues considered appealing career-wise. Moreover, there were women who endeavoured to build a scientific career of their own. I will thus show the extent to which they succeeded, what personal strategies women used in order to have their work promoted and recognized, and

how the institutional mechanisms, which substantially reduced their chances of professional acknowledgment and the possibility of obtaining prestigious professional positions, value validation, and scientific authority functioned.

The gender dynamics of the monographic group must be integrated in the larger context of conceptualizing women's and men's roles in social life, in the antecedents of women's involvement in science in general and in social research in particular – as shown above –, and in the definition of the social sciences and of women's place in the institutionalization of the discipline. Thus, the displacement of women from sociological research must be connected to the mechanisms of professionalization and institutionalization of the discipline.

Generally, the borders of scientific areas that are still developing and which do not yet benefit from academic recognition and legitimacy, much less from funding and career opportunities, are more permeable. In this ambiguous phase, women can penetrate and work beside men in fairly large numbers, although mostly as volunteers and generally in subordinate positions. Once the area has achieved institutional recognition as an autonomous discipline – a status that draws funds and professional opportunities, as well as a more rigorous but not necessarily objective selection –, women find it more difficult to enter these domains. Those women already in the field remain in subordinate positions, or a new sub-discipline is created, one that is considered "appropriate" for women. Accordingly, women are directed towards this sub-discipline, which is situated marginally both in terms of prestige and available economic resources. This is precisely what happened in the Bucharest Sociological School once the Superior School of Social Work "Princess Ileana" was established.

In order to support these hypotheses and to exemplify the mechanisms and strategies that produced both the participation and the exclusion or the ghettoization of women within the School, I will further develop a few aspects of collective work undertaken by the research group by succinctly presenting women researchers' publications in the School's journals (for a complete list of women's articles in these journals, see Văcărescu 2018) and in separate volumes and by offering an illustration of the professional and personal trajectories of women participants in Gustian sociological research.

## Strategies of Exclusion and Misappropriation of Women's Work

In this study, I am interested in women students' participation in the Gustian activities, for they reached the highest number, and their lives and careers were affected most by the involvement in sociological practice. The greatest part of these students was enrolled in the Faculty of Philosophy and Letters and

in the newly established School for Social Work. Most attended the meetings of the Sociology Seminar and participated in ever-increasing numbers in the sociological monographic campaigns between 1927 and 1935.

These young women were in the formative phase of their scientific specialization. Consequently, their involvement in field research – especially for those who worked for several years in the campaigns – represented a critical juncture in their educational and professional trajectories. Even if it is probable that many of them did not have scientific aspirations, the studies, interviews, and documents I used reveal beyond doubt that some women students had both scientific aspirations and the theoretical as well as methodological training that would have enabled them to fulfil them. However, these aspirations were only fulfilled in very few cases and only partially. Thus, Xenia Costa-Foru, Ştefania Cristescu, Elisabeta Constante, Lena Constante, Marcela Focşa, Paula Gusty, Natalia Raisky, Domnica Păun, Dochia Ioanovici, Maria Negreanu, and Maria Dărmănescu are only a few of the women who entered the Bucharest Sociological School as students, worked in several monographic campaigns, and published studies but did not benefit from the same career opportunities and recognition as their male colleagues. Some of these women's professional courses and the mechanisms and strategies of exclusion and/or misappropriation of their work by their male collaborators will be discussed below.

Some women researchers who entered as students in the monographic campaigns were later employed at the Superior School of Social Work "Princess Ileana". One of them was Xenia Costa-Foru (1902–1983), who achieved the highest professional position and academic prestige available to women in the Gustian School, for she became the director of the School of Social Work in 1935 (see Manuilă 1938: 14). Xenia Costa-Foru is the woman researcher who benefited from the highest degree of visibility and recognition within the School. Her main research area was the family, on which she published two studies in the School's journals, many more in the journal *Asistenţa socială* [Social Work] and other publications. She also authored a volume on the sociology of the family, the topic that constituted her Ph.D. dissertation under the supervision of Dimitrie Gusti (see the articles published by Costa-Foru–Stahl 1932: 447–462, Costa-Foru 1936: 112–118, and the volume Costa-Foru 1945). Costa-Foru participated in the monographic campaigns started at Nerej in 1927, where she had already begun her work on the family, women's lives and work, child-rearing, etc. Within the research group that shared the same topics, there were other women students too, but Costa-Foru emerged quite fast as the leader of the group, a fact that was admitted and mentioned several times, at least since the campaign in Fundu Moldovei (1929), by Henri H. Stahl, one of Gusti's closest collaborators and the leader of some of the monographic campaigns:

> Who were actually these "elders" who assumed the guilt of the decision-making? Ever since Fundu Moldovei, there started a grouping of the campaigns' "veterans" who worked harder and had more experience and will. According to a thought that became almost an obsession for me, I suggested (jokingly, of course) that not only the communal villages could "run on elders, but that it was appropriate that the monographers did the same. At the end of long discussions, we agreed, playfully, to organize ourselves under the leadership of "four elders": Vulcănescu, D. C. Georgescu, Xenia Costa-Foru, and the undersigned. [...] Each had in their turn a group of "descendants", "sons", and "nephews", according to their entrance in the monographic work. Thus, everything could have been represented graphically in the form of "hereditary lines", the four "elders" considering themselves "brothers". (Stahl 1981: 132)[9]

Similarly, further on, Henri H. Stahl insists on the important role played by Xenia Costa-Foru not only in research work but also in the organization and coordination of an entire subject matter in village life – that of the family and, in general, everything that represented rural social life from women's perspective: "As powerful 'personalities' could be considered some of the other monographers, such as Xenia Costa-Foru, around whom gravitated all those not only interested in the topic of the 'family' but also in the entire life of the village conceived from women's point of view" (Stahl 1981: 143). There are two relevant aspects within this informal organization of the work groups in the context of the broader field research campaigns.

The first aspect is related to the private character of these "hierarchical" acknowledgments within the framework of the monographic campaigns. Stahl does not talk about Xenia Costa-Foru's importance, whom he considers equal to the other three prominent members of the Gustian School – Mircea Vulcănescu, D. C. Georgescu, and himself –, other than in publications with a private character such as memoirs and oral history interviews. Although he mentions the organization of "hierarchical ties established between all monographers on the model of a free peasantry 'lead by four elders'" (Stahl 1936: 1164) in the scholarly overview article of the sociological monographic campaigns, published in the journal *Arhiva pentru ştiinţa şi reforma socială* [Archives for Social Research and Reform], Stahl does not specify which these "hierarchical" relationships are, nor does he mention the names of the four "elders".

The second aspect is that of the discursive conveyance in a ludic register of Xenia Costa-Foru's recognition of her importance and her contributions to research and fieldwork organization. Stahl insists on the playful dimension, even if he himself has realized the "reality" of both the usefulness of the research system and

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9    Translated by the author.

the important contribution of the four coordinators: "It was, of course, an amusing game but also a system of work organization [which might be characterized as one of 'school'], [which is] put together by each of the 'elders' with their apprentices" (Stahl 1981: 132). If in the cases of the other "elders" the recognition of their importance within the economy of monographic research and, more broadly, of sociological knowledge production happened in various ways within the academic sphere, as well as in the context of rendering visible and even using scientific "propaganda" for the monographic research system, it is obvious that the other three members did not necessarily need Stahl's supplementary emphasis. However, in Costa-Foru's case, who did not benefit from the same appreciation of her scholarly and organizational achievements, Stahl's omission and playful, private mentioning could be read as a means of diminishing her role. This limitation of visibility, recognition, and even appropriation of Xenia Costa-Foru's results by other members of the research campaigns are supported by other elusions of her work.

As mentioned earlier, Henri H. Stahl asserted in several places that he was the one who guided Costa-Foru towards the family as a research topic for there was nobody to deal with it and especially because "it fits very well a woman sociologist, better than a man sociologist" (interview with Henri H. Stahl in Rostás 2000: 245–246). However, women's putative suitability for such topics did not hinder Alexandru Claudian, who in 1929 delivered a talk at the Romanian Social Institute, titled *The Issue of the Social and of the Family in the Monographic Research* (see the result with public visibility from the campaign at Fundu Moldovei in Stahl 1936: 1150–1151). This happened despite the fact that it was Xenia Costa-Foru who studied the family and coordinated the research group working on this topic both in the campaigns from Nerej and Fundu Moldovei, while Alexandru Claudian had only participated in Fundu Moldovei, and he was not specialized in the sociology of the family. Moreover, not even Stahl himself was held back by the "more fitting a woman sociologist" character of the topic, so he co-signed an article on the family from Nerej (Costa-Foru–Stahl 1932: 447–462).

All these seeming "details" of the dynamics of scientific work and the distribution of visibility and rewards form, in fact, a gendered image of the Bucharest Sociological School, that is, of the inequalities between men and women in their opportunities, scientific recognition, and professional careers. Therefore, we are, on the one hand, encountering the footprints of the recognition of women's work and achievements during the research campaigns – thus, contemporary with their activities – and, from "private" sources, Costa-Foru's certification as a "strong personality" and her placement on the same level of importance and authority with Mircea Vulcănescu, D. C. Georgescu, and Henri H. Stahl. On the other hand, one cannot overlook her erasure from the "canon" or, at most, her placement in a marginal position in histories of sociology, authored by such scholars as Traian Herseni, Ovidiu Bădina, and Marin Diaconu. For them,

the most important contributors to the Gustian School are exclusively male. This elimination of some of the women researchers' contributions from the history of the discipline, such as Xenia Costa-Foru's, can be framed in and can also support the existence of the phenomenon identified by the American historian Margaret Rossiter under the designation "the Matilda effect".

The second case I want to discuss constitutes perhaps the most unjust rejection that a woman researcher was confronted with in her repeated endeavours to work alongside her male colleagues in the final phase of writing up the results of the sociological field research which she collected and in which she was specialized. Ştefania Cristescu (1908–1978) published studies, articles, and reviews in *Arhiva pentru ştiinţa şi reforma socială* and in *Sociologie românească* (see the articles: Cristescu 1932: 371–380, 1936b: 11–18, 1936c: 36–38, 1936d: 36–39, 1936e: 28–33, 1938: 383–388; Cristesco 1936a: 119–137), as well as a volume on women's beliefs about the household and magic rituals from Drăguş (Cristescu-Golopenţia 1940). From among the women participants in the monographic campaigns, she was the researcher who published most in the School's journals. Cristescu graduated with two BA degrees in philosophy and modern philology in 1930. She then pursued her doctoral studies at the University of Bucharest from 1930 to 1936. Between 1932 and 1934, she was awarded a scholarship to Paris, where she studied linguistics, ethnography, and sociology (see the letters addressed by Ştefania Cristescu to Anton Golopenţia between 27 November 1932 and 21 July 1934 in Golopenţia 2010: 76–266).

Cristescu was one of the most active participants in the monographic campaigns, attending all of them, starting with Drăguş (1929). Her primary research interest was magical practices, predominantly those performed by women. Most of her publications describe and analyse these practices from a complex perspective that combines theoretical and methodological elements from sociology, ethnology, and linguistics.

Apparently, at least, Ştefania Cristescu had her merits and qualities as a recognized researcher; this is evident from several comments made by her male colleagues interviewed by Zoltán Rostás. For instance, Henri H. Stahl considered her "very skilled in her profession", "a very conscientious and hardworking folklorist". He likewise noticed that "she worked well and published very interesting things". At the same time, however, these qualities having to do with skill, attention to detail, and hard work were supplemented by another gendered dimension: the quality of being "docile:" "she was a compliant girl" (interview with Henri H. Stahl in Rostás 2000: 303). This specific combination of attributes fits the traditional gender norms and roles, thereby showing the model accepted and valued by society and by the scientific community.

Despite being recognized for her work, Cristescu's scientific career alternated between periods when she was included in the privileged group and numerous

times when a group of researchers who sought professional advancement attempted to exclude her from the very research topics she worked on, as well as from the process of collating and writing up the research material. The documents available regarding Ştefania Cristescu enable a detailed documentation of the mechanisms and strategies whereby women were excluded and their work misappropriated. As such, they would deserve a separate study. However, here I illustrate by means of a few excerpts from letters between Cristescu and Anton Golopenţia (her colleague and, later, husband) one attempt to keep her out of the group that worked on the topic of spirituality, as well as her perception of this phenomenon.

In the letter of 19 August 1939, addressed to Golopenţia, sent from the writing campaign unfolding in Făgăraş, Cristescu recounts at length the conflict within the group that wanted to take over the writing of the topic on spirituality, a topic on which she had been working for a long time and for which she had gathered a great deal of material. Now her male colleagues wanted to use Cristescu's material for their own texts.

> I elaborated my work last year based on the last plan concerning the "Spiritual" area, which was proposed at Cornova by I. Ionică. Consequently, I worked in such a manner so as not to trespass at all in the field of customs with a primarily religious connotation that Bernea worked on. But [Bernea] wants to work this year only with Ionică and Iosif. Ionică would write the magical-religious representations, while Bernea the magical-religious practices. Therefore, half of the file I assembled would pass to one and the other half to the other. Bernea arrived here this morning and took – most likely – the list of my informants, and he went on the field where he gathered again my material. That's what he says, at least, because he wouldn't show me the material. (Golopenţia 2010: 176)[10]

Cristescu explains to Golopenţia the unfairness of the situation she finds herself in, which she characterizes as "unjust to me", for she had worked on the initial plan, according to which she was supposed to collaborate with the others and to write the part related to "magical representations and practices". Her reactions are contradictory, a fact that she is aware of. Initially, she wanted to leave the writing campaign altogether, but both the unfairness of her exclusion and the use by her colleagues of the material she collected – to say nothing of the importance she ascribed to monographic research – convinced her to stay. She writes that she would have accepted an option that enabled her to collaborate in the writing, but "Bernea flatly refused any collaboration, saying that writing is done much better alone (although there are three or at least two), saying that it was his first serious scientific work".

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10     Translated by the author.

In this manner, Ştefania Cristescu makes manifest the professional ambitions of her male colleague and, further on, notes her colleague's opportunism in his attempt to oust her so that he would profit from an attractive topic: "Bernea deems this topic one of the most beautiful to write about and that he must be the one to do it. He screamed at me that I should work on folklore or linguistics." She takes this second option into account, but she does not believe she can manage to gather new material for a new topic: "To start from the beginning, alone and angry as I am, another fieldwork – I cannot. For me, the process of collecting material is a much more serious endeavour than a write-up" (Golopenția 2010: 176–177).

Cristescu thinks about writing her own text, even if it would duplicate the one of her colleagues, but she fears that this would be useless: "It seems to me that I would write for nothing, and the monograph will publish what Bernea and Ionică already worked on." She concludes that she is "in a terrible bind" and that, "deprived, as I am, in this monograph, of a problem of my own on which I worked and that interests me, all I have left to do is to write the same topic using the Cornova material so that the Drăguş material should not be at risk of being written twice" (Golopenția 2010: 176–179). This example – one of many found in the rich correspondence between Ştefania Cristescu and Anton Golopenția edited by Sanda Golopenția – supports the thesis of ousting women researchers and using their monographic work by some of their colleagues.

Ştefania Cristescu did not, however, give up on her scientific aspirations – at least not permanently. In 1935, demoralized by the conflict-ridden atmosphere caused by the professional ambitions of some of the monographers, she obtained her teaching certificate in order to take up a position in secondary education. At the same time, she worked on several articles and acted as the librarian for the Seminar of Sociology, Ethics, and Politics at the University of Bucharest. She did this to support herself financially while in Bucharest. Nevertheless, in 1936, she accepted a teaching position at a high school in Caransebeş, where she remained for two years, until she was recalled for collaborating on the publication of a series of studies in preparation for the 14th International Congress of Sociology. The Congress was scheduled to take place in the fall of 1939 in Bucharest, but it was cancelled. Since the autumn of 1938, she worked for the Royal Cultural Foundation "Prince Carol". In the spring of 1939, she became Chief of Research for Spiritual Manifestations within the Research Directorate at the Romanian Institute for Social Research.

Ştefania Cristescu's professional and scientific trajectory illustrates the mechanisms of removing competing women researchers and the strategies employed in exploiting their work towards the career advancement of their male counterparts. At the same time, it also shows some of the women researchers' active and repeated endeavours and scientific aspirations to conduct their work, to be included in the writing groups, and to have their research achievements recognized and valued.

## Conclusions

The societal project, which Dimitrie Gusti adhered to and supported, comprised a flexible constellation of gender ideas and arrangements during its three decades of activity. The various organizations founded and/or coordinated by Gusti included women's participation from the beginning. Women students' and researchers' involvement in the sociological monographic campaigns, the establishment of a Feminine Section within the Romanian Social Institute, women students' participation at the voluntary student teams, and the mandatory character of women's social and cultural work under the Social Service Law show the existence of a set of activities that could be accomplished by women or even should be performed specifically by them. At first sight, we could believe we are facing a complete gender opening, a phenomenon unprecedented in the history of the provinces inhabited by Romanians and maybe even in the European and North American history of sciences.

An investigation of the social, cultural, and economic contexts at the end of the nineteenth century and during the first decades of the last century, especially when looking at an area that is not, however, included in the Romanian mainstream historiographical discourse, reveals information that contributes to the de-exceptionalization of the Gustian efforts from a gender perspective. Furthermore, such an inquiry shows that some aspects of the Gustian research endeavours, social reform, and intervention activities – planned and partially implemented – had been done before, particularly beginning in the first decade of the twentieth century, by women's and feminist organizations. It is possible that Gusti not only knew about the goals, the means to achieve them, and the activities undertaken by these organizations, but he might have considered some of them useful and included them in his project of social reform based on sociological research with multidisciplinary methods.

Thus, women's involvement in sociological monographs from 1927 onward becomes explainable through the existence of previous social research undertaken by women, particularly focusing on aspects such as the family, the household, women's lives and work, child-rearing, domestic industry, etc. Another hypothesis that cannot be discounted is the one of realizing the difficulties and the ineffectiveness of male researchers trying to collect information on some topics of social life, as well as the necessity of a large number of social investigators who would gather data according to the Gustian theoretical and methodological system but who would not necessarily have scientific aspirations in their own name. However, at the same time and just as importantly, the social and economic motivations, as well as women students' and researchers' personal and scholarly aspirations, constitute arguments for a reading of their involvement

in the sociological monographs as active agents in modelling their professional lives, as well as the research they carried out.

Historical and sociological studies on women's participation in science in general and in social sciences in particular, as well as in reformist activities, in various historical periods and geo-political contexts bring new perspectives on and explanatory models of the apparently paradoxical phenomenon of inclusion and exclusion of women from the production of sociological knowledge and, later, the elimination of their contributions from the history of the discipline. It can, therefore, be identified a combination of institutional and disciplinary mechanisms, economic and political interests, functional and social necessities, and personal strategies that first produced women's co-option in the production of knowledge and the recognition of their work only partially and mostly in "informal" contexts. At the same time, there is also evidence for the elimination of women or the diminishing of the value of their contributions in institutional and public contexts. At the same time, another phenomenon appeared: the relegation of most of the women in disciplinary and professional areas deemed "feminine" and considered "appropriate for women" such as social work. Of course, these areas benefited from less prestige and thus less funding and visibility.

The study of some topics of social life, such as the family, the household, women's lives and work, by the women researchers who participated at the interwar sociological monographs did not constitute a novelty. The novelty of the Bucharest Sociological School consists in both the fact that women studying these topics were included in recognized research structures, and the very inclusion of these aspects within a theoretical and methodological system, thus legitimizing them as topics worthy of scientific research attention and interest.

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# The Gusti Cooperative. Two Decades of Social History Experiments

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**Abstract**: This text outlines the journey and achievements of the Gusti Cooperative, a research group with deep roots in the work of Professor Zoltán Rostás in the field of oral history. Established in the early 2000s, the Cooperative emerged from Rostás's initiative to offer an alternative and complementary history of the Sociological School of Bucharest. Comprising Rostás, his Ph.D. students, and a network of friends, the Cooperative primarily focuses on social history and the history of Romanian sociology. Their work revolves around oral history interviews, documentation, and the publication of otherwise inaccessible documents from the interwar period. Despite maintaining an informal status and lacking a conventional organizational structure, the Cooperative has made significant contributions to the field of Romanian sociological research over the past two decades. Their most notable work involves the retrieval and publication of forgotten pages from the history of Romanian sociology, including anthologies, correspondences, and unpublished documents.

**Keywords**: the Gusti Cooperative, Zoltán Rostás, Romanian sociology, history of sociology, social history, oral history

## The Deep Roots of the Gusti Cooperative

Born in the shadow of the resounding echo produced by the volume of interviews with Henri H. Stahl, *Monografia ca utopie* [Monograph as Utopia], published in 2000,[1] the Gusti Cooperative has its roots in the work of Professor Zoltán Rostás in the field of oral history, which he began in the early part of the 1980s. Fascinated by everything that meant socio-human sciences, the young Rostás, a graduate of the Faculty of History and Philosophy, had the opportunity to hear lectures at the International Congress of Historical Sciences held in Bucharest in the summer of 1980. Here he came into contact with oral history (officially

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1    Rostás, Zoltán. 2000. *Monografia ca utopie. Interviuri cu Henri H. Stahl (1985–1987)* [Monograph as Utopia. Interviews with Henri H. Stahl (1985–1987)]. Bucharest: Ed. Paideia.

recognized by the international historical community as a sound research method). He initially used this method to investigate the multiculturalism of the Romanian capital, then he put it in the service of research in the field of social history, and later he used it as a tool for documenting the history of the Sociological School of Bucharest.

## A Fateful Encounter: Henri H. Stahl

One year after the 1980 Congress, Henri H. Stahl's volume of *Amintiri şi gânduri din vechea şcoală monografică* [Memoirs and Thoughts from the Old School of Sociological Monographs] appeared. The avid reading of this work elucidated many unknowns about the School founded by Dimitrie Gusti,[2] but, at the same time, it raised even more questions, which motivated Rostás to contact Professor Stahl in an attempt to offer an alternative and complementary history of the Sociological School of Bucharest, through oral history interviews. Parallel to the series of interviews with Stahl (which took place between 1985 and 1987), Rostás contacted – on the recommendation of the Professor – several former members of the monographer teams who participated in field research in Romanian villages under Gusti's leadership in the interwar era.

Obviously, the approximately 200 hours of interviews conducted in the 1980s could not be published during the communist regime. Then, as Rostás himself explained in a 2021 interview (Costin 2021),[3] the 1990s were feverish and Manichean years that promoted the books which highlighted the atrocities committed by the communist dictatorship. In that context, the social history of the interwar period had little resonance. With the settling of emotions and post-Decembrist enthusiasm, the oral history interviews with Stahl saw the light of print in 2000, with the participation of Irina Marmor, Professor Rostás's wife. The success of the volume and consequent books dedicated to the Gustian School created a favourable conjuncture for alternative approaches to the Gustian phenomenon, which attracted the spirit of adventure of Rostás's Ph.D. students, who felt the desire to contribute to the expansion of the research initiated by their professor.

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2   The Sociological School of Bucharest founded by Dimitrie Gusti was an interdisciplinary laboratory for research. It gathered a group of students, researchers, and collaborators who worked together on field research, following the monographic model created by Gusti himself. The monographic model focused on the detailed study of a small community, aimed to understand it through detailed and contextualized analysis. Thus, the School had the configuration of a *workshop* and was not bound merely by a set of ideas. Their joint activity culminated in the interwar period but continued after World War II until 1948, when political changes ended their activity.

3   https://www.observatorcultural.ro/articol/marginal-deci-exist/.

## The Beginnings

Thus, in the year 2000, in a small and friendly atmosphere, the Gusti Cooperative was born, composed of Professor Zoltán Rostás and three of his Ph.D. students: Theodora-Eliza Văcărescu, Florentina Stoian (Țone), and Antonio Momoc. After the publication of the volume of interviews with Stahl, other volumes of oral history interviews with former Gustians were published: *Sala luminoasă* [*The Bright Room*] (Rostás 2003), *Parcurs întrerupt* [Interrupted Journey] (Rostás 2006), and *Strada Latină nr. 8* [8 Latin Street] (Rostás 2009). Over the years, the number of Cooperative members among the Professor's Ph.D. students has increased, among them being: Ionuț Butoi, Alina Juravle, Ágota Szentannai, Martin L. Salamon, Gabriela-Cătălina Danciu (Dobrescu), Balázs Telegdy, Levente Székedi, Matei Costinescu. As the years passed, Irina Nastasă-Matei, Dana Costin, Rucsandra Pop, Ioana Fruntelată, Adela Hîncu, Dragoş Sdrobiş, Mihai Gaiță, and Andrei Gaghi were also integrated into this informal group. For their extraordinary contributions to publishing and promoting fundamental documents about the Bucharest Sociological School, the Cooperative is honoured to include among its members Sanda Golopenția, Doina Jela, and Marin Diaconu.

But membership in the Cooperative has always been deliberately not defined. The difference between *members* and *friends* of the Cooperative has been from the very beginning rather vague. Some "members" become "friends" over time due to the extended family or professional responsibilities that hinder the permanent activity within the Cooperative, while the active involvement of some "friends" in the group's projects makes them *de facto* "members".

In various interviews and discourses, Rostás pointed out the lack of a hierarchy within the group, considering himself *primus inter pares.* Observing the Cooperative from within, we could say that far from being an amorphous mass, the group has the structure of a solar system. Made up of independent scholars who revolve around Professor Rostás, the Cooperative has maintained an informal status to this day. The grouping has no institutional character, no headquarters, no employees, and no infrastructure or funds; however, for more than twenty years of existence, the Cooperative has had an active presence in the field of Romanian sociological research and social history based on oral history interviews.

## Scientific Activity

If during the first decade, the Cooperative was characterized mainly by spontaneous impulses of research, starting with the second decade, the activity of the Cooperative has become more systematic in nature when the Cooperative stepped on the international stage for the first time. Thus, in 2011, the magazine *Les Études*

*sociales* dedicated a special issue to the Gustian School, entitled *Sociologie et politique en Roumanie (1918–1948)*,[4] authored by the group. It followed a series of special issues in different scientific publications such as: *Transilvania*, *Sociologie Românească*, *Revista Română de Sociologie*, *Sfera Politică*, or *Polis*. Moreover, the members began to organize panels frequently at national and international conferences and dedicated themselves to publishing inaccessible documents on interwar Romanian sociology. Although this type of initiative normally involves the entire Cooperative, and its members often publish together in collective volumes, the research work (with few exceptions) is an individual one. Each member is involved in different social and professional sectors, and the scientific activity within the Cooperative is made purely out of intellectual pleasure and passion.

