

**THE VLACHS AND THE SERBIAN PRIMARY SCHOOL (1878-1914):
AN EXAMPLE OF SERBIAN NATION-BUILDING**

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

<u>LIST OF FIGURES</u>	4
<u>LIST OF TABLES</u>	5
<u>ABSTRACT</u>	6
<u>DECLARATION</u>	7
<u>COPYRIGHT STATEMENT</u>	7
<u>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</u>	8
<u>CHAPTER 1: Introduction</u>	9
1.1. Research Aims and Objectives.....	10
1.2. Methodology.....	11
1.2.1. Nation/Nationalism/National Identity.....	12
1.2.2. Ethnicity/Ethnic Group/Ethno-Cultural Group/Ethnic Minority.....	13
1.3. Why the Vlachs?.....	17
1.3.1. Defining the Vlachs.....	17
1.3.2. The Vlachs and the Serbian Nation and State.....	20
1.4. The Vlachs as a Historiographical Subject.....	23
1.5. Primary School and Nation-Building – Trends in Existing Literature.....	29
1.6. Serbian Primary Education and Nation-Building – Literature Review.....	32
1.7. Sources.....	35
1.8. The Structure of the Thesis.....	36
<u>CHAPTER 2: Serbia (1878-1914): Ideologies, Actors and Institutions</u>	41
2.1. Introduction.....	41
2.2. Serbia between 1878 and 1914 – A Historical Sketch.....	42
2.3. Serbian Nationalism.....	44
2.4. The Serbian Intelligentsia.....	48
2.5. Ideologies.....	51
2.6. 'People's Teacher' or 'National Worker'.....	54
2.7. Cultural Institutions.....	57
2.7.1. The Institution of the Primary School.....	59
2.7.1.1. The Transformation of the Serbian Primary School in the Period before 1878.....	62
2.7.1.2. Further Modernisation and Nationalisation, 1878-1914.....	63
2.7.1.3. National(-list) Aspects of the School Curricula.....	67
2.8. Conclusion.....	72
<u>CHAPTER 3: The Vlachs through Serbian Eyes</u>	75
3.1. Introduction.....	75
3.2. 'Territorialisation of Memory'.....	78
3.3. The Vlach 'Threat'.....	82
3.4. Vlach 'Backwardness'.....	89
3.5. Gendered Aspects of Serbian Discourses about Vlachs.....	93
3.6. Conclusion.....	101

<u>CHAPTER 4: Serbian Primary School in the Vlach Environment – Between Education and Serbisation.....</u>	103
4.1. Introduction.....	103
4.2. The Basic Precepts of the Education of the Vlachs.....	104
4.3. The Legislative Basis of the Assimilationist Educational Policies for the Vlachs.....	107
4.4. Preparatory Grade.....	116
4.5. Girls' Schools.....	122
4.6. Extended Schools.....	129
4.7. Conclusion.....	134
<u>CHAPTER 5: Primary School, Nationalising Strategies and the Vlach Local Communities.....</u>	136
5.1. Introduction.....	136
5.2. Teachers and Local Associations.....	137
5.2.1. Agricultural Associations.....	138
5.2.2. School Rifle Associations.....	142
5.3. State and Religious Celebrations.....	146
5.4. Serbisation of Vlach Traditional Dress.....	154
5.5. Conclusion.....	162
<u>CHAPTER 6: The Vlachs' Responses to Serbian Education Policies.....</u>	165
6.1. Introduction.....	165
6.2. Everyday Resistance Strategies.....	169
6.2.1. Local Authorities as Resistance Actors.....	171
6.2.2. Peasants as Actors.....	174
6.2.3. Ethnicity as the Factor of Resistance.....	177
6.3. Public Resistance.....	182
6.3.1. Romania: A Failed 'External National Homeland' of the Vlachs.....	183
6.3.2. Examples of Public Resistance Acts.....	186
6.4. Cultural Resistance.....	193
6.5. Conclusion.....	196
<u>CONCLUSION.....</u>	198
<u>BIBLIOGRAPHY.....</u>	206
Primary Sources:.....	206
i. Archive Sources:.....	206
ii. Periodicals:.....	206
iii. Articles and Books:.....	207
Secondary Sources:.....	209

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LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Areas of the Kingdom of Serbia inhabited by the Vlachs, 1885.....	39
Figure 2: Areas of the Kingdom of Serbia inhabited by the Vlachs, 1902.....	40
Figure 3: Šapsa headwear.....	161
Figure 4: Vlach man and woman from Homolje mountains.....	161

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Percentage of the Vlach Population per Region in 1884.....	19
Table 2: Number of Girls' Schools per Region (1899/1900).....	127
Table 3: Number of Girls' Schools in Relation to the Vlach Population per Region (1899/1900).....	129

ABSTRACT

This dissertation explores the process of Serbian nation-building, focusing specifically on the interaction between the Vlach ethno-cultural communities and the nationalising primary education imposed on them by Serbian authorities in the period 1878-1914. By doing so, the thesis aims to contribute to the reversal of the trend in the scholarship on the use of education in the nation-building of nineteenth-century European nations, which has so far predominantly adopted a 'top-down' perspective. Namely, instead of focusing on the main educational policies as conceived by the Serbian authorities for the ethnic Serbian population or at the national level, this thesis places the Vlach communities at the centre of the analysis by investigating how their very existence and their members' actions influenced the Serbian authorities' conception of the educational policies, on the one hand, and the course of the Serbian nation-building process, on the other.

The work has been conceived as an interdisciplinary study combining a range of methodologies and approaches. In exploring the character and the ideological underpinnings of the nationalising character of the Serbian educational policies devised for the Vlachs, the study has relied on a combination of modernist and postmodernist definitions of nationalism and the post-colonial concept of the 'Other'. Namely, by examining the Serbian authorities' idea of their own nation, on the one hand, and their perception of the Vlach communities in relation to the Serbian nationalist project, on the other, the thesis explains, firstly, why the education of the Vlachs was conceived primarily as an assimilationist project and, secondly, what these education policies consisted of.

The 'bottom-up' perspective adopted in this study has allowed the thesis to account for the Vlachs' reactions to primary schooling and its nationalising task by looking primarily at their resistance strategies. Conclusions are then drawn about the effects of the Vlach resistance acts on the Serbian nation-building project, the development of the Serbian educational system, and the extent to which these actions were the result of some form of Vlach identity awareness. By approaching the Vlachs as actors within the Serbian nation-building process, the study subscribes to the Subaltern Studies' methodology which assigns to the subaltern groups the quality of conscious agency.

DECLARATION

No portion of the work referred to in the thesis has been submitted in support of an application for another degree or qualification of this or any other university or other institute of learning.

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CHAPTER 1: Introduction

Compulsory education is still understood to be one of the main means of achieving and maintaining national cohesion and as such it is under the strict control and scrutiny of state authorities worldwide. Indicative of this tendency is the fact that, when it comes to compulsory levels of educational systems, there is no tendency towards either a relaxation of the governments' control or an international convergence and homogenisation of their organisation and curricula, as is true in the sphere of higher education.¹ The vigilant control of state authorities over primary and secondary education is justified by the idea that providing all members of the national polity with an 'appropriate' and standardised education in their early years is a necessary step for securing national cohesion. Although extremely common and an integral part of educational policies worldwide, the perception that the very existence of national identity and unity depends on the quality of education imparted to citizens is rather recent. In fact, it dates to the nineteenth century and it is closely related to the formation of modern nation-states and national identities – a process which started in Western Europe and in which education, especially at its primary level, was to play a major role.

Since its very appearance in the nineteenth century, the principle of national cohesion or national unity has been at odds with the ethno-cultural variety of the population of the newly-established nation-states. In fact, there was and still is a contradiction between the idealised vision of the nation-state whose population shares one culture and language, on the one hand, and its reality which sees the state inhabited by groups with distinct cultural patterns and vernaculars, on the other. This contradiction led state authorities to perceive the cultural heterogeneity of the state and in particular the presence of ethnic minorities as complicating and problematising the very task of achieving national cohesion – a vision that subsequently influenced the very development of the educational system. In fact, the latter has been conceived in the past as it is today as a key tool with which to solve what is regarded as the problem of ethno-cultural diversity that potentially threatens national unity. The specific historical

1 Andy Green, *Education and State Formation: Europe, East Asia and the USA*, 2nd edn (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2013), p. 3.

case explored by this thesis, therefore, reflects a wider issue of continuing topicality and urgency, not only for the ethnically fragmented Balkan area, but for Europe as a whole and beyond.

1.1. Research Aims and Objectives

The main aim of this dissertation is to explore the dynamics of a specific aspect of the Serbian nation-building process in the period 1878-1914, namely the way this process developed in a sphere of interaction between the primary school institution and the Vlach ethnic minority. This research aim will be achieved by addressing the following series of questions:

- (I) Why were the assimilation policies through education deployed towards the Vlachs, and how were these policies justified by the contemporary Serbian political and educational elites?
- (II) What were the main characteristics of the educational policies devised to achieve the assimilation of the Vlachs? What characterised the curricula and the school system organisation in the schools attended by the Vlach children, and how did these differ from the schools in Serbian localities?
- (III) What extra-scholastic nationalising strategies were used? What was their effect on the broader Vlach population?
- (IV) What were the reactions of the Vlach ethnic group to the promotion of primary education in the Serbian language and its nationalising goals? Did they resist them, and if yes, what did this resistance consist of? Did they advance demands for schooling in the Vlach (Romanian) language – an unambiguous sign of the development of a separate Vlach national identity/nationalism? If yes, what happened with these initiatives? What was the attitude of the neighbouring Romanian authorities towards the Vlachs? Did they support the Vlachs in their demand for cultural rights? If yes, how? If not, why?

The period considered in this study begins and ends with the dates of two political events: the attainment of the independence of the Serbian state at the Congress

of Berlin (1878) and the outbreak of WW1. Although the two events had an enormous importance for the general development of Serbia's internal and external politics, this chronological choice has been taken on the basis of the impact these events had on Serbian nationalist ideology and the nation-building process. In fact, the first event, the attainment of independence in 1878, gave the Serbian authorities full liberty to pursue their nationalist agenda both internally, through state and nation-building, and externally, thorough nationalist propaganda and wars aimed at creating a Greater Serbia. On the other hand, the second event, the outbreak of WW1, signified the abandonment, or rather a transformation, of this nationalist agenda. By embracing, in the course of WW1, the idea of a Yugoslav unification, the Serbian political elites opted for a multinational state, in which Serbian nationalism had to come to terms with at least two other competing nationalist ideologies: that of the Slovenians, and especially that of the Croats.²

The 1878-1914 period represented a period of ideal conditions for the development and application of the tenets of Serbian nationalist ideology. During this time Serbia was an independent state, ethnically predominantly Serbian, and governed by a political and cultural elite of Serbian ethnic background. Therefore, primary education policies and their use in the nation-building process in this period were purely 'Serbian' in their character and as yet untouched by the inter-ethnic dynamics which would emerge in the post-war Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes. Given these political conditions, primary schooling policies from the period 1878-1914 can be seen as being influenced by Serbian nationalism at its height.

1.2. Methodology

The multifaceted perspective adopted in this thesis towards the topic of Serbian nation-building at the turn of the twentieth century required a multi-disciplinary approach. The study has, therefore, relied on and combined theories and methods from various disciplines such as History, Social Sciences, Gender Studies, Post-colonial and Subaltern Studies. While the individual concepts and theories used in this thesis will be

2 Ivo J. Lederer, 'Nationalism and the Yugoslavs', in *Nationalism in Eastern Europe*, ed. by Peter F. Sugar and Ivo J. Lederer (London: University of Washington Press, 1969), pp. 396–438.

introduced and explained in detail in the appropriate chapters and sections where they are applied, the following section will give a brief definition of the key terminology used in this research.

1.2.1. Nation/Nationalism/National Identity

Broadly speaking, the study subscribes to the modernist and post-modernist paradigms of nationalism. In disagreement with the so-called primordialist position, according to which nations are historical realities and in certain cases even natural social forms, modernists approach the understanding of nation, as well as the understanding of notions related to or derived from it such as 'national identity' and 'national consciousness', as modern, constructed and reconstructed phenomena. They are, in fact, defined as a product of the specific cultural, social and political circumstances of the late-eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and nurtured by deliberate actions of specific social groups. In this dissertation the post-modernist approach to nation, nationalism and the related terminology are mainly reflected in the acknowledgement and analysis of the discursive side of these concepts, in the choice of endorsing the 'minority perspective' of Serbian nation-building, and in drawing inspiration from Rogers Brubaker's paradigm of nationalism in the overall structuring of the thesis.

Developed with a focus on three 'political fields' - *national minority*, *nationalising state* (which is the minority's host state), and the *external national homeland* (a state whose authorities perceive the *nationalising state*'s minority as their kin) - Brubaker's definition of nationalism distinguishes between three types of nationalism.

The first type of nationalism, *nationalising nationalism*, is generated by the nationalising state and consists of 'claims made in a name of a "core nation" or nationality, defined in ethno-cultural terms and sharply distinguished from a citizenry as a whole'. Although dominant within the state, the 'core nation' perceives its position as weak and uses this alleged weakness to justify the promotion of policies favourable to its interests.

Opposed to *nationalising nationalism* is the *transborder nationalism* of the external national homeland. The antagonism between these two forms of nationalism is primarily due to the fact that the latter claims the right to monitor and intervene in favour of what it perceives as ethno-national kin, i.e. the minority dwelling in the nationalising state. According to Brubaker's model, monitoring by and interventionism of the external national homeland is particularly intense when an external national homeland perceives the minority to be actively threatened by the nationalising policies of the nationalising state. These policies are interpreted by the authorities of the external national homeland as a strategy aiming at de-nationalising the minority in order to weaken its identity and/or assimilate it into the body of the core nation.

The national minority, an object of the competing interests of these two opposing forms of nationalism, has (or may have) its own *minority nationalism*. Although minority nationalism and *homeland nationalism* are both opposed to the *nationalising nationalism*, this does not imply that they are necessarily 'harmoniously aligned'.³

Brubaker's paradigm of nationalism has been broadly applied in this dissertation. The Serbian state is understood as a nationalising state whose authorities deployed a set of nationalising educational policies aimed at assimilating the Vlachs. Second, the study examines whether and to what extent the Romanian state acted as an external national homeland for the Vlachs, and, finally, the minority nationalism or identity dynamics of the Vlachs are investigated in relation to both the nationalising educational policies of the Serbian state and the position of the Romanian state authorities.

1.2.2. Ethnicity/Ethnic Group/Ethno-Cultural Group/Ethnic Minority

Closely related to the concepts of nation and nationalism are those of ethnicity, ethnic group and similar expressions, such as ethno-cultural group or ethnic minority. The affinity of the terms nation and ethnic group is reflected in the theoretical solutions suggested by some scholars. For instance, Anthony D. Smith argues that modern nations are closely related to pre-modern ethnic groups. The latter, which Smith names *ethnie*, are perceived as forms of human organisation that preceded the formation of the nations

³ Rogers Brubaker, *Nationalism Reframed: Nationhood and the National Question in the New Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 5–6, 57–67.

and offered the symbolic and cultural foundation on which modern national identity was later built.⁴ While there are many disagreements with Smith's interpretation of the link between ethnic groups and nations, the idea that ethnicity influenced the development of nationalism, especially in its 'Eastern' version, is widely accepted among scholars (see chapter 2).