**Themes and Topics of Research**

The most recurrent themes that are the object of the Cooperative's attention revolve around two axes: social history and the history of Romanian sociology (with special attention to the interwar period), both axes being tributary to the method of oral history. Although they published several important books dedicated to probing the current sociological reality, such as: *Chipurile oraşului. Istorii de viață în București. Secolul XX* [The Faces of the City. Histories of Life in Bucharest. 20th Century] (Rostás 2002), *Bişnițari, descurcăreți, supraviețuitori* [Smugglers, Craftiness, Survivors] (Rostás–Momoc 2013), *Cealaltă jumătate a istoriei. Femei povestind* [The Other Half of History. Women Telling Their Stories] (Rostás –Văcărescu 2008), or *„Eu în România mă simt străin" – Vieți de imigrant în Grecia* ["I Feel Like a Stranger in Romania" – Immigrant Lives in Greece] (Rostás–Salamon 2018), the most consistent efforts of the Cooperative consist in recovering the legacy of Romanian sociology from the interwar period.

Thus, long-forgotten pages from the history of Romanian sociology were brought to light by publishing anthologies, correspondences, and unpublished documents (after decades of obscurity that came along with the rise to power of the communist regime, which prohibited the field of sociology and all the sociological centres of research, including the Gustian School after the end of World War II). Among these works, we mention only a few: 1) anthological volumes such as: *Transhumanța interbelică în Balcani. Studii şi articole despre aromâni în publicațiile şcolii gustiene* [Interwar Transhumance in the Balkans. Studies and Articles about Aromanians in the Publications of the Gustian School] (Rostás–Salamon 2017), *Personajele acestea de a doua mână. Din publicațiile membrelor Şcolii Sociologice de la Bucureşti* [These Second-Hand Characters. From the Publications of the Members of the Sociological School of Bucharest] (Văcărescu 2018), *Despre migrație şi emigrație la români* [On the Migration and Emigration

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4     https://www.cairn.info/revue-les-etudes-sociales-2011-1-page-5.htm.

of Romanians] (Rostás–Țone 2018); 2) microhistory studies – e.g. *Alma Mater în derivă. Aspecte alternative ale vieții universitare interbelice* [Alma Mater Adrift. Alternative Aspects of the Interwar University Life] (Nastasă-Matei–Rostás 2016 – the volume in 2020 was reissued in English); 3) documentary volumes: *Dimitrie Gusti. Corespondență. Acte și Documente. Bibliografie Adnotată* [Dimitrie Gusti. Correspondence. Acts and Documents. Annotated Bibliography] (Rostás–Rădoi 2017), *Dimitrie Gusti, o bibliografie a receptării* [Dimitrie Gusti, a Bibliography of Reception] (Rostás 2020); 4) collective studies – volumes with international participation: *Condamnare, marginalizare și supraviețuire în regimul comunist. Școala gustiană după 23 august 1944* [Condemnation, Marginalization and Survival in the Communist Regime. The Gustian School after August 23, 1944] (Rostás 2021), *Mărire și decădere. Sociologia gustiană în context central-est-european după Marele Război* [Rise and Fall. Gustian Sociology in the Central-Eastern European Context after the Great War] (Văcărescu–Rostás 2022); 5) author volumes – e.g. *Atelierul gustian. O abordare organizațională* [Gustian Workshop. An Organizational Approach] (Rostás 2005), *Capcanele politice ale sociologiei interbelice* [The Political Pitfalls of Interwar Sociology] (Momoc 2012), *Un aliat uitat* [A Forgotten Ally] (Salamon 2014), *Mircea Vulcănescu, o microistorie a interbelicului românesc* [Mircea Vulcănescu, a Microhistory of the Romanian Interwar Era] (Butoi 2015 ), *Cazul József Venczel* [The József Venczel Case] (Telegdy 2016), *Limitele supraviețuirii. Sociologia maghiară din Transilvania* [The Limits of Survival.  Hungarian Sociology in Transylvania] (Székedi 2021).

In total, summing up both the volumes published either individually or in a team, as well as the special issues in scientific journals, the Cooperative has published more than 50 works over a period of two decades, not to mention the multitude of articles and studies published individually by the members in various scientific publications in the country and abroad.

## Between Marginalization and Institutional Collaborations

To mark the two decades of existence, the Cooperative published in 2020 an anniversary collective volume curated by Ionuț Butoi and Martin Ladislau Salamon, entitled *Marginal și experimental. Cooperativa Gusti: două decenii de cercetare în istoria sociologiei* [Marginal and Experimental. The Gusti Cooperative: Two Decades of Research in the History of Sociology]. The volume includes some of the most significant articles and studies that the members of the group have published over time in various scientific publications. The title of the paper may seem paradoxical: The Gusti Cooperative and its scientific results are far from being considered marginal in the broader context of the research in the field of the history of Romanian sociology; however, it manages to capture the very essence of the Cooperative: its institutional marginality.

Despite the lack of the institutional element, or, we could say, due to this aspect, the Gusti Cooperative has become in time a pillar of support for the unconventional research of Romanian sociology. The lack of structures, funds, or constant support from academic institutions comes with several disadvantages, but it allows its members to carry out their work without institutional or conceptual limitations and constraints. Paradoxically, not depending on academic structures or on the grant-based financing system, the Cooperative has managed to outline a specific profile and maintain continuity from a thematic point of view: a *red thread*, we could say.

However, the fact that the group is informal does not prevent it from having cooperative relations with different institutions. Thus, over time, the Cooperative has collaborated with several entities both for editing and publishing original materials, as well as for organizing scientific events (conferences, colloquia, debates): the Museum of Ethnography in Braşov (with the participation of whom a previously unpublished volume of correspondence addressed to Dimitrie Gusti has appeared), the Institute for the Investigation of Communist Crimes and the Memory of Exile in Romania, The Faculty of Journalism and Communication Sciences of the University of Bucharest, the Institute of History "Nicolae Iorga", the Faculty of Sociology and Social Assistance at the University of Bucharest, or the Society of Sociologists from Romania, to mention just a few.

## Means of Dissemination

The Gusti Cooperative also has a digital presence. It has an Internet platform, *Cooperativa G*, "which has as its main purpose the dissemination, in the virtual environment, of the research results in the fields of social history and oral history related to the Sociological School of Bucharest or the Gustian School and the Social Sciences in Romania. The initiator of this site is professor Zoltán Rostás, Ph.D., and the main contributors are his collaborators and researchers."[5] The group also has a Facebook page,[6] as well as a *Newsletter*, which, under the care of Ionuţ Butoi, Ph.D., has reached 100 issues in 2018.[7]

But the most effective means by which the Gusti Cooperative spreads its own scientific activity is especially through its rich publishing production, through intensive participation in scientific events (conferences, congresses, colloquia, round tables, scientific debates), and also through the organization of such scientific events with national and international participation as, for example, the colloquium organized in the autumn of 2021 in collaboration with the Faculty of Political Sciences and the Faculty of Political Sciences of Journalism and Communication Sciences of the University of Bucharest, on the occasion of

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5    http://www.cooperativag.ro/despre-noi/.
6    https://ro-ro.facebook.com/cooperativa.gusti/.
7    http://www.cooperativag.ro/la-100-de-numere-ale-newsletter-ului-cooperativa-gusti/.

the 120th anniversary of the birth of Henri H. Stahl, entitled *Why Is It Difficult to "Draw" the Profile of This Scholar? Henri H. Stahl at 120 Years Old.*

## Gazing into the Future

The Cooperative's concerns have remained constant over time thanks also to the fact that it has a horizontal structure. Free from infighting and institutional constraints, Zoltán Rostás foresees the future of the Cooperative on the same coordinates, all the more so since the "golden vein", which is the object of study of the group, is broad and almost unlimited in nature.[8]

Of course, there is no perfect overlap between Professor Rostás's scientific objectives and the individual ones of each member, but the group managed to acquire its own identity and physiognomy since its founder managed to have a catalytic effect on his own "disciples" and "friends".

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# "Hungarian Supremacy Cannot Be Debated". Hungarian Conservative Sociologists on the Nationalities Question (1908–1918)

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**Abstract.** *Magyar Társadalomtudományi Szemle* (*MTSZ*), i.e. *Hungarian Review of Social Sciences*, was published between 1908 and 1918, and it was the highest-toned journal of contemporary Hungarian conservative sociology. At that time, in the last years of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, one of the most pressing social issues was the nationalities question: what rights belong to non-Hungarian-speaking nationalities living in the territory of the Kingdom of Hungary? This question was answered by two schools of tender-aged Hungarian social science. In general, liberal-left sociologists following Western scientific patterns believed that the language and cultural rights of national minorities need to be expanded. Conservatives, on the other hand, called for a restrictive policy to maintain the territorial integrity of the Kingdom of Hungary. The analysis of the authors and writings in favour of the extension of rights has been completed (Litván 1978, 2006; Litván–Szücs 1973). Conservative sociologists who support the restriction, however, have so far received almost no attention in the history of sociology. In this writing, I would like to fill this gap. After the short institutional presentation of contemporary conservative sociology, I will focus on their central journal, *MTSZ*. I will analyse the articles in which the authors have taken a position on the nationalities question. I argue that the articles published in the *MTSZ* have primarily addressed the nationalities question as a political and demographic issue. Therefore, I will describe these two types of writing. (Beyond that, some articles focused on social theory, culture, or education when writing about the rights of non-Hungarian-speaking minorities.) My basic question is how those aspects of the nationalities question appeared in *MTSZ* and how those all create a specific political store of knowledge. If we get answers to this, not only will we shed light on one of the forgotten but exciting schools of early Central European social science, but perhaps the history of the first quarter of the 20th century will also be better understood.

**Keywords:** history of sociology, the 1910s, conservativism, the nationalities question, Austria-Hungary

# The Journal and Its Circle

The birth of Hungarian sociology was attended by two journals and their circles: *Társadalomtudományi Társaság* (TT), i.e. the Society of Social Sciences, which published *Huszadik Század* (*HSZ*), i.e. Twentieth Century, between 1900 and 1919, and Magyar Társadalomtudományi Egyesület (MTE), i.e. Hungarian Society of Social Sciences, which published *MTSZ* (1908–1918). While the former consciously took on the role of a pioneer and innovator, the latter was the organ of the conservative, nationalistic intelligentsia (Huszár 2015, Szabari 2021: 390). From the perspective of the history of ideas, the work of MTE is still relatively unprocessed. The reason for this can be linked to the failure of their assumed mission (Karády–Nagy 2019: 56) and to the specificities of Hungarian sociology, which was re-institutionalized in the 1960s, to its history (Vasvári 2007, Szabari 2011).

Hungarian historians of science consider the journal *HSZ* published by TT starting in 1901 as the "first Hungarian workshop of sociology". In the beginning, this society was characterized by a confusingly lively diversity of worldviews. Within the progressive worldview, every trend was represented: liberalism, anarchism, revolutionary syndicalism, radicalism, and social democracy (Litván 1973: 6). Indeed, in the earliest times, both conservatives and moderate liberals considered the journal as their own. Nevertheless, their departure began considerably early on, in the second year of the journal's existence. According to the positivist thinkers' opinion, the journal should not deal with daily political affairs at all but should only publish purely scientific writings. However, several people advocated the opposite: the journal should assume its political mission to spread progressive-liberal ideas. In the end, the positivists won the debate, and the opponents left the editorial board (Vasvári 2007).

This was the first visible friction between moderate and radical members of the membership, but there remained some ideological differences. The differences became irresolvable because of the domestic political crisis of 1905–1906.[1] In the summer of 1906, the previously very broad ideological spectrum of the TT's membership narrowed:

> The two sides were already clearly visible: the nationalist, liberal right wing and the group of civic radicals and socialists. The last moment of the events took place on 7 August 1906: the civic radical and socialist group won at the hastily convened extraordinary general meeting, and the right-wing group was expelled from the company. (…) After that, the society

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[1]    Franz Joseph I of Austria ignored the results of the parliamentary elections because the pro-independence united opposition won. This led to a domestic political crisis that lasted for months.

and the journal came under the intellectual control of civic radicals and socialists. (Vasvári 2007: 94)[2]

A series of long-standing antagonisms led to the mass departure of liberal and conservative members in 1906. Those who left quickly set about creating their social science forum. On 5 February 1907, the preparatory committee was established, the purpose of which was to cultivate a patriotic, nationally-based social science that was above parties.[3] The corresponding association, i.e. the Hungarian Society of Social Sciences, was founded two months later. The launch of the journal *MTSZ* intended for intellectuals was finally decided at the committee meeting in July 1907, the publishing office of which was set up in Cluj (Kolozsvár), and the members of the editorial board were Menyhért Palágyi, István Apáthy, Jenő Gaál, and Benedek Jancsó. *MTSZ* was published ten times a year, (except July and August) on the 15th of each month. This system worked exactly from the January 1908 issue until the June 1914 issue. Due to the outbreak of the First World War, the seventh, eighth, ninth, and tenth issues planned for that year were merged and published together. After that, only 3 numbers appeared, and even these randomly; the last one was on 15 September 1918, just before those weeks when the Central Powers, one after another, sued for peace with the Entente. *MTSZ* was primarily aimed at the conservative intelligentsia: university professors, teachers, clerks, officials, etc. Throughout its existence, its impact on public discourse was smaller compared to *HSZ* (Huszár 2015: 65).

## Articles on the Nationalities Question in *MTSZ*

It is important to point out that the nationalities question was not the most important topic of *MTSZ*. Its interest extended to many areas: social theory, social policy, law, history, art theory, social movements, economics, education, foreign policy, public administration, etc. Although the nationalities question was one of the most trending topics of conversation of the era, the authors of *MTSZ* dealt much more with universal suffrage, for example. It is therefore more typical that they mention the nationalities question when discussing other topics. However, from the point of view of the history of science, the form in which such an important question appeared in the highest-quality Hungarian conservative social science journal is extremely important. The primary reason

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2    Translated by the author.
3    More than three-quarters of the members received their regular salary from the state, local government, or a church. This may explain the phenomenon that later became clear that the nationalities question was discussed primarily as a political-administrative issue in the columns of *MTSZ*.

for this is that *MTSZ* committed itself to the same principles as the decision-making power of the time.

Out of a total of 70 published issues of *MTSZ*, 36 articles written by 24 authors, as well as one book published by the MTE deal with the nationalities question. We can classify them into 4 + 1 groups according to the way the topic is presented:

1. *Political-administrative topics* (16 articles) where the nationalities question is primarily a matter of state and electoral rights. In general, the authors see the weakening of Hungarian dominance within the country in every extension of rights; they are concerned about the establishment of universal suffrage primarily from an ethnic, not a social, point of view. What previous power decisions led to the fact that some of the nationalities living in the territory of the Kingdom of Hungary demand territorial autonomy for themselves? Who is to blame for this? What processes of constitutional history led to this? How should the Hungarian government behave to silence the demands of nationality? What are the duties and responsibilities of the state, the counties, and the Hungarian political elite? What is written about all this in the domestic and foreign literature? Librarian and archivist Albert Gárdonyi and agrarian politician Ferenc Steinecker annotated most of the political texts.

2. *Demographic assimilation topics* (7 articles): the articles belonging to this section reported on the process of Magyarization by analysing and communicating the latest or long-term demographic and economic statistical data. The authors all agreed that, from the point of view of the country's prosperity, an increase in the number and standard of living of the Hungarian nationality is desirable. However, the statistical and possibly psychological characteristics of the process have been interpreted in various ways. It is surprising to what extent the economic aspect has been pushed into the background in favour of the population. Most demographic and assimilation texts were written by demographer Alajos Kovács, who later became the President of the Hungarian Central Statistical Office.

3. *Theoretical articles* (6 articles): this group includes those writings that primarily approached the nationalities question as a philosophical and social theoretical problem. This means thinking about the Hungarian national idea and presenting theoretical works. The former was mainly articulated as follows: how can national aspirations be integrated into the scope of the Hungarian national idea?

4. *Cultural-educational pieces* (3 articles + 1 book): asking how a non-Hungarian-speaking child with an ethnic background can be raised Hungarian. What level of education are the nationalities in Hungary at all? The writings that attempted to comment on the public discourse on nationalities from the point of view of culture and education revolved around these questions. Most of the cultural-educational texts were annotated by teacher Sándor Imre.

4 + 1. *Complex articles* (4 articles): I considered that some texts have a complex approach because they considered more than one of the above categories (even

all of them) when discussing the nationalities question. The first article from this group is a detailed report on the MTE meeting held on this topic. The second is Béla Kenéz's prudent, broad-minded proposal to solve the nationalities question. The third is the article on Romanian irredentism by teacher Endre Barabás from Cluj. And the fourth, which is the most comprehensive of all, can be linked to József Ajtay, adviser to the Ministry of Finance. In it, Ajtay summarizes the lessons learned from the association meetings held in 1913 and 1914 dealing with the nationalities question. I already mentioned above that the authors rarely focused exclusively on the nationalities question; it was more common that this question came up in connection with other topics. This can serve as an explanation for the fact that only 4 articles belong to the group of complex writings. Their distribution is uneven, and they can only be found in the issues of the years 1913 and 1914. One of the reasons for this may be that the data of the 1910 census was published in 1913, so in view of the new results, the nationalities question came into a new light.

I admit that, like all categorizations, this is arbitrary. I can also see that in many cases it is a challenging task to place individual writings in one of the groups: the scientific style of the time, which aimed for completeness, confronts the researcher with a continuous dilemma. A more sensitive grouping would perhaps be able to show the multiple overlaps between the aspects. Reading the texts, for example, those who primarily approach the nationalities question with a political toolkit and language have the right to make cultural and educational statements as well. And *vice versa*: those who argue in favour of reforming the school system on a professional basis, rightly think that their proposals are also political and therefore directly address what they have to say to the decision-maker. But in most cases, it is possible to identify a dominant approach according to the article's central theme, i.e. what it says, the language, and, in the last case, the author's education and position, considering the nationalities question. Since the theme of most of the articles (more than 60%) was political-administrative or demographic assimilation, I will focus on these two categories hereinafter.

## Political-Administrative Articles

The political-administrative writings were evenly distributed over the years, so the most common category remained on the agenda throughout. This also means that the intensity of the political discourse about nationalities was not significantly influenced by any specific event.[4]

Authors of *MTSZ* were generally characterized by an advisory attitude. At the end of their political articles, their scientific findings were almost always

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4   For instance, the annexation of Bosnia-Herzegovina in 1908, the memorandum of Slovak politicians in 1911, and the simmering of Croatian domestic politics in 1912 did not produce any more political articles.

transformed into advice for the authorities to take to heart. This may indicate, on the one hand, that there were influential politicians among the periodical's readers (Huszár 2015: 65). On the other hand, the previously mentioned attitude of the conservatives, which they could not enforce within *HSZ*, finally prevailed: they also provided a place for current politics in their social science forum. Their advice in this regard was formulated in broad generalities. However, it seems that the association's advice was not received as enthusiastically by the decision-makers as the members formulated it.[5]

Moreover, another major type of political-administrative writing is reviews of domestic and foreign scientific literature. These are often reviews of books specifically about Hungarian nationality policy. Since Hungary's minority policy had extremely bad press at the time (the authors also acknowledged this, and even directly blamed the nationalities for it), this usually meant responding to unfavourable criticism and defending the government's policy. In addition to all these, the political-administrative category also includes those texts in which they wrote about the nationality aspects of suffrage, labour movements, and relations with Austria.

## Political Advice for the Authorities

Those authors who approached the nationalities question primarily from a political point of view, most often transformed their insights into concrete advice. Here, the ideas to be taken to heart were formulated primarily directly in connection with the discussion of the nationality question. However, there were also examples of proposals related to nationalities being made under the pretext of the extension of the right to vote, Széchenyi's ideological legacy (Andrássy 1912), or World War I military deployments (Czettler 1917). I will present a single but typical example from this category.

The most closely related to the nationalities question are the political-administrative statements that were made at the MTE's meeting on 17 and 28 February 1913. The procurement committee summarized the questions in seven points, which the invited speakers undertook to answer, as summarized below:

– National aspirations: what are the demands? To what extent are these natural developments and to what extent are they the results of conscious agitation?

– The unity of the Hungarian state: how can it be protected? What is the role of the state in this field? What needs to be done in terms of public administration, economics, and foreign policy?

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5   In 1909, when the MTE devoted a special session to the issue of emigration, it summarized its observations in a separate document for the Parliament. Two years later, Gábor Daniel, the Chairman of the Parliamentary Emigration Committee, sadly stated that the Parliament had not been able to put the document on the agenda since then (Anonymus 1911).

The 69-year-old retired politician and Prime Minister, Kálmán Széll, was asked to chair the meeting. Széll owed the invitation much more to the high positions he held in the past than to his characterful nationality policy: compared to the conditions of the time, it is striking that the nationality issue was almost completely absent from Széll's statements during his prime ministership (Tőkéczki 2015). The elderly politician was also forced to defend himself because of this. He said that even though many people criticized him during his prime ministership because he was not sufficiently violent with the nationalities, he always wanted the country to remain Hungarian. He did allow the nationalities to use their mother tongue in their private lives, but he always imposed the condition "that they consider themselves Hungarian people, parts of the Hungarian nation and that they profess it and bear the consequences" (Anonymous 1913: 224).[6]

The two other speakers at the meeting were Ágost Jankó and Károly Balás. Jankó was Vice-Prefect of Torontál County in the southern region, and he built his speech around the ethnic relations experienced there. According to him, at that time, the population of Torontál was extremely diverse: the proportion of Hungarians was only 21%, compared to 33% of Serbs, 28% of German, and 14% of Romanians. The Vice-Prefect reported weak local pan-Slavic agitation, adding that the county had an obligation to suppress this as soon as possible. In general, he considered it desirable to establish a daily direct nexus with the Serbs, but only if they cut off their relations with the Kingdom of Serbia. According to Jankó, the correct organization of the public administration can prevent all kinds of pan-Slavic aspirations. Only those who know Hungarian should be appointed to official positions, but Hungarian civil servants should also speak the languages of the local nationalities. According to Jankó, the government should curtail the autonomy of the Serbian Orthodox Church to prevent the agitation.

Károly Balás, a professor at the Royal Academy in Košice, gave a lecture on the general characteristics of irredentism. In his opinion, the government could defeat these dangerous efforts for the unified Hungarian state by doing the following: supporting a prosperous, independent Hungarian intelligentsia, spreading the Hungarian language more forcefully, and making it exclusive (therefore the current nationality law should also be amended). In return, free translation should be provided for the nationalities. Although he believes that it is true that the proportion of Hungarians in the cities is growing rapidly, this alone does not solve the problems: "Language conquest in the village is at the same time the acquisition of a piece of national land and part of the country, and, as such, it is the only sure and lasting thing" (Anonymous 1913: 235).[7]

Jankó and Balázs were two conservative intellectuals who knew public administration well. Both formulated particularly complex proposals regarding

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6    Translated by the author.
7    Translated by the author.

the nationalities problem. On the one hand, in a negative, forbidding tone. Those who do not know Hungarian should not be allowed to hold government jobs, the independence of the churches of the nationalities should be curtailed, there should be no other official language than Hungarian, and the territories of the nationalities must be Magyarized linguistically and culturally. On the other hand, in a positive, permissive way, and in some places even by expanding rights. Let us contact those whose mother tongue is not Hungarian, let the Hungarian officials know the languages of the nationalities, and let the citizen who does not know Hungarian, who manages his/her affairs receive free translation. These suggestions may seem too strict today – rightly so. But if we look at these from the perspective of the Kingdom of Hungary trying to build a nation-state within the imperial framework, we can see that they were primarily motivated not by aimless oppression but by the desire to catch up with the nation-state ideals of the time.

## Book Reviews

It seems that the membership of the MTE was relatively well acquainted with contemporary European social science currents. A range of fresh scientific works was presented, and the journal had a regular review column. Since the government's ethnic policy was particularly poorly judged in Western Europe, the primary task of the explanations related to the nationality issue was to fend off foreign criticism. Many domestic publications also gave Hungarian reviewers the opportunity to express their political opinions related to the nationalities question. Since they are typical, I will present two examples: firstly, a review of a book sympathizing with Hungarian nationality politics and, secondly, of a book condemning it.

In the first issue of the journal, Endre Makai, a young surgeon, presented the work of the French historian Charles-Louis Chassin, which was published more than half a century earlier, in 1856 (*La Hongrie, son génie et sa mission, étude historique, suivi de Jean de Hunyad, récit du xve siècle*). In this, Chassin first gave a general description of the Hungarian people, and, secondly, he published an essay about John Hunyadi, a 15th-century Hungarian politician and military leader. Makai stated that Hungarians are not properly known abroad, at best they regard us with indifference, at worst with expressed dislike. He traces this back to economic reasons on the one hand and ignorance on the other since the "cultured world" can only rely on the narratives about Hungarians related by peoples neighbouring us. On the other hand, Chassin's book, although it was written quite a long time ago, according to Makai, is still relevant in 1908: the text, written in a thorough and readable style, speaks of the Hungarians in a loving yet objective tone (Makai 1908).

The young doctor mostly highlighted findings related to nationalities from the book. In Chassin's opinion, the Austrians and Romanians unjustly accused

Hungary of oppressing nationalities since equality before the law was also ensured for non-Hungarian speakers. The Frenchman's argument went back to Stephen I of Hungary: according to him, the founder of the state was too permissive with the peoples found in the Carpathian Basin, which is why they "became spoiled", and to this day Hungary is bearing the burden of warring nationalities. Makai spectacularly skimmed past Chassin's mistakes such as the fact that the Frenchman confused the law with everyday experience and that he traced a modern problem parallel to nation-states back to the 11th century. The review presented a work in which the Hungarian nationality policy was exceptionally not only acceptable but appeared in a particularly good light. Makai thereby legitimized the Hungarian nationality policy.

On the other hand, Albert Gárdonyi, head of the Library of Budapest, presented a book that painted a particularly unfavourable picture of the Monarchy's ethnic relations. He reviewed the latest book of the British historian Robert William Seton-Watson (commonly known under the pseudonym Scotus Viator): *German, Slav, and Magyar. A Study in the Origins of the Great War.* Seton-Watson researched the history of Eastern European nationalities and wrote this book specifically on the topic of the world war in 1916.

The main claim of his book is that the harsh oppression of Hungarian nationalities contributed greatly to the war. Gárdonyi categorically refused this, calling Seton-Watson's book a biased, malicious, and unfair work, which applies a double standard since the ethnic aggression of the British Empire could also be legitimately criticized. Gárdonyi also responded to him in a bellicose tone: "We simply regard this work as a fever dream of war, which time will remedy one day" (Gárdonyi 1917: 67). Perhaps we can rightly consider Gárdonyi's criticism as a militant-sounding criticism of a publication serving war purposes, rather than a professional review of scientific work.

In summary, when discussing the political aspects of the nationalities question, the authors primarily sought to provide principled and practical advice, in which case they almost always relied on their ideas. Secondly, the reviews referred to the question in connection with the presentation of books by domestic and foreign authors. It is interesting that in the latter case proposals were only rarely formulated for the government, and the lessons of the presented books were drawn more for theory than for practice. Since it can be found in most writings, we can consider the following formula as the starting point of the entire political-administrative category: due to development and catching-up, the expansion of citizenship rights is necessary, but if this means a significant political strengthening of the non-Hungarian-speaking population, it is not allowed to be performed.

Although the expressed opinions overshadow this statement (some are more permissive, some other are stricter with nationalities), their starting point is

always the above idea. On the one hand, this means that beyond the common starting point, the authors of *MTSZ* had a relatively common position regarding the cultivation of the correct nationality policy. On the other hand, there is the fact that the authors considered the solution to the nationalities question as solvable only with political-administrative means, so they saw it as a matter of a political nature, and they wrote about it as such. Compared to this, they were mostly biased towards the government of the time.

## Demographic Assimilation Articles

Hungary's first demographic transition occurred between the 1880s and the First World War. In the process, a society characterized by high fertility and high mortality rates was transformed into a society characterized by a dwindling number of children and low mortality; meanwhile, the country's population grew almost one and a half times. The proportion of native Hungarian speakers increased much more than this, so the country experienced a strong assimilation and Magyarization (Szántó 2014). However, the data and analyses of the censuses should be treated with criticism. In addition to the fact that the censuses served a political purpose in themselves, the surveys during the dualism era not only monitored but also tried to shape the statistical nationality using certain methodological tools (Kövér 2016).

The authors of *MTSZ* paid special attention to statistical data when discussing the nationalities question. Here we can distinguish two types of articles. On the one hand, there is the communication and professional analysis of demographic data, and, on the other hand, the more abstract discussion of the data highlights the social and psychological aspects of assimilation. The latter can also be combined with the provision of primary data, a good example of which is the rather complex analysis of Kornél Szemenyei.

Gyula Steiner, the County Chief Notary of the mostly Slovak-speaking Nyitra County, started from the 1900 census data. According to him, although it is reassuring to see the rapid growth of the Hungarian-speaking population, the higher fertility rate of the nationalities may seem contradictory. According to Steiner's explanation, since the growth of the Hungarian population took place primarily within the urban population, and urbanization is an unstoppable process, the growth of the "nation-building element" is guaranteed for many decades. Many children born of non-Hungarian-speaking families are born in rural areas and villages, from where sooner or later they move to larger settlements that provide better living conditions, and as a result, within a foreseeable time, they also assimilate into the city dwellers. The essence of this interesting argument is that the nationalist advocates who call for cruel oppression are not right since the non-Hungarian-speaking population voluntarily merges into the majority Hungarian ethnicity by moving from villages to cities (Steiner 1910).

The detailed data of the 1910 census were not published until relatively late, in 1913. Statistician-demographer Alajos Kovács used the new data to present the power relations between Hungarians and the nationalities. At that time, Kovács had been working for the Statistical Office for more than ten years, participated in the preparation of the 1900 census, and played a key role in the 1910 and 1920 censuses (Faragó 2012). According to him, the hegemony of the nation-forming ethnic groups can be ensured primarily by their numerical superiority in a multi-ethnic country. This is not yet a given in the Kingdom of Hungary, as most Hungarians can be observed in less than half of the 63 counties. In the author's opinion, this is a cause for serious concern, and it would be necessary to amend the borders of the counties or reform the public administration to mitigate this.

The numerical majority, on the other hand, is spectacularly present in the intellectual elite and in the cities. Regarding the latter, Kovács also considers it important to note: "The nationalities question will be solved by the cities, which absorb and explain the nationality masses. The larger the urban citizenry will make up the nation, the more secure the Hungarian hegemony will rest on" (Kovács 1913: 194).[8] The rise of Hungarians happened mainly at the expense of German and Slovak native speakers, so they assimilated the most. The reason for this is the conscious assimilation that can be observed primarily among the nationalities, but the emigration characteristic of them also promotes this process. According to Kovács (1913), although Hungarians are not an absolute majority, their financial and cultural superiority compensates for this, and those who fear national aspirations have no cause for concern.

High school history teacher Pál Török's musings were also based on the data from 1910, which he considered a more favourable natural reproduction of the Hungarian population. According to him, this is primarily not due to the positive trend among native Hungarian speakers but to the worse mortality data of the nationalities. After all, a more favourable birth rate does not necessarily mean better economic and cultural conditions, but unfavourable mortality data indicate worse living conditions. However, according to the author, the biggest difference between Hungarians and the nationalities is precisely the quality of living conditions – in favour of Hungarians (Török 1914). Török's specific explanation is in some ways contrary to that of Alajos Kovács since he is not convinced that the favourable demographic situation of the Hungarians would be sustainable: it is not the Hungarian nationality that is doing well but the others that are doing poorly.

Kornél Szemenyei's large-scale article is the one that most thoroughly explored the process of assimilation between 1870 and 1900. He saw the explanation as justified primarily in strengthening the Hungarian language: the proportion of those who knew Hungarian increased continuously, especially among Germans and Slovaks, as well as among industrialists, merchants, and intellectuals. He

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8    Translated by the author.

traced the issue of the state language back to economic reasons: the influence of the state in economic life increased at the same time, and more and more non-Hungarian-speaking participants entered the scene. All of this made it necessary to use a common language, which could not be other than the language of the majority of the population, Hungarian. According to Szemenyei, in the case of such a large assimilation, it is meaningless to talk about Magyarization, rather self-Magyarizing can be observed: the nationalities themselves realized that their economic and cultural catching-up can only be achieved if they merge into the majority Hungarian society (Szemenyei 1908). Throughout the article, the connection between the nationalities question and modernization is extremely strong. The author equates the process of development with the process of assimilation: this is both a call to governments (help the integration of nationalities) and to nationalities (assimilate). After all, assimilation represents the highest level of development for both parties.

All the demographic and assimilation texts appearing in *MTSZ* welcomed the fact of Magyarization that can be read from the census reports. However, the mood of the articles is different. While specialists such as Alajos Kovács confidently asserted that the growth of the Hungarian population was assured for decades, lay analysts warned all readers not to sit back with satisfaction after reading the results of the censuses, as there is still plenty of work to be done for the Hungarian hegemony around confirmation. The optimists strongly relied on the fact that the absorption power of Hungarians is extraordinary in the cities, even in regions where the nationalities are otherwise in the majority. Alajos Kovács also recognized this when he advised the government that cities should be given a greater political role, thereby strengthening the position of Hungarians.

## Conclusions

I analysed 37 texts that were published in *MTSZ* or related to the journal. Starting from these titles, nearly one-third of the texts dealt primarily with some aspect of the nationalities question. The remaining two-thirds were basically about other topics. We can therefore say that the nationalities question usually did not appear by itself but in connection with other topics. What are these other topics? The fact that the authors have a wide range of information is assumed by the fact that they are primarily book reviews (7 times), followed far behind by electoral reform (3 times), population statistics (3 times), the relationship with Austria (2 times), and left-wing labour movements (2 times). This recognition overshadows our presuppositions regarding the nationalities question and points out that only 5% of the approximately 700 articles published in *MTSZ* dealt with it, but only 1-2% of all texts explored the topic in depth. This may also be why *MTSZ* did not have a "nationalities question expert", that is, an author who would have kept the

topic on the agenda and would have appeared occasionally with deeper analyses. In the case of demographic and assimilation articles, perhaps Alajos Kovács can be considered as such (although he did not limit himself to the nationalities question in his articles), and in the case of complex texts, it is striking that on two occasions it is an extract from an association conference.

Along which lines of fault can the authors be placed about the nationalities question? It is noteworthy that not only their starting point (ensuring the hegemony of Hungarians) but also their detailed opinions were more or less coherent. The sentence quoted in the title of the present article sums this up well: "Hungarian supremacy cannot be debated" (Sigmond 1909: 812).[9] The factor based on which we can distinguish the authors, for lack of a better one, is the issue of the right of nationalities to use their own language. We can come across two different approaches – the authors communicated practically the same thing in a strict, prohibitive, or permissive tone: nationalities can use their mother tongue at home, but the supremacy of the Hungarian language in public life is unquestionable. The authors were therefore separated from each other much less by differences in conviction than by differences in attitude.

In what framing did the nationalities question appear, and which aspects did the authors highlight? I placed the texts in 4 + 1 groups, depending on which aspects of the nationalities question were primarily considered: political-administrative, demographic assimilation, theoretical, cultural-educational, and complex. As it turned out from the previous ones, political-administrative or demographic assimilation aspects dominated nearly two-thirds of the writings, i.e. for the conservative authors of *MTSZ*, the nationalities question was primarily a political and population issue. These writings provided the government with principled and practical (but above all: political) advice on the nationalities question, and they covered the topic through book reviews. It is striking that the authors did not raise the issue of the current Hungarian leadership's responsibility and considered any kind of reform acceptable only if it did not involve the rise of nationalities at the expense of Hungarians. At the same time, the desire to modernize and catch up ran through almost all his writings. All the demographic and assimilation texts agreed that the spectacular assimilation of the nationalities is to be welcomed, but regarding the sustainability of the growth of the Hungarian population, some authors (typically professional statisticians) made optimistic predictions, while others made pessimistic ones.

The theoretical articles of *MTSZ* pointed out the specific relationship between the national idea and the nationalities question: the authors only very rarely discussed the two issues together since, in their opinion, the nationalities were not yet at the level of self-organization that would allow them to speak of nations on an equal footing with the Hungarians. Parallels were mainly drawn with

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9     The author wrote this in reference to the state financing of cultural life.

Western cultural nations (French, German) and ethnic groups that languished within empires but that once had independent states (Czech, Polish). Finally: the cultural-educational framing was rare, and those texts also mainly focused on the field of education. It is interesting that the issue of secularization came up only occasionally, almost exclusively in connection with the curtailment of the autonomies of the Romanian and Serbian Orthodox Churches.

In the first weeks of the 20th century, it appeared in the columns of the conservative *Kakas Márton* tabloid: "The nationalities question is being **talked** about more and more in the parliament. And the agitators **act** during this…" (Apróhírek). Conservative authors of *MTSZ* tried to find a solution to this problem by their means: using scientific methods to talk about the nationalities question so that the government could act against the agitators of nationality, to ensure "Hungarian supremacy".

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# The Peculiarity of Sociographic Knowledge in Hungary[1]

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**Abstract.** Hungarian sociography describes society and social problems in an easily understandable way. Sociographic writings do not neglect the political purpose, which creates a specific knowledge about the society within a limited public. Despite the heterogeneity of the genre, the central element of sociographic work is the critique of the dysfunctionality of the existing social system, urging social change. Sociography has not had the conditions to become a science. It remained an area on the border of politics – science – literature. All three at once; however, neither of them. The problem of the institutionalization of sociography means that its importance can be determined through the examination of its task.

Burawoy's theory on public sociology argues that the knowledge of society expressed in scientific language needs to be adapted to the common language. Based on the characteristics of Hungarian sociography, the main goal is to adapt Burawoy's approach on public sociology to sociography. This article presents the peculiarities of Hungarian sociographic knowledge production and transmission during the 20th century and attempts to place sociography in Burawoy's system.

**Keywords:** sociography, sociographic knowledge, Burawoy, public sociology

## Introduction

In the last few years, there has been a growing interest in the peculiarity of sociography.[2] There is still an ongoing debate about the description of the field and how to define it. Several authors have conducted a reflexive review of the history of sociography and tried to create an exact definition during the 20th century

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2   The foundation named *Magyarország Felfedezése Alapítvány* [Foundation of Discovering Hungary] has published three books recently on this topic: Tóth, Pál Péter (ed.). 2018: *A magyar szociográfia a 20–21. században* [Hungarian Sociography in the 20th and 21st Centuries]; Letenyei, László, Tamáska, Máté (eds.). 2018: *Szociográfia – Kárpát-medencei körkép* [Sociography.

(Turnowsky 1928, Jócsik 1935, Gaál 1937, Bibó 1940, Sükösd 1963, Kulcsár 1970, Berkovits 1975, Szilágyi 1982, Pelle 1984, Némedi 1985, Lengyel 2021, Szerbhorváth 2021). Despite the problems of definition and lack of the criteria for becoming a social science, sociography as a genre still exists in Hungary.

Sociography is a rather complex field to define in the scientific literature. However, the importance of the knowledge produced and transmitted by sociographies in studying social issues should be emphasized. From its inception, sociography has been a means of exploring and understanding social reality (Sükösd 1963), presenting the so-called "crisis situation" (Bibó 1940), and reporting on the problems of society in writings that have been formulated with scientific rigour (Némedi 1985). The demand for sociographic works on the part of society justifies their existence but also raises the question of the identity of public sociology.

The article outlines the main definitions of sociography in each period of its history, primarily based on the literature related to Hungary. It focuses on defining the peculiarity of sociographic knowledge. The article proposes that Burawoy's theory on public sociology is acceptable in determining the peculiarity of Hungarian sociography. Public sociology is "taking knowledge back to those from whom it came, making public issues out of private troubles and thus regenerating sociology's moral fibre. Herein lies the promise and challenge of public sociology, the complement and not the negation of professional sociology", and "[P]ublic sociology brings sociology into a conversation with publics, understood as people who are themselves involved in the conversation" (Burawoy 2005: 5, 7).

## Brief History of Hungarian Sociography

This part introduces the characteristics of the international context of sociography, comparing it with the history of Hungarian sociography considering the territorial changes of the country and seeks to answer the question of what is specific to the history of Hungarian sociography.

The beginning of the history of Hungarian sociography dates to the first years of the 20th century. Since then, with varying intensities, sociography has been part of the academic and non-academic society. Modernity has caused a change in social structure, and social sciences have different reactions to all that, reflected in sociography as well.

The overview of the history of Hungarian sociography shows that the definition of sociography has been interpreted differently in each period. In this article,

Transcarpathian Basin Panorama]; in 2021, they published György Lengyel's edited book with sociographies [Sociographies from 2019 – Introductory Remarks and Background]. The foundation preserves the legacy of sociography.

three main periods are used: (1) the beginnings – before 1920, (2) the so-called golden age (1920–1938) reflecting periods formulated by Némedi (1985), and (3) the era of veiled social criticism after World War II. The article aims to present the differences of each period and define the peculiarity of sociography.

## Roots and International Influence

The first attempt at Hungarian sociography is ascribed to Róbert Braun at the beginning of the 20th century (Turnowsky 1928, Bán 1987, Sárkány 2018). Braun was one of the first ones whose work can be identified as sociography. *Lippa and Sansepolcro*, the comparative study of the Hungarian and the Italian village, was published in 1908, and "this study is a pioneering work not only in the Hungarian sociological literature but in the sociological literature in general" (Turnowsky 1960: 12). A year later, in 1909, Braun published *Adatok a vidéki munkásság életéhez* [Data on the Life of Rural Workers], an essay on industrial workers from Marosvásárhely (Târgu-Mureş). The article is considered the first Hungarian sociographical work at the beginning of the 20th century (Turnowsky 1928). Between 1909 and 1910, Braun had a field trip in the United States where he met William Isaac Thomas. Thomas showed interest in Hungarian society,[3] and later, due to their joint work, Braun published the article *A falu lélektana*[4] [The Psyche of the Village] in 1913. Braun's research methodology preferred empirical data collection, combining personal observation and experience while striving to maintain objectivity (Turnowsky 1960).

The genre of Hungarian sociography could evolve through Braun's international contacts although its concept or definition is not clear in the international context. Sociography has a prehistory, but it is not strictly separated from the social endeavour to have data on society. The genre, in general, is likely to be place- and history-specific.

Previous studies (Turnowsky 1928, Jócsik 1937, Sükösd 1963, Némedi 1985) indicate that the most profound impact on Hungarian sociography was the Amsterdam School operating between the two world wars, which was associated with Sebald Rudolf Steinmetz and his students (Van Doorn 1956, Zijderveld 1966, Van Rossum 1975, De Haan–Leeuw 1995, Karel 2002, Jongerden 2022). Internationally, the word sociography first appeared in the work of the Dutch

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3    Thomas had a fieldtrip to Europe after getting his Ph.D. degree to study the European peasant society, and he visited Hungary as well. In 1912, Thomas's article *Race Psychology: Standpoint and Questionnaire with Particular Reference to the Immigrant and the Negro* was published in the *American Journal of Sociology*. The article gives an example about the assimilation processes in Hungarian Transylvania.

4    "Thomas wanted to collect material on the psychology of the European peasantry for sociological comparisons, and he asked Braun to collect data in Hungary" (Braun 1913: 37). The original questionnaire has been adapted to conditions in Hungary.

ethnographer and sociologist Sebald Rudolf Steinmetz in 1913. As he wrote, "sociography is the description by all possible means of all the relations and conditions of a people at a certain time" (Steinmetz 1913: 2). He emphasizes the importance of cognition, which also serves political purposes, and his most striking statement is the one in which he speaks of sociography as an already existing science. However, he underlined the need to meet science requirements regarding content and methodology to keep pace with other disciplines. "Sociography can therefore claim recognition as a science by satisfying three needs: an intellectual need, an indirect scientific need, and a direct practical need" (Steinmetz 1913: 2). Reflecting on Steinmetz's work, Karel (2002:2) stated that "sociography is a fusion of the words *socio*logy and geo*graphy*", and thus the research objective was focused mainly on a territorial unit in order to collect data about the population, and local governments were responsible for this kind of sociographic agencies (Van Doorn 1956, Karel 2002). Nowadays, the heritage of sociography with changed methodology is called "rural sociology" in the Netherlands, and it is influenced by American sociology (Hofstee 1963, Jongerden 2022). The so-called golden age of Dutch sociography dates back to the 1920s and 1930s, albeit, after World War II, it disappeared entirely with the disappearance of the peasant society. The critiques of Dutch sociography were mainly against the applied empirical methodology without theoretical background or description of the specific instead of general social phenomenon (Van Doorn 1956, Zijderveld 1966, Van Rossum 1975, Karel 2002, Jongerden 2022). Even though Steinmetz and his colleagues wanted sociography to be an independent scientific discipline, "sociology came to occupy a more prominent position" (De Haan–Leeuw 1995: 71). In the Netherlands, sociology has won the "scientific battle" over sociography.

The German history of sociology also has an era where sociography played a significant role. Ferdinand Tönnies (1929) identifies sociography with empirical sociology. The author contended that sociographic works should use statistical tools in their methodology. Statistics cannot be given its own field of research. It must, therefore, be associated with and complement other disciplines and fields of study. Tönnies's concept of sociography was more likely the same as the survey statistical methods in the United States (Heberle 1937).

The nature of writing supported by empirical data is considered to be stronger from a scientific point of view, so statistics has an important role in defining the concept of sociography. The subjectivity of the choice of topics can be reduced using figures and statistical analysis, which can be a great advantage of sociographic works with a political focus. According to Steinmetz (1913), sociography cannot be without statistics and must rely on empirically proven social phenomena. Tönnies, like Steinmetz, emphasizes empirical knowledge, and he proposes the institutionalization of sociography, calling it a "sociographic observatory". Tönnies contends that "I consider the one as important as the other; and I recognise

sociography as fundamental, in so far as it is a question of establishing facts and their interrelationships, for instance, establishing causes and causation, because this is the ultimate aim of social knowledge" (Tönnies 1929: 125).

American sociography (ethnography) has the same traditions as Hungarian sociography; this period is called the first Chicago School (Szelényi 2018: 20). According to the American society, this kind of writings was about the urban phenomenon or the living circumstances in specific districts or neighbourhoods from the city of Chicago. In Hungary at that time, the topics were related to rural societies. Both used quantitative analysis, and although it was not scientific enough, the selection was based on individual cases, and the results cannot be replicated. So, both ethnography and sociography fail to meet the essential criteria of science due to methodological shortcomings (Szelényi 2018). During the first era of the Chicago School, in 1918–1920, William Isaac Thomas and Florian Znaniecki published *The Polish Peasant in Europe and America.* Their research is based on empirical data collection and greatly impacted empirical sociology. Thomas's interest in European peasant society led him to Hungary years before his books with Znaniecki were published. Based on his cooperation with Róbert Braun, Thomas could have chosen Hungary as the object of comparison, and *The Hungarian Peasant in Europe and America* could have been written.

The international literature on sociography shows a variety of approaches, so it is quite difficult to find the same way of thinking abroad as in Hungary. Hungary's golden age of sociography was linked to the so-called folk, or rural movement and to what has occurred in Romania in the form of the movement around the group Erdélyi Fiatalok, i.e. Youth of Transylvania, established in 1930. The group members were dominant personalities of Hungarian minority public life (Lengyel 1987). However, where the roots of Braun's sociographical works are, a different type of genre, the monographic sociology became popular. In the same period, Dimitrie Gusti established the Bucharest Sociological School and elaborated monographic sociology. According to Rostás (2020: 36), Gusti

> proposed a system of a monographic approach to social reality as a method capable of grasping social life *in its entirety*. Thus, sociological monography implied an unprecedented unification of the sciences involved in studying social reality. (...) Gusti was interested in shaping a concept of society that could work as a theoretical product and as an instrument capable of guiding empirical research.

The empirical research of Gusti's monographic project was usually conducted in villages, and the method also raised the attention of Hungarian writers and researchers (Rostás 2020). Gusti's influence was significant on the so-called folk, or rural movement in the 1930s, when sociography started to become popular

in Hungary. "Braun followed his work and criticised it for piling up material for its in-depth details, for failing to draw the correct conclusions" (Turnowsky 1960: 17–18). The impact of Steinmetz and Tönnies also appears in Gusti's monographic method, so Gusti's work and the empirical research of the rural movement have some common traditions (Némedi 1985). After World War II, in Romania, sociography and monographic sociography were restricted for a few years, and even though some attempts were identified (e.g. the monographic work of Henri H. Stahl or fieldworks at universities), the genre could not survive any longer (Székedi 2015, Veres 2018).

Previous research has shown that sociography, classified as a forerunner of "pure sociology" or considered empirical sociology, could not survive. In the Netherlands, where even the word sociography was defined, the concept could not live after the 1950s. In Romania, the genre still has faint shadows of the works between the two world wars but not of any significant importance. In Germany and the United States, sociography became part of empirical sociology in the development of the history of sociology. The concept and method, created at the beginning of the 20th century, almost disappeared from modern sociology.

## The Discipline of Sociography in Hungary

In Hungary, the need for evolving sociology should have been addressed compared to sociography, which was the tool for exploring social reality. Sociology and sociography came into being as a response to the conflicts caused by changes in social processes.

The obstacles to the emergence of sociology (theoretical, methodological, and institutional problems) favoured the cultivation of sociography. "Sociography broke away from sociology at a stage of its deadlock" (Sükösd 1963: 1255). We should notice an essential difference between the sociography of the West and Hungary. "In the West, the need for sociography grew out of the methodological ambiguities of sociology, and when these things were sort of clarified, the term of sociography was soon forgotten. In Hungary, where serious theoretical ('pure' and 'applied') sociology did not exist, the question of sociography arose primarily in a non-disciplinary sense" (Némedi 1985: 21),[5] so we can say that "the lack of sociology caused the claim and the need for sociography" (Szerbhorváth 2021: 153). Or, to put it differently, in Hungary, sociographical writings can be determined as the forerunner of Hungarian sociology (Kertész 1933: 2). Sociography as the description of society is one of the most important fields of early Hungarian sociology. Sociographies reported on the society's problems in scientifically rigorous writings. The researched topics concerned mainly the problematic fate of peasant society, sought to reflect on the delayed civilization,

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5    Translated by the author.

and made political recommendations for social transformation. The roots and beginnings of Hungarian sociography can be traced back to the beginning of the 20th century; the main aim of the sociographical writing was to explore society.

World War II and the division of Hungary also left their marks on the production of sociographic writings. In the so-called "golden age" of sociography, the aim was to reflect on youth movements and draw attention to the social problems of the time (Némedi 1984). In the 1930s, the impact of the so-called folk or rural movement[6] was significant. In the words of Bata (1963: 54):

> Whereas the sociography of the 1930s analysed the circumstances of the peasantry in a broad social context. [Later] sociography seems to carry micro-sociology in its cells, concentrating on the momentary state of small communities, examining the life of a single cooperative, a tenement, a brigade, anchored around a typical life story, a life situation, a problem.[7]

Sociography was created by bourgeois radicalism in Hungary, promoting the achievement of middle-class status, highlighting the crisis of peasant society, and finding a solution in the form of the so-called "third way".[8]

The land division that the so-called folk, or rural writers had hoped for was achieved in 1945, and later on some of them played a significant political role (e.g. Péter Veres, Ferenc Erdei) and could continue their sociographic work without any restrictions. After World War II, a communist dictatorship was established in Hungary following the Soviet occupation. The ideology of the party-state permeated all areas of life, including academia, and as a result some sociographers were tolerated while others became excluded from the scientific community. Publishing writings that aimed to understand the nature of society and describe the actual living circumstances of society was seen as an anti-regime activity. Those sociographic writings that did not support the ideology of the political party were prevented from publishing (e.g. Miklós Haraszti, Péter Zsille, Tamás Földvári, Sándor Tar). The writings in this era can be identified as veiled social criticism.

Social problems have evolved through historical and political changes, and each period had its cornerstone of the sociographies reflected on. With these changes, the elements and the methods of sociographical writings have changed. Defining sociography seemed a difficult task even after the 1960s. Mihály Sükösd (1963) also refers to Steinmetz when considering the methodological aspect of

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6   Usually, sociography is identified with the so-called rural movement. The members of the movement were authors, and their works reflected on the living circumstances of the peasant class, urged social and political changes.