The complex relation and often blurred boundaries between the concepts of nation and ethnic group are also manifested in some authors' tendency to almost equate the two. Floya Anthias and Nira Yuval-Davis suggest that the only acceptable differences between ethnic group and nation are, on the one hand, the scale, as in most cases the population of ethnic groups is relatively smaller than the population of the nation, and, on the other hand, the scope of their political aims. Namely, the authors argue that an ethnic group's ideology does not imply the political aim of achieving statehood, whereas the establishment of the nation-state constitutes one of the main aspirations of nationalist ideologies, and therefore of nations.⁵

As in the case of the concept of nation, understandings and definitions of the notion of the ethnic group vary according to each scholar's methodological and disciplinary background. Some scholars approach ethnic groups from a 'primordialist' position, seeing and studying them primarily as a separate and specific cultural units. Other authors shift their attention from analysing the cultural content/nature of the ethnic group to categories such as social interaction, processes and relations that substantiate that nature and maintain it as such. Fredrick Barth, for instance, suggests focusing on the process of the group members' self-identification which allows for the maintenance of the ethnic boundaries of the group. According to Barth, instead of approaching and studying the group's culture as an 'objective' (ascribed by outsiders) marker of the given groups' ethnicity, attention should be paid to which cultural elements the members of the group conserve and consider to be relevant for their self-identification in the process of their interaction with other groups, and why they do this.⁶

4 More about ethno-symbolism in: Anthony D. Smith, *Ethno-Symbolism and Nationalism: A Cultural Approach* (London: Routledge, 2009); Anthony D. Smith, *The Ethnic Origins of Nations* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1986).

5 Floya Anthias and Nira Yuval-Davis, *Racialized Boundaries Race, Nation, Gender, Colour and Class and the Anti-Racist Struggle* (London: Routledge, 1993), p. 18.

6 Fredrik Barth, *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries: The Social Organization of Culture Difference* (Oslo: Universitets Forlaget; London: Allen & Unwin, 1969), pp. 9–16.

Even more 'extreme' is Brubaker's approach. He challenges the very scholarly tendency to unproblematically use the concept of 'group' when referring to the organisation of society. 'Groupism', or the phenomenon which, according to Brubaker, implies that society consists of defined and delimited groups which act as social agents, but which – in Brubaker's view – is actually nothing but the reifying and essentialising of these entities. In order to avoid this 'groupism' trap, Brubaker suggests approaching ethnicity, and categories such as race and nation, not as entities, but 'in relational, processual, dynamic, eventful and disaggregated terms', i.e. as 'practical categories, situated actions, cultural idioms, cognitive schemas, discursive frames, organisational routines, institutional forms, political projects, and contingent events'.⁷

Brubaker's approach is particularly suitable for exploring the identity dynamics of ethnic minorities from a historical perspective. It allows the study of a minority community's potential identity dynamics through the analysis of social, political and cultural phenomena, events or dynamics registered as having occurred within the communities, without having to rely on 'objective' definitions and descriptions of these communities authored by individuals who, in most cases, were members of the dominant group, or even definitions and descriptions elaborated *a posteriori* in scholarship.

As this research follows Brubaker's conceptualisations it will not be assumed that nineteenth-century Vlachs from north-eastern Serbia were conscious of their Vlach identity and the ethnic boundaries of their group in the same way they were defined and described by contemporary Serbian authors. On the contrary, observations about identity dynamics within the Vlach communities will be based on the analysis of recorded events and phenomena that might have influenced the Vlachs' self-identification. However, this approach does not mean that the 'objective' definitions and perception of the Vlachs as made by contemporary Serbian authors can altogether be ignored. The fact that the latter perceived Vlachs as an organic ethnic group meant that they also treated them as such – an attitude which resulted in concrete political actions with concrete outcomes and consequences. For instance, specific assimilationist educational policies were devised on the basis of perception of the Vlachs as a group, and they have to be analysed as such.

7 Rogers Brubaker, *Ethnicity without Groups* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2004), pp. 9–11.

Therefore, in order to be able to analyse the rationale behind the educational policies deployed by the Serbian authorities, certain aspects of the Serbian 'objective' perception of the Vlachs must be retained. For instance, contrary to Brubaker's suggestion, the use of the term 'group' will not be abandoned altogether, especially when analysing top-down policies or Serbian discourses about the Vlachs. For the nineteenth-century Serbian social actors, the Vlachs were a tangible group reality. However, as will be evident from the analysis itself, when referring to the Vlach communities as a single group, no Vlach cultural homogeneity, shared identity or communal action is taken for granted or implied.

Some concepts from Subaltern Studies have also been used in studying Serbia's nineteenth-century Vlachs: *subalternity* and *agency*. Dipesh Chakrabarty's definition of *sublaternity* as 'the composite culture of resistance to and acceptance of domination and hierarchy' is applied when examining the Vlach community members' reaction to the nationalising educational policies imposed on them by the Serbian political and cultural elites.⁸ In fact, notwithstanding their ethno-cultural and linguistic affiliation, which was different from and marginalised by the dominant Serbian one, and regardless of their predominant peasant background and general exclusion from key power positions, the Vlachs are in this study regarded as bearers of a conscious *agency*. Namely, not as passive subjects on whom the nationalising educational policies were simply projected, or individuals opposing them out of ignorance of the 'beneficial' influence the schooling would have had on their lives, as maintained by contemporary Serbian elites and even modern scholars; but as capable of negotiating and resisting these policies because of consciously decided priorities reflecting the cultural, social and economical needs of the Vlach communities. By doing so, the Vlachs were not only able to affect the desired course and effects of primary education, as conceived by Serbian authorities, but, given the nationalising task the education was performing, their actions also affected the very process of Serbian nation-building.

8 Dipesh Chakrabarty, 'Invitation to a Dialogue', in *Subaltern Studies IV* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1985), pp. 364–76 (p. 376).

1.3. Why the Vlachs?

1.3.1. Defining the Vlachs

The nineteenth- and early-twentieth century Vlachs this thesis is concerned with were a cluster of Romance speaking populations inhabiting the north-eastern areas of the Serbian state. The term Vlachs, in Serbian *Vlasi*, was not only the traditional term used by nineteenth-century Serbs to designate this specific population, but it was also used to designate the inhabitants of the principalities of Wallachia and Moldavia and later those of the Romanian state.⁹ The use of the same name for both populations, the Vlachs from north-eastern Serbia and those from Romania, indicates that Serbian authors and authorities of the period perceived these two communities as part of the same nation (*narod*). This perception is also confirmed by the Serbian authors' use of the term 'Romanians' which, adopted by the Romanian intellectual *elites* as the official name of their newly-established nation, entered the Serbian vocabulary only from 1878 onwards. In fact, after the Congress of Berlin, in which Romania was recognised as an independent state, the term 'Romanians' was used by Serbian elites alongside the traditional term 'Vlachs' to designate the Vlachs from the north-eastern Serbia.

The perception of the Vlachs and Romanians as a single nation could be also found in texts written by West-European authors. For instance, the French ethnographer Guillaume Lejean made no distinction between the two, and the German linguist Gustav Weigand, one of the founding fathers of the Romanian dialectology, grouped the dialects spoken by Serbia's Vlachs with the Romanian dialects of Banat and Oltenia.¹⁰ No different perspective was adopted by the few contemporary Romanian authors who wrote about Serbia's Vlachs. As early as 1876, the Romanian Romantic poet Mihai Eminescu spoke about the Vlachs from Serbia as Romanians, establishing a tendency which would be followed by the Romanian ethnographers who 'discovered' the Vlachs at the beginning of twentieth century (see chapter 6).¹¹

9 The principalities unified in 1859, but the official recognition of the new Romanian state took place only at the Congress of Berlin in 1878.

10 Guillaume Lejean, *Ethnographie de la Turquie d'Europe* (Gotha: Perthes, 1861), pp. 18–19; Alina Loredana Coroliuc, 'Gustav Weigand și geografia lingvistică' (unpublished doctoral thesis, Christian-Albrechts-Universität zu Kiel, 2013), p. 315.

11 Ionelia Toarcă, *Comunitatea românească din estul Serbiei: studiu geografic* (Bucharest: Ed. Semne, 2011), p. 56.

The endonym of the Vlachs, i.e. the name they identified themselves with, was *Rumîn(-i)*. Both West-European and Serbian nineteenth-century authors mention this term as used by the Vlachs themselves, and it is still used among the members of this community nowadays. In this thesis, the term Vlachs will be used predominantly for two reasons. Firstly, because 'Vlachs' was the traditional and dominant term used by the Serbian authors for the *Rumîni* from north-eastern Serbia, and secondly, because this is the term which has become the official Serbian name for the *Rumîni* in the twentieth century. However, the term 'Rumun(-i)', the Serbian version of the name Romanian(-s), has been kept in quotations if used by the authors of the quoted sources.

Another point that needs to be stressed is that the Vlachs from the north-eastern part of nineteenth-century Serbia were and are not the only Vlach communities inhabiting the Balkan region. Vlachs could be found in northern Greece, southern Albania, Macedonia, south-western and north-western Bulgaria and the Croatian peninsula Istria. However, unlike the Vlachs from eastern Serbia and those from north-western Bulgaria, whom scholars equate with Romanians, the other Balkan Vlachs have been generally treated as distinct ethno-cultural groups. The basic subdivision of these Vlachs distinguishes between two main groups: Istro-Romanians from Croatia and Aromanians, which include the Vlachs from the remaining countries of the southern Balkans.

Contrary to the situation of the present day, which sees the Vlachs as a small national minority of the Serbian state – according to the last, 2011, census the Vlach national minority amounts to only 0.49% – in the second half of the nineteenth century the Vlachs were Serbia's largest minority ranging from 7.8% in 1884 to 5% in 1900.¹² The second largest minority were Roma who, according to the 1884 census, amounted to 34,006 individuals, or 1.8 % of the total population, while other minorities such as Albanians, Turks or Bulgarians were far less numerous. In fact, the total combined number of these three minorities amounted to around 0.5% of Serbia's population, or to less than 10,000 individuals.¹³ The size of the Vlach population is even more striking if considered at the regional level. Most of the Vlachs were concentrated in four districts (Krajina, Požarevac, Ćuprija, Crna reka) where they made up an average 37% of the

12 Dragan Vukmirović, *Stanovništvo. Nacionalna pripadnost: podaci po opštinama i gradovima* (Belgrade: Republički zavod za statistiku, 2012), p. 15; Državopis Srbije (Belgrade: Kraljevsko-Srpska državna štamparija, 1899), pp. 265, 276.

13 Državopis Srbije, 1899, pp. 264, 266.

region's population, with a staggering 62% in the Krajina region.¹⁴

Regions	Vlachs	Total population	Vlachs %
Krajina	52,019	83,549	62.00%
Požarevac	57,568	184,122	31.26%
Ćuprija	10,612	69,486	15.27%
Crna reka	29,351	64,084	45.80%

Table 1: Percentage of the Vlach Population per Region in 1884

As well as their numerical size, it was the geographical distribution of Vlach communities that contributed to drawing the attention of the Serbian authorities. They inhabited the north-eastern areas of the Serbian state, bordering on the north with Romania and on the east with Bulgaria. Therefore, not only were they living in direct proximity to the newly-established Romanian state, whose population was perceived by the Serbian authorities as identical to the Vlachs, but they were also bordering the north-western region of Bulgaria, which in its turn hosted a significant Vlach minority. Given the Vlachs' numerical strength and geographical position, they represented, from the perspective of the Serbian authorities, an impending threat to national security.

Although the Vlachs of Serbia were generally perceived and dealt with by Serbian authorities as a single ethnic group, it is important to stress that, as was typical of all pre-modern societies, they presented numerous regional and local differences in language, culture, and lifestyle. Some Serbian authors acknowledged these differences, as the standard Serbian classification of the Vlachs distinguishing between *Unguraeni* and *Carani* Vlachs, posited on a combination of linguistic and alleged origin criteria (see chapter 3). The *Unguraeni* dwelt in the mountain areas of north-eastern Serbia, while the latter were concentrated on the planes of the Krajina region.

It is also important to mention that the various Vlach communities did not share the same history, at least in regard to their relation to the Serbian state. Before 1830-33 the four Vlach-inhabited districts that would later be included in the Serbian state laid in

14 Državopis Srbije, 1899, pp. 265, 267. With the administrative reforms of the 1890s, the Crna reka and Ćuprija regions were incorporated into the Timok and Morava regions respectively. See the maps on pages 39 and 40.

two different administrative regions. One of these was the *Pashalik of Belgrade*, the Ottoman administrative unit which would become the core territory of the Serbian principality, including the Vlach-inhabited districts of Požarevac and Čuprija.¹⁵ The districts of Krajina and Crna reka were instead part of the other administrative region, the *Vidin Sanjak*.¹⁶ The *Pashalik of Belgrade* became the Principality of Serbia in 1830, and it eventually annexed the districts of Krajina and Crna reka in 1833, as part of the larger Russo-Ottoman settlement (Treaty of Adrianople, 1829).

Given the lack of studies and scant primary sources, it is difficult to give a detailed account of either the existence or aspects of some Vlach high-culture in the period before the formation of the Serbian state. However, some cultural links certainly did exist between Vlach-inhabited areas and the Romanian cultural and religious centres of the Austrian Empire and Danubian principalities (see chapter 4). During the 1718-1739 Austrian occupation of the areas of the future Serbian state, the majority of the territories which in the nineteenth century would be densely populated by Vlachs were annexed to the Banat of Temeswar, an administrative unit of the Austrian Empire containing a high percentage of Romanians. The free circulation of people, goods and culture that had existed during the occupation did not completely disappear once the territory was reintegrated into the Ottoman Empire. For instance, in Vlach localities of the future Krajina region church services and religious instruction offered by priests used the Vlach vernacular and religious books printed in Romanian until the area was annexed to the Serbian state (1833). Written vernacular was used in Krajina for official purposes even after the area was incorporated into the Serbian state, as several legal contracts (*tapija*) from 1850 still extant in the Archive of Negotin confirm.¹⁷

1.3.2. The Vlachs and the Serbian Nation and State

The late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century Serbian political and cultural elites were increasingly influenced by the idea of nationalism as a 'political principle

15 Officially, this administrative unit was called *Smederevo Sanjak*, but informally it was also called *Pashalik of Belgrade*. However, it was the latter that is commonly used in Serbian and wider historiography.

16 Vladimir Stojančević, *Ključ i Porečka reka od kraja 18. veka do oslobođenja 1833* (Belgrade: SANU, 1994), pp. 11–12.

17 Negotin, Istorijiski Arhiv Negotin (IAN), V. 3

which holds that political and national unit should be congruent'.¹⁸ This political strand of nationalism was combined with the ideology of *ethnic* nationalism, which was the dominant nationalist ideology in Serbia of the period (see chapter 2) and which, as explained by Smith, emphasises understanding the nation in genealogical terms, by privileging the importance of community of birth, native culture and vernacular languages.¹⁹ Considering the fact that the Serbian authorities primarily understood the Serbian nation in ethnic terms and that they endorsed the idea that the Serbian state could not include more than one (Serbian) nation, it is unsurprising that the presence of a conspicuous Vlach minority was seen as rather problematic.

As a Romance speaking population, not only were the Vlachs perceived as disrupting imagined or desired Serbian national unity, but they were also perceived as a potential threat to the very territorial integrity of the Serbian state. As stated earlier, at the time the Serbian authorities considered the Vlachs to be part of the Romanian nation, and they feared that as such, they might become of interest to the Romanian political elites. This interest could have been expressed through Romanian territorial claims – an unlikely scenario given the international political situation and the political agenda of the Romanian state (see chapter 6) – or through interference in Serbian internal affairs as protectors of the Vlach minority's cultural rights – a lower-profile but more likely intervention. The latter scenario would have created numerous challenges to the Serbian government whose control over the Vlach population might weaken, while their internal politics would lose independence by being exposed to monitoring and conditioning by the Romanian establishment.

However, the perception of Vlachs as a threat to Serbian national interests did not emerge immediately with the establishment of the Serbian principality. In fact, some parts of the Vlach population had actively contributed to the creation of the latter by supporting and participating in the first Serbian Uprising against the Ottomans (1804-1813). In the early stages of this uprising – which Serbian scholarship interprets as the turning point in the creation of the nineteenth-century Serbian state – the ethnicity factor played a minor role, or even none at all, the main reason for the uprising being economic issues.²⁰ Therefore, when the Serbian principality came into being (1830),

18 Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2008), p. 1.