7   Translated by the author.

8   The "third way" theory is a kind of counter-revolutionary experiment (dissent from the right and left wings) which urged modern social changes and saw the solution to social problems in the rise of the peasant society.

sociography and also incorporates the view of Ernő Gondos, who argues that the content aspect is a more relevant subject of the sociography related to historical change. However, Sükösd already emphasized that historical changes increase the heterogeneity of the genre. Concerning Hungarian sociographies, three groups can be distinguished by Sükösd: (1) literary sociography; (2) non-fiction, characterized by scientific preparation and comparative analysis as accurately as possible; (3) journalistic sociography. At the same time, Sükösd also reflects on the sociographic works of the 1960s, when the cult of personality also determined the nature of the results, and there was no possibility of actual social research at that era. Writers turned to literary sociography or the genre of the sociographic essay, thus adapting to the zeitgeist. Heterogeneity characterizes sociographic works with no uniform genre or methodology (Sükösd 1963).

In 1975, György Berkovits asked "What is sociography? Is it a genre, a method, a literature, a science, a journalism, perhaps a perspective, a form of engagement, a political work, possibly a way of public appearance, or is it merely a semi-literature, an auxiliary science?"[9] (Berkovits 1975: 46). The author emphasizes the ideological, politicizing character of sociographic works and the prevalence of romantic ideas and distinguishes literary sociography from scientific sociography, identifying three forms of sociography: (1) journalistic, (2) literary, and (3) social reportage, quite similar to the categorization of Sükösd in 1963. Berkovits (1978) differentiates "sociography" and "as-if sociography" (*mintha-szociográfia* in Hungarian). The first one is based on revealed facts, and the other seems like reality literature without facts. He emphasizes the methodological differences; otherwise, the sociographical work is just fiction without any critics of the society and social problems.

Dénes Némedi (1985) returned to the roots of English sociology when the need for an empirical study of social reality was formulated. He believes that the writings of Le Play, Engels, and Booth on the situation of the working class are similar to what is called sociography in Hungary. But one could also mention the research of the German *Verein für Socialpolitik*,[10] which is sociographic in its nature. Némedi also reflects on Steinmetz and Tönnies and sees their work as having a significant influence on the history of Hungarian sociography. Still, he also considers Dimitrie Gusti's monographic sociology as a forerunner and refers to the role played by Oszkár Jászi, one of the forerunners of Hungarian sociology. The author concludes that:

> the word sociography expressed the need to go beyond ideological-theoretical terms and to know more precisely how things actually are in

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9     Translated by the author.
10    Association for Social Policy in Germany. The association aimed to solve social problems, mainly integrate the social worker class into society. Their research methods have a significant role in the history of sociology.

Hungary. The social research, the sociography, were given both cognitive and political tasks; the point was not to develop the right methods but to present 'reality' against prejudices, to make conscious concealment impossible.[11] (Némedi 1985: 22)

"Sociography was a tool for fact-finding and a tool for change at the same time, and therefore had to contain description and evaluation in direct unity" (1985: 124). The response against the political regime resulted in heterogeneous works, and therefore, according to Némedi, to give an exact definition to the field is an impossible challenge. So, what is sociography? – he asks. "Even contemporaries, who often took the meaning of the word sociography for granted, could not have answered this question" (Némedi 1985: 24). In summary, Némedi did not formulate a precise definition, concluding that the self-definition was correct in his point of view, that is: "Sociography is what contemporaries consider it to be" (Némedi 1985: 24). Szerbhorváth (2021) strengthens Némedi's standpoint on this matter.

An important implication of these findings is that many authors tried to define and raise sociography to a scientific level, just as Steinmetz did in the Netherlands. Although in Hungary it remained a specific area in between social sciences, it plays a role in informing society about social facts. In the 1970s, sociology became professionalized and abandoned its critical role (Szabari 2020), and in this context sociography performs a critical function and requires public appearance to change the public discourse of social problems.

## Political Aims

In the 1930s, sociographies published in the framework of the so-called folk, or rural writers' movement reacted to social changes. They raised awareness of these changes not necessarily independently of politics (Kulcsár 1970). The authors used sociography to disseminate ideas about social and political structural changes. Usually, sociographical writings aim to arouse much interest in the social order, the living standards of ordinary people, and the differences between social classes. Since the writings described social problems using scientific descriptions in an easily understandable way, the public's attention could be seized. Although the target group of this kind of writings were politicians and leaders, they could not be actually reached or their interest raised (Szabó 1936, Tóth 2018). Historical, social, and economic changes have also shaped the target group and the problems of sociographic works.

Sociography is fundamentally about making things understandable to the public. However, there is a desire for the greatest possible social publicity, behind the scientific need to draw attention to social problems and crises (Bibó 1940). The

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11    Translated by the author.

political aim is present in sociographic works regardless of the historical period (Berkovits 1975, Némedi 1985, Salamon 2011, Standeisky 2004, Szerbhorváth 2015), and it can be declared in sociographies, even after World War II, especially during the Kádár regime, when the political ideology greatly influenced the writings. Initially, there was total censorship, i.e. the inability to publish sociographic works. Among the so-called folk, or rural writers, those who could assert themselves took on a political role, e.g. Ferenc Erdei and Péter Veres. In the late 1960s and the 1970s, the political environment started to change, and sociographic writings could be published. However, the genre pointed to the weaknesses of the system, and thus so many of the authors were prohibited, e.g. the works of Erzsébet Galgóczi, Miklós Haraszti, Zoltán Zsille, or Sándor Tar, just to mention some of them. The main reason for the censorship was that the sociographic works presented an accurate picture of the society, which the regime wanted to conceal, as it did not fit the official ideology. There were also exceptions: e.g. György Moldova first belonged to the category of tolerated writers, and later the state even supported his sociographical writings. Even though Moldova illustrated public thinking quite realistically, it can be seen as a critique of the political system even though he could identify himself with the ideology of state socialism (Dupcsik 2022).

During the Kádár regime, when the sociographies about the working class became widespread, the political power did not have it in its interest to write about other social classes or social changes. Those authors who tried to write about such issues were pushed outside of the scientific community, and only those could prevail in the academic field who were politically reliable. The political aims of the sociographical writings were usually neglected, so they remained on the literature level for public information. So, a contradiction occurred: state socialism and its ideology denied social problems, while the sociographic writings started to lose their political aim and turned to fiction and literature.

After the regime change, the capitalist social system allowed social discussion about marginalized groups. The world's view and the approach towards social problems has also changed around and after the turn of the millennium. Sociographies are responsible for sensitization nowadays since the topics are about human fates. Those who create sociographic works do not have a unique, independent, or separate profession. Usually, sociologists, writers, and journalists create this type of genre, while political issues are raised by politicians. Sociography also uses a qualitative and quantitative methodology although it remains non-scientific because of its common language. The topics of sociography are related to political issues; however, it is far from the political sciences. Sociography can fill the position on the border of science, literature, and politics (see *Figure 1*).

To summarize the abovementioned attempted definitions and reflections for definitions, sociography is a response to a crisis situation, a work of fiction including literary elements based on empirical data and (manifest or latent)

political aspirations, demanding objectivity against subjectivity. Sociography aims to get public presence and shape public discourse, although the interest in such sociological works is decreasing in the 21st century. Sociographers' political goals have also began to fade away after the regime change, as professional politicians report on social problems and urgent changes in the social order, i.e. the topics once urged by sociographers.
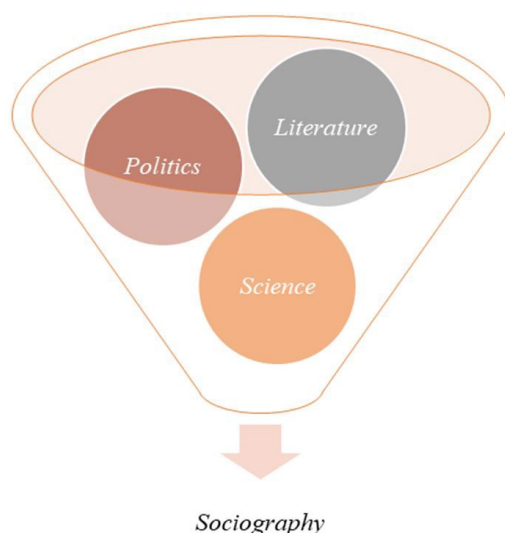
**Figure 1.** *The peculiarity of sociography*

## The Peculiarity of Sociographic Knowledge – Science – Literature – Politics

Burawoy (2005) starts from the fact that when sociology was in its infancy, the main aim was to adapt everyday knowledge about society to a science language. However, at the turn of the millennium, the question arose about how far the inside circle of science had drifted away from the outside. Whom is it written for? Who is the target audience for studies presenting the latest research findings? According to Burawoy, "taking knowledge back to those from whom it came, making public issues out of private troubles" is what public sociology is for (2005: 5). "Public sociology is part of a broader division of sociological labor that also includes policy sociology, professional sociology, and critical sociology" (2005: 9). Burawoy defined public sociology as the sociology which "brings sociology into a conversation with publics, understood as people who are themselves involved in conversation" (2005: 7).

The author further classifies sociology (see *Table 1*). Professional sociology provides legitimacy and expertise with theories and scientific norms; critical sociology appears as a practical side of professional sociology. It is the subject of analysis; policy sociology offers a solution for social problems and aims to be practical; public sociology creates a dialogue between the researcher and the public and reports in an easily understandable way about social problems (Burawoy 2005).

**Table 1.** *Division of sociological labour*

| Division of sociological labour | | |
|---|---|---|
|  | *Academic* | *Extra-academic audience* |
| *Instrumental knowledge* | Professional | Policy |
| *Reflexive knowledge* | Critical | Public |

*Source: Burawoy 2005: 11*

Furthermore, two types of public sociology can be determined, i.e. traditional public sociology and organic public sociology. In the first case, sociologists write about their opinions on public matters. In the second case, the public sociologist connects with a local community based on actual dialogues. According to the author, "the project of such public sociologies is to make visible the invisible, to make the private public, and to validate these organic connections as part of our sociological life" (Burawoy 2005: 8). That is, "public sociology is often an avenue for the marginalized, locked out of the policy arena and ostracized in the academy" (2005: 11). The knowledge of public sociology is based on the consensus between sociologists and their publics; public sociology understands politics as democratic dialogue (2005: 16) although in the case of sociography, the communication with politicians as part of the public is missing or limited. In public sociology, the results of sociological research are interpreted by the public in an easily understandable way, and the knowledge of public sociology is created with multi-disciplinary collaboration (Burawoy 2005). By analogy with Burawoy's public sociology theory, the statement of this research is that sociography can be determined as a public sociology. The assumption is that the sociographical writings can be grouped according to genre, in addition to the choice of its subject. In the following, some specificities of Hungarian sociography are depicted.

When we refer to the *(1) documentary character* of sociography, the writers from this category usually have a degree in sociology. Their writings are not just for the public, and the text is supplemented by official records, statistical data; and those give its peculiarity. For instance, Pál Závada in his book titled *Kulákprés*[12] used family photos, annual records of the amount of land and the obligation to

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12   The book's content is about the history of a family and a village between 1945 and 1956. The story follows the political and economic provisions and their impact on the family and their wider environment.

surrender, statistical records, newspaper clippings, and letters. Závada's work is described as a sociography of family and the village's history. Bálint Magyar in *A Dunánál (Dunapataj 1944–1958)* (the first edition's title was *Dunaapáti I–III*) used several types of documentation to realistically illustrate the village life. The volumes comprise photographs, minutes of municipal council meetings, reports, letters, and official decisions of the regional council.

We can differentiate writings which *(2) critique the formal, institutional framework of society*. Usually, these kinds of works have been banned during state socialism and can legally be published after the regime change. For instance, *Darabbér*, written by Miklós Haraszti, was only published in 1989, even though it was first published in 1971 as a samizdat. It was translated and in 1975 published in West Berlin and eleven other countries. Haraszti wrote about factory life based on his experiences in a tractor factory. The manuscript was forfeited, and a lawsuit was launched because of its content. *Az elkülönítő* written by Péter Hajnóczy had quite the same history. *Valóság*, the journal that published the article, had a lawsuit, and Hajnóczy's novel could not be published until three decades later, when his estate was being processed. The topic was about people with mental health conditions and the conditions of institutional treatment, which caused quite a scandal. *Az elkülönítő* was published in 1981 as part of the anthology *Magyarország Felfedezése* [Discovering Hungary], entitled *Folyamatos Jelen* [Continuous Present]. It contained writings from the new generation of sociographers. The sociographies give an insight into the formal and informal functioning of society. Zsuzsa Vathy (1981) wrote a report on free time for mothers at home with their children. The report stated that free time, as we think about it, does not exist, so the formal functioning and the concept failed. The mothers tried to earn money to make up for the cost of living because the childcare allowance was way less than their previous salaries. The report gave specific knowledge about the informal functioning of the social class instead of the official information.

The *(3) character of policy* has a different nature during the history of sociography. During the golden era of sociography, the so-called folk, or rural movement members offered clear solutions to existing social problems. Because of belated embourgeoisement, the need for social changes was urgent, but at the same time the social problems had to be solved. Zoltán Szabó wrote the following "dedication"on the cover of *A tardi helyzet*:[13] "To the authorities. Report of Zoltán Szabó, a resident of Budapest. Urgent action to be taken on the situation in Tard" (Szabó 1936).

Society in general can be identified as a client of these writings, although it remained unspoken, and the writers recognized their research tasks. After

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13   The book's content concerns the poor living circumstances of a small village, Tard, in 1936. It represents the hopeless everyday life of the peasant society based on the writer's personal experiences.

World War II, the problem of limited publicity appeared. The ruling power had a specific concept about the knowledge of society, and it appeared as a client. The assumption was that sociographic works did not need to offer solutions for social problems since during the socialist era there was not any social problem, e.g. poverty did not exist. Consequently, only those sociographic works could have been published that promoted the official ideology. It is illustrative of György Aczél's solution, who, as the defining cultural policy-maker, introduced the policy of the three Ts [*tilt, tűr, támogat* in Hungarian, that is, ban, tolerate, support]. "György Moldova was one of the originally tolerated, later supported writers who wrote sociographies based on commissions from the ministry" (Szerbhorváth 2015: 107).

The *(4) public characteristic* is central to identifying the essence of sociographical works. Sociography presents social problems in an easily understandable way, using statistical data and literary devices to "tell a story" about human beings. During the socialist era in Hungary, those writers who experienced banning because of the three Ts turned to literature to mix reality and fiction. Reports, journalistic works, and literary books are the form of specific publications. Consequently, the genre of sociography became increasingly heterogeneous, especially after the regime change. During the 1970s–1980s, Erzsébet Galgóczi was one of the most famous writers. Her peasant origin also influenced the choice of her writings. In *A vesztes nem te vagy* (1978), she illustrates the difficulties for those who had problems caused by social mobility and some coping techniques for moving from the village to the city.

Steadily, sociography went beyond the so-called folk, or rural movement, finding its role in each era. Reflecting the reality, the problems considered taboo or having limited publicity, then opening towards new phenomena caused by capitalism, sociography has been transformed according to the varying social problems and changes.

In conclusion, sociography can be partially identified as public sociology; however, some supplementary information must be provided. As it was mentioned, the professional category of sociography needs to be clarified since the institutionalization of sociography has never happened even though there have been some attempts. According to the history of political systems in Hungary, the policy-oriented direction of sociography is a mixture. Sociography exists besides sociology, and sociographical works convey social problems to the public; they transfer knowledge by writing, fulfilling the need for sensitizing society. Sociography is created on the border of politics, science, and literature; sociography is all three at once; however, neither of them.

# Conclusions

The interest in social facts and problems has been part of everyday life, which helps sustain sociography's existence. In Hungary, sociography cannot be fully labelled as public sociology. However, sociographic writings contributed to disseminating social problems to the public, mainly by presenting social facts written with literary devices.

In public sociology, one main focus is to converse with the public, and the knowledge transfer works mutually. In Hungary, such dialogue could not occur because the political regime ignored the social problems in sociographical works. So, Hungarian sociography could not meet these basic principles of public sociology, and only individual cases of such mutual dialogue can be demonstrated. This point of view was strengthened by Szerbhorváth when he wrote that "sociography is good for an insight into a situation, [and it is] very much dependent on the author's habitus" (Szerbhorváth 2021: 152). Despite such shortcomings, "there was a need and demand for sociography because of the lack of sociology" (Szerbhorváth 2021: 153).

The article has demonstrated that the definition of sociography has several formulations, and the shared values of sociography in each period have been outlined. Even though the genre of sociography is diverse, its main element consists in how to describe and present the crisis of the society to the public. Accordingly, sociography is created on the border of politics, science, and literature. All three at once; however, neither of them. Using Burawoy's theory on public sociology, it has been shown that sociography can be partially counted as public sociology. However, it is more/different than that because of the literary elements used in sociographic writings. With the added layer of literature to demonstrate more accurately the social reality and grab the public more easily, sociographical knowledge provides information about the present society through individual stories. Sociographical knowledge is based on the informal operation of society and gives an insight into people's lives from different social classes.

The existence of sociography in the 21st century proves its legitimacy even though the knowledge transfer could not be, or it can be, only partially institutionalized.

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# The Reorganization of Hungarian Sociology
# after the 1956 Revolution

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**Abstract**. The history of Hungarian sociology in the state-socialist period can certainly be described in terms of a general Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) historical model, the most important feature of which is the undivided power of the Communist Party. Under such conditions, the Soviet Union and local political power holders had a direct influence on the institutionalization and functioning of sciences, including sociology. The study contributes to understanding the social impact of the 1956 revolution, particularly its crushing effect on the development of Hungarian sociology in relation to the general model. Firstly, the early development of sociology in the Soviet Union and most state-socialist countries in the 1950s was blocked in Hungary by the 1956 revolution. The trauma of the 1956 revolution made all groups of society, including the intelligentsia, realize that the system could not be changed in the long term. At the same time, it made it clear to the political authorities that the system could not be maintained in the long run with methods of the past. As a result, Kádár's consolidation relied heavily on a compromising intelligentsia, needed for its expertise (in this case, modern sociological expertise) and legitimizing the system. Consequently, sociology in Hungary started developing and became institutionalized in the early 1960s. In this situation, sociology represented both a critical point of view opposing the system and, at the same time, a tool of its – covert or overt – legitimation.

**Keywords:** history of sociology, Central and Eastern Europe (CEE), Hungarian sociology, 1956 Revolution

## Introduction

When speaking about national sociologies, such as Hungarian sociology, we need to look for their basis in the complex network of social, economic, and political circumstances by which the nation is determined and in which "national" sociology develops and operates. Its cultural, historical, and social structure, traditions, and geographical location place Hungary in the category of Central European countries or, rather, the Central and Eastern European (CEE) ones

(besides the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Romania, and Poland) (Lewis 1998). "These are sometimes called the 'Lands in Between': in between Russia and Germany, Europe, and Asia, East and West. This is a frontier country, part of Europe, but on the edge of it and not fully integrated with it" (Batt 1998: 1). Accordingly, the pre-1945 structure of Hungary can be characterized by some imagined or hypothetical models of a Central and Eastern European (CEE) country (Szűcs 1981, Mucha 2009). These models describe Central and Eastern European (CEE) countries as traditional and agricultural societies, the main features of which are "political dependency and a resulting delay in the development of indigenous and autonomous political structures; economic underdevelopment and the consequent maintenance until World War II of an agrarian economy along with its peasant class (...) and the emergence in the 19th century of a multifunctional group of 'intelligentsia', an educated urban class" (Mucha 2009: 509).

At the beginning of the 20th century, the representatives of Hungarian sociology, as other CEE sociologists, had to adapt to these Central and Eastern European (CEE) frameworks. On the one hand, Hungarian social scientists, familiar with the works of Western sociologists of the time, constantly attempted to build academic sociology, based on the rules of universal sociology developed in the West (Karády 2020).[1] On the other hand, they sought to give a more accurate picture of the state of society by using various empirical methods, thus helping its development (following the Western model). The members of this group were thus oriented towards scientific questions and social reform, i.e. political and scientific goals at the same time. The first sociological periodical in Hungary, i.e. *Huszadik Század* [The Twentieth Century] was first published in 1900, and the first sociological association, Society for Social Science, was formed in 1901. In its charter, it was set down that its members had to participate in social, political, and pedagogical work besides their activity as researchers. In the 1920s and the 1930s, the resolution of political and socio-political issues became more relevant in social science works (Némedi 1985).

After the Second World War, Hungary became part of the Soviet Bloc, and so its operations after 1945 were bearing the most characteristic features of state-socialist states, as defined by János Kornai (1992). The most important of these is the undivided power of the Communist Party. The state-socialist period in Hungary lasted for more than 40 years between 1948 and 1989. In order to understand the history of Hungarian sociology during this period, we need to come to terms with the specific form of state socialism in Hungary that provided the context for the development of sociological studies there.

As in other socialist countries, after 1948, the year of the turnaround, Hungary, too, was dominated by the state-socialist power structure and the totalizing central

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1    Despite the similarities, there seems to have been little scientific communication between intellectuals in the region during this period; for instance, "there were no translations of works of scholars from other CEE countries" (Mucha 2009: 511).

power of the Communist Party.[2] Although the democratic institutions continued to exist for a short period of time after the end of the war (between 1945 and 1948),[3] all the power was concentrated in the hands of the Party[4] leaders and in the hands of a small group called the "Moskovites", i.e. those who were in close contact with the Party leaders in Moscow.[5] Between 1948 and 1953, Stalinism was implemented in Hungary under the direction of this handful of people. Their methods included forced industrialization, the collectivization of agricultural land, the appropriation of companies and banks by the state, the development of an institutional system of dictatorship, the oppressive power of the authorities responsible for internal affairs and security, a general cult of the leaders, show trials, political cleansings, internments, and the levelling of the standards of living. Like all other social institutions, the running of science came under the control of the Party. "Academic reforms were affected by the general rule, implemented by Stalinism, that no autonomous, privately organized cultural and social movements, agencies and publications should be tolerated, except those adopted and strictly controlled by the new authorities" (Karády–Nagy 2019: 83). The situation was similar to that in Czechoslovakia, for example, where in 1948 the Departments of Sociology were closed down, and the teachers were removed from the universities (Musil 1998). Likewise, in Hungary, Sándor Szalai, Head of the Departments of Sociology between 1946 and 1949, was imprisoned in 1950.[6] In 1948, following the Soviet pattern, the Hungarian Academy of Sciences (HAS) and the Central Institute for Statistics (CIS) were reorganized, too. In 1948, under the direction of György Péter,[7] the head of the

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2    According to Bottoni (2009: 791): "There is wide consensus among scholars that until 1948 Sovietization made slower progress in Hungary, a defeated and occupied territory, than in any other Eastern European countries. While Bulgaria, Albania, Yugoslavia, Poland, and, to a certain extent, Romania were almost fully Sovietized in 1947, Czechoslovakia and Hungary remained at a pre-Sovietized level until mid-1948, when the local communist parties finally took over the state apparatus. This aversion could also explain why Hungary became, in 1956, the scene of the largest anti-Soviet popular uprising in the Soviet Bloc."

3    On the history of Hungarian sociology between 1945 and 1948, see Szabari (2021).

4    In 1948, after the formation of a coalition between the Hungarian Communist Party (*Magyar Kommunista Párt*) and the Hungarian Social Democratic Party (*Magyar Szociáldemokrata Párt*), the Hungarian Workers' Party (*Magyar Dolgozók Pártja, MDP*) was founded, and a Soviet-type centralized political power was developed in Hungary.

5    The members of this group were Mátyás Rákosi, Ernő Gerő, Mihály Farkas, and József Révai.

6    The Department of Sociology was founded in 1946 at Pázmány Péter University in Budapest. The appointing of Szalai was the result of an agreement of the political parties. Szalai was the head of the intellectual department of the Social Democratic Party. A vivid intellectual life developed in the department. Its library included international sociological literature, the classical works of the time, and the department also published two handbooks: *Social Reality – Sociology* (Szalai 1946) and *Introduction to Sociology* (Szalai 1948). Both books described the history of sociology (primarily the theories of August Comte and Karl Marx) by criticizing them from the point of view of Marxism and explained the problems of sociology of the time (Szabari 2012, Tóth 2015).

7    From 1932, György Péter participated in the illegal communist movement, and in 1935 he was sentenced to 15 years in prison. He served in the Szeged prison until 1944. His mates were some

Institute (CIS) at the time, Hungarian statistics was radically transformed, as during its reorganization the most excellent sociologists were removed. These parallel processes show that after 1948 it was not the local sociological tradition that shaped the development of sociology in this early phase of the state-socialist regime in the CEE region but, rather, the intrusion of the centralized power (Vorisek 2011).[8]

## The Significance of the 1956 Revolution for the Development of Hungarian Sociology in the 1960s

> "Well, we'll live here then" – says the mother after the
> defeated revolution in the iconic Hungarian film
> *Time Stands Still* (1982),
> directed by Péter Gothár.

However, the state-socialist system itself cannot be regarded as a completely homogeneous one. First, because the countries of the Soviet Bloc had many country-specific characteristics, and, second, because the state-socialist period can be divided into different phases according to the functioning of the system.[9] Besides similar operating mechanisms inherent in the system, directives and direct interventions also played an important role in the functioning of state-socialist countries. The Soviet Union played a leading role in both the guidelines and the elimination of possible deviations from the model. The 20th Congress of the USSR is an example of a guideline, while the military suppression of the Hungarian (1956) or Czechoslovak (1968) revolutions represents direct intervention. The 20th Congress of the USSR, the confrontation with Stalinism, and the increasingly pressing issue of modernization and economic development played a decisive role in the development of science, including the (re-)institutionalization of sociology in the countries of the Socialist Bloc. Although this process of (re-)institutionalization of sociology involved several and diverse actors and interests, "in all the countries the Party was in a position to approve and control these developments" (Vorisek 2008: 91).

After Stalin's death, the Soviet leadership ordered political changes in Hungary, too, with Imre Nagy replacing Mátyás Rákosi as Prime Minister. However, the

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of the later communist directors, but we know almost nothing about Péter's contacts with the others. In 1944, when the prisons were opened to prepare the deportation of the prisoners to Germany because of the imminent arrival of the Soviet troops, he managed to escape. In 1948, he was appointed Head of the Central Institute for Statistics (KSH), which was unambiguously a party mandate.

8    Even in Poland, sociology was banned in the 1950s (Karády–Nagy 2018: 94).

9    According to Kornai (1992: 19), "three prototypes may be distinguished in the social system": revolutionary-transitional, classical, and reform system.

changes in Hungary went beyond Soviet expectations. The outbreak of the October 1956 revolution was followed by direct intervention.

Even though the Hungarian revolution was unsuccessful and followed by severe repression, the fact that it took place had a significant and lasting impact on the development of the socialist model in Hungary and, therefore, on the functioning of sociology in Hungary. In my opinion, the revolution and its lessons for the authorities, the intelligentsia, and for the period of consolidation that followed constituted the defining specific elements in the history of Hungarian sociology, which determined the divergence from the general model of Central and Eastern European countries. This also means that while I agree with many of the substantive findings of Vorisek's (2008) studies, I dispute his claim that the (re-)institutionalization of sociology in Hungary can be described as a "Soviet-type" development (Vorisek 2008: 93). I hope that my paper will also highlight the fact that, in addition to institutional history, an analysis of the broader historical context is essential when examining the history of sociology in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE).

The 1956 revolution marked a redefinition of possibilities and limits. For all Hungarian social groups, including intellectuals, the crushing of the revolution meant that there was no alternative to the communist regime and the Soviet hegemony in the foreseeable future. In 1956, after the fall of the revolution and the end of Rákosi's regime, Moscow chose János Kádár as the political leader of Hungary. Kádár's first measures were aimed at ending the revolution by force, punishing the "counter-revolutionary" elements, and consolidating his power. Kádár's aims and tools did not diverge considerably from the practices of the 1950s. After the revolution, the harder policy made itself felt also in the field of social sciences.[10] One of the consequences of 1956 was that the processes of reform in the social sciences, which had started in the Soviet Union and the other socialist countries at the end of the 1950s, could only begin belatedly in Hungary.

The Soviet leadership had good reasons to support sociological research in the Socialist Bloc. Partly, it was interested in developing practical expertise and knowledge of economic development, and partly it wanted to increase the presence of socialist countries in international public fora with the aim of winning supporters in the international committees and associations (Vorisek 2008: 93). By 1955, many of the great figures of Western sociology and political science had been invited and had visited the Moscow Philosophical Institute, and in 1958 the Soviet Sociological Society was founded (Karády–Nagy 2018: 94). Furthermore, in 1959, a Soviet delegation, along with other socialist delegations, took part in the World Congress of the International Sociological Association

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10   For example, the economists who began their careers in the mid-1950s and who lobbied for economic reforms were pushed into the background.

(ISA) at Stresa.[11] By contrast, although there was a Hungarian delegation at the ISA at Stresa (Dupcsik 2022: 313–314), the question of sociology could not arise in Hungary after 1956 up until 1960.[12]

At the same time, the long-term consequences of 1956 put certain groups of Hungarian intellectuals in a special position, as the Kádár regime had to establish its internal and external legitimacy, both of which depended on reconciliation with the intelligentsia. János M. Rainer wrote in this respect that "the Kádár system was a permanent reflection on 1956" (Rainer 2006: 1190). 1956 also suggested to the authorities that there was not enough reliable information about the opinions of the members of society, which information was readily available using modern (social) scientific tools. All of these led to an increase in the value of sociological knowledge.

## The Classic Kádár Regime: The "Golden Age" of Critical Sociology (1961–1973)

The consolidating power of Kádár's policy aiming at a general reconciliation in Hungarian society really started to make itself felt by the beginning of the 1960s. Kádár's famous slogan was first spoken out in 1961: "Anyone who is not against us is with us" (Huszár 2002). With changes in the early 1960s began the development of the "Hungarian model" of socialism, often referred to as "Kádárism", characterized by a certain degree of independence of social and economic subsystems, attempts to render everyday life devoid of politics, as well as efforts to satisfy people's desire for consumption and modernization. In the classic years of Kádár's leadership, the Stalinist dictatorship was replaced by a less oppressive and less ideological system that improved living conditions, introduced a consumption-oriented economic policy, and was internationally

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11   The Soviet delegation was headed by Pyotr N. Fedoseev, who spoke about the prominent role of Marxist sociology and concrete sociological research in the Soviet Union, criticizing some Western sociological trends. According to Fedoseev: "A general Marxist sociological theory is based on the sum total of all social facts, it takes into consideration the actual historical development and reveals the main social problems suggested by life. (…) The need for concrete sociological studies is the direct result of the general aim of Marxism, namely that philosophers must not only interpret the world but assist in transforming it in the interests of a progressive development of mankind" (Fedoseev 1959: 178). This concept of Marxist sociology was one of the significant reference points for the Hungarian intellectuals who wanted to rebuild sociology in Hungary.

12   The congress was attended by Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Poland, Romania, and Poland, among the socialist countries of Central and Eastern Europe. Poland's large delegation included big names such as J. Chalasinski, S. Ossowski, Z. Bauman, and Jan Szczepanski. Romania was represented by T. Ionescu, G. Ionesco, A. Joja, Ch. Joja, V. Malinski, M. Manescu, and M. Ralea. There was not a single sociologist among the Hungarian delegation. Erik Molnár, the leader of the Hungarian delegation, was a Marxism historian.

open. These changes gradually and considerably raised a sense of security among the population and improved society's readiness and capacity for compromises.

The stability of the regime owing to its consolidation played an important role in the fact that sociology could be reorganized in Hungary even if the period of *détente* was not without troubles since the traumas of the 1950s had wounded many people who were to reorganize sociology. In this changed political climate, the habitual way of thinking in sociology did not change completely. It is well known that sociologists who wanted to relaunch the discipline, such as András Hegedüs, Sándor Szalai,[13] or Kálmán Kulcsár, had to depart from the principles of historical materialism in justifying the legitimacy of an independent sociological discipline. They argued that historical materialism was not the same as sociology and that independent Marxist sociology should be created. Hegedüs, for example, made the claim that sciences – including historical materialism – become differentiated through their development, as new lines of study are formed, and therefore Marxist sociology had to be viewed as one of the new lines of study within the general discipline of historical materialism. Hegedüs used the strategy of stressing the close relationship between sociology and historical materialism, while Kálmán Kulcsár or Sándor Szalai pointed out the professional and scientific value of a sociology free of ideology (Hegedüs 1961, Kulcsár 1961, Szalai 1961, Szántó 1960). These legitimating procedures, on the one hand, made a connection to the arguments used in the Soviet Union (see in the footnote: Fedoseev 1959), and, on the other hand, they were groundbreaking since according to the dogmatic Marxist position, there was no need for an independent sociology alongside historical materialism. After 1963, Hungarian sociologists paid very little attention to discussing the relationship between historical materialism and Marxist sociology. Instead, they concentrated on empirical research projects and Western sociology.[14]

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13    Sándor Szalai was rehabilitated in the fall of 1956 after the political cleansings, and he could work for a short period between 1956 and 1957 as a university teacher. Later on, he was dismissed from his job and became a senior research worker at the University Library in 1960 and then a university teacher at the University for Chemical Industry in Veszprém at the end of 1962. Despite his efforts to play a central role in the (re-)institutionalization of sociology, Szalai was not given a leading position. However, it is indicative of his talent as an organizer that it was under his leadership that Hungary took part in the first international time balance research project in the early 1960s (Szalai 1972).

14    While theoretical discussion continued to be about the relationship between historical materialism and sociology, and the formation of an independent sociology was still at stake, there already existed a group of scholars at the Central Institute for Statistics (CIS) who, thanks to their professional knowledge and flexible worldview, later played a crucial role in conducting sociological surveys as well as preparing the economic reforms of 1968. Within the CIS, a Department of Economic and Demographic Statistics was already operating in the 1960s, and their work became the point of departure for studies on social mobility and demography after the Department of Social Statistics was founded in 1962. The Institute also provided an opportunity for social scientists who had earlier been removed from their positions for political reasons to work again. An old student of Szalai Institute, László Cseh-Szombathy, was employed there, and he researched the social problems of alcoholism, aging, and deviance. In 1961, András Hegedüs was appointed Head of

The "golden age" of sociology – as it was often mentioned by the sociologists contributing to it – can primarily be linked to the establishment of the Sociological Research Group of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences for a variety of reasons.[15] First, because the Research Group became the symbol of sociology in Hungary due to its institutional independence; second, because it undertook the responsibility of educating people, a task assumed by the politically engaged intelligentsia at the beginning of the twentieth century; third, because it practised a critical approach in sociology. What did critical sociology mean in Hungary at the time? Criticism had a peculiar meaning in Hungary in the 1960s: it did not mean the criticism of the existing political order (it did not strive to offer social or political alternatives, contrary to the practice of social thinkers at the beginning of the century and to Western critical sociology) but the criticism of social reality, i.e. showing that things in society do not always happen in the ideologically projected way. The representatives of the critical line, such as Hegedüs, Zsuzsa Ferge, Ágnes Losonczi, and others, tried to point out the differences between reality and ideology. Moreover, they believed that society could be corrected, modernized, and the disparities reduced, with the help of sociology.[16]

In 1963, the Sociology Research Group of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences (HAS) started its activity under the direction of András Hegedüs. The staff came from various social backgrounds. Those playing a role in the development of Hungarian sociology can be divided into two groups: on the one hand, the already mentioned Marxists (or Marxist revisionists), among them: Mária Márkus, Ágnes Heller, Ágnes Losonczi, Antal Gyenes, and Miklós Szántó and, on the other hand, people coming from the non-Marxist intelligentsia such as László Cseh-Szombathy, Iván Szelényi, Iván Varga, and Rudolf Andorka.

András Hegedüs had a very singular life. At the age of 33, he became Head of the Council of Ministers and fulfilled this function between April 1955 and October 1956. After he signed a request asking the Soviet Union to send troops to suppress the 1956 uprising, he escaped to the Soviet Union. There he worked as a senior research worker for the Philosophy Institute at the Soviet Academy for Sciences. He could return to Hungary only in September 1958 on the condition that he would not undertake a political career. In his memoirs, he wrote that after his return he wanted to conduct scientific work (Hegedüs 1988). In 1960, he began

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the Institute, and then, after his release from prison, István Bibó took over, and from 1962 Rudolf Andorka was leading the Institute, whose research about population, demography and later about social mobility made it possible for Hungarian sociology to engage in international scientific life. In 1963, the first research project on social stratification started in this institute under the guidance of György Péter; the organizers were Zsuzsa Ferge, Éva Láng, and István Kemény.

15   The Sociology Research Group, at first part of the Institute of Philosophy within the Hungarian Academy of Sciences (HAS) (established according to the Soviet model), was created in 1963.

16   In the second half of the 1960s, a similar way of thinking can be detected in the sociology of Czechoslovakia, where Marxist revisionists, who believed that the stagnating society could be modernized through sociology, played a crucial part in sociological studies (Musil 1998).

working for the Economic Institute of the HAS, and in 1961 – working under the direction of Erik Molnár – he was already the secretary of the Sociological Committee of the HAS,[17] also named the Vice-President of the Central Institute for Statistics. András Hegedüs had a strong political background, which made it possible for him to "dare" to take part in the reorganization of sociology.[18] Besides engaging "reliable cadres", another control mechanism was also in place: the obligatory approval of the research budget by the government.

The first monumental empirical research carried out by the Sociology Research Group of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences (HAS) was the so-called survey in the Gyöngyös region, consisting of the study of three settlements near the city of Gyöngyös. An indicator of the general enthusiasm with which it was carried out – but also of the want of a thorough professional basis – was the fact that the twenty-two researchers worked on twenty-two different topics, and the proposed goal of their research was – vaguely – put as "the deepest possible exploration of the social relations in the three villages" (Szántó 1998: 178).

As early as at the beginning of the 1960s, traditional research topics appeared in Hungarian sociology, for example, sociologies of the city, village, and work, or the study of lifestyles and surveys of the situation of certain social groups (for example, the intelligentsia and the working class) were also made. The fact that from the beginning of the 1960s Hungary, together with other socialist block countries, regularly took part in international conferences for sociology organized by the UNESCO helped in the modern approach to various topics.

It is clearly visible in the early projects (for example, in the Gyöngyös region study), as well as in the later ones, that the analysis of social structure and of mobility were the two most important research themes of this period. Social structure and mobility were important ideas at the time because (both intra- and intergenerational) upward mobility considerably grew compared to the interwar period. This kind of mobility was supported by the socialist ideology, and, at the same time, the problem allowed the critically-minded scholars and sociologists who were sensitive to civil issues (and interested in so-called civil sociology rather than in Marxist theories) to form a new idea of "reality".

The most important book of this period on the social structure was the work of Zsuzsa Ferge (1969), which made use of the results of research on

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17  At the beginning of 1961, there was already a decision to form the Sociological Committee of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences and to establish a sociological department at the Institute of Philosophy of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, coordinated by Miklós Szántó (AL V. 221-1, Record of the formation of the Sociological Committee).

18  Similar processes took place in other state-socialist countries of Central and Eastern Europe (CEE): in Czechoslovakia, Pavel Machonin and in Poland, Wlodzimierz J. Wesolowski were chosen by the political authorities as the most reliable scientific leaders to establish the sociology discipline. (Their lives took similar courses to that of Hegedüs after the political repression of sociology).

social stratification conducted at the Central Institute for Statistics (CIS). Ferge established the study of society according to its division into different types of work groups.[19] This approach allowed the sociological examination of the structure of society because instead of the determining role of the means of production, it studied the role of people's place in the division of labour: the size of income, the quality of housing, and the level of education. In her book, Ferge sets out the concepts of equality and inequality. In her opinion, people have to strive not for equality and levelling (even though the goal of the socialist revolution was the creation of complete social equality) but rather for the undoing of rigid structures created by the various dimensions (i.e. legal, material, and cultural) of inequality. In her viewpoint, "real social equality implies a complex system of social differences, in which most differences are not socially determined" (Ferge 1969: 30). In her book, besides justifying the study of inequalities, Ferge also threw light on the fact that the abolishment of private property did not automatically entail a more equal social structure because it left other inequalities (for example, cultural ones) intact. Like Pierre Bourdieu, Zsuzsa Ferge later analysed cultural inequalities by looking at the system of education.

Another important topic of critical sociology was the problem of alienation. Alienation refers to processes by which material, intellectual, and social products gain an uncontrollable power over people, as it was not a matter of dispute that alienation existed in Hungary in the 1960s. The discussion revolved around the question of whether alienation was merely a legacy of the past, which would disappear at the end of a short transition period, or whether it was the result of various production processes related to the production of goods (carried out in a socialist economy), perhaps leading to the development of a new form of alienation (for example, due to planned economy or bureaucracy). According to the research of András Hegedüs and Mária Márkus concerning the effects of economic reforms, property relations, and the division of labour, alienation is not only characteristic of capitalist societies, but it is an exciting phenomenon in the socialist system as well (Hegedüs–Márkus 1965). Political reprisals were launched against Hegedüs for his critical works – partly because of his participation in the discussion about alienation and partly because of his reform views. Consequently, in 1966, Hegedüs was removed as editor of the prominent social science journal of the time, *Valóság* [Reality], and was forced to resign as Head of the Sociology Research Group of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences (HAS) in 1968.

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19  Departing from the division of labour theory, Zsuzsa Ferge created seven groups based on the type of work, according to property, power, knowledge, systematicity of participation in the division of labour, the agricultural character, or the physical or intellectual character of the work, and the subject of work.

## Repression and Institutionalization of Hungarian Sociology (1973–1989)

Although in 1969 a new economic mechanism was introduced (not in its original form but with many compromises), the Hungarian participation in the suppression of the revolution in Czechoslovakia convinced even the most optimistic reformers that they could not count on considerable changes in the Soviet sphere. A gradual shift to the left marked the era and also influenced the situation of sociology. After 1968, a two-way process started. On the one hand, on a personal level, there was an intensification of reprisals against the representatives of the critical line of thinking. On the other hand, the pace of institutionalization accelerated, with individuals willing to compromise with the state power.

On a personal level, those against sending troops to Czechoslovakia (the ones who signed a protest in the town of Korčula, Yugoslavia, i.e. members of the Budapest School and students of György Lukács, except for Hegedüs) were "punished" only later, in 1973 (after György Lukács's death). András Hegedüs, János Kis, and Mihály Vajda – who were party members – were expelled from the Party, while Ágnes Heller, Mária Márkus, György Márkus, and György Bence lost their jobs. Another indication of the conservative turn was the fact that Iván Szelényi and György Konrád were arrested because of their jointly authored book *Intellectuals on the Road to Class Power*. The book's theoretical basis was Marxism, yet it provided a critical assessment of the traditional Marxist concept of "class". In 1974, both authors were offered the possibility to leave the country.[20]

At the same time, at the institutional level, progress was impressive during this period. In 1966, under the leadership of Sándor Lakatos, the Social Sciences Institute of the Central Committee of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party (MSZMP) was founded in order to counterbalance the monopoly of the Sociological Research Group of the HAS. The main task of the Institute was to provide theoretical justification for the Party's ideology. Nonetheless, quite surprisingly, the Institute also provided a place for discussions and presentations, even though its director was a dogmatic hardliner.[21] In 1968, the Sociology Research Group

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20    The thesis of the book was that within the state-socialist system the members of the intelligentsia, which included bureaucrats, technocrats, and humanist intellectuals, organized themselves into a class and used their knowledge to promote their class interests in the process of the redistribution of power and goods (Konrád–Szelényi 1989). It is interesting to note that, just as Zsuzsa Ferge, the authors underscored the increasing importance of cultural capital in state socialism through an analysis of inequality in society, yet, while Ferge threw away the Marxist concept of class by introducing that of work types, Konrád and Szelényi created the new, revisionist concept of the class of intellectuals.

21    As an example of the development of Hungarian sociology, a series of courses organized by the Institute can be mentioned, in which Zsuzsa Ferge, Kálmán Kulcsár, Iván Szelényi, Ferenc Pataki, and Tibor Huszár gave lectures on classical works of sociology by E. Durkheim, Max Weber, R. K. Merton, W. Mills, and György Lukács, which, given the exceptional situation of the Institute, became accessible to a limited audience in Hungary, too.

of the HAS became an independent research institute as Sociology Research Institute of the HAS, headed by Kálmán Kulcsár. By 1972, the Institute had grown to have 28 researchers supported by 17 administrative and technical assistants. On 1 January 1969, the Mass Communication Research Centre was established at the Hungarian Radio and Television under the leadership of Tamás Szecskő. The responsibilities of the Centre included research on the measurement of audience reception of radio and television programmes and the recording of various public opinion polls. In 1970, the Department of Social Statistics was founded in the Central Institute for Statistics (KSH), under the direction of István Huszár with the task to provide information in general about social processes by collecting data in specific fields. The problems studied in the Department included social mobility, social stratification, housing conditions, lifestyle, poverty, the situation of the Gypsies, and deviance (such as alcoholism and suicide).[22]

In 1971, the first academic department of sociology was established at the Faculty of Humanities of Eötvös Loránd University (ELTE).[23] The first head of the department was Tibor Huszár, who had studied at the Lenin Institute in Moscow before becoming a lecturer at the Department of Philosophy of ELTE. In 1969, Huszár was commissioned to found the Department of Sociology. His personal influence determined the development of the Department and later of the whole Institute of Sociology. Because of his connections in the Central Committee, Huszár succeeded in maintaining a delicate balance between restrictions and opportunities, between what was forbidden and what was allowed or tolerated. The department's tasks included not only pedagogical ones (such as the publication of handbooks and educational auxiliary materials or the development of a curriculum) but also research: first as part of a research project on the intelligentsia, and then, in 1973, two nation-wide surveys were carried out on the social situation of lawyers and doctors.

*Sociology*, the periodical of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, was first published in 1972 (from 1991 onwards, it has been published by the Hungarian Association of Sociology under the title *Sociology Review*), and the teaching of sociology began step by step at some universities in the country.

The Hungarian Association of Sociology[24] was founded relatively late, only in 1978, and its first president was Sándor Szalai. With this, sociology achieved a

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22   In 1975, István Huszár was "sent" from the CIS over to the National Planning Institute, and the Department was closed in September 1978, while some of the subordinated departments were reassigned to different departments of the Institute and to the Institute for Research of Population Sciences.

23   The Department started at first with 10-15 undergraduates, and their number grew steadily. In 1983, the Department was transformed into an independent institute in which sociology, social history, social psychology, and methodology formed separate departments. After 1987, the Institute offered programmes also in social politics and social work.

24   The number of participants was limited to 99 persons for, according to a police rule, people had to ask for special permission to gather in the case of meetings of 100 persons and over.

full institutional force, and all the necessary elements of the infrastructure were in place for the study of sociology. Naturally, until the end of the 1980s, the Party maintained its control in personal matters (number of employees, confirmation of hirings, etc.), and, since independent research grants were almost totally missing, research relied financially on organizations belonging to the state and the Party.

In the 1970s, a new generation appeared in Hungarian sociology, which further promoted the professionalization of the discipline. Although it cannot yet be considered a "professional generation", its members entered the field through a deliberate choice of career. Their task was not to create anymore but to ensure the operation of the new discipline. Professionalization, which began in the 1970s, entailed the import of theoretical and methodological results of work done in the West, rather than the development of an independent and specifically "Hungarian" sociology. Thus, as already noted above, Bourdieu's ideas dominated in Zsuzsa Ferge's research, the critical theories of the Frankfurt school appeared in Zsolt Papp's works, and theories of Emile Durkheim and Max Weber were very popular in sociological analyses throughout the 1970s. In order to render classic sociological works more accessible to the Hungarian public, Gondolat Publishing House published a series called *Sociological Library through the 1970s and 1980s*, including works by Herbert Marcuse, Max Weber, George Simmel, Ferdinand Tönnies, Robert Merton, and Herbert Mead in Hungarian translations.

The increasingly professional character of sociological literature in the 1980s – the use of specific terminology and systems of measurement – made sociological works difficult to understand and largely inaccessible to the broader public. Sociology, which hitherto provided a language for discussion about society and made the exchange of social experiences possible (Kuczi 1991), now became increasingly closed, staying within the confines of its own professional vocabulary. Alongside this process, difficult methodical (statistical and mathematical) procedures gained considerable impetus in sociology, the results of which were meaningful only for a handful of professionals. Although empirical research had been present from the very beginning in Hungarian sociology, in accordance with international tendencies, sociologists were doing research in this period in ever-more systematic ways and in increasingly smaller fields, dealing with specific problems instead of the overall social issues. Thus, research areas that were hardly separable in the 1960s became separate fields of sociology by the 1980s with their own methodology, technical literature, and dedicated research groups.

Changes in the discipline during the 1970s, its professionalization, and broader political changes led to a decline in the public role of sociology. The classical themes of sociology, such as social inequality and the analysis of social structures, were less apt to provide answers to the challenges of the 1980s compared to economics and political science.

# Conclusions

The history of sociology in Hungary between 1948 and 1989 cannot be described as a history of one immanent or internal development, following the principles of the discipline, even though what we have seen unfold in this chronological sketch is the image of a gradually institutionalized and professionalized discipline.

The institutionalization of sociology highlights the growing importance of scientific and professional knowledge and expertise during the consolidation of the Kádár regime in the 1960s and the fact that in many cases the representatives of the system of the party-state and science supported each other's goals in both latent and manifest ways. Processes of consolidation contributed to the development of autonomy in the various professional and scientific fields and allowed for the demarcation of boundaries where professional competences became an increasingly important resource. New possibilities were opened up by the various contradictions between knowledge and power, obedience and professional ethics. It could be said that the communist leadership in Hungary chose the path of "domesticating" sociology rather than the eradication of sociology (Mink 2017: 23).

Despite the various difficulties, a considerable development took place in the field of sociology in the 1960s: the discipline justified its existence, achieved the recognition of its professional competence, and legitimized the theory of a social system divided on the basis of the division of labour, a new reality whose ground was no longer ideological. The professionalization of Hungarian sociology and its integration into the world of international scientific research could not have occurred without the work done in this period.

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# Natalism as a Nationalist Biopolitical Response from Socialism Till Today in Hungary [1]

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**Abstract**. After the Second World War, the population policies of the socialist countries were not free from the dilemma of natalist/anti-natalist policies. This essay focuses on the Hungarian population policy discourses of the Kádár era and the present day, with some references to Central European specificities. The fear of the disappearance of Hungarians has been present in Hungarian intellectual discourse for several centuries, and by the twentieth century, it had become a fundamental idea that reached society as a whole. Given the growing interest (not independently of contemporary trends) in the international sociological literature not only in the transformation of biopolitics in recent decades but also in the historical antecedents of earlier periods, I believe that it may be interesting to examine the fear of national death in both a Hungarian and a Central European context.

**Keywords**: socialism, population policy, natalism

## Introduction

The fear of decreasing population appeared in some form in almost all the socialist states of Central Europe following the declining fertility caused by socialist modernization. Based on the sources available to me, each of these sources seems to be presented as an individual, self-contained discourse of crisis affecting its own nation, with no more global understanding of the problem in relation to the countries of the socialist bloc and most often no mention of similar (or even more serious) processes in any other, sometimes neighbouring, country.

The state-socialist thematization of the problem of depopulation was a very complex and delicate matter since the measures taken in response to demographic

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1 The original version of the lecture, based on Hungarian sources, was presented at the workshop entitled *Representations of Fear*, organized by the Cultural Archaeology Research Group in Debrecen on 26 April 2019. The paper was extended with some references to the Central European context for the present issue of *Acta Universitatis Sapientiae, Social Analysis*.

trends had to be constantly adapted to an ideologically rigid policy that was at the same time subject to sudden changes. Sometimes women's emancipation, sometimes the petty-bourgeois family, sometimes the working woman, sometimes the (working?) mother were held up as the role model of society, just as the achievements of socialism were proclaimed sometimes through the population growth that modernization brought, sometimes through the decline that it brought, sometimes through the opposition of socialism to consumer culture, sometimes through its power to ensure consumption. By the second half of the 1960s, however, policymakers in the socialist bloc were confronted with the tensions between the dynamically expanding industrial labour demand and declining fertility rates, and in response, many socialist governments rethought their approach to population. In the mid-1960s, similar measures were taken to encourage childbearing, largely through fiscal means, but with varying degrees of intensity from country to country.