19 Anthony D. Smith, *National Identity* (London: Penguin Books, 1991), p. 12.

20 David MacKenzie, 'Serbia as Piedmont and the Yugoslav Idea, 1804-1914', *East European Quarterly*, 28 (1994), 153–82 (p. 155).

Serbian authorities perceived Vlachs as allies, or at least as not hostile to the Serbian authorities.

This situation changed in the second half of the nineteenth century when concerns with the Vlachs and with the potential threat they represented for Serbian national interests started to emerge. This representational change was a result of a pan-European shift in the understanding of the concept of nation. In fact, in this period, as argued by Eric Hobsbawm, ethnicity and language became the main criteria for defining a nation across Europe and, consequently, states were increasingly pursuing the cultural and linguistic homogenisation of the state's population.²¹ This general shift in the definition of nation and state affected Serbian elites' understanding of the ethnic and linguistic differences presented by the Vlachs, which were, consequently, increasingly seen as a menace to the Serbian nation. This changed perception was translated into a series of negative representations of the Vlachs, and then into the promotion of nationalising and assimilation policies. The latter was especially intensified after Serbia obtained independence status in 1878, which as said earlier, allowed the Serbian political and cultural elites to more freely pursue their nationalist goals, both at home and abroad.

Given their historical role and their relation with the Serbian state, the Vlachs could be understood as, to borrow Anna Triandafilidou's definition, a 'significant internal other' of the Serbian nation. Namely, an ethnic group that has participated in the formation of the state in which it then becomes a minority, and who, because of its specific language and culture, starts to be perceived by the dominant group as a threat to either the territorial integrity of the state or to its cultural unity and authenticity.²² In order to prevent the potential Vlach threat, and to achieve what was at the time considered the ideal form of the nation-state – an ethnically/culturally homogeneous state – this minority became the target of a series of state-orchestrated assimilation policies; of these, primary school policies were to play the most prominent role.

Although, in the early stages of their formation the majority of European states experienced a tension between the *civic* (see chapter 2) and *ethnic* models of nation, since, as Smith notes, every nationalism contains both civic and ethnic elements to

21 Eric J. Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism Since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), p. 102.

22 Anna Triandafyllidou, 'National Identity and the "Other"', *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 21 (1998), 593–612 (p. 601).

varying degrees and in different forms, when it came to educational choices, the *ethnic* principle prevailed in most nineteenth-century European countries.²³ In fact, nineteenth-century European and Serbian authorities actively promoted the establishment of national educational systems whose medium of instruction was the language of the dominant group, and whose focus was on the culture of the dominant group. Consequently, the ethnic minorities' languages and cultures, such as those of the Vlachs, became increasingly marginalised, and their members were encouraged and/or forced to undertake an education that was almost exclusively provided in the official state language and largely through state-controlled educational institutions. This process of acculturation of minorities has been defined by Erwin Epstein as 'internal colonialism'.²⁴

The assimilationist attitude of the Serbian authorities towards the Vlachs continued throughout the entire twentieth century and into the following. In fact, it was only in 2007 that the Vlachs were recognised as a national minority, and thus gained access to the cultural rights guaranteed by the Serbian state to all officially recognised minorities.

1.4. The Vlachs as a Historiographical Subject

The Balkan Vlachs have been a problematic and contested subject of study in all Balkan historiographies since the latter were established in the nineteenth century. In his recent article on the historiographical treatment of the Vlachs across the Balkan academies, the Serbian sociologist Miroslav Ružica acknowledges that this attitude is still far from being abandoned, and points out that in the various national pasts that are interpreted in a 'Romantic and simplistic ways', 'the narratives about the Vlachs are always marginalised, one-sided or absent'.²⁵ A similar opinion is held by the Croatian scholar Zef Mirdita and the Serbian historian Bogumil Hrabak. In his work *The Vlachs in Historiography* (2004), Mirdita offers an exhaustive analysis of the main

23 Smith, *National Identity*, p. 13.

24 Erwin H. Epstein, 'Education and Peruanidad: "Internal" Colonialism in the Peruvian Highlands', *Comparative Education Review*, 15 (1971), 188–201 <<http://dx.doi.org/10.2307/1186729>>.

25 Miroslav Ružica, 'Balkanski Vlasi/Aromuni/Cincari – teze za nešto drugačije čitanje balkanske i srpske istorije i kulture', in *Sto godina sociologije u Srbiji* (Belgrade: Srpsko sociološko društvo, 2012), III–IV, 1018–45 (p. 1020).

shortcomings and interpretative problems of various Balkan historiographical traditions dealing with the Vlachs, and Hrabak denounces the nationalistically-inspired reluctance of Serbian, and other former Yugoslav, historiographies, to engage with the role of the medieval Vlachs in the ethnogeneses of the former-Yugoslav nations.²⁶

While partiality and nationalistically motivated interpretations characterise, with few exceptions, the majority of Balkan scholars' works on the Vlachs in general, the Vlachs from eastern Serbia are also an understudied subject, as an extremely low number of studies by either home or international historians engaged with them. In fact, contrary to the *Aromanians*, i.e. the Vlachs from northern Greece, southern Albania, Macedonia and south-western Bulgaria, who have attracted significant attention in both Balkan and international scholarship, the Vlachs of eastern Serbia, especially when it comes to modern history, have been largely neglected in both Serbian and international studies.²⁷

In Serbian historiography on the medieval history of the territories making up modern-day Serbia, Vlachs are generally treated as a socio-economic category of transhumant herders of Serbian ethnicity, and thus denied any distinct ethno-cultural or linguistic identity.²⁸ As to the (early) modern and contemporary period, Serbian studies have altogether ignored the Vlachs as a historiographical subject. In fact, they were normally only briefly touched upon in studies related to the areas where Vlachs resided, and in these cases they were never approached as socially or politically active subjects. Scholars would limit themselves to a brief discussion of the origins of the Vlachs and provide some information regarding their language and culture. In doing so, and this is even more striking, Serbian scholars would rely on interpretations given by nineteenth-

26 Zef Mirdita, *Vlasi u historiografiji* (Zagreb: Hrvatski institut za povijest, 2004); Bogumil Hrabak, 'Vlasi starinci i doseljenici u porečju Zapadne Morave (do 1570. godine)', in *Zbornik radova Narodnog muzeja*, ed. by Milovan Vulović (Čačak: Narodni muzej Čačak, 1992), pp. 5–46.

27 Max Demeter Peyfuss, *Die aromunische Frage. Ihre Entwicklung von den Ursprüngen bis zum Frieden von Bukarest* (1913) und die Haltung Österreich-Ungarns (Vienna: Böhlau, 1974); Tom Winniffrith, *The Vlachs: The History of a Balkan People* (London: Duckworth, 1987); Bernard Lory, 'La politique minoritaire de l'Empire Ottoman envers les Aroumains', in *Minorities in the Balkans: State Policy and Interethnic Relations* (1804–2004), ed. by Dušan T. Bataković (Belgrade: Institute for Balkan studies, 2011), pp. 49–57; Ali Arslan, 'The Vlach Issue during the Late Ottoman Period and the Emergence of the Vlach Community (Millet)', *Études Balkanique*, 2004, 121–39; Schwandner-Sievers, Stephanie, '3: The Albanian Aromanians' Awakening: Identity Politics and Conflicts in Post-Communist Albania' (ECMI Publications Programme, 1999), <<http://www.ecmi.de/publications/detail/03-the-albanian-aromanians-awakening-identity-politics-and-conflicts-in-post-communist-albania-192/>> [accessed 5 September 2013]

28 Ružica, III–IV, p. 1019; Zef Mirdita, 'Vlasi u jugoslavenskoj historiografiji', *Časopis za suvremenu povijest*, 2002, 201–18 (p. 212).

and early-twentieth-century Serbian authors, without questioning the validity of their arguments or suggesting alternative approaches. This is particularly evident when it comes to the origins of the Vlachs, as almost all contemporary Serbian historians endorse the nineteenth-century theory which sees the Vlachs as an ethnic group that in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries migrated to areas already inhabited or abandoned by ethnic Serbs. Chapter 3 will describe in detail the development of these interpretations.

The above-outlined approach to the Vlachs as a historiographical subject can be found in the works of Vladimr Stojančević, the scholar who published numerous works on the nineteenth-century history of eastern Serbia, the area which was, as said earlier, inhabited by a high number of Vlachs.²⁹ In his works, Stojančević drew widely on nineteenth- and early-twentieth century theories regarding the Vlach population's origins, in particular that developed by the Serbian ethnologist Tihomir R. Đorđević (see chapter 3).³⁰ A similar trend can be seen in a series of articles published by the journal *Braničevski glasnik*, in its 2010 issue, which is completely dedicated to contributions on the origins of the Vlachs of the nineteenth-century Požarevac region.³¹ As with Stojančević's position, the main aim of these articles is to support the hypothesis of a Vlach migration to eastern Serbia during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.³²

Unwittingly or deliberately, the insistence in Serbian historiography on the foreign origins of the Vlachs serves to de-legitimise the presence of this minority within the Serbian state, and at the same time to diminish its importance in the creation of the modern Serbian state and nationhood. Namely, with a focus on an alleged immigrant past of the Vlachs, the latter are not only deprived of the so-called 'historical right' to and continuity on the territories they inhabit – both criteria still very powerful in Serbian historiographical discourse – but also their contribution to and position within the modern Serbian state are marginalised, if not completely dismissed. The message implicitly conveyed by these works is that the Vlachs benefited from settling in areas

29 He mostly deals with the area which in the nineteenth century was called the Krajina district.

30 Stojančević.

31 In the nineteenth century this district was known as the Požarevac district.

32 Nebojša Đokić and Olivera Dumić, 'Etnički sastav stanovništva na prostoru današnje Braničevske eparhije U XVIII Veku', *Braničevski glasnik*, 2010, 82–133; Marija Vušković, 'Prilog proučavanja života vlaškog stanovništva u Požarevačkoj nahiji tokom prve vlade Kneza Miloša Obrenovića (1815-1839)', *Braničevski glasnik*, 2010, 134–48; Milorad Đorđević, 'Vlasi u Homolju', *Braničevski glasnik*, 2010, 69–81.

which are considered as territory that – on the grounds of historical tradition – could be legitimately claimed by the Serbian nation, and also gained from being granted the same civic and political rights as ethnic Serbs.

One of few alternative reconstructions is provided by the Serbian historian Dragoljub Petrović in his 1996 article, *The Vlachs of North-Eastern Serbia as an Ethnic Entity*. Contrary to the dominant Serbian historiographical position, of a Vlach migration from the territories of present day Romania, Petrović entertains the possibility of a more ancient Vlach presence in the north-east of Serbia. He also advances a hypothesis concerning the reasons why the Vlachs failed to develop a modern national identity in the nineteenth century, drawing attention to how they were integrated into the Serbian nation. Petrović argues that a crucial role in this integration was played by the Vlachs' participation in the wars waged by the Serbs. Moreover, according to Petrović's reconstruction, the Vlach ethnic group has always been loyal to the Serbian government, and therefore the latter had never needed to deploy particular policies or sanctions to force the Vlach population to obey and support Serbian politics, as had been the case with other minorities.³³ Petrović does not specify what policies and sanctions he refers to, but it is evident that in his reconstruction he ignores the dynamics of the assimilation process promoted through compulsory education towards this minority, and the responses of the latter to these initiatives. In fact, as will be shown in this dissertation, the introduction of compulsory primary schooling in Vlach-inhabited areas was not unproblematic and did not go unchallenged by the members of this minority.

While Serbian historians are primarily concerned with the origins of the Vlachs, or more precisely with producing works that support the thesis of their eighteenth/nineteenth century migration to the territories of the Serbian state, ethnologists and anthropologists have been attracted by various aspects of this minority's traditional and popular culture. Contrary to the extremely low number of historical studies on the Vlachs, anthropological studies are relatively well represented in Serbian academia, focussing on various aspects of the cultural heritage of this minority, such as rituals, beliefs or oral literary tradition, and lately even

33 Dragoljub S. Petrović, 'Vlasi severoistočne Srbije kao etnički entitet', in *Položaj manjina u Saveznoj Republici Jugoslaviji: zbornik radova sa naučnog skupa održanog 11. 12. i 13. januara 1995* (Belgrade: SANU, 1996), pp. 795–806.

sociolinguistics.³⁴ However, being concerned with contemporary social or cultural practices of the Vlachs from the eastern Serbia, these works do not offer a historical insight into this community.

The Vlachs from eastern Serbia have also attracted the attention of international anthropologists, especially because of the numerous immigrant Vlach communities in West-European countries. One of the earliest studies of Vlachs as both immigrants and in their original setting was undertaken by the Swedish scholars Carl-Urlik Schierup and Alexandra Ålund.³⁵ The works of a French anthropologist of Vlach origin, Dejan Dimitrijević-Rufu, also deal with aspects of Vlach culture from the binary perspective of communities split between Vlachs in Serbia and those who migrated to France.³⁶

Another matter to consider is the way the Vlachs from eastern Serbia are treated in Romanian historiography. In communist-ruled Romania, Vlachs were almost completely absent from Romanian historiography, and their rediscovery took place only in the 1990s, after the collapse of communism. Contrary to Serbian scholarship, which defines the Vlachs as migrants from the territories of present day Romania, Romanian historiography endows the Vlachs an autochthonous status in the areas they inhabit. One must not forget, however, that, as in the case of Serbian historiography, the Romanian historians' approach to the Vlachs does not guarantee an unbiased interpretation, as many of them are not immune from their own form of nationalist ideology, albeit with an agenda that is rather different from that of their Serbian counterparts.

Romanian scholars tend to perceive the Balkan Vlachs, and especially those

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- 34 Petar Vlahović, 'Neke etnološke odrednice Vlaha severoistočne Srbije', in *Zbornik radova Muzeja rudarstva i metalurgije* (Bor: Muzej rudarstva i metalurgije, 1980), pp. 103–11; Annemarie Sorescu-Marinković, 'The Vlach Funeral Laments – Tradition Revisited', *Balkanica*, 2004, 199–223; Paun Es Durić, *Sveti jezik vlaškog hleba* (Belgrade: Balkankult fondacija, 2010); Biljana Sikimić, 'Etnolingvistički pristup vlaškoj duhovnoj kulturi – običaj „kumačenje“', in *Actele simpozionului Banatul, trecut istoric și cultural*, (Timișoara: Editura Marineasa, 2005), pp. 148–58; Biljana Sikimić, 'Tragom terenskih istraživanja Emila Petrovića u Srbiji: Čokešina, Lokve i Ždrelo', *Probleme de filologie slavă*, 15 (2007), 443–54; Miloš Marjanović, *Društvene i kulturne promene u selima vlaške etničke zajednice Negotinske krajine*, Posebna izdanja, 22 (Belgrade: Etnografski institut SANU, 1981).
- 35 Carl-Urlik Schierup and Aleksandra Ålund, *Will They Still Be Dancing?: Integration and Ethnic Transformation among Yugoslav Immigrants in Scandinavia* (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell International, 1987).
- 36 Dejan Dimitrijević-Rufu, 'Rites de passage, identité ethnique, identité nationale', *Terrain. Revue d'ethnologie de l'Europe*, 1994, 119–34 <<http://dx.doi.org/10.4000/terrain.3092>>; Dejan Dimitrijević-Rufu, 'La fête du saint patron de la maisnie (Slaua), chez les roumains de Homolje (nord-est de la Serbie)', *Zeitschrift für Balkanologie*, 31 (1995), 138–47; Dejan Dimitrijević-Rufu, 'Identités contextuelles. Le cas d' une communauté roumaine de Serbie', *Cahiers Balkaniques*, 25, 164–74.

from neighbouring eastern Serbia, as an integral part of the Romanian nation, and thus they interpret their histories through the lens of an alleged Romanian national unity. Georghe Zbucea is the most renowned Romanian historian whose work focusses on the Vlachs of eastern Serbia. The main scope of his studies is to expose and denounce the assimilationist policies deployed by the Serbian state towards the Vlachs. However, his interventions on the subject are limited to presenting few sources that provide evidence for these nationalising policies, while no in-depth analysis is offered on the dynamics of the assimilation phenomenon.³⁷

Another group of historical studies dealing with the Vlachs from eastern Serbia needs to be mentioned, as it is formed of two works by authors who are themselves of Vlach origin, i.e. Dragiša Kostandinović's *Romanians from north-eastern Serbia, 1804-1948*, and Savoljub Gacović's three-volume *Romanisation and the Romance Population of the Timok Area, I - XVI centuries*. Both studies are based on their authors' doctoral dissertations, written and defended at Romanian universities.