The situation is complicated by the fact that the Soviet Union did not respond with the demographic logic that characterized almost all world politics during the Soviet era. Any measure that influenced demographic processes, sometimes with greater freedom, sometimes with tightening (divorce, abortion, family support, migration regulation, etc.) were more a reflection of domestic policy fluctuations than a genuine effort to respond to demographic challenges (Ivanov et al. 2006: 407). As a result of Marxist anti-Malthusian ideology,[2] population issues were taboo in the Soviet Union for decades, and the population of the Soviet Union grew relatively rapidly for a long time. Only in the late 1960s did policymakers have to face the problem of low fertility. Thus, it is only since the early 1970s that childbearing incentives have been introduced, following the example of the Hungarian model (Gurko 2018, Claro 2015: 55). The lack of measures to follow probably also contributed to the fact that, although there were many similarities between socialist countries in their biopolitical regulations, each country followed its own path (Liskova–Szegedi 2021).[3]

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2    The fear of population decline or the fear of the decline of "certain" population and that of the (over)growth of "certain" population obtained its classical form in Malthus's work (1798). Malthus's ideas of two centuries earlier were revitalized with the American immigration at the end of the 19th century: at first, immigrants were seen as competition who might contribute to the reduction of wages, then their multiplying children were considered a risk of change in the "racial" composition of the nation, evoking the problem of "quality" of the population. The governing idea of population politics of the time was eugenics: on the one hand, increasing the prolificacy of the middle and upper classes, who were considered to be "superior" (positive eugenics), and the limitation of the fertility of "the sick" of some sort (negative eugenics). In terms of the global status of population control, Attila Melegh writes about how the Malthusian theory, which is based on class differences, transforms into neo-Malthusianism of developed/ undeveloped societies in the West/East, where population decline and the intention to reduce poverty appear as parallel arguments (and as a concept) (Melegh 2011).

3    The advantages and disadvantages of pro- or anti-natalist policies became particularly problematic in the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia, where fertility rates differed between ethnic

This essay focuses on the Hungarian population political discourses of today and those of the Kádár era, therefore relevant ideas of earlier periods are represented incomprehensively or in the form of allusions, while the Central European specificities are rather presented in the form of references. Certain elements are represented in the Hungarian discourse in the interwar period, although the problem of population decline overwrote the Malthusian frame of reference. Ethnic purity, the limitation of "certain" population, the myth of "pure" countryside communities, the stabilization of the number of the whole population, and the fear of being "surrounded" can be explained both by the fear of the elites losing space and as a political tool. The identity-building function of the fear of a "diluting" nation and population decline were used many times in the past, but there seems to be a similarity between the ideas of the present government and earlier ones in the way in which the toolkit of population politics is dominated by pro-natalist discourse (while health politics is not thematized or only thematized in a de-emphasized way). Vocalizing population decline as a disaster is our century-long heritage on the one hand, and (the excuse of) crisis management is a superb political means to support interventionism both in the Hungarian and the global context on the other hand.

## Sources Used and Methodology

In the twentieth century, there were a number of population debates in intellectual circles both in Hungary and in neighbouring countries (Doboş 2018, Havelková–Oates-Indruchová 2014, Kiss 2008, Kuzma-Markowska–Ignaciuk 2020, Liskova 2016).[4] In Hungary of the early 60s, it was the periodicals *Élet és Irodalom* [Life and Literature] and *Valóság* [Reality] and at the end of the decade *Nők Lapja* [Women's Magazine] which provided space to publish points of views in this respect. Regarding the 1970s and 1980s, I focused more on texts from the 1980 and 1986 debates. Not only is the textual material of these debates relatively easily accessible since they were widely circulated at the time, but the corpus has also been the subject of excellent sociological analyses with discourse analysis by sociologists Mária Heller, Dénes Némedi, and Ágnes Rényi (Heller et al.

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groups and such state intervention was potentially divisive (Drezgić 2010). Childbearing programmes have been introduced more or less universally to motivate (or demotivate) different populations to have children, mainly through fiscal and administrative means such as family support linked to the time of employment. On a comparison of family support systems in Central Europe, see Szikra (2018a, 2018b), Varsa–Szikra (2020).

4 The Hungarian debates of the 1960s have a famous precursor in the 1920s, not discussed here. Already in the 1920s, the mapping of low-fertility municipalities, whose birth control practices were characterized by one only child, began. An overview of the single-parent discourse, which was very intense between the two world wars and left a deep mark on the Hungarian mentality, was carried out by Rudolf Andorka (Andorka 2001).

1990). In fact, the first publication I came across was the analysis itself, which included a good part of the very intense debate that followed the presentation of the analysis, mainly involving reactions from demographers in a verbatim transcript (Monigl 1990).[5] I was struck by the vehemence and ideological tone of the reactions to the scientific work. I then heard about the debate and its context in detail in an interview with one of the authors, Maria Heller, who was mapping the history of Hungarian sociology. In addition to the second analysis of the corpus of texts, I therefore re-read the texts of the authors included in the analysis from the decades of socialism. Following the regime change, I tried to follow the path of the previous method to find new focal points of professional debate (Melegh 1999) and to focus on works from the academic field that aimed to address a lay audience, even in the hope of appealing to policymakers. Thus, I will first highlight the conference address summarizing the thoughts of Tiborné Pongrácz,[6] as she was the Deputy Head of the Hungarian Demographic Research Institute of the Central Statistical Office (KSH), author of numerous studies, and a significant figure in Hungarian demographic research whose public appearances became noteworthy in the media as well. In terms of the period towards the turn of the millennium, in the spring of 1998, I examined the answers given to the population poll of the Hungarian Demographic Research Institute (*Körkérdés a népesedésről* [A Survey on Population] 1999),[7] predominantly on the basis of Attila Melegh's paper analysing the responses (Melegh 1999). After the turn of the millennium, in the current discourse, it is sociologist József Benda's work that is highlighted, also due to his embeddedness in the media, the number of times he was cited, and his work which is suitable to be represented as a diagnosis of the general climate of the era (Benda 2015, 2016). Although the empirical material in this paper is drawn from Hungarian sources, I will try to compare it with the statement of other Central European papers. The comparison is made easier by the fact that in recent years a number of excellent studies have been published analysing the population policies of socialist and post-socialist countries, a trend that even suggests the emergence of a sub-discipline.

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5    It is typical that the text of the debate itself was not published; according to the journal, many withdrew their comments, which is no wonder given that many vehemently resented the conclusions of the paper (according to the authors' verbal communication).

6    Closing remarks at the conference *Contemporary Hungarian Family through the Eyes of a Demography Expert. Population and Population Politics* (Pongrácz 1991).

7    The poll was originally sent to 140 researchers, social scientists, and intellectuals with public appearances, and only thirty responses arrived from mainly sociologists, historians, and demography experts.

# The Main Characteristics of the Hungarian Socialist Population Discourse: Natalist Argumentation Strategies and (Potential) Counter-Discourses

Topics, issues, not to mention problems that reached publicity in the 1960s could only be published under conditions determined by the political establishment. However, the question of population, as in other state-socialist countries, was not yet in the foreground of interest of the establishment, so many had the opportunity to tackle the subject in a flexible but supervised and controlled discursive space (as well as to address other issues under the excuse of the population). That is why in Hungary the ideas that had been considered manifestations of the rural populist approach were given the opportunity to be present on a larger scene because the establishment refrained from administratively influencing population processes for a while after the harsh population interventions of the first half of the 50s. Therefore, the issue of whether many or few children are born – similar to the Soviet approach – meant neither an advantage nor a disadvantage for the regime (Heller et al. 1990: 18).[8] That is why pro-natalist ideas could be relatively freely represented along with the (obviously carefully selected) arguments of the rural populist school that had been present in the earlier regime.

As an introduction, here are four main characteristics of the Hungarian debates represented in the followings: (1) Those who spoke out applied a well-definable (rural populist) strategy: they were successful in connecting more social problems, and using the appropriate language they also succeeded in riveting the attention (of the readers, the public as well as of the establishment). (2) The discourse was significantly pro-natalist in nature, and there was no other child-centred opinion even on the non-formal scene (for example, based on the changed status of children). (3) The most dominant figures in the debates at the time (and later) can be characterized with the reinforcement of negative identity, as the constant decrease of the population provided a permanent means to maintain the crisis discourse enhancing the idea of general decline, which offered no space for opposers other than arguing from a defensive position. (4) The academic and/or

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8    In the Soviet Union (and in the state-socialist countries), the idea that population growth favoured the communist cause prevailed for a long time. Building on Karl Marx's anti-Malthusian concept of human, scientific, and technological progress, the "socialist population policy" rejected the Western problems of population growth because socialist economies had to be able to feed, educate, and train the growing population and raise the living standards of the working class. The Marxist anti-Malthusian attitude was further reinforced by the fertility decline (or the fear of it) that began to be felt in the second half of the 1960s. The first written legitimization of the theory of demographic transition in the Soviet Union took place in 1973, allowing low fertility to be reinterpreted from a symptom of weakness to a sign of progressive development (Rivkin-Fish 2003).

official experts – willingly or not – only observed debates and appearances as outsiders, and they only spoke in public from the 80s.[9]

In 1963–1964, the first wave of debates took place on the pages of *Élet és Irodalom*.[10] For today's reader, the most interesting part of the debate might be the fact that the participants sought the traditional, rural, and national set of values embedded in the socialist ideals and the way in which the issue was thematized according to the norms of two ideologies at the same time. The strategy of the rural populist approach was based on the moral values of traditional rurality and its anti-modernity that had been elaborated earlier, while it loyally pursued the goals announced by the official socialist ideology. One must also note that "the relationship between the two is not without controversies, as in a number of cases their value positioning is often conflicting and mutually exclusive (e.g. the concept of modernity, national vs. international, political leadership, political alternatives, etc.), but the constant oscillation between the specific and the general does not always make that apparent" (Heller et al. 1990: 25).

However, the three authors, Heller, Némedi, and Rényi, found a number of points where the real connection between the rural populist and socialist ideology could be exploited well by the participants of the debate, for example, when emphasizing collectivity as opposed to individual rights, either in terms of the responsibility of the individual and their mandatory sacrifice or when it came to patriarchal society and the need for the intervention of the state (in decisions or justice), not to mention the top-down control of society and the individual, rendering individual differences and needs as secondary, which are not alien to either ideology. According to the three authors, condemning the irresponsible, greedy, and selfish petty bourgeois and the moral deterioration that manifests in consumption was only one (more apparent and obvious) aim of the representatives of rurality, their other ambition being to hold politics itself (!) accountable for socialist principles, somehow driving an attack from the left (Heller et al. 1990: 25–27).

This strategy was difficult to maintain in the second (1972–1973) and third (1981–1982)[11] periods of the debate in such an obvious way. In order to keep it

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9     The involvement of demographers in the preparation of decisions, and especially the incorporation of their recommendations into decisions, varies greatly between periods and countries (Bódy 2016; Doboş 2018, 2020; Kiss 2008; Ivanov et al. 2006; Kuźma-Markowska 2019).

10    At the same time, there were a couple of articles in the same topic in *Kortárs* [Contemporary] in 1963, and after the end of the debate in *Élet és Irodalom* (1964) and other periodicals, e.g. *Magyar Tudomány* [Hungarian Science], *Valóság* [Reality], *Társadalmi Szemle* [Social Review], *Élet és Tudomány* [Life and Science] also published one or two more serious papers.

11    The second wave of the population debate accompanied the book *Éljünk magunknak?* [Live for Ourselves?] edited by Gyula Fekete, in which he published the debate of 1964–1965 from the *Nők Lapja* magazine and legitimized his arguments with letters of readers and opinions (Fekete 1972). The third debate took place in *Élet és Irodalom* again, with the participation of experts this time.

popular, it was not advisable to attack consumption and growing demands so vehemently and unrelentingly, as the regime was based on the establishment and maintenance of a wide social consensus on increasing welfare.[12] Therefore, criticism took two shapes. One – more significant – attack pointed out "textually specific, individual flaws, sins and lack of moral responsibility, but for their existence and multiplicity, the political establishment was held responsible – indirectly" (Heller et al. 1990: 27).[13] This critical approach appeared heroic and was safe at the same time, as the fight against ideological and moral loosening for the sake of the community could only be represented (and envisaged?) in the disguise of paternalism, by means of state intervention. The other – certainly less emphasized but more and more often appearing – direction of comments on population politics was around the theme of nationalism, which I intend to tackle at a later point in more detail.[14] First, let us see who was in the crosshairs of the natalist outbursts.

The attacks of rural populist ideology were often aimed at abstract or constructed, or sometimes specific individuals or groups.[15]

One of the causes of population decline was often identified as "misconceived female equality" (Bor 1963) or a group of "self-awareness tom-tomming" (Bor 1972) women abusing emancipation. These women sometimes appear as infected by "the arrogance of the primitive petty bourgeois", and that is why having (big) families cannot be achieved (Bor 1972). Ambrus Bor, a leading writer and editor of one of the largest publishing houses, who largely contributed to the discourse on the dwindling Hungarian nation, meant it literally when he said: "the distorted,

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12   It is worth comparing this with Czechoslovakia, which became ideologically entrenched after 1968, where the increase in consumption supply was much more limited as a systemic legitimization factor, not to mention the extreme measures taken in Romania, where the aspect of socialism and the improvement of consumption opportunities was not even an option (Liskova 2016, Kiss 2008).

13   All quotations, if not marked otherwise, are translated from Hungarian by the author.

14   In Poland, earlier, in 1957, the population debate had begun with publications in economic journals emphasizing the negative impact of uncontrolled population growth on the development of Polish economy. With its high birth rate in the 1950s and early 1960s, Poland was an exception among the socialist countries of Central Europe. In the 1950s, 700,000 children were born in Poland every year. At first, the Polish authorities were pleased with the high birth rate, but by the mid-1950s it became clear that the high birth rate was not being matched by infrastructure development, putting too much strain on housing and services. As a result, Polish authorities have introduced some initiatives to curb population growth. Poland is the only state-socialist country in Europe that pursued an anti-natalist policy until the late 1950s while officially classifying Malthusian theory as "reactionary". On the "other" side, from the 1950s onwards, the Polish Catholic Church became an intense shaper of the discourse, opposing abortion and "artificial" contraception and presenting the anti-natalist policies of the party-state as a threat to the Polish nation. After the clear divide of the 1960s, state-socialist and Catholic population policies became significantly more conflated in the 1970s (Kuźma-Markowska 2019).

15   To the latter, one example is the personal attack of the partner (for example, allusions to the distinction between "high-earning women with degree" and "female journalists").

almost perverted interpretation of female emancipation, minimum number of births, the abuse of the legalized pregnancy termination [which is not other than] the unconscious, unconvinced dwindling of a nation with the excuse to achieve human liberty" (Bor 1963a: 731). Female emancipation was an annoyance, which was extremely difficult to handle, as a woman's right to make decisions about her own body also included the possibility of pregnancy termination. The criticism of abortion gave an opportunity to emphasize responsibility for the fate of the nation (on an individual as well as on a political level), and as making it a moral issue, it widened the circle of those involved.[16]

Ambrus Bor linked female emancipation (emancipat*ing*) directly to financial profit-making: "There are quite a few who are only after the financial advantages of emancipating: a woman can advance to the profit-making full partner of a family's general partnership (Bor 1963b – quoted by Heller et al. 1990: 35), but the image of a wage-earning woman often appears parallel with the devaluation of the mother role with other authors as well. The final solution of the problem was the idea of full-time housewife in the 1973 debate (Varga 1972; Turgonyi 1973, 1974; Fekete 1973, 1974). The "unelaborated emancipation", "anti-mother feminism", the idea of "over-emancipation" (Fekete 1973, Száraz 1986) were identified as some of the reasons for population decline in the 1980s;[17] however, Ambrus Bor condemned not only the misdirection of the role of women (i.e. mothers), their view of roles and sense of duty but also the situation that made men (fathers) uncertain, the outdated idea of families, which involves a "deep silence around the re-evaluation of fatherhood", which indirectly means a criticism of the establishment for the unrefined concept of the "socialist father" (Bor 1963b – quoted by Heller et al. 1990: 35).[18]

Besides emancipated women (or those of the petty bourgeoisie), the young constituted another group that could be criticized repeatedly. These young people today, who are "indifferent to the ideals of nation, homeland, socialism, who lack a sense of responsibility, duty, and who only wish to live their lives based on fashion, comfort and welfare", in the early 60s also push family and national interests into the background, which makes us "look at joyful freedom

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16    Many spoke out for the law at the time of the 1973 restrictions of the Abortion Act, even in highly prestigious academic journals, e.g. Huszár (1973) in *Világosság* [Clarity]. Heller, Némedi, and Rényi cite authors who argue with the idea that condemns abortion under any circumstances and who display women's point of view who choose pregnancy termination such as sociologist Zsuzsa Ferge (Wisinger 1982) or Péter György (1964), then President of the Hungarian Central Statistical Office.

17    To which others (mostly female participants) reacted by the vivid description of the obstacles and partial nature of emancipation.

18    Research on the question of the "socialist father" is yet to be done. In the Soviet Union, the "men's question" appeared in a different context, with some demographers strongly advocating the creation of so-called men's clinics because of men's declining health and low life expectancy (Claro 2015: 56).

with alarm and doubt, struggling with the vision of the disappearance of the nation" (Jobbágy 1964 – quoted by Heller et al. 1990: 37). Condemning the young is always a good opportunity – in the 1980s, the image of the young "who get everything ready-made and are overly protected" as a harmful consequence of "modern softness" comes into the foreground (e.g. Varga 1982; for more details, see: Heller et al. 1990: 64). At the same time, Gyula Fekete articulates a criticism of the anti-children and anti-family nature of the regime in the context of socialist housing estate construction (Fekete 1965, 1980).

It was not easy for those who questioned the natalist point of view, as a pro-natalist basic consensus had developed, which made it hard to examine the question from a different point of view; so much so that one with an opposing opinion had to speak from a defensive position (for example, refer to their own happy experiences concerning the family or having children). Some elements in the counterarguments can be easily identified. The most common strategy was to place the question of having children back onto a practical level from a moral one. The – mostly female – participants listed the everyday difficulties for which the government did not offer help for the families or for mothers with childcare (due to the deficiencies of nurseries and kindergartens), or accentuated the missing help of society (or the family itself) (e.g. the possibility of part-time employment, sharing the housework, or the lack of an emancipated way of thinking). Others defended young people who carefully planned to have children in the name of modern values and the broadening cultural and economic needs of the young (learning, travelling, building the appropriate financial background and livelihood). Besides the everyday practical examples, only a few participants questioned explicitly the moral validity of the natalist position on depopulation, for example, the sociologist, socio-politician Zsuzsa Ferge. "The prospect of the disappearance of the nation in this sense is a historical distortion, which is not to be feared. At least, it is a more fearsome idea that we do not want a society that is good to live in but one in which many live. The poor quality of social values is a more dangerous void than the demographic one" (Heller et al. 1990: 70–71). Ferge separated the development of the population from the national existence and elevated it into a universal humanist framework of human possibility that is true for everyone. So did Imre Hirschler,[19] who claimed that the possibility of universal philanthropy and a harmonious society is present in a child, seeing them as the meaning of life and refusing the idea that children are a symbol of national vitality. Pál Tamás questioned the crisis discourse itself when he made the comment that the issue of demographics might not be so worrying (Tamás 1982). By doing that, he did not only refuse national

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19    Gynaecologist Imre Hirschler was an active member of the workers' movement and the only representative of sexual enlightenment in the two decades after WWII. Readers could come across his books *Nők védelmében* [In the Defence of Women] (1958) and *Szülőszoba, tessék belépni!* [Labour Room, Please Enter!] (1965).

fate as the discursive framework but – some 20 years later – returned to the original idea of the article that triggered the debate at the time: in 1963, József Pál wrote articles in *Élet és Irodalom* on the overpopulation of the world, examining the food supply problems due to overpopulation, relying on Western sources (Pálfy 1963). Typically, Ambrus Bor's reaction to the article dealing with a global problem was as follows: "*we* are not overpopulated" (Bor 1963 – quoted by Heller et al. 1990: 34; my own emphasis).

## The Role of Natalism in Expert Population Policy Discourse and the Emergence of Eugenics in Non-expert Discourse

The ideology of natalism was easy to thematize in the socialist era in Hungary, the problem being the presentation of the vision of *national* disappearance in the socialist political context. Ambrus Bor crossed this line in 1963 with his article *Tizenhárom ezrelék* [Thirteen per Mill], in which the topic of the disappearing nation was explicitly expressed (Bor 1963a). Bor claimed that the greatness of a nation depends on its mass. Additionally, he linked demography not only to national existence but to its geopolitical situation. The real problem is the "power relations along the Danube", the "disproportion" that due to population decline "we may not only remain the smallest in the valley of the Danube, but we may as well become a minority" (Bor 1963a – quoted by Heller et al. 1990: 31). Bor was worried about the higher fertility of the neighbouring "friendly" countries, which is extremely striking after the Romanian natalist political measures of the second half of the 1960s: in 1966, a decree made abortion illegal that had been used as an exclusive contraceptive, although it had been the most important means of birth control. Due to this measure, 527,764 babies were born in 1967 and 526,091 in 1968 (the two generations with the highest headcount in Romania ever). In either of those two years, more than 30% of the women between 15 and 45 years and 56% of the women between 20 and 35 years at the time gave birth to children (Kiss 2015: 15).[20]

At the same time, the notion of "quality reproduction" appears more and more often in printed media.[21] The non-disadvantaged families (i.e. not gypsy) are to be encouraged and supported, and the ideal of many influential individuals is an intellectual family with more than one child. At the heart of this idea is the aforementioned "full-time mother", who would support only those who can

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20    Today, the total fertility rate of Romania is the lowest in the region (1.34; Hungary's in 2018 was 1.49).

21    Which is described most explicitly by Domokos Varga (1972), but others also came up with similar ideas about "certain" groups of the population.

offer "the necessary moral guarantees". The medical-geneticist Endre Czeizel's contribution is also noteworthy for its impact; he supported the idea of quality selection as an expert in 1972 (Czeizel 1972; and later in the debate of the 1970s – see Heller et al. 1990: 57). Ambrus Bor also lists arguments for quality selection, but he also refuses the idea of changing the newly introduced childcare support (GYES) although he was aware that it encouraged the poor having more children.

The enhancement of eugenic ideas is to be thoroughly examined. Based on the research of the three authors mentioned before, this paper merely looks at how the mechanism of stigmatization followed (appeared parallel to) declared eugenic notions. Heller, Némedi, and Rényi drew attention to the significant dominance of scapegoating and stigmatization in the debates of the 1980s (especially in the "representative" debate on demographics in the autumn of 1981). Among the scapegoats, there were "the lumpens", "those who sought ecstasy", and those who were unable to make an effort or were not cut out for working life. But "the worthless", "the burdened", and those with intellectual disability, who reproduce too fast and therefore mean a potential threat, are all to be despised. So is the group of gypsies, who were rarely called by name at the time; more often than not, they were described as a group "with the poorest education" or "of lumpens who live amidst squalor and debauch". The idea that "it matters what kind of family children are born into" and the discourse on the "appropriate" number of children in gypsy families are present throughout the era – in Hungary, in fact, belatedly.[22] Compared to the threat of becoming overwhelmingly populated by gypsies, there is less talk of "aliens", or "Othellos", and more of Romanians (also expressed in code language) (Heller et al. 1990: 63). The issue of nationality, especially comparisons with Romania, became more and more significant in the 1980s.

Another important difference is that the debates of the 1980s were set in a completely different economic/social context.[23] Readers and media consumers were aware of the declining population, the exhaustion of the earlier positive measures, as well as the impossibility of population political measures (more financial benefits) to counterbalance these due to a lack of necessary economic background. In 1980, the Deputy Head of KSH said in the daily newspaper *Magyar Nemzet* [Hungarian Nation] that the demographic slope was about to happen sooner than expected. In early 1981, in an article based on demographic statistics in *Társadalmi Szemle* [Social Review], demography expert and population statistician András

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22    In Czechoslovakia, eugenic arguments against the Roma were already publicized in the mid-1950s in connection with the legalization of abortion (Hašková-Dudová 2020 – quoted by Varsa-Szikra 2020: 537). In contrast to Czechoslovakia and Hungary, Polish family planning literature did not link "problematic" elements to ethnicity or place of residence, with eugenic manifestations appearing in relation to the problem of alcoholism (Kuźma-Markowska 2019: 13).

23    Moreover, information represented in the secondary public sphere also influenced what was made public in the official mass communication in the 80s. Heller, Némedi, and Rényi assign the change of attitude in the discourse to that as well.

Klinger claimed that the demographic situation was worse than planned, and the family model of three children aimed at in the 1973 decree was simply unrealizable (Kovács 1980; Klinger 1981 – quoted by Heller et al. 1990: 60–61).

## The Role of Experts in the Discourse on Population Politics from the Kádár Era until Today

In the first wave of debates (except for one statement), there were no expert participants by orders coming from above, possibly because the issue was not of priority for the establishment, and the participants of the discourse predominantly shared a pro-natalist point of view. Experts on population politics, especially demography experts, later tried to distinguish between the issues of having children and those of nationalism, linking the question of birth rate to modernization tendencies worldwide. As experts, they emphasized the complexity of demographic tendencies and their connection with social changes, the financial status, and the economic-political conditions of the society.[24] Since demographics look at the question of population and birth rate in relation to death rate, demography experts wanted to drive the debate towards the problem of death numbers. However, as opposed to having children, that topic did not spur "laymen" in the debate of the 80s, and it is not different today: having children is still an emphasized point in population politics, while it is still clear from the population statistical data that untimely deaths (and the poor health condition of the population) is (also) a more significant problem.

The experts were not in an easy position despite their status as experts. The decision-makers were uninterested in their participation or even advice for decades (in Hungary: Bódy 2016, in the Soviet Union: Claro 2015: 53, in Romania after 1966: Kiss 2008: 17); their efforts and ideas were not supported. In terms of their public utterances, they were in a delicate situation, as their opinion could be (could have been) interpreted as a criticism of the political decision-makers. While tendencies of specialization intensified on the international academic scene, it was further enhanced by the decision-making and power-political mechanism in the Soviet bloc. That is why experts were more willing to represent themselves as experts of a smaller area, which in this case meant that there were very few occasions and people who would articulate the problem of demographics in its complexity (and in a comprehensive way). Therefore, on the one hand, the discourse was dominated by laymen's arguments, and, on the other

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24    However, their message carried a hint of ambivalence – as the basis of their argumentation was female emancipation, the protection of individual decisions, and the freedom of privacy, they considered and described birth rate itself as something that could be influenced and designed centrally.

hand, experts lost their authority on the subject to a certain extent in the eye of the public. This was probably in connection with the attack on demography experts. It (i.e. the criticism of KSH and of the Demographic Research Institute) first took place at the beginning of the 1970s (Kováts 1970), which was re-evoked in the 1980s. The idea of negligence on behalf of demography experts reappears today: for example, János Tóth I., teacher of philosophy, Assistant Professor at the University of Szeged displays the following scapegoating: "First of all, no one spoke of this problem in the last forty years, or if someone dared to tackle the issue, the internationalist elite made fun of them (…) How was a simple citizen to know that the country was in a demographical crisis?" (Tóth 2018).