The two aforementioned works deal with different historical periods and issues, but they share a common feature. Contrary to the dominant Serbian historiography discussed earlier, which supports the theory of an eighteenth- and early-nineteenth-century migration of the Vlachs to the territories they currently inhabit, the two Vlach authors argue that the Vlachs are indigenous, descended from the ancient Romanised Balkan populations. Concern with proving the autochthonous status of the Vlachs is especially evident in Gacović's work, as this argument actually constitutes his main hypothesis. In fact, his three-volume work analyses archaeological and historical sources and toponyms, in order to demonstrate the continuity of the Vlach presence in eastern Serbia.³⁸ Gacović's approach can be interpreted as a response to mainstream Serbian historiography which, as explained earlier, limits itself to demonstrating or reiterating the nineteenth-century thesis of Vlachs as immigrants.

A significant part of Kostandinović's work is dedicated to the illustration of the numerical size of the Vlachs, based on data collected in Serbian nineteenth-century censuses, and the ethnographic notes written by various authors of the time, in particular

37 Gheorghe Zbucea and Cezar Dobre, *Românii Timoceni destin istoric și documente* (București: Editura DC Promotions, 2005); Gheorghe Zbucea and Constantin Buchet, *Românii din afara granițelor României* (București: Ed. Fundației 'România de Măine', 2008).

38 Slavoljub Gacović, *Romanizacija i romansko stanovništvo timočke zone od I do XVI veka* (Bor: Muzej rudarstva i metalurgije; Ariadnae filum, 2012), I, II, III.

those coming from Romania. Moreover, Kostantinović is concerned with the Vlachs' inter-war initiatives aimed at achieving a cultural or political independence from the Serbian state. As to the period preceding WW1, the author takes into consideration only events and figures from the first decade of the twentieth century, which he considers to be the historical moment that saw the beginning of the Vlachs' national 'awakening'.³⁹ In contrast to Kostantinović's view, this thesis will demonstrate that, although not successful, there were earlier initiatives that can be interpreted as manifesting an emerging national awareness among the Vlachs.

In the light of the general historiographical tendencies towards the Vlachs which, with few exceptions, suffer from nationalistically biased approaches (Serbian and Romanian historiographies) or lack of interest (Western historiographies), the main contribution of this dissertation consists in shifting the focus from the topic of the Vlachs' origins to that of the Vlachs as active historical subjects. From this viewpoint, this thesis subscribes to the declared goals of Subaltern Studies historiography which aims '[...] to write the subaltern classes into the history of nationalism and the nation and to combat all elitist biases in the writing of history. To make the subaltern the sovereign subject of history, to stage them as the agents of history, to listen to their voices, to take their experiences and thought (and not only their material circumstances) seriously [...]'.⁴⁰

1.5. Primary School and Nation-Building – Trends in Existing Literature

Since the publication of Eugen Weber's 1976 seminal work *Peasants into Frenchmen: The Modernization of Rural France 1870-1914*, in which the links between primary schooling and national integration were first analysed, a high number of similar works have been published worldwide.⁴¹ However, while Weber addresses a number of

39 Dragisa Kostandinovic-Traian, *Românii din nord-estul Serbiei între anii 1804-1945* (Liga Culturala pentru Unitatea Românilor de Pretutindeni; Editura SEMNE, 2008).

40 Dipesh Chakrabarty, 'Minority Histories, Subaltern Pasts', *Economic and Political Weekly*, 33 (1998), 473–79 (p. 475) <<http://dx.doi.org/10.2307/4406471>>.

41 Eugen Weber, *Peasants into Frenchmen: The Modernization of Rural France, 1870-1914* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1979).

topics and perspectives on schooling and its use in nation-building – such as the critical analysis of the success of the schools on the ground, reactions of the local population to schooling, education in non-French-speaking areas – the approach adopted in subsequent studies has been less varied, especially in those works dealing with the construction of European nineteenth-century nations.

The overwhelming majority of studies of European nineteenth-century schooling and nation-building are concerned with general primary school legislation as conceived at the national level, textbook content and the elites' understanding of the nation and the role of education within it.⁴² What these studies often lack is attention to specific educational policies for ethnic minorities and the so called 'bottom-up' perspective on the development of education, which offers an insight into the population's reaction to the implementation of educational policies. This unbalanced approach is less dominant in studies dealing with nation-building in inter-war Europe, post-communist and post-colonial countries, in which the educational policies as conceived for ethnic minorities are relatively well-explored.⁴³ However, even in these studies the population's perception of and reactions to the educational policies remains an understudied topic.

There are some exceptions to these limits on the historiographical trend

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- 42 Abigail Green, *Fatherlands: State-Building and Nationhood in Nineteenth-Century Germany* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001); Maria Cristina Morandini, *Scuola e nazione: maestri e istruzione popolare nella costruzione dello Stato unitario (1848-1861)* (Milan: Vita e Pensiero, 2003); Mirela-Luminița Murgescu, *Între 'bunul creștin' și 'bravul român': rolul școlii primare în construirea identității naționale românești (1831-1878)* (Iași: Editura A '92, 1999); Pier Luigi Ballini and Gilles Pécout, *Scuola e nazione in Italia e in Francia nell'Ottocento: modelli, pratiche, eredità: nuovi percorsi di ricerca comparata* (Venice: Istituto veneto di scienze, lettere ed arti, 2007); Donatella Palomba, 'Education and State Formation in Italy', in *Second International Handbook of Comparative Education*, 2 vols. (London: Springer), 1, 195–216; Andreas M. Kazamias, 'Modernity, State-Formation, Nation Building, and Education in Greece', in *Second International Handbook of Comparative Education*, 2 vols. (London: Springer), 1, 239–56; Taras Kuzio, 'Nation Building, History Writing and Competition over the Legacy of Kyiv Rus in Ukraine', *Nationalities Papers*, 33 (2005), 29–58 <<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/00905990500053960>> [accessed 5 June 2012]
- 43 Gal Levy, 'Ethnicity and Education: Nation-Building, State-Formation, and the Construction of the Israeli Educational System' (unpublished doctoral thesis, The London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE), 2002) <<http://etheses.lse.ac.uk/id/eprint/849>> [accessed 2 February 2012]; Mila Mancheva, 'Image and Policy: The Case of Turks and Pomaks in Inter-War Bulgaria, 1918-44 (with Special Reference to Education)', *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations*, 12 (2001), 355–74 <<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/713670353>>; Irina Livezeanu, *Cultural Politics in Greater Romania: Regionalism, Nation Building & Ethnic Struggle, 1918-1930* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2000); Graham K. Brown, 'Making Ethnic Citizens: The Politics and Practice of Education in Malaysia', *Education, Ethnicity and Conflict*, 27 (2007), 318–30 <<http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.ijedudev.2006.12.002>>; Tan Yao Sua, 'The British Educational Policy for the Indigenous Community in Malaya 1870–1957: Dualistic Structure, Colonial Interests and Malay Radical Nationalism', *International Journal of Educational Development*, 33 (2013), 337–47 <<http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.ijedudev.2012.05.004>>.

concerning the topic of education and nation-building in nineteenth-century Europe. The work of Stephen Harp on primary schooling policies deployed by the French state towards the German minority in Alsace and Lorraine, and a series of essays dealing with minority education in Nordic countries edited by Sven Tägil shed light on the educational policies of the newly-established European nation-states towards some of their minorities. In addition, in his work on the schooling policies of Russia's eastern minorities, Wayne Dowler has explored the tension which characterised the Empire's political and intellectual scene, namely tension between the assimilationist positions on the education of minorities and the more liberal approach allowing the use of minority language as medium of instruction.⁴⁴

With its focus on the state's main educational strategies, the mainstream approach to the role of education in the forging of nineteenth-century European national identities gives the misleading impression that nineteenth-century political elites sought to enforce a unique educational policy throughout the entire territory of their respective states. The idea of a uniform educational policy being deployed within the majority of European nation-states is normally supported by the fact that in this very period the states actually gained control over education, depriving the Church or private organisations of this role that they had traditionally held. However, given the ethnic and linguistic heterogeneity present to different extents in all nineteenth-century European states, such unified educational policy was not a realistic project.

Arguing that the same educational policy could not be applied nationwide because of the presence of ethnic minorities, does not imply that the latter would necessarily be given rights to education in their own languages – which, however, did occur in some nation-states (see chapter 2) and multi-ethnic empires, namely imperial Russia and Austria-Hungary. Instead, it suggests that the national integration through education worked differently in areas inhabited by ethnic minorities, since it often involved the modification and adaptation of the curricula or the schooling system. The analysis of these modifications, adaptations or even *ad hoc* measures issued specifically for a minority group allows us to see the minority as the catalyst for both the

44 Stephen L. Harp, *Learning to Be Loyal: Primary Schooling as Nation Building in Alsace and Lorraine, 1850-1940* (DeKalb, IL: Northern Illinois University Press, 1998); Wayne Dowler, *Classroom and Empire: The Politics of Schooling Russia's Eastern Nationalities, 1860-1917* (Montreal: Queen's University Press, 2001); Sven Tägil, *Ethnicity and Nation Building in the Nordic World* (London: Hurst, 1995).

educational policies and the nation-building process deployed by the political and cultural elites of the dominant groups.

1.6. Serbian Primary Education and Nation-Building – Literature Review

Serbian nineteenth-century primary schooling has been studied by a large number of scholars whose work seeks to highlight how the Serbian primary school was transformed through a series of modernising initiatives.⁴⁵ These scholars reconstruct the legislative and organisational developments of the educational system by presenting quantitative data such as statistics of the number of schools established, by exploring the trend of secularisation of the school curricula, or, as will be discussed later, in chapter 4, by analysing the modernisation initiatives of primary schooling against the backdrop of the traditional values of Serbian society. However, the established approach almost completely ignores the ideological aims and implications of the educational system, that were, instead, amongst the fundamental reasons behind these educational reforms.

With the exception of Vladeta Tešić's 1974 study *Moral education in Serbian schools 1830-1878*, that, given its focus on the moral precepts taught in nineteenth-century Serbian primary schools, could be considered an alternative to this trend, it was not until the early 1980s that the first work examining the nationalist aspects of Serbian primary schools was published.⁴⁶ Authored by the American scholar Charles Jelavich, this work explores what Serbian children learned from their school textbooks about their own nation on the one hand, and other South-Slav nations, mainly Croats and Slovenes, on the other.⁴⁷ Jelavich's study did not attract particular attention in Serbian academic environments, as it was not until the mid-1990s and early 2000s that similar

45 Vladimir Grujić, 'Osnovnoškolsko obrazovanje i vaspitanje u Srbiji do sticanja državne nezavisnosti', *Spomenik*, 1994, 7–111; Milenko Karanovich, *The Development of Education in Serbia and Emergence of Its Intelligentsia (1838-1858)* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995).

46 Vladeta M. Tešić, *Moralno vaspitanje u školama Srbije, 1830-1878* (Zavod za udžbenike i nastavna sredstva, 1974); see also: Natalija Jovanović, 'Moral Values Teaching and Serbian School in the 19th Century', *Facta Universitatis – Series Philosophy, Sociology, Psychology and History*, 5 (2006), 113–29.

47 Charles Jelavich, 'Serbian Textbooks: Toward Greater Serbia or Yugoslavia?', *Slavic Review*, 42 (1983), 601–19.

studies were published by Serbian authors.

Studies of nineteenth-century Serbian primary schooling and its role in Serbian nation-building suffer from shortcomings similar to those of the dominant historiographical trend on primary schooling and nation-building in the broader European context. Similarly to their counterparts who dealt with the role of education in constructing unified national identities across Europe, the historians who dealt with the Serbian case have tended to adopt a 'top-down' perspective. Namely, they have analysed the main nationalising educational strategies as operating through the subjects taught, by exploring the nationalist messages delivered through curricula and handbooks. As is demonstrated below, these studies fail to address two major issues. Firstly, the features of nationalising educational policies in ethnically heterogeneous areas, and secondly, the 'bottom-up' viewpoint on nationalising education in both minority and majority environments. In fact, no insight is given into the attitudes of the population towards the nationalising aspect of schooling among either ethnic Serbs or minority groups.

Jelavich's above-mentioned 1983 contribution on the nationalistic contents of Serbian schoolbooks has been further developed in his successive and larger study, *South Slav Nationalisms: Textbooks and Yugoslav Union before 1914* (1990), which includes an analysis of Croatian and Slovenian school manuals alongside one of Serbian textbooks. Concerned with establishing what pupils of Serbian, Croatian and Slovenian nationality learned from their textbooks about their own nations and other South-Slavs countries, and assessing to what degree the knowledge they were given fostered the idea of Yugoslavism, Jelavich only superficially engages with other ethnic groups of the area of what would later become the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes.⁴⁸

A study of Serbian schoolbooks similar to Jelavich's was recently undertaken by Aleksandra V. Ilić in her *Textbooks and National Education in Serbia (1878-1918)*.⁴⁹ Although the bulk of her study is dedicated to an analysis of the nationalising contents of textbooks, the author also pays due attention to other issues pertaining to the Serbian school system and the intellectual environment of the period. Ilić efficiently illustrates the contribution made by educational workers to the production of various Serbian nationalistic discourses by analysing how these elites understood their own nation.

48 Charles Jelavich, *South Slav Nationalisms: Textbooks and Yugoslav Union before 1914* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1990), p. xi.

49 Aleksandra V. Ilić, *Udžbenici i nacionalno vaspitanje u Srbiji: (1878-1918)* (Belgrade: Filozofski fakultet, 2010).

However, as the focus of Ilić's work is on Serbian nationalising education as conceived for ethnic Serbs, it fails to acknowledge and investigate how these educational strategies worked when it came to ethnic minorities.

A narrower approach to textbooks and the nationalisation they provided has been adopted by Galina M. Janjušić, as she focuses exclusively on history as a subject. In her doctoral dissertation *History in Nineteenth-century Serbian Schools* (1996), Janjušić analyses the political exploitation of history teaching in nineteenth-century Serbian schools. She also discusses other relevant topics such as the organisation of the Serbian school system, the position of history in the hierarchy of subjects taught in Serbian schools, and the development of the Serbian historiographical tradition in general. The latter topic is particularly important because it provides information concerning the cultural and social backgrounds of the authors of history textbooks, responsible for the creation of the nineteenth-century historical narratives of the Serbian past. Another crucial aspect of this study is the consideration of the public debate led by intellectuals about the purpose of history as a subject in educational curricula. Janjušić's analysis demonstrates that the majority of nineteenth-century Serbian pedagogues believed that the primary purpose of history was not to give the students a balanced knowledge about the past, but rather to foster their national identity and to contribute to transforming them into passionate patriots.⁵⁰ However, despite all these positive features, Janjušić's work is limited by a lack of interest in the education of ethnic minorities.

Ivana Vučina Simović and Jelena Filipović's study of the Sephardic Jews is one of the few works to address the schooling of the ethnic minorities in the context of the formation of the nineteenth-century Serbian state and nation. This study sees the inclusion of this minority in the Serbian educational system as one of the reasons for Sephardic Jews' language shift to Serbian.⁵¹ The same could be said for Naum Kaytchev's *Desired Macedonia: Army, School and Nation-building in Serbia and Bulgaria, 1978-1912* (2003). In this work, the Bulgarian scholar explores how the expansionist aspirations of the Serbian elite influenced the way the Macedonians were represented in schoolbooks and literature for soldiers.⁵²

50 Galina M. Janjušić, 'Istorija u školama Srbije XIX veka' (unpublished master's thesis, University of Belgrade, 1996).

51 Ivana Vučina Simović and Jelena Filipović, *Etnički identitet i zamena jezika u sefardskoj zajednici u Beogradu* (Belgrade: Zavod za udžbenike, 2009).

52 Наум Кайчев, *Македонијо, възжелана: Армията, училището и градежът на нацията в Сърбия и България (1878-1912)* (Sofia: Paradigma, 2003).

This brief review of the works on the role of primary school in 'long-nineteenth-century' Serbian nation-building demonstrates that no attention has yet been given to how the nationalising educational policies were either conceived for or applied to the Vlachs. Moreover, all aforementioned works overlook the 'bottom-up' perspective which could shed light on how minorities reacted to primary schooling and to the nationalising strategies the latter pursued. By focusing on the specific aspects of Serbian educational policies as they were conceived for the Vlachs, and by analysing the reception of these policies by the Vlach population, this dissertation aims at filling in these historiographical gaps.

In addition, this dissertation will contribute to the institutional history of the Serbian primary school. Contrary to historians of Serbian education who explain the changes that occurred in the Serbian primary school system exclusively in terms of the modernisation process, this dissertation will suggest that many developments of the Serbian primary school were in the first place implemented as part of the broader assimilationist project involving the Vlach minority. As will be demonstrated in chapter 4, this was in the first place the case with girls' education/schools, preparatory grade (a type of preschool education) and extended schools (a type of higher primary school).

1.7. Sources

This study is based on the analysis of two types of primary sources: archival documents and periodicals and books of the period.

The majority of the archival documents have been retrieved from the Archive of Serbia in Belgrade and the collections held in other Serbian national archives (the Historical Archive of Negotin, the Historical Archive of Zaječar, the Archives of Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts); archives of other countries (the National Archives of Romania and the Diplomatic Archives in Bucharest) have also been consulted.

The archival sources from the Ministry of Education collection (*Ministarstvo prosvete, 1838-1918*), held in the Archive of Serbia, have been of major importance in

investigating the dynamics of the enactment and nature of educational policies in the Vlach-inhabited areas. Material such as the confidential documents of the Ministry of Internal Affairs (*Ministarstvo unutrašnjih dela, 1838-1918, poverljiva građa*) from the same archive and the Special Dossiers collection (Dosare Speciale 71/1900-1919) held in the Diplomatic Archives of Bucharest were essential in exploring the Vlachs' cultural-political activities that might have led to demands for cultural rights, primarily in the form of an education in Vlach or Romanian language.

As to the periodicals of the period, this study primarily relied on journals that concerned the educational system. The Educational Herald (*Prosvetni glasnik*), the official organ of the Ministry of Education, was a precious resource for both exploring official Serbian educational policies, and for analysing the contemporary debate on educational priorities, problems and the general development of primary schooling in Serbia. Similar content was offered by other education-related periodicals such as *Teacher* (*Učitelj*), the official organ of the Teachers' Association, and minor journals such as *Our School* (*Naša škola*), the official organ of the Teachers' Association of the Mlava district, or *Teachers' Herald* (*Učiteljski vesnik*), edited by Belgrade-based teachers.

As to the books, this research mostly relied onto travelogues and works containing descriptions of the Serbian state and nation.

The primary sources from the Serbian archives are dated according to the Julian calendar and this dating system has been maintained in this study. The Julian calendar is thirteen days behind the Gregorian calendar, which is nowadays in use in the majority of countries worldwide, the United Kingdom included.

1.8. The Structure of the Thesis

In addition to the introduction and conclusion sections (chapters 1 and 6), this thesis consists of five chapters.

Chapter 2 reconstructs the backdrop against which the specific educational-

nationalising policies for the Vlach ethnic group were conceived. It first outlines the historical background of the Serbian state in the period which this thesis is concerned with. Subsequently, it defines the nature and the main tenets of Serbian nationalism, as they constitute the ideological basis for the educational policies deployed both nationwide and specifically towards the Vlachs. The chapter also discusses the cultural and ideological background of the Serbian intelligentsia, which was both the bearer and creator of Serbian nationalism and the promoter of primary education policies. Here, particular attention is paid to local teachers as they were regarded by the Serbian authorities as playing a pivotal role in the modernisation and nationalisation process of the Serbian population. Finally, special analysis is dedicated to the role of state cultural institutions in forging Serbian national identity, and in particular to the primary school.

Chapter 3 is concerned with the Serbian intelligentsia's perception and representations of the Vlachs. The analysis of these discourses is extremely important because they contain the ideological and practical justifications underlying the assimilation policies that the Serbian authorities devised for the Vlach minority. Moreover, they also demonstrate how the perception of primary education as a crucial player in the assimilation of the Vlachs was widely shared among the Serbian intelligentsia. The first point this section is concerned with are the discursive strategies aimed at justifying – through the exploitation of the past – the Serbian possession of the territories inhabited by the Vlachs. This is achieved by presenting the latter as 'intruders' and 'newcomers' into 'historically Serbian land'. The second aim of this chapter is to establish when the Vlachs started to be perceived as a threat to Serbian national interests, and as such needed to be neutralised through assimilation in the Serbian community. The next issue the chapter is concerned with is the analysis of the 'civilising mission', another discursive strategy used by the Serbian authorities to justify the assimilation of the Vlachs; representations of the Vlachs as amoral, backward and superstitious will be analysed and explained. The section ends with an analysis of the gendered aspects of the Serbian discourses about the Vlachs.

Chapter 4 investigates how the nationalising tasks of the primary school were defined and achieved in the areas inhabited by the Vlachs. This is firstly tackled by analysing how Serbian educational workers understood the role of primary school amongst the Vlachs, and secondly, by examining the legislative measures which represented the cornerstones of the nationalising educational policies conceived for

Vlach children. Subsequently, the chapter investigates some of the most characteristic features of primary schooling in Vlach-inhabited areas: the establishment of mass girls' education, the 'preparatory grade' (a type of preschool education) and the 'extended schools' (higher primary school). These three segments of primary education were intensively promoted in Vlach-inhabited areas, because they were identified by their promoters as necessary measures to facilitate the assimilation of the Vlachs.

Chapter 5 deals with the nationalising aspects of activities promoted by the local school in order to involve the broader local community. It first examines how agricultural and school rifle associations were used for spreading and fostering patriotism and Serbian national identity both nationwide and specifically among the Vlachs. The same perspective is adopted in analysing the public celebrations which represented a special venue for displaying national symbols and diffusing nationalist messages. Finally, the chapter looks at the involvement of primary school teachers in the endeavour undertaken by the Serbian authorities to change, i.e. Serbify, Vlach traditional dress, which was considered to be the most undeniably external marker of Vlach ethnicity.

The last chapter looks at the reactions of the Vlach minority to the imposition of compulsory primary schooling in the Serbian language. It examines the types of resistance this population adopted to oppose this schooling, and the extent to which their resistance strategies were inspired by ethnic factor; namely, the extent to which the resistance was due to some Vlach ethnic or national consciousness. Attention is then given to the initiatives promoted by figures from the Vlach communities aimed at achieving some degree of schooling in the Vlach (Romanian) language. In order to better illustrate these dynamics, this section will also examine the attitude of the neighbouring Romanian state authorities towards the Vlach minority and the latter's aspiration for a cultural autonomy within the Serbian state.

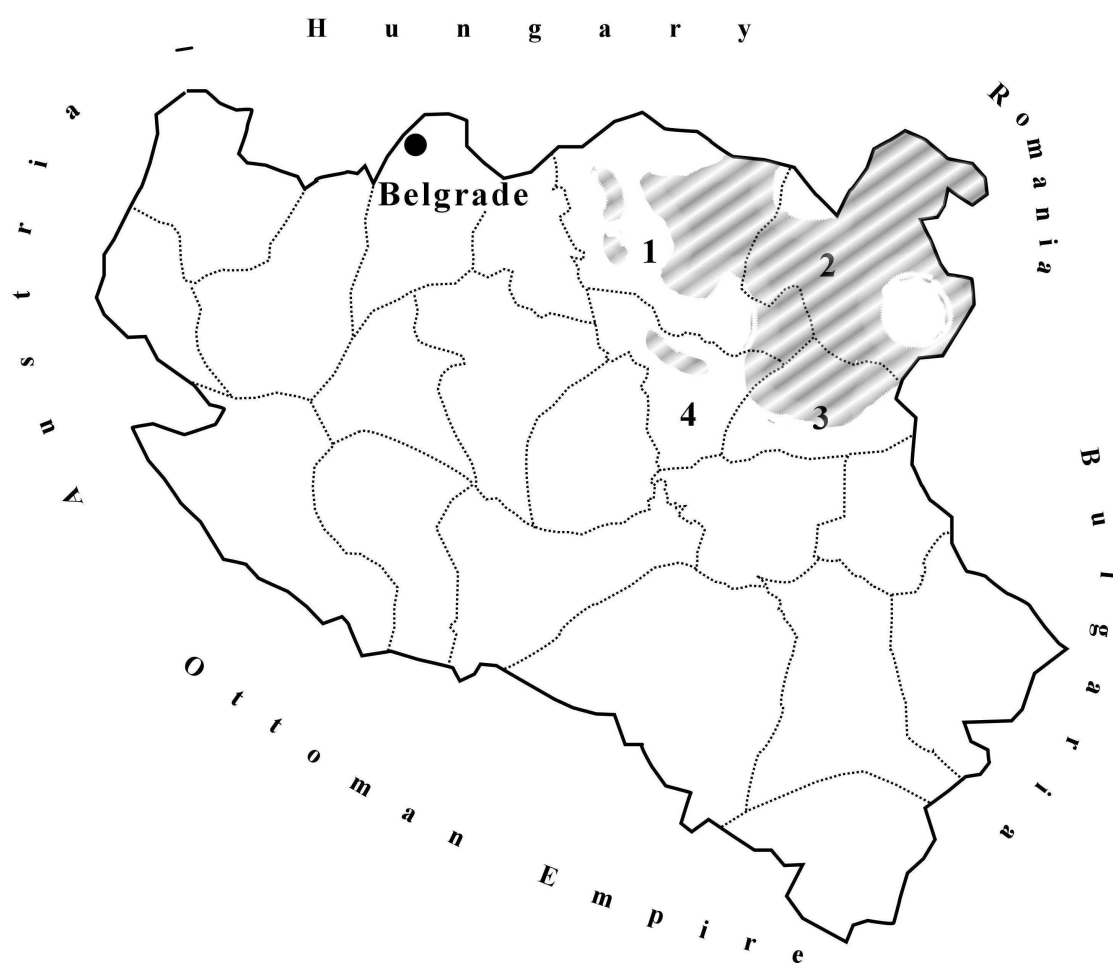



Figure 1:  Areas of the Kingdom of Serbia inhabited by the Vlachs, 1885

Regions:

Požarevac	1
Krajina	2
Crna reka	3
Ćuprija	4

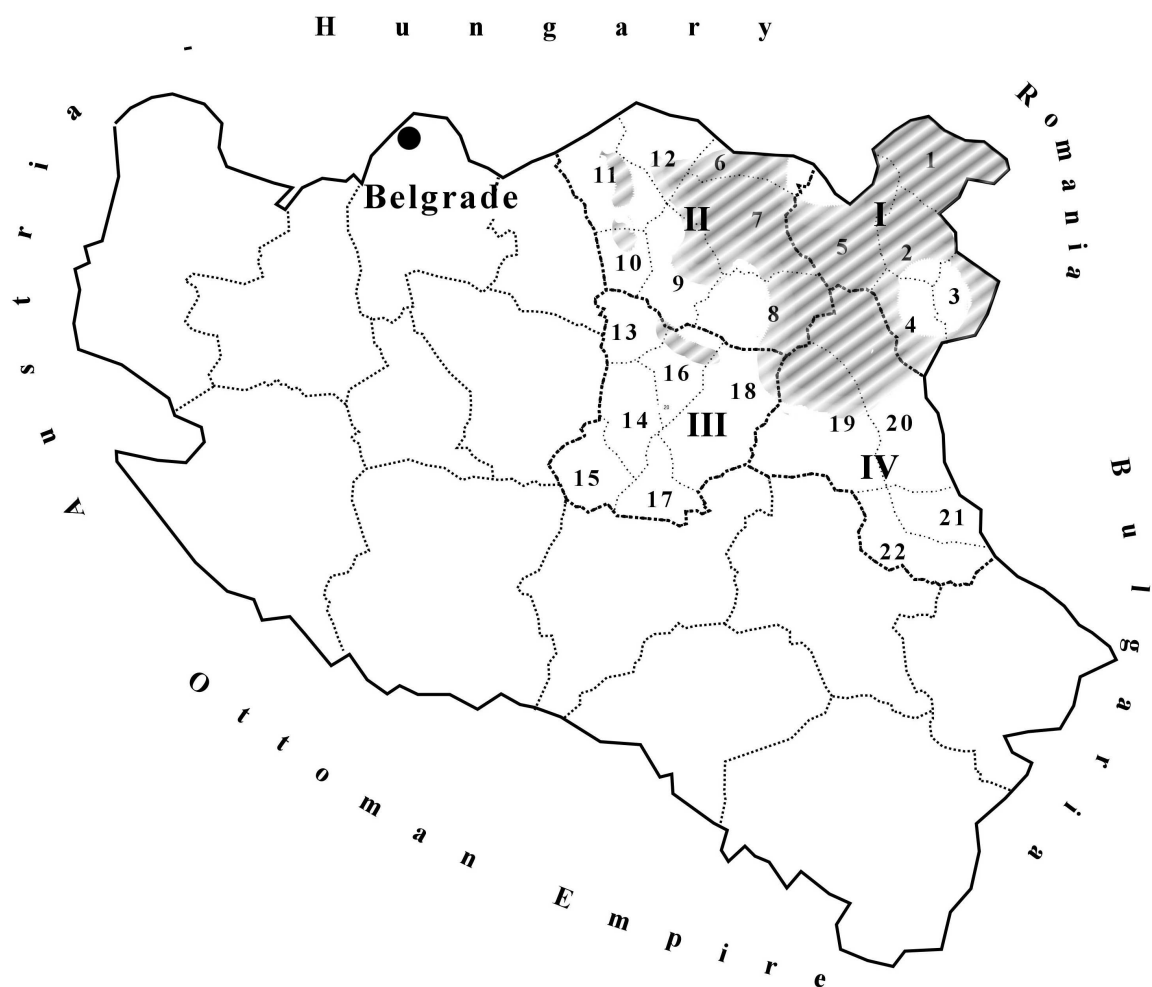



Figure 2:  Areas of the Kingdom of Serbia inhabited by the Vlachs, 1902

		Districts:				Districts:	
I Krajina region:		Ključ	1	III Morava region:		Resava	13
		Brza Palanka	2			Belički	14
		Negotin	3			Levački	15
		Krajina	4			Despotovac	16
		Poreč	5			Temnić	17
II Požarevac region:		Golubac	6	IV Timok region:		Paraćin	18
		Zvižd	7			Boljevac	19
		Homolje	8			Zaječar	20
		Mlava	9			Timok	21
		Morava	10			Zaglavak	22
		Požarevac	11				
		Ram	12				

CHAPTER 2: Serbia (1878-1914): Ideologies, Actors and Institutions

2.1. Introduction

Integral to the broader political, cultural, social and institutional transformation and dynamics of Serbian society between 1878 and 1914 was the nation-building process. In contemporary scholarship this multifaceted process is referred to as 'modernisation', and in the case of Serbia it is generally equated with the process of the 'Westernisation' of society. While Western Europe certainly provided models to be followed, the historical, cultural and economic specificities of the nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century Serbian state gave Serbian modernisation its own originality and specificities. It was therefore within this specific environment, which combined traditional Serbian with imported West-European features, that both Serbian national identity and the Serbian primary school system developed and influenced each other.