The clichés around the population decline in Hungary left their mark on the profession itself. The summarizing work of Mrs Tibor Pongrácz, the Deputy Head of the Demographic Research Institute of Central Statistical Office (KSH), *A mai magyar család demográfus szemmel* [The History of Hungarian Family from a Demography Expert's Perspective] (Pongrácz 1991), contains a lot of pro-natalist ideas that are still used today – some of which are based on misconceptions or ideological convictions. Mrs Pongrácz begins by saying: a distinction must be made between the international tendencies behind "the malfunctions of Hungarian families today" and the "often deliberately anti-family conditions imposed on families in the past forty years" (Pongrácz 1991: 1–2). In terms of the fragility of marriages, "the primary issue is the enforced mass employment of women" with the aim of providing cheap and mass workforce for the industry,[25] along with the disintegration[26] of the classic family model representing traditional values. The state tried to "compensate" for the eight-hour-long working time of mothers with small children by forcing the children into community at a very early age and liberating the mothers from the burden of childcare, which made family life practically unknown for the children until their adulthood – according to the author. Due to the absence of family milieu, a whole generation grew up that essentially never saw a model for a harmonious family spending time together

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25 "Did 'women' not use to do paid jobs before the Rákosi Era? In fact, statisticians found in the 1880 census (when the rate of women's paid employment was first registered) that 636,000 women worked in agriculture (as assisting family members) and nearly half a million women as day-labourers, and so on. The latter were typically peasant girls, who sought employment in the city, postponing marriage and having children (…). In 1910, in the Kingdom of Hungary, three quarters of 15–19-year-old women – therefore in this era typically unmarried but not students – were wage-earners" (Gyáni 2011: 27 – quoted by Dupcsik 2016: 137–138). The post-WW2 topos of "forced, mass employment of women" took root in other socialist countries and was reinforced after the regime change. See on the issue: Havelková–Oates-Indruchová (2014).

26 According to a controversial family sociology study, "the Kádár era was the golden age of the Hungarian family, or at least social familialism in Hungary" (Dupcsik–Tóth 2008: 315). The planned atomization of society and preventing open manifestations of social responsibility resulted in isolation in micro communities of families. The familialist set of values that is often described as a characteristic of the "typical" conservative family was not alien to the socialist idea of family in the Kádár era, to the Husak "normalization", or to the socialist family image of the Gierek era.

and never gained practice in handling the everyday difficulties, potential conflicts of family life (Pongrácz 1991: 4). The author holds women responsible for the great number of broken marriages, as "to resolve family conflicts, married couples (especially women misled by emancipation ideology) filed for a divorce sooner even if this step was not in accordance with the severity of the conflict and its potential to be resolved" (Pongrácz 1991: 4). Similarly, to advocates of the natalist point of view, Mrs Pongrácz refuses any solutions for population decline other than having children: "improving conditions concerning mortality in itself can lead to developing and stabilizing a more rigid, old-aged society that is less open to innovation".[27] As a result, generations reproducing themselves in lower numbers ultimately lead to an unstoppable, irreversible process (Pongrácz 1991: 8).

The short citations illustrate how the phrases and ideas of "women misled by emancipation ideology" return from the 1960s on and become explicit, expressing the harmful impact of women's employment,[28] the psychological distortion of children who are taken out of their families and forced into communities (i.e. kindergarten and nursery), which results in children "unfamiliar with family life until their adulthood". According to this logic, irreversibly damaged families generate irreversible demographic decline. The ideal family described by demography experts promoting and researching natalism could be conservative (and legitimate) solely on professional grounds for a long time because there were always more children in "integrated" families until the turn of the millennium. However, natalist ideology pictured the family as a micro-world free of problems with everyone having their own (static) place and role in it. There is no mention of toxic conditions of family members living together – alienation, domestic violence, alcoholism, etc. Accordingly, these are not the concern of family policy, its only focus being – to this day – encouraging having children.[29]

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27  Another ambivalent idea in natalism is ageism, which is based on stereotypes and preconceptions about the elderly and fundamentally and exclusively sees aging as a problem (disregarding the changes and alternatives in aging societies worldwide).

28  As Csaba Dupcsik summarized it: "1. the female ancestors of the generation that is active today were most likely to do paid work as far back as six or seven generations, and three generations back they were most likely to spend the majority of their active years with work – however, in terms of norms and ideology, female employment is often described as a constraint of late modernization and/or a heritage of communism. 2) In Hungary, birth rate has been declining for more than 140 years; it was below the reproduction limit in the early 1930s (the population only grew for decades due to the improving death rate); however, in terms of norms and ideologies, it often seems that the number of births started to decline due to liberation of abortion in the Kádár era and 'consumer hedonism'" (Dupcsik 2016: 140).

29  "The task of official family policy and various institutions, organizations, and groups that influence social behaviour is to reinforce healthy elements that are still present in Hungarian people and to support the traditional, conservative ideal of the family based on solidarity and sacrifice as opposed to individualistic concepts of the family" (Pongrácz 1991: 9). Whatever that means. In families where women are active in employment, there are more children born than in those where the wife does not work (Pongrácz [!] – S. Molnár 2011: 99.).

The fear of the disappearance of Hungarians and the irreversible negative consequences of such tendencies are emphasized in another source from the turn of the millennium (i.e. *Körkérdés a népesedésről 1999*).[30] The survey organizer, Attila Melegh, highlights the moralizing tone of the comprehensive research of almost thirty (!) social scientists, which describes the changing social and family values as problematic, and this is demonstrated by the fact that many see "low productivity, the marriage rate, increasing productivity outside marriage as an index of deteriorating moral and social conditions". The idea which gained ground from the 1960s is that population is an indicator of the overall situation of a country, therefore the decline of the total number of populations marks the weakening position of the country (Melegh 1999: 6). Many put their concern in writing about the decreasing proportion of Hungarians and about the increasing number of "foreigners" and "undemanding" Romani population. Those who were asked on the matter saw the solution in increasing social benefits, consistent population and family policy as well as in influencing mindsets (Melegh 1999: 6–7).[31]

Another example of today's natalist family policy is sociologist József Benda's works[32] (Benda 2015, 2016). In his book *A szakadék szélén* [On the Edge of the Abyss], the author has a vision of the disappearance of Hungarian intellectual and material culture[33] as well as of a crisis from the increasing social tension. "After decades of idleness and hopelessness", the author, "at last", got down to elaborating a "successful demographic strategy that displays national results". It was no insignificant ambition, as "it is of *crucial importance and a main priority* that we steer the way of thinking and life situation of this populous generation of 38–40-year-old people in a direction within *one or two years* (!) that they would decide to have at least one more child" (Benda 2015: 8, 157; emphasis in the original). In order to change the current trends, "we must understand how the ability to find a partner and take care of children develops and the ways of influencing it. [...] A more complex, transdisciplinary analytic apparatus is necessary. Only out of these can (intersectional) social plans be born that carry the promise of results" (Benda 2015: 35). Benda is quick to find the two areas responsible for the population decline: the early relationship between mother and child, and the deficiencies of the Hungarian school system.

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30    The results are far from representative; see the remarks made in the text above.
31    On the success of Hungarian family policy measures, see Kapitány–Spéder (2017), Spéder et al. (2017), Makay (2019), Szikra (2018b).
32    My text does not attempt to introduce and analyse specific current family political measures. In addition to the aforementioned, see Szikra (2020).
33    "The Hungarian population is exponentially decreasing; within a human lifetime (1950–2040), it has been moving towards self-elimination. [...] It is time that [...] everybody faced one of the fundamental laws of life. If we are unable to cooperate, give life to and bring up further generations with physical and mental health, all the spiritual and physical values that have been compiled in the past millennia in society throughout constant struggles will diminish within a few decades" (Benda 2015: 10–11).

According to Benda, the ("disappointed" or "yearning") generation born between 1950 and 1967 "may have *suffered psychological damage on a massive scale* due to the interrupted mother–child relationship. The majority shares the experience of 'motherlessness', lack of intimacy and time spent with the family, the absence of the ability to form close relationships, which are important and essential prerequisites of a permanent and happy marriage, offspring, and the absence of which will resonate in our society for a long time" (Benda 2015: 65; emphasis in the original). Women's employment and nursery education interrupted mother–child relationships so aggressively that the trauma was inherited by the next generation: the "disappointed generation" passed on their attachment disorders, so there is a lower rate of married individuals among their children (the generation born in 1968–1989 with an "inability to form attachment"). As a result, there is only fifty percent in the next ("do not trust anyone") generation, and the "generation unable to form attachment" is not even able to reproduce themselves (Benda 2015: 108–122).

The governing idea and sociological work of the author use John Bowlby's attachment theory "widely accepted today" (Benda 2015: 150), and he attempts to introduce it based on the Hungarian translation of Bowlby's *A Secure Base: Clinical Applications of Attachment Theory* published in 2009 (Bowlby 2009). However, Benda displays extreme tendentiousness in a social scientific context; Bowlby's indeed well-known attachment theory is fashioned to his own ideological conviction. In his oeuvre of half a century, Bowlby places great emphasis on the role of the mother, but it is due to her being the primary caregiver. As a result of newer and newer ethological and anthropological research, Bowlby himself as well as his followers working with him and independently of him emphasized the decisive role of the primary caregiver – who is not the mother by blood in each case, or not even a woman. Benda probably read the sections on the role of the mother and father on the first pages of the book, in which Bowlby introduces the results that point to the fact that the role of fathers can be just as crucial (or sometimes even more decisive) than that of mothers (Bowlby 2009: 17–18). Bowlby's attachment theory is "widely accepted", precisely because since the birth of the theory in the 1950s Bowlby has been open to new results and responded to them when developing it, often cooperating with his critics, emphasizing individual differences (the personality of the child) as well as cultural ones that influence the development of attachment.

However, Benda does not stop at mothers. Another contributor to the drop in the willingness to have children is the school's concealed curriculum. The school values and the education system work against having children, as *"teachers do not teach students how to build relationships in the family, their private lives, but how to learn as much as possible and get into higher education"* (Benda 2015: 88–89; emphasis in the original). Benda goes on to dwell on the deficiencies of the school system

and pedagogical attitude and then concludes: "developing the skills of managing relationships, communication, prosocial behaviour, curiosity about the other sex, handling conflicts and others are alien to the school system. *These characteristics would be the most important foundation for finding a partner, living together, and taking care of a child*" (Benda 2015: 93–94; emphasis in the original). It is clear from Benda's texts that exceeding the natalist authors of the 1960s, who were keen on ignoring economic arguments, József Benda as a sociologist explicitly refused the idea that economic situation influences the number of desired and, in fact, born children. He thinks that decisions to have or not to have children are determined by attachment patterns and school socialization. I considered the introduction of his ideas important because it demonstrates well how natalist arguments are complemented by psychological (more correctly: psychologizing) argumentation in the early decades of the 21st century parallel with the psychologization of society – even if the arguments themselves seem absurd.[34]

The strong and constant pro-natalist influence did not leave Hungarian academics unmarked. Attila Melegh demonstrates through the theory of demographic transitions how the pro-natalist attitude of the academic context made it impossible to adapt even the most important Western theory of modernization. The modernization tendencies that theoretically occur with a population decline could only appear as part of a deterioration discourse, as modernization accompanied by a reduction of population is unacceptable for the Hungarian public. Anti-natalist arguments are not published in Hungary to this day. "Similarly to the debates of earlier decades, the pro-natalist (earlier rural populist) point of view is the active one in discourse, in fact, it provides the main topics even today, and any counterarguments try to place them in a different context. An argumentation and frame of reference that is independent of the pro-natalist approach is sporadic" (Melegh 1999: 10). Attila Melegh's conclusion made at the turn of the millennium is still true today even though the past two decades came up with alternative frameworks, for instance, in terms of immigration and shortage of workforce.

## Conclusions

The crisis and fear narrative of the disappearing Hungarian nation does not leave room for criticism (as our very existence is at risk), nor for rational arguments (in relation to immigration or healthcare, for example); we carry its weight as a moral and identity-forming burden. While in other countries the fate of the country

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34    However, let us not forget that his arguments were published in the journal of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, and the fact that his ideas were quite popular not only among laymen but in certain political, decision-making circles.

(nation) is not evidently linked to natalism, in Hungary it is seen as a fundamental law of biopolitics, which results in population issues becoming political questions. It might seem that there is safety in numbers, as the desire for constant multiplication is a primary reaction to the fear of disappearing, but by transforming it into a sense of being threatened, it is deliberately used to build political identity by the architects of the social and political scene in the past century.[35]

In the reconstruction process following the traumatic losses of the Second World War, natalism was often taken for granted as a solution for patriarchal societies embarking on the path to socialism. As fertility declined in the 1960s as a result of (socialist) modernization, policy-makers rethought their population policies, focusing primarily on increasing fertility. At the same time, as can be seen from the examples used for comparison in the Hungarian case study, despite the similarities, socialist countries have followed and continue to follow their own paths in the field of regulation. This was linked to the differences in the sociodemographic development of the socialist states, their domestic political stakes, and the uncertainty in the way the Soviet Union did (not) respond to the demographic challenges of the period. Most socialist countries used so-called positive incentives, mainly fiscal instruments, to increase the birth rate (with questionable success), Bulgaria and Poland complemented these with restrictive measures (tax on childlessness), and Romania turned the population issue into an abortion policy through repressive criminal law instruments – to which the Hungarian public reacted sensitively. At the same time, the discourse of gender equality in socialist societies took a conservative turn, which can be captured by the focus on (and in many cases the reduction of) women's role as mothers in public debates and policy-making. In Hungary, this has been complemented by the rhetoric of fear of national death, which has remained an integral part of the 21st-century rhetorical repertoire of the current ruling party in its fourth term. The decline in the number of Hungarians continues to be framed in politics and in the politically dominated public sphere around the issue of women becoming mothers (more than once), while the "policy problems" of emigration, deteriorating health indicators, and so-called avoidable deaths do not reach the government and public agenda.[36] The exclusivism and imposition of natalism appear as a proven recipe in the toolbox of populism to simplify complex problems.

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35  In 2019, the Hungarian government has announced the 7 points of its Family Protection Action Plan, whose declared aim was to increase the demographic growth of Hungarians by encouraging Hungarian women to have more children (mainly through financial incentives). The language of the measures evokes the rhetoric of war and was accompanied by a strong media campaign ("reproduction instead of immigration") (in brief: Zimányi 2019).

36  The situation of men, the possibilities and impossibilities of becoming a father are not thematized at all, while in Hungary "among men aged 35–44 with only primary-school education, childlessness is exceptionally high: 1 out of every 2 men is childless, whereas among men with higher education the proportion is 25%" (Makay–Spéder 2019: 67). According to the latest data, "at the beginning of 2020, the number of Hungarian citizens living in the countries

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of the European Economic Area and Switzerland exceeded 490,000. (...) The number of people born in Hungary and living abroad (around the world), regardless of when they left the country, was 714,000 in 2020, which is about 7.3% of the total Hungarian-born population" (Gödri–Horváth 2021: 227–228). In relation to avoidable deaths, "the relative position of Hungary is particularly unfavourable for both preventable and amenable mortality: whereas in 2016 the total (standardized) mortality rate was 1.6 times higher in Hungary than in the EU-14 for amenable mortality, the figure was 2.7 times and for preventable mortality 2.2 times higher (…). Thus, mortality is markedly higher for causes that are heavily influenced by the performance of the healthcare system. Compared to the Czech Republic and Poland, our relative position is much worse in terms of avoidable mortality than in terms of total mortality" (Orosz–Kollányi: 2019: 243). EU-14: EU-15 Member States without Luxembourg (see ibid.).

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# Levente Székedi: Limitele Supraviețuirii – sociologia maghiară din Transilvania după 1945 [Limits of Survival – Hungarian Sociology in Transylvania after 1945][1]

*Cluj-Napoca: Institutul pentru Studierea Problemelor Minorității Naționale [Romanian Institute for Research on National Minorities], 2021*

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As the author emphasizes in the introduction, one of the specificities of Eastern and Central European sociology is that, in addition to social cognition, it has typically sought to promote social reform and has expected legitimacy from this dual activity (Larionescu 2007, Mucha 2009). For this reason, it is not worth analysing the history of sociology in Eastern and Central Europe from the point of view of the history of ideas alone because the social – and, more specifically, the political – context (also) set the framework for the cultivation of sociology in the 20th century.

Taking a closer look at the topics analysed in the book, it can be stated that Hungarian sociology in Romania was a bit of a "stepchild" of both major national histories of sociology since in most of the evenings both Romanian (meaning practised in Romania) and Hungarian (meaning practised in Hungary) slip over the sociological work of the Hungarian sociologist in Romania – or authors from other fields. This duality, and at the same time a dilemma, persists to this day because the Hungarian sociologist in Romania (and, of course, not only) also must decide for whom s/he intends his/her results: if it is to the Hungarian public, then these results will probably never be included into the Romanian sociological discourse, and, of course, the same is true the other way around.

Returning to Levente Székedi's book, I think it is important to note that it is based on the author's doctoral dissertation, defended at the Sociology

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Department of the Bucharest Doctoral School, under the supervision of Professor Zoltán Rostás. In practice, the structure of the work discusses the period under analysis through the four hypotheses formulated by the author, encapsulating it in a homogenous discursive field.

The analysed period in Romania does not have a consistent, collectively accepted phasing, but several authors (e.g. Larionescu 2007, Zamfir et al. 2018, Rostás 2012) have divided this era into stages based on some events that can be considered milestones in retrospect and which Székedi synthesises. To make it easier for the reader to adapt these sections to the events in Hungarian sociology, let us look at Szabari's (2020) chronology from the point of view of the history of sociology in parallel.

**Table 1.** *A summary of the stages of sociology in Romania and Hungary after the Second World War*

| Romania (Székedi 2021: 15) | | Hungary (Szabari 2020: 24–31) | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Period** | **Brief description of the era** | **Period** | **Brief description of the era** |
| 1944–1947 | A "grace period" is the continuation of research projects between the two world wars and the initiation of new projects, the aim of which is to acquire applicable knowledge. Rethinking the institutional framework. | 1945–1948 | "Coalition period", where the goal was to introduce the knowledge of sociology from Western Europe and the United States to Hungary and to build the institutional framework. |
| 1948–1958 | The period of banning sociology (sporadic and disguised attempts to make sociology acceptable). | 1949–1960 | The period of the abolition of sociology (disguised attempt to conduct sociological research). |
| 1959–1964 | The slow political rehabilitation of sociology. | 1961–1973 | The gradual re-establishment of the sociological institutional system, reform socialism, and the consolidation of the Kádár era. |
| 1965–1976 | The re-formation of sociology institutions (both research institutes and universities), the (partial) rehabilitation of Dimitrie Gusti (and the Bucharest School of Sociology). | | |

| Romania (Székedi 2021: 15) | | Hungary (Szabari 2020: 24–31) | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Period** | **Brief description of the era** | **Period** | **Brief description of the era** |
| 1977–1989 | The re-marginalization and then the annihilation of sociology. | 1974–1989 | A phase of duality: "professionalization" but also "closure" and "abandonment" of critical sociology characterize this period. |

Given this parallel, the author rightly refers to Bosomitu's observation that, although the countries of Eastern and Central Europe have followed very different developmental paths, the rebirth of sociology in these countries seems to be a common phenomenon (Bosomitu 2012). In fact, this finding highlights not only the fact of parallelism but also the extent of Soviet influence since if we look at the Hungarian and Romanian periods, we can clearly identify the domestic and foreign policy actions by which the Soviet Union influenced the states in its sphere of interest. One need only think of the communist takeover and its domestic effects in Hungary and Romania or the détente announced by Khrushchev or the political effects of the latter, which also had a marked impact on the development of sociology, and these stages are all illustrated in the author's graphic account. However, it can also be seen that this parallel is not complete since in the final phase of the communist period, the two countries followed almost completely opposite paths.

The above phasing also helps to place Székedi's book in time since the author undertakes (even if this is not clear from the subtitle) to analyse only the period of 1944–1971, and for this analysis he uses three methods: the qualitative document analysis, which is complemented by the methods of oral history and microsociology.

To give the reader an idea of the work invested, I will briefly mention the number of articles and their places of publication that formed the basis of the research: *Világosság* [Light] daily newspaper (Cluj, 1944–1945: 56 articles), *Utunk* [Our Path] magazine (Cluj, 1946–1956: 205 articles), *Korunk* [Our Era] magazine (Cluj, 1957–1964: 493 articles), *Művelődési Útmutató* [Cultural Guide] and later *Művelődés* [Culture] magazine (Bucharest, 1953 –1964: 29 articles), *Lupta de clasă* [Class Struggle] (Bucharest, 1948–1960: 90 articles), *Probleme economice* [Economic issues] (Bucharest, 1958: 10 articles), and *Valóság* [Reality] magazine (Budapest, 1945–1948 and 1958–1964: 133 articles).

Most of the research material of the period analysed is taken from one of these journals, and they provide both illustrative material and a unit of analysis to enable the author to test his working hypotheses. These working hypotheses were:

1. The topics analysed by Hungarian sociologists living in Romania are largely identical to the topics analysed by Romanian sociologists living in Romania. This hypothesis was confirmed since the directives and the research topics considered as legitimate coming from Bucharest applied to everyone in Romania.

2. The problem of minority identity, i.e. the problem of nations living together, occupies a specific and privileged place in Romanian Hungarian sociology. This hypothesis has been only partially confirmed since, in the light of communist internationalism, the discussion of the issue of national identity was a rather delicate subject because it was considered by the official directive as a dead issue (the discussion of which could dangerously lead back to the past).

3. The village as a subject of research is (re)focused in several ways: as a "timely" research topic (changes in village society as a result of the change of regime, industrialization, and collectivization, complemented by a significant ethnographic interest), as a way of promoting the results and methods of the Gusti school of sociology in Hungarian, and as a return to the Transylvanian (Hungarian) village work movement and monographic (in the Gusti's sociological sense) research begun between the two world wars. This hypothesis was also confirmed because, in different periods, one or the other topic became legitimate.

4. Hungarian sociology in Romania looks beyond the borders of Romania and has a broader orientation towards international sociological topics and methods than a significant part of Romanian sociologists. This hypothesis has also been confirmed since, for example, the journal *Korunk* has published a few reviews that were written by Hungarian authors. What is more, according to the author, the *Korunk* journal (when it was not following the hardline stance) took the editorial principles of the Budapest journal *Valóság* as a model, adapting it, of course, to the Hungarian reality, possibilities, and expectations in Romania.

The chapters of the book practically analyse the characteristics of the period along the four working hypotheses described above, where, in addition to describing the themes of the publications, the author goes around the boundaries – typically political – that set the framework for the writings that could be published in that period.

The author of the present volume rehabilitates and brings back to the public consciousness some Romanian Hungarian sociologists because we are a bit like the first lecture of the history of sociology when we talk about the precursors of sociology. Well, these forerunners were not sociologists either, but the history of sociology written afterwards elevated them to this "rank". And Levente Székedi's book re-legitimizes some sociologists and brings them back into the collective professional memory.

In conclusion, I think it is important to mention that Székedi's book is also a resource work for Romanian (with Romanian nationality) sociologists or the public interested in sociology in Romania since, following the path started by

Salamon[2] (2014) and Telegdy[3] (2016), the author includes in the appendix of the book several Romanian translations of articles initially published in Hungarian that reflect the characteristics of the periods described in the book both in form and content.

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2    In the appendix to his book, Salamon includes Romanian translations of several correspondences, typically between members of *Erdélyi Fiatalok* [Transylvanian Youth].

3    In the appendix of his book, Telegdy includes Romanian translations of several articles written by József Venczel.

# Influencer Agencies: The Institutionalization of the Digital Attention Economy[1]

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**Abstract.** In Lippmann's media interpretation, attention plays a central role. Already at the beginning of the 20th century, the author realizes that to understand the operational characteristics of mass media, it is essential to learn about the nature of consumer attention. Lippmann was one of the first researchers to discover that without examining attention, we cannot understand the patterns of persuasion or political, social, and cultural influence, and the peculiarities of media economy. Thus, in his work *Public Opinion*, published in 1922, he devoted a distinct chapter, entitled *Time and Attention*, to this topic. Lippmann's legacy lives on with us in this sense as well. With the advent of digital media, new possibilities for exploiting attention appeared, and tracking the characteristics and changes of these is also of great importance in contemporary media research. The following study focuses on the institutionalization of the digital attention economy, and within it deals with influencer agencies as the newest segment of the media and cultural industry.

**Keywords:** digital attention economy, influencer marketing, influencer agencies

## Introduction[2]

Capturing and directing the attention of the masses is one of the most important goals of any political or economic system, and since the advent of mass media, this need has been served by increasingly sophisticated means. Walter Lippmann

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was one of the first mass media researchers to recognize the importance of the problems of attention, and, accordingly, attention was given a central role in the way the author interpreted media. Already at the beginning of the 20th century, Lippmann recognized that understanding the nature of consumer attention was essential to understanding the operation of mass media. The consideration that we are unable to comprehend patterns of persuasion or political, social, and cultural influence or the nature of the media economy without examining media attention is clearly evident in the author's early work already. He also devoted a chapter to this topic in his 1922 work *Public Opinion*, with the title *Time and Attention*, in which he tried to map the attention of the readers of printed media with a particularly forward-looking approach compared to the methodological possibilities of the time (Lippmann 1922).

Building on the foundations laid by Lippmann and others, the study of the nature of attention continued throughout the 20th century according to different paradigms and approaches. Some of the research focused on media itself, while experts sought to answer the question of how and by what means the media can most effectively capture attention and what it does with it. These approaches typically emerged in the so-called "publicity model" (Elliott 1972, Turow 2009, Plantin et al. 2018, McQuail 2020). Another trend of research focused specifically on audience research and sought to describe the group of recipients who, for various reasons, are consumers of particular media content – this concept is described by the authors as the "attentive audience" (Devine 1970, Almond 1960, McQuail 2020.) The relevance of the early trends mentioned here is still undisputed in some cases; however, the interest in attention has recently become one of the most complex areas of media research. This often involves issues related to interpersonal communication, mass communication, and the world of online media at the same time. The studies are essentially about understanding the nature of consumer attention, so the focus is on the economic aspects – this approach is reflected in the concept of "attention economy" (McQuail 2020, Hartmann 2009, Crogan–Kinsley 2012).