This chapter provides a broader overview of the main political, ideological and institutional circumstances and developments which influenced and contributed to the course of the Serbian nation-building process. It also identifies the most important actors in that process, and clarifies some aspects of the methodological approach adopted by this dissertation. Given its central place as an object of this study, the institution of primary school is paid special attention in this chapter.

After the first section, dedicated to the political transformations of Serbia in the given period, the chapter will analyse the origins and ideological underpinnings of Serbian nationalism. Subsequently, the chapter is concerned with the Serbian intelligentsia, in particular with the educational background of its members and their relationship with the state authorities. A separate section analyses how members of the intelligentsia affiliated to the dominant ideologies of the time, in particular liberalism and radicalism, engaged with and handled nationalist ideology.

Special attention will be given to primary school teachers; they were not only entrusted with the task of instilling national identity in the broader population, but also of spreading knowledge and fostering the general modernisation of society. Subsequently, cultural institutions that operated as centres of knowledge and ideology production will be analysed; this exploration will focus on the role of those elite national institutions that were organised along the lines of learned societies, and it will determine their contribution to the construction of Serbian national identity.

The study will then focus more closely on the institution of the primary school. Firstly, a conceptual understanding of the primary school and its role in nation-building is defined and an overview of the transformation of the primary school is given – from a diachronic perspective. Analysis here is concerned with the school as an instrument for nationalising Serbian society, although a broader understanding of the school as a promoter of modernity will not be neglected. Finally, conclusions will be drawn.

2.2. Serbia between 1878 and 1914 – A Historical Sketch

The near four-decades with which this thesis is concerned with were characterised by numerous processes and complex dynamics, in both Serbia's internal and external politics. The Serbian authorities not only partook in the long and difficult process of transforming the political system of the Serbian state, but they also engaged in attempts to enlarge Serbian territory. These internally and externally directed activities led to some of the most remarkable events in the late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century Serbian state: Serbia's 1882 status upgrade – from a principality to a kingdom, the dynastic change brought about by the regicide of 1903, and the Serbian state's participation in three wars (the Serbo-Bulgarian war of 1885, and the two Balkan Wars of 1912-1913).⁵³

One of the most important aspects of the political transformation of the Serbian state in the period under discussion was its transition from an absolutist-style monarchy

53 With the assassination of King Alexander I Obrenović and his wife, with whom he did not have an heir, the Obrenović dynasty was extinguished. The successor, Peter I, came from the Krađorđević dynasty, whose forefather was the leader of the First Serbian Uprising, Đorđe Petrović - Karađorđe.

towards parliamentarism. This transition begun with the introduction of a party system, a slow process which saw the affirmation of three political parties: Liberal, Progressive and Radical. The path towards a more liberal, parliamentary system was marked by violent inter-party dynamics, which resulted in the triumph of the Radical and the decline of the Progressive and the Liberal Parties. According to Latinka Perović, the origins of these often unscrupulous and violent inter-party relations lay in the widespread conception, and consequently treatment, of political rivals as 'enemies'.⁵⁴

The path towards parliamentary democracy was further hampered by the absolutist tendencies of both Obrenović rulers, Milan (1868-1889) and his son Alexander I (1889-1903). The Serbian kings' absolutist attitude generated numerous ministerial crisis, making the affirmation of a liberal constitution and of basic political and civil liberties a very tumultuous, if not impossible, process. For instance, a more liberal constitution introduced in 1888 – after almost two decades of political activity demanding it – was abolished shortly after, in 1894, only to be reintroduced, with some modifications, after the dynastic change in 1903.

Even after the dynastic change of 1903, which saw the reinstatement of the Karadorđević dynasty, and ushered the period known in mainstream Serbian historiography as the 'golden age of Serbian democracy', the underlying dynamic of Serbian political life was a far cry from a truly democratic system.⁵⁵ In fact, recent studies have demonstrated that, although the legal basis for the development of democracy had been laid, political practices and inter-party dialogue remained very similar to those that characterised the pre-1903 situation.⁵⁶ The main feature of Serbian politics in this period was the undisputed supremacy of the Radical Party and the emergence of the army as a political actor. The elite officer corps which was responsible for the regicide in 1903, was not only protected by the new regime, but was also permitted to become an independent political force with its own political programme and even its own secret organisation (the 'Black Hand').⁵⁷

54 Latinka Perović, *Između anarhije i autokratije: srpsko društvo na prelazima vekova (XIX-XXI)* (Belgrade: Helsinški odbor za ljudska prava u Srbiji, 2006), pp. 391–393.

55 The end of this 'golden age' of Serbian parliamentarism is taken to be the year 1914.

56 Olga Popović, *Parlamentarizam u Srbiji od 1903. do 1914. godine* (Belgrade: Službeni list SRJ, 1998); Dubravka Stojanović, *Srbija i demokratija 1903-1914: istorijska studija o 'zlatnom dobu srpske demokratije'* (Belgrade: Udruženje za društvenu istoriju, 2003).

57 Perović, *Između anarhije i autokratije*, p. 24; Olga Popović-Obradović, *Kakva, ili, kolika država: ogledi o političkoj i društvenoj istoriji Srbije XIX-XXI veka* (Belgrade: Helsinški odbor za ljudska prava u Srbiji, 2008), pp. 242–243.

The period 1903-1914 also saw a shift in Serbia's foreign policy to more aggressive stance. The territorial enlargement of the Serbian state became the political priority since it was supported by both the Radical Party, which dominated the political scene in 1910s, and military circles. Given these developments, Olga Popović-Obradović has suggested that it would be more appropriate to call this period “‘a golden age” of Serbian nationalism, war-waging, [and] militarism’ than the ‘golden age of Serbian democracy’.⁵⁸

Another characteristic of Serbian politics during the period 1878-1914 merits consideration. The course of the country's internal and external policies of this period were heavily determined by the politics of the Great Powers – particularly Russia and Austria – and their interest in the Balkans. After the Congress of Berlin, the Serbian state was mostly under Austrian tutelage. This preferential relation with Austria-Hungary was defined by a secret political convention, agreed in 1881 between the Austrian authorities and King Milan. The Serbian state's exit from the Austrian sphere of influence and its passage under the protection of Russia took place only after the dynastic change in 1903, when the Radicals, traditionally a pro-Russian party, became the dominant political force.

2.3. Serbian Nationalism

Serbian nationalism began to emerge in the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries among the Serbs from the Austro-Hungarian Empire under the combined influence of the Enlightenment and Romanticism. Under the strong influence of the latter, early Serbian nationalism took the form of a literary movement concerned with exploring and constructing what were thought to be the genuine ethnic and linguistic characteristics of the Serbian people. Subsequently, with the creation of the Serbian principality, Romanticism and Romantic nationalism spread among educated members of Serbian society south of the Danube. The constitution of the Serbian state also accelerated the transformation of Romanticism from a cultural into a political

58 Olga Popović-Obradović, ‘Vojna elita i civilna vlast u Srbiji 1903.-1914. godine’, in *Srbija u modernizacijskim procesima 19. i 20. veka. 3, Uloga elita*, ed. by Latinka Perović (Belgrade: Izdanje autori, 2003), pp. 191–215; Popović-Obradović, p. 248.

movement.⁵⁹ This process is explained by Miroslav Hroch as the passage from phase A of the national movement – which consisted of a purely cultural interest in the nation manifested by a few scholars – to phase B – which witnessed the spread of nationalism through political agitation.⁶⁰ While Romanticism as a literary movement lasted in Serbia until the penultimate decade of the nineteenth century, Romantic nationalism and its influences on the state's political, cultural and scientific developments continued right into the twentieth century.

In contemporary scholarship, still influenced by the typology of nationalism suggested by Hans Kohn, nationalism of the German type and all those that modelled themselves on it, are defined as 'ethnic', 'Eastern' or 'cultural' nationalisms.⁶¹ This 'Eastern' type of nationalism is also understood to be opposed to 'Western' or 'civic' nationalism, whose ideology, according to this interpretation, rests not on the ethno-linguistic characteristics of a group, but on the primacy of the state (territory), its institutions, and the individual's conscious identification with them.⁶² In line with Kohn's model, is Holm Sundhaussen's understanding of Serbian nationalism. Sundhaussen argues that in the absence of a nationally defined state or territory with which to identify, cultural nationalism became the natural choice of Serbian intellectuals.⁶³

The German Romantic philosopher Herder's definition of the concept of *Volk* as primarily determined by language and the common culture of its members, hugely influenced the European and Serbian Romantics' understanding of the nation, and, consequently which populations should be included in such a community.⁶⁴ The most famous attempt to define the Serbian nation on the basis of linguistic principle was undertaken by Vuk Stefanović Karadžić, Serbian literary language reformer and one of the most eminent representatives of Serbian Romanticism. In his *Serbs All and Everywhere*, published in 1849, Karadžić defines as Serbs all South-Slav peoples

59 Milorad Ekmečić, *Stvaranje Jugoslavije, 1790-1918*, 2 vols. (Belgrade: Prosveta, 1989), I, p. 463.

60 Miroslav Hroch, *Social Preconditions of National Revival in Europe: A Comparative Analysis of the Social Composition of Patriotic Groups among the Smaller European Nations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), p. 23.

61 Hans Kohn, *The Idea of Nationalism: A Study in Its Origins and Background*, 9th edn (New York: Collier Books, 1967), pp. 329–331.

62 Smith, *National Identity*, pp. 9–13.

63 Holm Sundhaussen, *Istorija Srbije od 19. do 21. veka* (Belgrade: Clio, 2008), p. 92.

64 Vicki Spencer, 'Herder and Nationalism: Reclaiming the Principle of Cultural Respect', *Australian Journal of Politics & History*, 43 (1997), 1–13 (pp. 4–6) <<http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8497.1997.tb01374.x>>.

speaking the *štokavian* dialect.⁶⁵ The latter was determined on the basis on the pronunciation of the interrogative pronoun 'what', and alongside *čakavian* and *kajkavian*, was one of the three dialects of what in the twentieth century would be defined as the Serbo-Croatian/Croatian-Serbian language. *Štokavian* was given the status of the literary language of both Serbs and Croats at the so-called 'Vienna agreement' which took place between Serbian and Croatian Romantics in 1850, but later in the century this decision was contested by many members of the Croatian intelligentsia.⁶⁶

The definition of the Serbian nation as a *štokavian* speaking people was not actually Karadžić's own invention. As Miroslav Ekmečić argues, this theory had first been advanced by the Czech Enlightenment thinker Josef Dobrowsky and Jernej Kopitar, a Slovene linguist and the imperial censor for Slav literature in Vienna, and as such, it was widely accepted by the linguists of the period Europewide.⁶⁷ Besides the Serbs, Karadžić's definition of the Serbian nation included Bosnian Muslims and numerous Croats, who were therefore denied a separate national identity. Karadžić's ideas influenced how the Serbian nation would be perceived by subsequent generations of the Serbian intelligentsia, throughout the rest of the century and even beyond. For instance, a primary school geography handbook published in 1902 still spoke of the Croats as Serbs of the Catholic faith.⁶⁸

As already noted above, nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century Serbian nationalism did not only consist of defining the Serbian nation in cultural terms. With the creation of the Serbian principality, Romantic nationalist ideology influenced both the processes of state and nation-building, and the course of Serbian foreign policy. While the Serbian elites pursued the cultural and linguistic integration of those living within state borders, their main foreign policy goal was aimed at the unification of all Serbs. As Jasna Dragović-Soso puts it, after the creation of the Principality of Serbia, the unification of Serbdom became 'the overarching national mission' of the Serbian political and intellectual elites.⁶⁹ The criteria according which the borders of the putative

65 Jelavich, *South Slav Nationalisms*, p. 7.

66 Keith Langston and Anita Peti-Stanić, 'Attitudes towards Linguistic Purism in Croatia: Evaluating Efforts at Language Reforms', in *At War with Words*, ed. by Mirjana N. Dedaić, Daniel N. Nelson (New York: Mouton de Gruyter, 2003), pp. 247–82 (p. 251).

67 Ekmečić, i, pp. 423–424.

68 Jelavich, *South Slav Nationalisms*, p. 148.

69 Jasna Dragović-Soso, 'Rethinking Yugoslavia: Serbian Intellectuals and the "National Question" in Historical Perspective', *Contemporary European History*, 13 (2004), 170–84 (p. 170).

Greater Serbia were decided combined ethno-linguistic principles with the so-called 'historical right' principle, namely, laying claim to the territories which in the medieval period had belonged to a Serbian ruler or fallen under the jurisdiction of the Serbian Orthodox Church.⁷⁰

The most important Serbian political project concerning external politics was formulated by Ilija Garašanin, one of the most influential Serbian statesmen, in his *Draft (Načertanije)*, a secret document written in 1844. Even though Garašanin's *Draft* was influenced by Polish pan-Slavists and initially conceived as a plan for the establishment of a South-Slav state under Turkish suzerainty, according to contemporary scholars it actually represents a project – and outlines the strategies – to achieve the Greater Serbian state.⁷¹ Garašanin was not alone in his desire to see a Greater Serbian state established through the 'liberation and unification of all Serbs'. This political project often appeared on the Serbian intelligentsia's political agenda, and was openly referred to in Serbian publications and the press of the period, and political parties' programmes. Milan St. Protić draws attention to the striking similarity between the *Draft* and the Radical Party position in relation to Serbian unification.⁷² Popović-Obradović goes even further by arguing that national-territorial myths about a Greater Serbia, and especially those related to Kosovo, were characteristic for the whole of Serbian society at the turn of the twentieth century.⁷³

It has to be acknowledged that a Greater Serbian state was not the only option contemplated by the Serbian intelligentsia as regards the future Serbian polity. Various other projects such as a South-Slav or Balkan federation or confederation had been articulated throughout the second half of the nineteenth century. However, these alternative unification programmes never gained any significant weight among Serbian political and cultural elites. Indicative of this trend is the fact that the small group of Serbian intellectuals who by the end of World War I became supporters of the federalist organisation of the new Yugoslav state, in the early stages of the war did not have a clear idea about what this federation should look like, and what the position of Serbia

70 Barbara Jelavich, *History of the Balkans*, 2 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), ii, p. 109.

71 MacKenzie, p. 159; Piotr Żurek, 'Nova interpretacija geneze načertanija: srbocentrizam Hotela Lambert i Hrvati', *Scrinia Slavonica*, 2006, 629–48.

72 Milan Protić, 'Serbian Radicalism 1881–1903 / Political Thought and Practice', *Balkanica*, 2007, 173–91 (pp. 179–80).

73 Popović-Obradović, p. 226.

within this polity should be. In fact, their projects ranged from a federation in which Serbia would play the leading role, to something that could be called a two-phase project, the first step of which would consist of the creation and consolidation of the Greater Serbian state, and the second, its unification with other south-Slav people.⁷⁴

2.4. The Serbian Intelligentsia

Throughout the entire 19th century and certainly up to the Second World War, an extremely important role in the processes of Serbian state and nation-building was played by the Serbian intellectual elites – the Serbian intelligentsia.⁷⁵ This term merits a brief discussion, since, as Ljubinka Trgovčević rightly notes, its meaning and use, either by Western European or Balkan scholars is still rather problematic.⁷⁶ The sociologist Ron Eyerman shares this cautious approach: he suggests that the analysis of 'intellectuals' (and an intelligentsia) as a social category requires that both the concept and the category be situated in a specific historical, political and cultural context.⁷⁷

In contemporary West-European academia, explorations of intellectuals and the intelligentsia focus on the political influences exercised by those lumped together under these headings.⁷⁸ In this context, the intelligentsia is predominantly understood to be 'alienated', a group that operates in opposition to the governmental establishment.⁷⁹ Derived from studies of the Russian and, to lesser extent, Polish 19th-century intelligentsia, these main features of the definition do not tally with the Serbian intelligentsia of the same period.⁸⁰

What mainly distinguishes the nineteenth-century Serbian intelligentsia from its

74 Ljubinka Trgovčević, *Naučnici Srbije i stvaranje jugoslovenske države, 1914-1920* (Belgrade: Narodna knjiga, 1986), pp. 260–61.

75 Vasa Čubrilović, *Istorija političke misli u Srbiji XIX veka* (Belgrade: Narodna knjiga, 1982), p. 154.

76 Ljubinka Trgovčević, *Planirana elita: o studentima iz Srbije na evropskim univerzitetima u 19. veku* (Belgrade: Istorijski institut, 2003), pp. 233–36.

77 Ron Eyerman, 'Intellectuals: A Framework for Analysis, with Special Reference to the United States and Sweden', *Acta Sociologica*, 35 (1992), 33–46 (p. 33).

78 Trgovčević, *Planirana elita*, pp. 233–34.

79 Martin Malia, 'What Is the Intelligentsia?', *Daedalus*, 89 (1960), 441–58 (pp. 443–44); Michael Confino, 'On Intellectuals and Intellectual Traditions in Eighteenth- and Nineteenth-Century Russia', *Daedalus*, 101 (1972), 117–49 (p. 118).

80 Aleksander Gella, 'The Russian and Polish Intelligentsias: A Sociological Perspective', *Studies in Soviet Thought*, 19 (1979), 307–20.

Russian and Polish counterparts is its far less conflictual relationship with the government. However, it would be wrong to claim that there were no disagreements or tensions between the politically active intelligentsia, on the one hand, and the monarchs and their governments, on the other. As already noted above, the persecution of political 'enemies' was a routine on the Serbian political scene, and to some degree it characterised all of the parties which held power. The case of the socialist leader, Svetozar Marković, who died in 1875 as a result of his imprisonment, provides an extreme example of political persecution. Similarly, in the early 1880s, the Progressive government manifested an aggressive attitude towards Pera Todorović and Nikola Pašić, both leaders of the People's Radical Party and followers of Marković. In their turn, members of the latter did not refrain from using violence against their political rivals, mainly the supporters of Progressive Party. The event known as 'the big national relief' lasted for almost a decade (1887-1896), and resulted in the death of 377 Progressive Party supporters'.⁸¹

Despite the aforementioned inter-party dynamics and persecution perpetrated, personally, by kings, it cannot be argued that the relationship between the Serbian government and the country's intelligentsia was at root confrontational. The fact is that the Serbian government itself promoted and supported the rise of the intelligentsia by providing funds for the education of its members and by employing them in various state institutions. At the dawn of Serbian independence (1830s), there was a lack of educated people able to fill civil service positions, which rendered it necessary to draw on educated Serbs from the neighbouring Austro-Hungarian Empire, a practice which lasted until the 1850s. In order to deal with this shortage of necessary personnel, the state authorities adopted a plan to hot-house a home-grown intelligentsia. This involved sponsoring outstanding Serbian youth to send them to the best West-European universities. From 1839 when the first group of state-scholarship holders (*blagodejanci*) was sent abroad until 1914, an estimated 1,300 Serbian students graduated from some of the leading European universities.⁸² The state was the main subsidiser of its own elite throughout the entire nineteenth century. In fact, it was only at the turn of the twentieth century that self-financed students studying abroad came to outnumber those supported

81 Latinka Perović, 'Narodna radikalna stranka: utemeljenje socijalnog, nacionalnog i političkog jedinstva srpskog naroda', in *Proces Vojislavu Šešelju: raskrinkavanje projekta Velika Srbija*, ed. by Sonja Biserko (Belgrade: Helsinški odbor za ljudska prava u Srbiji), pp. 35–90 (p. 75).

82 Trgovčević, *Planirana elita*, p. 39.

by the Serbian government.⁸³

The 19th-century Serbian intelligentsia represented a new breed whose scientific, cultural and political views were influenced by West-European values and ideas. This is not surprising since, during this period, around 70% of the people with higher education had attained this education abroad, mostly in Germany, Austria and France, and to a lesser extent in Russia.⁸⁴ This predominance of Western education amongst the Serbian intelligentsia influenced its members' understanding of their mission: to ensure that Serbia played a role in European civilisation by implementing reforms in the 'European spirit of progress' in 'almost all fields of national life'.⁸⁵ The Enlightenment idea of progress was thus fully embraced by Serbian intellectuals of the time.

It would be wrong to claim, however, that the Serbian government relied exclusively on educated people who had completed their education abroad. In fact, since the mid-nineteenth century, the number of home educated students had been growing. The highest ranking educational institution during the first half of the century was the Lyceum, established in Kragujevac in 1839. After being moved to Belgrade in 1841 it gradually developed into a higher education institution, the Grand École (*Velika Škola*) (1863), and eventually into a University (1905).⁸⁶ Moreover, a significant number of students had been graduating from teacher training colleges (*Učiteljska škola*), the first of which was established in 1871 in Kragujevac.⁸⁷ Even those students who had been educated and who graduated at home were – to a certain extent – acquainted with West-European culture and scholarship, since the majority of those teaching and lecturing in Serbian secondary and higher education institutions held West-European university degrees.⁸⁸ Moreover, the organisation and the curricula of these home institutions were modelled on their Western counterparts.

83 Ljubinka Trgovčević, 'Influenze esterne sulla "inteligencija" serba nel XIX secolo', *Rivista storica italiana*, CX (1998), 642–53 (p. 646).

84 Trgovčević, *Planirana elita*, pp. 40–44.

85 Latinka Perović, 'Milan Piroćanac – zapadnjak U Srbiji 19. Veka', in *Srbija u modernizacijskim procesima 19. i 20. veka. 3, Uloga elita* (Belgrade: Čigoja štampa, 2003), pp. 11–72 (p. 13).

86 Srećko Čunković, *Školstvo i prosveta u Srbiji u XIX veku* (Belgrade: Pedagoški muzej, 1971), pp. 73–75, 119–123.

87 Čunković, p. 114.

88 Trgovčević, *Planirana elita*, pp. 53, 239.

2.5 Ideologies

Although educated predominantly in Western Europe, not all members of the Serbian intelligentsia agreed that the Serbian state should fully follow the Western model of social development. In fact, a split in the intellectual scene similar to that which took place in nineteenth-century Russia between the *Slavophiles* and *Westerners*, fractured the Serbian political and intellectual elites. Contemporary scholarship consider that, from the ideological point of view, Radical party members are akin to Russian *Slavophiles*, while those supporting the Progressive and Liberal parties are seen as have been promoters of a Western-style liberalism and modernisation. However, what is generally omitted in this classification of Serbian parties and subsequent analysis of their ideologies and policies, is the fact that all their representatives were also nationalists, and that as such, the concrete policies these parties proposed – both internally and externally – were not substantially different from each other.

The ideology of the Radical Party drew upon the socialist ideas of the Russian émigré circle in Zurich, especially those promoted by Pyotr Lavrovich Lavrov, and upon Russian Slavophilism as expressed by Nikolay Yakovlevich Danilevsky. Given this ideological background, Radical Party members, and above all its leader, Nikola Pašić, were critical of the Western-style modernisation undertaken by King Milan and the Progressive governments (1880s and 1890s), which, in their view, neither considered nor valued the traditional specificities of Serbian society.⁸⁹ However, although this anti-Westernism was actively deployed in their political speeches against the Progressive Party, the Radical Party did not significantly affect the internal policy of Radical governments, which mostly followed the path established by the previous Progressive governments. As Obradović-Popović put it, after the Radicals seized power in 1903, the organisation of the Serbian state remained that of 'primitive capitalism', inspired by the Western-European model.⁹⁰ The Radical Party's anti-Western feelings had a deeper influence on the country's foreign policy. As already mentioned above, indisputably philo-Russian, they were primarily opposed to the Austrian tutelage over the Serbian

89 Latinka Perović, 'Narodna radikalna stranka: utemeljenje socijalnog, nacionalnog i političkog jedinstva srpskog naroda', in *Proces Vojislavu Šešelju: raskrinkavanje projekta Velika Srbija*, ed. by Sonja Biserko (Belgrade: Helsinški odbor za ljudska prava u Srbiji), pp. 35–90 (p. 48); Slavenko Terzić, 'About Eastern and Western Panslavism', *Istorijski časopis*, LIII (2006), 317–32 (p. 329).

90 Popović-Obradović, p. 227.

state.⁹¹

Another dominant tendency, especially in Serbian scholarship, is to attribute to the Radical party the leading role in galvanising Serbian nationalism by making the attainment of the Greater Serbian state its political priority. Popović-Obradović argues that after the 1903 dynastic overthrow the '[a]ll-Serbian unification and the creation of a Greater Serbia was proclaimed to be the goal of the utmost importance of the new regime, the "holy task" of the new king and the majority in power'.⁹² While this interpretation is valid in as much as it highlights the political priorities and rhetorical strategies of the Radical Party, it is also misleading because it reinforces the idea that the intelligentsia who associated with Liberal and Progressive Parties did not share the same nationalistic ideology and aims.

The *Slavophile* tendency combined with Romantic nationalism also characterised the ideology of the Liberal Party – the oldest Serbian political party, which dominated the Serbian political scene in the period 1868-1880. While recent scholarship defines Serbian liberalism, as conceived by its leader Vladimir Jovanović, in a more moderate way, as a synthesis of nationalism and Giuseppe Mazzini's version of liberalism, an older generation of scholars – such as Slobodan Jovanović – are much more explicit when it comes to defining the influence of nationalism on the ideology of this party. Jovanović sees the Liberals in the first place as fervent Romantic nationalists, whose liberal ideology actually 'sprung from' and was conditioned by their nationalism.⁹³ He also points out the liberals' typically Romantic obsession with 'the people', and their lack of moderation in pursuing what they considered their main national goals: the achievement of internal freedom and the liberation and unification of all Serbs.⁹⁴ The urgency they attributed to the achievement of a Greater Serbia resulted in agitation in favour of the intervention of the Serbian army in support of the Herzegovina uprising in 1875-76. They managed to galvanise public opinion in Serbian cities and force Prince Milan to engage in a war against the Ottomans (1876). Therefore, the first war for achieving Greater Serbia was primarily called for by the Liberals.

91 Perović, *Između anarhije i autokratije*, p. 22.

92 Popović-Obradović, p. 249.

93 Boris Milosavljević, 'Liberal and Conservative Political Thought in Nineteenth-Century Serbia: Vladimir Jovanović and Slobodan Jovanović', *Balkanica*, 2010, 131–53 (p. 135); Slobodan Jovanović, *Ustvobranitelji i njihova vlada (1838-1858)* (Belgrade: Geca Kon, 1933), p. 361.

94 Slobodan Jovanović, *Druga vlada Miloša i Mihaila, 1858-1868* (Belgrade: Geca Kon, 1923), p. 398; Jovanović, *Ustvobranitelji*, p. 263.

Liberal Party leaders were also responsible for spreading Romantic nationalism among Serbian urban society. The United Serbian Youth (*Ujedinjena Omladina Srpska*), an organisation founded by the Liberals, and modelled on Mazzini's Young Italy, in Novi Sad (Austro-Hungarian Empire) in 1866, was extremely popular with the Serbs from the Principality, especially with the students. For instance, Stojan Novaković, the leader of Progressive Party and a key figure in the development of Serbian primary school education, was in his youth associated with this organisation.

Generally presented as the antithesis of the Radical Party, Progressive Party is the most celebrated among Serbian scholars for its genuine liberal ideology and its focus on the modernisation/westernisation of the Serbian state. However, this view of the Progressive Party is over-simplistic in as much as it downplays the influence of nationalism on this party's ideology and policies, and omits the clearly nationalist activities led by Progressive governments in the territory of the Ottoman Empire, especially in Macedonia. A more complete understanding of the Progressive Party ideology has been given by Dimitrije Đorđević in his analysis of the political creed of the Progressive party leader Stojan Novaković. Đorđević sums up Novaković's political views as the combination of moderate conservatism, nationalism and reformism along the patterns offered by the western Europe.⁹⁵

The modernising activities of the Progressive leader, Novaković, were particularly important for the development of the primary school system. As a minister of education and religious affairs, he introduced, in December 1882, general and compulsory primary education, and he was the first minister to pay systematic attention to the schools attended by Vlach children. In fact, by ordering – in a letter dated 12 August 1882 – the regional authorities to provide lists enumerating all schools in their region attended by Vlach children, as well as the precise number of these children, he acknowledged the schooling of the Vlach population to be a specific issue in primary education policies.⁹⁶

Although the way Serbian parties' leaders understood the notion of the Serbian

95 Dimitrije Đorđević, 'Stojan Novaković: Historian, Politician, Diplomat', in *Historians as nation-builders: Central and South-East Europe*, ed. by Dennis Deletant and Harry Hanak (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1988), pp. 51–69 (p. 57).

96 Belgrade, Arhiv Srbije (AS), MPS P f. XXXV r. 4180/1882 – document number 5,657 of 12 August 1882 sent by the minister of education to provincial governors of Krajina, Požarevac, Crna reka and Čuprija regions.

nation and their definition of the main national goals were mostly determined by Romantic nationalism, in the very process of nation- and state-building an important role was also played by Enlightenment precepts. In fact, key figures in this process looked to the West as the model to be emulated, for it was there that the Enlightenment had left its imprint on state organisation.

2.6. 'People's Teacher' or 'National Worker'

Primary school teachers occupied a special place in the vision held by the Serbian intelligentsia. The Serbian authorities saw them as key figures in the transformation of Serbian society. Consequently, governmental elites had high expectations of teachers. They were not only entrusted with educating and moulding ideal Serbian citizens out of a mass of peasant children, but also with re-educating adults, instilling in them modern values and knowledge imported from Western Europe. The teachers' very profession and social position determined both this perception and the goals they were expected to achieve. Teachers not only constituted the largest group of civil servants, but they were dispersed across the country, in even the most remote villages, and in most cases they were the only properly literate and educated people in the community in which they resided. Accordingly, teachers represented a suitable tool for the promotion of the authorities' policies, and by acting as such, they contributed to the strengthening of state control over its citizens.