Lippmann's legacy is still with us, so the study of the factors influencing the nature of attention is of outstanding importance in contemporary media studies as well. In the following study, I will explore the factors shaping the institutionalization of the digital attention economy and the role of the so-called influencer agencies as the newest segment of media economy and media and culture industry (Gálik–Csordás 2020). Globally, the emergence of a mature influencer market can be dated to the second half of the 2010s, accompanied by several new cultural and economic phenomena. Of these, the present study will focus on the emergence and growth of influencer agencies. This choice is justified by the fact that the exploration of the diverse activities of the agencies, the examination of the operation and role of the enterprises explain the most relevant

economic and cultural factors that characterize the process of institutionalization of the whole industry, which also creates new systems of tools for the exploitation of attention. In the framework of the research, I define the concept of influencer agencies, describe the typical scope of their activities and their role in the market, and examine the cost structure of the agencies.

## Methodology and Informants

In addition to the scholarly and professional sources, the information processed in this paper is derived from expert interviews with CEOs from three of Hungary's most prominent influencer agencies (Stokes 2003).[3] The questions of the approximately one-and-a-half-hour semi-structured, in-depth interviews were organized around the following eight topics: 1) presentation of company history; 2) operating environment: peculiarities of the Hungarian market; 3) regulation, market supervision; 4) types of cooperation frameworks, B2B and B2C; 5) orders, planning, and implementation; 6) cost structure of agencies' operation; 7) practice of online content production; 8) the future of the influencer marketing (Kovács 2007). The expert interviews included in the analysis were conducted with Post for Rent, Special Effects Media, and Star Network in several phases between April 2022 and February 2023.

According to its own presentation, Post for Rent offers advanced influencer marketing solutions based on progressive technology, industry expertise, and the latest data processing solutions. Over the years, the company's team of experts has implemented more than 10,000 campaigns, ranging from small businesses to the biggest brands. The company is committed to providing customized solutions to meet a wide range of stakeholders' business needs. The company also owns a successful network of franchises around the world, offering international expertise in the design and implementation of influencer campaigns.[4]

Since its launch in 2013, Special Effects Media has grown to become one of Hungary's largest YouTube content managers (MCN). The company manages several high-reach platforms, including the biggest Hungarian YouTube channels, such as *Videomania* and *Pamkutya*, which have already exceeded 1 million subscribers, Unfield, which has 636 thousand followers, and *Szerinted?*, having 248 thousand fans, and filmed in the company's own studio.[5] The company's main focus is on larger, integrated campaigns and quality YouTube content, and

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3   Students from the course *The Birth of a Media Institution: Operation of Influencer Agencies in Practice* contributed to the interviews. I have indicated the experts who spoke by naming the companies in the analysis.

4   https://www.postforrent.hu/.

5   Data from 19 February 2023.

they support their partners by optimizing their YouTube presence and offering rights management and video production as part of professional support.[6]

The Star Network agency was launched in 2015 and offers its partners complete influencer marketing solutions, whether they are content producers or brands. Star Network is committed to helping its partners achieve the best possible results through digital campaigns on social media. The company supports its partners in five divisions with senior colleagues in areas such as partner management, sponsorships, event organization, content production, and music rights management. Star Network works with over 400 opinion leaders and content producers on YouTube, Instagram, TikTok, Facebook, and Twitch. The company's influencer portfolio includes the biggest national stars, the most popular influencers, and micro-influencers in specific content segments, providing a truly broad reach for their clients.[7] The main correlations identified by the study are presented below.

## The Place and Role of Influencer Agencies in the Contemporary Media Industry and Media Economy

By the second half of the 2010s, it had become common practice for brands to rely on the involvement of key players in social media campaigns, known as influencers or online opinion leaders (Guld 2021). Due to this marketing strategy, the field of influencers came into being, and influencer agencies that work with, support, and employ influencers have been created. It is worth noting, however, that cooperation with agencies is not inevitable, even in the 2020s. Brands that want to work with influencers may opt for so-called in-house solutions: an organic construction where the brands search for content producers that meet their goals.[8]

However, in many cases, this process is not only time- and energy-intensive but is often also risky, as choosing the right influencer partner is a complex task that requires considerable expertise (Russell 2020). A similar but generally lower-risk solution is to implement campaigns using platform specialists or consultants. In this case, brands typically ask for expert help only in finding the influencer, or perhaps in managing some of the sub-processes, while the process of campaign implementation is basically done in-house. However, I am only considering the third option in the following, i.e. the role and functioning of agencies in cases when a brand outsources the entire campaign to external experts. This includes finding and selecting the right influencer, creating the strategy, and managing the entire campaign.[9]

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6    https://speceffectmedia.hu/#about-us.
7    https://starnetwork.hu/.
8    https://www.curemedia.com/things-to-consider-when-you-do-influencer-marketing-in-house/.
9    https://blog.atisfyreach.com/how-do-influencer-marketing-agencies-work/.

Before I get into details, we first need to clarify what exactly we mean by an influencer agency. By the most common definition, "an influencer marketing agency is an organization that works with brands and influencers to deliver influencer marketing campaigns, primarily through social media".[10] Although this relatively simple definition captures the essence of such organizations, it obscures the diversity of the practical, real-life operation of these agencies. One of the biggest differences between the operations of each agency is the number of platforms it uses. Even nowadays, smaller agencies may specialize in only one or two platforms and provide services exclusively on those. It is common in larger markets that agencies focus on two or three platforms only, and on those platforms they build up a broad, professional portfolio that can satisfy most clients. To run campaigns on up to eight to ten different platforms is relatively rare for an influencer agency, and only the largest companies offer this type of operation (Watkins 2021).

It is remarkable that in Hungary there is also a temporal aspect to the diversification of agency services. The pioneers emerging in the mid-2010s were typically focusing on one platform, i.e. YouTube, and it is best proved by the fact that the term "influencer" was virtually unknown among professionals at the time, but the term "YouTube star" was all the more common.[11] Along with the later rise of Instagram, professional offers specialized in Instagram also appeared in the field of domestic influencer agencies, but at that time the discourse was still not about influencers but about YouTube stars and Instagram celebrities.[12] In the following years, the market environment we have today developed together with the emergence and spread of other platforms. In this environment, the surviving domestic businesses typically build their own portfolios for their clients on four to five platforms. The agencies discussed here typically provide a "full service", which means that they manage the entire campaign from the initial brainstorming through planning and implementation to its follow-up. Finally, it is also worth noting that as influencer marketing becomes more common, there is a growing number of advertising, creative, and social media agencies that now offer influencer marketing services alongside their many other activities (Russell 2020).

The work of agencies is typically organized around five main tasks: 1) building and managing follower bases; 2) organizing community events; 3) connecting brands and influencers; 4) designing creative content; 5) managing online campaigns.[13]

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10    https://influencermarketinghub.com/what-do-influencer-marketing-agencies-do/.
11    https://forbes.hu/uzlet/youtube/.
12    https://www.blikk.hu/galeria/tobbszaz-milliot-kapnak-posztolt-kepeikert-az-instagram-celebek/mtdq849.
13    https://influencermarketinghub.com/what-do-influencer-marketing-agencies-do/.

## The Building and Managing of Follower Bases

Everything in the influencer industry is about followers, whether we focus on quantitative indicators, such as the number of followers, or the quality and composition of the follower base – consequently, the starting point for all activities is building, finding, and managing a follower base. Campaign planning and implementation can only be successful if professionals know exactly who and where to find in the online space and what the consumption preferences of the given target group are, whether it is the content itself or the advertising embedded.

   The agencies perform a range of activities to optimize, grow, and manage follower bases. They perform this partly by targeting the influencers who cooperate with them in partnership – for example, emerging content creators who have not yet maximized the potential of their channel. In such cases, even changing the name of the channel, search engine optimization, or fine-tuning the scheduling of posts can boost traffic. This can lead to a larger or more loyal online audience and community in the long run. The other practice involves agencies taking over the management of a brand's social media channels in the hope that their activities will increase the brand's visibility (Watkins 2021). In this case, it also happens that the operation of the channels is partially or entirely entrusted to influencers, who, if lucky, can channel their loyal followers to the brand's platform. The role of social media analytics tools is crucial in both cases. These are now available on most platforms and can provide an accurate picture of the evolution of the follower base.[14]

## The Importance of Community Events

Organizing community events is also a complex task of the industry, and although this activity is fundamentally part of community building and work related to the follower base, there are several factors that justify handling it as a separate activity. First of all, it is important to note that there are two main types of agency activities in this area: the so-called non-media and the media-type programmes. Non-media community building events are social events that take place in real time and space, such as meet and greet events, stage performances, or public screenings (Guld 2020). The main attraction of such events is that fans can meet the influencers live, so they can get real-life experiences, have a short chat, and take a picture together. These offline community programmes are already emerging as a separate segment in developed Western markets such as the US, but similar events are also organized by domestic agencies once or twice a year.[15] The

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14   https://www.affable.ai/blog/influencer-analytics-tool.
15   A good example of this is the MineCinema programme organized by We Tube Ltd., promoted in 2022 with the following announcement: "MineCinema is a family event where you can meet Hungary's popular YouTubers as part of a unique programme. The films set in the world of

programmes of the other type take place in the online media space with activities that generate social activity such as competitions, quizzes, or sweepstakes. These events, which are repeated several times a year, are organized and run by the agencies themselves, involving popular influencers who are able to mobilize a larger number of followers. The activities are often linked to a brand that sponsors the event, so although these programmes are not completely independent of specific market processes, the emphasis is still on community building.

## Establishing Connections between Brands and Influencers

One of the most typical functions of an agency is connecting brands and influencers. In each case, the aim is to use professional support to help the brand start cooperation with an influencer who is well suited to represent the brand's values in all of its aspects and who can deliver the right quality and scale of reach to the target groups identified (Watkins 2021, Russel 2020). It is easy to see why the vast majority of brands outsource this task to external expertise: finding the right partner is not an easy task in today's abundant channel environment, with thousands of content producers in a single country market. This is where the role of agencies building portfolios, as mentioned earlier, becomes clear. In the majority of the cases, agencies do not approach actors they do not know with a specific assignment but prefer to hire influencers they have worked with before and trust their work and results. Within these portfolios, agencies will ideally also be able to track the workload of each content producer who has been involved and in what collaborations earlier, and whose profile best fits the given task.

Working with an agency can also be beneficial for influencers, as the sales activities are handled by the agency, and it also provides legal support in areas such as advertising regulations, copyright issues, and the contracting process itself. In the past few years, agencies have been approached by aspiring influencers themselves in the hope that these companies can help them grow faster and generate revenue. Market practice shows that the vast majority of applicants are not yet suitable for stable cooperation at this point because either they have a very small number of followers or their channel profile is not yet sufficiently mature or both. These inquiries are typically rejected by agencies, but occasionally truly talented candidates are taken on board and helped to make a real market breakthrough (Borchers–Enke 2022).

Finally, it is also worth noting that domestic market experience in Hungary also shows that influencers are often disloyal to their agencies, often switch partners,

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Minecraft have been written, directed, and dubbed by popular local content creators since 2015. Our events always include Q&As, quizzes, and lots of other fun activities that are guaranteed to be enjoyed by the whole family. Our target audience is mainly primary school children who regularly watch video content on YouTube" – source: https://minecinema.hu/mi-az-a-minecinema/.

or sometimes do business with clients without the agency's knowledge. These problems often cause tensions between the agency and the influencer because the momentary financial gain may conflict with longer-term strategic planning or may even destroy existing partnerships.[16]

## Designing Creative Content

Designing the creative content requires a very close cooperation between the client, the agency, and the influencer. Indeed, one of the characteristics of influencer-supported campaigns is that the solutions that work really well create a delicate balance between the client's expectations and the content that the influencer can credibly deliver and organically integrate into the sharing process (Van Driel–Dumitrica 2021). One of the basic principles of influencer marketing is that no one knows the audience better than the content producer who delivers the message. So, the early recommendations were clearly about having to leave the projects to the influencer, who would then deliver the brand's message in a form that was most likely to resonate with the audience. Unfortunately, this kind of unlimited freedom often led to unpleasant situations, usually in the case of young influencers, even teenagers, who, although they managed to create messages that suited their own style, these messages often proved to be unacceptable to the client (Klausz 2019). According to current practice, the implementation of campaigns is, therefore, a process of close cooperation between the client, the agency, and the content producer, with the exception of influencers with a stable, balanced performance who have already proven their competence and expertise on numerous occasions.

## Managing Online Campaigns

Finally, agencies can also provide considerable assistance in the management of online campaigns, which also implies cooperation between the clients and the actors involved in the implementation. There are two typical solutions in the field of influencer communication, the so-called topic-based and the hashtag-based campaigns.[17] In topic-based campaigns, the influencer produces and shares content on a specific topic that fits well with a brand's needs, in consultation with the client. Current trends show that brands are planning such collaborations for the longer term. Thus, if an agency can help them find the right influencer for their purposes, they will enter into a longer-term partnership with them, whereby the creative content they develop together can be recycled multiple times. A good example of this could be the case of channels promoting fitness

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16    https://www.origo.hu/techbazis/20181107-guld-adam-influencerek-szerepe-a-turizmus-kommunikacioban.html.
17    https://influencermarketinghub.com/hashtag-campaigns/.

and wellness topics, which are particularly characterized by the fact that part of the content is used to regularly promote the products of a particular brand.[18] In comparison, a shorter-term link between client and content producer is now less recommended; however, since in some cases this may still be justified, we can find such solutions, too.

Hashtag campaigns are also structured along similar principles, except that in these collaborations the influencer's follower base plays a much bigger role. In hashtag campaigns, the influencer also encourages followers to share their content with the given hashtag, but an even more effective solution is for followers to create their own creative content with the same tag (Childers et al. 2019).

In addition to the campaign solutions mentioned above, sponsored posts, cross-over campaigns, and live streams are also worth mentioning. Sponsored campaigns are usually short collaborations where the influencer puts the content at the service of a specific product or brand.[19] Furthermore, in their posts, influencers share their own experiences and impressions with their followers, in the hope that this will raise awareness of the partner they are cooperating with or encourage followers to purchase.

Cross-over campaigns are characterized by the fact that the promotion takes place on multiple platforms at the same time, which clearly implies that the best results are achieved with influencers practising multi-platform content production (Russell 2020). The strategy is that the influencer produces content for several platforms at the same time, which are similar in theme and style, but each one is tailored to the expectations of the given platform.[20] Thus, for the same campaign and creative content, you can produce content including only photographs for Instagram, longer videos for YouTube, short video material for TikTok, and live streaming for Twitch (Permana et al. 2021). In this case, the role of agencies is primarily to oversee and optimize the process of content production and deliver it to the different platforms.

Live streaming has been growing in popularity since 2018, and since then we have seen the rise of several platforms that support this option in particular. In many ways, live streaming evokes the world of traditional linear media, with the magic of the moment and community experience at the same time, giving these events their uniqueness and appeal. On online platforms, this is further enhanced by the possibility of interactivity, so that through mediation and influencer engagement, brands have the opportunity to create a more realistic and authentic connection with their viewers and prospective customers.[21]

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18    See the channel of Valentin Torma:
      https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCEoeJZ2eYj3lNpYd5XEH1Xw.

19    https://aspire.io/blog/sponsored-posts/.

20    https://purpleriot.co.uk/marketing-trends-2022/.

21    https://blog.atisfyreach.com/how-do-influencer-marketing-agencies-work/.

# The Process of Implementation

The five areas of activity mentioned above can, in practice, be broken down into additional tasks, and clients choose to work with influencer agencies precisely because they have much more professional experience in this specific segment of marketing. After the inquiry and ordering of the service, the first step is the precise definition of the target group, which includes the socio-demographic and socio-economic characterization of potential consumers (Campbell–Farrell 2020). The following step is to select the influencers that match the target group's content consumption preferences, which, in the first instance, means targeting those content producers relevant to the project with whom the agencies have an established relationship or who have already proven their capabilities in previous campaigns. A further prerequisite for the selection is that the influencer has spare capacity and, ideally, can also identify with the brand and the task. Another important factor in influencer selection is the social platforms on which the content producer is active.

Although most successful influencers today are pursuing a multi-platform content production strategy, typically posting content on three or four different platforms in parallel, we see significant differences in terms of who can be reached with what kinds of content on these platforms.[22] The agencies have detailed information about which platforms their partners are active on and whom they reach there, so they can determine exactly whether a specific campaign should be targeted through YouTube, Instagram, LinkedIn, or TikTok, for example.

As mentioned earlier, agencies can also play their part in creating the appropriate content to ensure that the content is in line with the client's objectives. Equally important is the precise timing of the campaign, so the schedule for the placement of posts and the length of the campaign are also part of the strategic planning. This is also determined in close cooperation with the client. Finally, agencies can also help with the follow-up process, if required, by checking the performance of campaign materials from the moment the content is delivered, and even before, ensuring that messages comply with all regulatory requirements.[23]

In terms of professional recommendations, there is a wide range of material available on the web to help clients find the guidance they need when they want to implement a campaign in partnership with an influencer agency.[24] These materials include step-by-step influencer toolkits developed with the help of leading experts in the field. A text published in 2021 and featuring Chris Wilson, founder of the UK influencer agency PMYB, tries to help future clients find

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22   https://influencermarketing.ai/cross-platform-or-single-platform-influencer-marketing-which-is-better/.

23   https://influencermarketinghub.com/what-do-influencer-marketing-agencies-do/.

24   https://www.viralnation.com/blog/what-does-an-influencer-marketing-agency-do/.

their way with the following suggestions.[25] Wilson advises clients to investigate how long the agency has been running influencer marketing campaigns. Also, whether case studies are available that showcase the agency's previous work, but recommendations from previous clients can also help in the selection process.

Before starting a collaboration, it is important to know how many influencers belong to the agency's portfolio, on which channels, and what type of content they produce. This is particularly important today because some agencies, for example, focus specifically on reaching young people, so these so-called "youth marketing" agencies can effectively target the under-20s.[26] It is also worth considering whether the chosen agency works only with its own influencer partners or whether they select from a larger pool of potential content producers, similar to the influencer platform. Once the options for choosing an influencer have been clarified, that is the stage, according to Wilson, when we can ask for suggestions on which channels may be worth using, and we should also request information on what services the agency will offer during the campaign.

It is also important to clarify who owns the rights to the content shared in the campaign, or whether we can reuse the content outside the campaign. In case influencer-supported communication is only one element of a larger campaign in the marketing mix, it is important to know whether the agency is capable of managing the other solutions or whether it should be outsourced to another agency. From the client's point of view, it is important to define the benchmarks that will be the indicators of the campaign's success before the joint work begins, and you can even ask for a guarantee that these will be met. Once the above issues have been clarified and agreed upon, the final step is to elaborate and analyse the campaign budget, and then the order can be placed.[27]

Finally, in addition to the work of influencer agencies, we should also mention the so-called influencer platforms.[28] These are online service platforms that can provide considerable support to clients in running successful campaigns – for example, through digital tools that support the client's work through a variety of metrics. The most commonly requested help from influencer platforms is still to find the right content producer; however, in recent years, other services have been added to these businesses. Here we can mention specific analytical tools related to influencer marketing or influencer sales house services, which are specifically dedicated to connecting the customer with the content producer.[29] However, this solution assumes that the client has the professional skills needed for the next stage of the campaign elaboration process, i.e. they can do the work in-house

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25    https://influencermarketinghub.com/what-do-influencer-marketing-agencies-do/.
26    https://www.campuscommandos.com/what-is-youth-marketing/.
27    https://influencermarketinghub.com/what-do-influencer-marketing-agencies-do/.
28    https://www.simplilearn.com/top-influencer-marketing-platforms-article.
29    In Hungary, similar support is provided by the website called *Influencer Search*: https://www. influencerkereso.hu/tudastar/influencer-marketing.

after finding the right influencer. In comparison, agencies provide a much more comprehensive service and offer ready-made products to clients who do not have the tools essential to run an influencer campaign in-house.

## Features and Players of the Hungarian Market

It has already been mentioned above that the influencer industry has been evolving, growing, and becoming institutionalized in Hungary as well. The time of the industry's emergence in Hungary is 2015, and the Media Hungary 2015 conference held in Siófok in May 2015 is considered a milestone in professional circles. For the first time, the two-day forum for market operators included a separate session on the market and economic role of Internet celebrities, where stakeholders only talked about the so-called "YouTube stars". In just over a year following the event, a number of digital agencies have set up separate divisions to exploit this emerging segment, and independent companies have also started to specialize in this business.

Thus, by mid-2017, the profiles of the leading agencies had already emerged, but there is significant diversity in the way these organizations operate, even though all of the companies mentioned here are involved in influencer-related activities. However, a characteristic of the mature influencer market is that specialization has also started in Hungary, i.e. some of the operators are only involved in a sub-task or in exploiting a specific market segment. A non-exhaustive example is an agency called Befluence, whose fundamental activity, among many others, is providing clients with services that measure influencer activity. B2Binfluencer. hu provides services in the fields of HR, marketing, finance, and technology through expert influencers who can effectively contribute to reaching professional groups. Accordingly, the company uses specific communication channels such as LinkedIn, professional blogs, market conferences, and company events. There are also platform-specific agencies appearing in the supply, such as Instafame, which offers solutions for Facebook and YouTube, but the main profile is for campaigns designed for Instagram.

We can conclude this list with the large agencies that offer full service, i.e. they run campaigns on all major social platforms and combine this with extensive sponsorship activity. The most successful agencies include Star Network, Special Effects Media, and Post for Rent.

## Discussion and Conclusions

In the 2020s, the lack of attention became one of the hot topics in the communication industries, so reading Lippmann, we might even be surprised to learn that the question preoccupied the author as early as the beginning of the 20th century. Although we were still decades away from the era of channel abundance when Lippmann's book was published, the author recognized that the average consumer's attention is a finite resource, so it can only absorb a limited amount of information. Lippmann formulated his findings about attention in the context of the printed press, but analysis systems developed by the author and the basic principles he laid down are still valid. Lippmann discovered a close relationship between the factors that influence attention to the media such as the time spent on media consumption, the number of products consumed, the content and scope of the products, as well as the socio-demographic and socioeconomic status of consumers, taking gender differences into account as well. According to Lippmann's also significant, forward-looking observation, the attention of the audience is the most receptive to visual stimuli, and among them, moving images are the most effective. He explained this by the fact that moving images create an opportunity to identify with the characters, which creates tension, and this effectively fixes the viewers' eyes on the screen (Lippmann 1922). The solution is even more effective if the viewer can identify with the character, resembles him/her or wants to become like him/her – just as it can be observed today in the case of the most successful influencers.

Lippmann was not yet familiar with the concept of the attention economy, but already in 1922, he clearly saw that the importance of attention in the market is a highly significant factor. He was aware of the market practice in which newspaper publishers use advertisements to sell the attention of their readers, as well as the fact that advertisements not only serve specific business purposes but also fulfil a PR function on the advertisers' side (Lippmann 1922). Lippmann's findings are still valid more than a hundred years later. Although the media environment has undergone fundamental changes since 1922, and more and more effective tools have appeared on the market in the competition for attention, the rules and principles discussed above are still valid today. At the same time, studying the latest solutions is still essential to understand how the operation of the media affects the processes of contemporary society, culture, or economy.

In this paper, I have provided an overview of one of the most typical phenomena of the mature influencer market, namely the emergence, functioning, and market role of influencer agencies as the latest tool for grabbing and managing attention. The emergence and rise of influencer agencies clearly mark the process of institutionalization of this solution, coinciding with the way in which the initial attempts at influencer communication between 2015 and 2017 shifted towards

professionalization after 2018. In the period since then, we have witnessed a settling of the role of businesses in the market and, as the above reasoning shows, we are already witnessing the specialization of influencer agencies in many areas. Another way of looking at this phenomenon is to describe it as the institutionalization of the digital attention economy, in which sense influencer agencies appear as one of the newest segments of the media and culture industry. From the foregoing, we can also infer the efforts that have been made in recent years to exploit consumer attention focused on online content producers more and more effectively through the systems that have been developed. It is also clear from the narratives that the advanced technological solutions that characterize the digital environment, in particular analytical systems, allow for more efficient planning and execution in this environment than ever before, leading to increasingly efficient solutions for trade with attention, also in economic terms.

Naturally, this communication solution has not escaped the ups and downs of recent years. After initial uncertainties, there was a huge boom roughly between 2016 and 2017, when almost every brand and business was confident that this solution would be the magic bullet that would deliver the most effective reach to consumers. During this period, most businesses experimented with using influencers, but it soon became clear that without good judgement and accurate planning, this method would not be successful either. This somewhat overheated period was inevitably followed by a period of sobering up, which led to a definite market recovery, which in turn led to a drop in influencer communications spending by brands. I think that the market is now much more sensible about the potential of the solution, so the cost of the advertising pie that is being spent on this method is much better spent simply because brands and companies have much more business experience in this area.

With technical and technological changes bringing new opportunities to the world of online communication on an almost daily basis, we can be sure that they will continue to affect the way influencer agencies operate in the near future. While it is difficult to predict exact trends in a rapidly changing environment, there are already signs in early 2023 that suggest some important market trends. One of the most interesting of these developments is the emergence of digitally created, or CGI (computer-generated images), influencers and the parallel emergence of agencies that work specifically with influencers who are not real people.[30] Characters created using artificial intelligence and deep learning technology are now so lifelike that the average user cannot tell at first glance whether they are browsing a real or fictitious person's online profile. Another interesting area could be the fashion industry, where companies have been

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30   https://theconversation.com/cgi-influencers-when-the-people-we-follow-on-social-media-arent-human-165767.

hiring influencers in large numbers and successfully since the beginning.[31] In this segment, we are witnessing how some agencies are dealing with influencers active only in the world of fashion, who are also creating new rules of the game in the fashion industry by being able to displace professional models as ordinary people. Change is fast and significant. However, we can be sure of one thing: the stakes in the battle for attention are getting higher, and the tools are getting even more sophisticated.

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