The idea of the teacher as an important agent of social change was not a Serbian invention. The concept had developed in nineteenth-century Western Europe as a result of the authorities' concern with the rural development of their countries.⁹⁷ In line with the general European trend, the role teachers were expected to play into the transformation of Serbian society was generally seen as that of undertaking a 'civilising mission'. Teachers' work was perceived as crucial to the 'enlightenment' of the Serbian population, which had been kept in a condition of backwardness by the centuries-long Ottoman domination. Most in need of being 'civilised' was the peasantry, who was seen

97 Jon Lauglo, 'Rural Primary School Teachers as Potential Community Leaders? Contrasting Historical Cases in Western Countries', *Comparative Education*, 18 (1982), 233–55 <<http://dx.doi.org/10.2307/3098792>>.

as living in the darkness of ignorance, primitivism, dirtiness and superstition. Teachers were therefore entrusted with the 'high national task' of disseminating culture, spreading knowledge of agricultural and technological innovation, and providing hygiene advice to improve people's lives. Moreover, scattered across the whole state territory and in direct contact with the population, teachers were considered very suitable 'agitators' for the national cause. The multifaceted tasks accorded Serbian teachers as a group were well captured by St. S Stanišić, himself a teacher, in his extensive discussion on the teacher as a 'cultural worker' (1901):

The teachers were the first and the only ones [amongst the state's intelligentsia] to engage in different cultural activities required by the needs of the recent times. They have already attained some success: in economy [by promoting] agricultural cooperatives, economic and other societies, gardens and various courses; in civilising [mission], by [promoting] libraries, reading rooms and [by delivering] lectures in extended schools; in fostering [their own] intellectual abilities, by good quality teaching, through their literary and societal work; in culture, through the strong agitation aimed at awakening consciousness about the need to improve hygiene conditions, and social and patriotic life; in science, by collecting meteorological, ethnographic, geographic, legal and folkloric data, etc.⁹⁸

Stanišić represents Serbian teachers as wholeheartedly dedicated to the overall 'progress' of the Serbian nation. Although there were certainly teachers who felt and behaved as Stanišić, depicted, his text needs be read as a romanticised description of an ideal 'people's teacher', rather than a realistic description of the average turn-of-the-century Serbian teacher. In fact, many teachers were not particularly enthusiastic about working in remote Serbian villages, preferring the more cultivated environment of towns to 'still-to-be-cultured' rural settlements. This fact was recognised by the authorities, particularly by the Ministry of Education, which was thus forced to repeatedly reassert the 'true role of the people's teacher'. In fact, a year before Stanišić's article appeared, Minister of Education Pavle Marinković had sent special instructions to primary school supervisors.⁹⁹ The minister firstly denounced the fact that so many

98 Staniša S Stanišić, 'Učitelj kao kulturni radnik', *Učitelj*, 1901, pp. 233–45, 332–33, 417–31, 589–98 (p. 333). Extended schools were a type of higher primary education (see chapter 4).

99 Instruction number 15,226 of 28th November 1900.

teachers did not properly understand their role in society, as a high number of teachers were reluctant to work in the countryside. Secondly, the minister outlined a 'true people's teacher'. The latter ought to be more than a 'school worker', and his duty went beyond that 'of educating children': the '[t]eacher's influence should go beyond the school's threshold'; 's/he should become the people's friend, get close to them, understand their real needs and, on every occasion, be their wise and sincere friend'. No leniency was shown those teachers who tried to avoid the countryside: they were defined as 'unfit' for their job and 'in want of national feeling'.¹⁰⁰

Notwithstanding the reluctance many teachers showed towards working in village schools, and their lack of enthusiasm towards their role as 'people's teachers', they were nevertheless forced to engage in the extracurricular activities suggested by authorities. Numerous circular letters issued by the Ministry, especially from the 1890s onwards, detail these duties. In 1888 teachers were called upon to co-operate in the collection of meteorological data, when the minister of education and religious affairs, Dr. Vladan Đorđević established the National Meteorological Network. Another field in which teachers were involved was agriculture; they were expected to establish and work in school gardens, which were used not only for the pupils' education and teacher's own benefit, but also for training adults and serving as a showcase for new agricultural techniques and products.¹⁰¹ In order to successfully disseminate agricultural innovation to the population at large, teachers were encouraged to undertake necessary training. Two training sessions took place in 1897 and 1898, having as their subjects general agricultural training and grapevine grafting, respectively. Another important task entrusted to teachers was the improvement of the population's health and hygiene. Instruction dated 27 June 1903, invites primary school teachers to establish local branches of the Society for the Improvement of People's Health, and to co-operate with the headquarters of this organisation.¹⁰²

Serbian teachers' contribution to Serbian nation-building cannot be overlooked. One of the main aims of Serbian primary school was to instil patriotic feelings and teach children to feel 'Serbian'. Success in this field depended predominantly on the teachers, since their personal teaching style actually determined whether the content taught would have the desirable effect. The authorities were convinced that some teachers were

100 *Prosvetni glasnik*, 1900, p. 682.

101 The gardens were used for teaching natural science ("poznavanje prirode").

102 *Prosvetni glasnik*, 1903, p. 650.

unable to perform this national task properly. School supervisors often lamented the lack of national and patriotic enthusiasm among teachers, and the consequent dry and detached teaching style, especially when it came to topics concerning the 'great' national past or eminent figures. Therefore, numerous and repeated instructions and recommendations were issued to surmount these teaching-style shortcomings and to remind teachers that in addition to educating in a broader sense, the primary school had a specific 'national role' to perform.

The importance of enthusiastic and patriotic teachers was especially felt in ethnically mixed areas such as Vlach-inhabited north-eastern Serbia. In fact, many teachers employed in this area did properly understand their role as 'national workers'. They not only took initiative, for example suggesting to the Ministry of Education the educational measures necessary to achieve an efficient and more rapid 'Serbisation' and 'civilising' of the Vlachs, but they also acted as a policing force, reporting any sign of 'Romanian' or other kind of 'propaganda' among the Vlachs. Education measures that would later be supported by the government, such as the mass education of girls, the introduction of preparatory grade or the adaptation of the national curricula for the schools attended by Vlach children, were first suggested by teachers themselves and then adopted as official policies by the Ministry of Education. These aspects of Serbian primary schooling will be analysed in detail in chapter 4.

2.7. Cultural Institutions

Patriotic cultural institutions, modelled on West European learned societies, were of paramount importance for the creation of the modern Serbian national identity throughout the nineteenth century. *Matica Srpska*, a pioneering institution of this kind, was founded in the Habsburg Empire (Pest) in 1826, but it was with the creation of the Society of Serbian Letters (*Društvo Srbske Slovesnosti*), today's Serbian Academy of Science and Arts, in Belgrade, in 1841, that Serbian culture took its truly nationalist shift. Unlike the intellectuals gathered around *Matica Srpska*, who were rather pan-Slav oriented, and in terms of language reforms, supporters of the *Slavenoserbski* language, a mixture of Church Slavonic and Serbian language spoken by the urban Serbs of the

Hapsburg Empire, members of the Society of Serbian Letters adopted Karadžić's reformed Serbian language from the very outset.¹⁰³ This decision meant that the peasant-spoken vernacular Serbian, a language similar to that of the Serbian epic poetry which Karadžić collected and published in the same years, became the literary language of the highest institution of the newly-established Serbian principality, and therefore, the language in which all the scientific and literary works of this institution were printed. However, it was only with the introduction of Karadžić's reformed language as the language of education at all levels, in 1868, that the Serbian vernacular won over *Slavenoserbski*, and put an end to the diglossia of the educated Serbian elites. However, it is also important to stress that by the end of the nineteenth century the Serbian intelligentsia had already partially departed from Karadžić's norm by adopting the dialect spoken in the area around Belgrade.¹⁰⁴

Notwithstanding their pro-*Slavenoserbski* stance and opposition to Karadžić's language reform, intellectuals gathered in *Matica Srpska* did contribute to the affirmation of both the Serbian language and Serbian culture. As Peter Herrity argues, by critiquing Karadžić's linguistic solutions in their journal *Letopis*, they operated 'as a forum for his ideas', and by publishing Serbian secular literary works, they offered new venues for the use of popular language.¹⁰⁵

The Society of Serbian Letters' contribution to the affirmation of the Serbian language was not limited to the adoption of Karadžić's reformed language as the official language of the Society, and therefore the language in which the Society's journal was printed. As evident from its founding constitution, one of the Society's key functions was to further develop the Serbian language by promoting lexicographical and grammar studies, and encouraging original literary production in Serbian, as well as translations of the European literary classics. Similar attention had been given to other aspects of Serbian culture such as history, art, geography and statistics.¹⁰⁶ While history was important, in order to trace and document the continuity of the Serbian people diachronically, geography and statistics served to map the distribution of Serbian people and Serbian lands, as well as their numerical strength. However, these studies also

103 Peter Herrity, 'The Role of the Matica and Similar Societies in the Development of the Slavonic Literary Languages', *The Slavonic and East European Review*, 51 (1973), 368–86 (p. 369).

104 Langston and Peti-Stanić, p. 252.

105 Herrity, p. 375.

106 Glasnik Društva srbske slovesnosti, 1847, pp. 1–4.

revealed the ethnic heterogeneity of the supposedly Serbian lands, which led to the need to describe and define, culturally and historically, various uncovered nationalities. As will be further discussed in chapter 3, it was through this attempt to define the Serbian nation that the main discourses about the Vlachs were produced.

The ethnographic description of Serbs and other nationalities living in their proximity gained momentum at the turn of the twentieth century with the foundation of the journal the *Serbian Ethnographic Anthology* (*Srpski etnografski zbornik*), an initiative of the aforementioned Stojan Novaković, at the time secretary of the Academy. The aim of this journal, as conceived by its founder, was to continue Vuk Karadžić's literary mission by concentrating on the publication of traditional literary production by the Serbian people.¹⁰⁷ A decade later, in 1902, the *Serbian Ethnographic Anthology* became the organ of the Serbian 'anthropogeographic school', founded by the geographer Jovan Cvijić.¹⁰⁸ In fact, from 1902 onwards, at Cvijić's suggestion, one issue of the Serbian Ethnographic Anthology, named *Settlements of the Serbian Lands* (*Naselja srpskih zemalja*) was reserved for anthropogeographic studies undertaken under the specific instructions issued by Cvijić himself. In 1921, when the Serbian state had been already superseded by the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, the name of this issue was changed to the slightly more nationally-neutral *The Settlements and the Origins of the Populations* (*Naselja i poreklo stanovništva*). Notwithstanding the elimination of the adjective 'Serbian', the rest of the title suggests that the 'people', the key concept of Romantic nationalist ideology, continued to be the central research subject of Serbian scholars, well into the twentieth century.

2.7.1. The Institution of the Primary School

While institutions such as the Serbian Academy contributed primarily to the definition and construction of Serbian national identity, it was primary education that

107 Milovan Radovanović, 'O naučnim osnovama Cvijićeve antropogeografsko-etnološke škole i njenom značaju za poznavanje etničkih procesa u srpskim zemljama', *Globus*, 34 (2003), 3–28 (p. 3).

108 Cvijić is in Serbian scholarship considered to be the founder of geographical science in Serbia. His scientific interest ranged from physical geography and geology to human geography. During his career, he was appointed to many prestigious positions in Serbian institutions of the time: he was member of the Serbian Academy from 1899, secretary of its scientific branch (1904-1905), and its president (1921-1927); he was also president of the University of Belgrade (1906-1907; 1919-1920).

was used as the main medium for spreading the concept of the Serbian nation and instilling patriotic feelings into the population. However, the scope of Serbian primary education, of course, was not exclusively ideological and its development also reflected the Serbian state's more pragmatic needs. Running and further developing the newly established state and its institutions required educated people and a population that would be more state-aware and willing to partake in the transformation of the economical, social and political spheres of society. In order to achieve this, primary education became increasingly secular, and the curricula were gradually adapted in order to provide children with knowledge deemed to be necessary for their development as individuals, and for ensuring their successful contribution to the overall progress of society. In addition, given both the need for nationally-aware citizens and the ultimate national aim of the liberation and unification of Serbdom, education also assumed an increasingly patriotic character.

The relationship between nation-building and the development of mass primary education in nineteenth-century Europe has been acknowledged by many scholars. The dominant model of the creation of European mass schooling is defined by John Boli, Francisco O. Ramirez and John W. Meyer as aiming at 'creating members of the nation-state'. Mass education is here understood as a 'purposive project to construct the modern polity, reconstructing individuals in accordance with collective religious, political, and economic goods and purposes'. Schooling is thus transformed into a 'vehicle for creating citizens' and is promoted by the nation-states 'in order to transform all individuals into members of national polity'. According to the model proposed by Boli et al., the first step in the establishment of mass education is taken with the enforcement of compulsory education and the successive phases of this development consist of the expansion of the schools system and the achievement of a more extensive student attendance.¹⁰⁹

While the definition of the primary school as a tool for nation-building suggested by Boli et al. applies to educational practices in all European countries during the period, the phases of the development of mass education as suggested by this model do not fully correspond to the actual evolution of primary schooling as they occurred across Europe. For instance, several studies suggest that in France, mass-education was

109 John Boli, Francisco O. Ramirez and John W. Meyer, 'Explaining the Origins and Expansion of Mass Education', *Comparative Education Review*, 29 (1985), 145–70 (pp. 158–60).

achieved well before the introduction of the secular, universal and compulsory schooling, thanks to the involvement of the Catholic Church in the educational service.¹¹⁰ However, the phases suggested by the model are consistent with the path which Serbian primary education followed in the nineteenth century.

The development of the Serbian primary school system started with the attempts to promote a government-controlled primary education in the late 1810s, during the period of the First Serbian Uprising. However, it was given a truly mass and national character, at least from the legislative viewpoint, only later in the century, namely after 1882, with the issuing of the law establishing general and compulsory primary schooling. In addition, in Serbia of the period there was no strong church-managed education tradition preceding state intervention in the field of education. The few existing ecclesiastical schools were generally based in monasteries and aimed mostly at training future priests.

Although compulsory national primary education did become a dominant schooling model in Europe in the last third of the nineteenth century, the secular state's appropriation of the management of education had started a century earlier. Many late eighteenth-century absolutist monarchs, inspired by Enlightenment thought, took control of education, particularly secondary schools, as part of their struggle to curb the prerogatives of religious orders. In this period, therefore, the monarchs of Austria, Prussia, Russia and France promoted important educational reforms.¹¹¹

However, the century that separates late eighteenth-century reforms from the late nineteenth-century establishment of state-controlled mass education witnessed a significant change in the ideological assumptions amongst European elites, in the first place in the gradual, fundamental distortion of the Enlightenment principle of education as a universal 'right', whose ultimate purpose was 'private and public happiness'. In fact, as Paolo Bianchini demonstrates in his studies on schooling in the Sardinian Kingdom, at the turn of the nineteenth century, education was discovered to be a fundamental tool for 'fostering loyal subjects', and instead of a 'right' enjoyed by citizens, it was defined

110 Raymond Grew and Patrick J. Harrigan, 'The Catholic Contribution to Universal Schooling in France, 1850-1906', *The Journal of Modern History*, 57 (1985), 211-47.

111 Paolo Bianchini, 'Popular Education – Rights and Duties: School Reforms in the Sardinian Kingdom between the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries', *Paedagogica Historica*, 47 (2011), 109-21 (p. 110) <<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/00309230.2011.560857>>.

as their 'duty'.¹¹² The transformation of Enlightenment precepts and their interplay with rising nationalist ideology also defined the course of the development of the Serbian nineteenth-century primary education.

2.7.1.1. The Transformation of the Serbian Primary School in the Period before 1878

The very first attempts to establish a centralised primary school system took place during the late phase of the First Serbian Uprising (1808-1813). They were undertaken by Dositej Obradović, the most important Enlightenment figure among the Austro-Hungarian Serbs, who was appointed minister of education in the Serbian insurrectional government. Although the results of this first endeavour were modest and short-lived, as the Ottomans closed the schools when the uprising was crushed in 1813, Dositej's work and his thought left a durable legacy among subsequent generations of Serbian educational workers with regard to the perception of the role of education. The Enlightenment understanding of pedagogy, summarised by Felicitas Munzel as aiming at producing 'moral- and civic-minded citizenry', was in Dositej's philosophy combined with the idea that the Serbian people should 'catch-up' with Europe and could get rescued from the darkness of barbarity and primitivism, all Ottoman legacies, only through the 'enlightenment' offered by the education.¹¹³ Throughout the nineteenth century such an approach became a leitmotif in the discussions and writings of Serbian educational workers. Dositej's attempt to establish an educational system in early-nineteenth-century Serbia – whose population was predominately rural, illiterate and overall untouched by European trends – proved, as Slobodan G. Markovich puts it, the 'practical confirmation' of the Enlightened ideology he subscribed to.¹¹⁴ In recent scholarship, Dositej's philosophical thought and educational activities promoted during his ministerial role are regarded to be the foundation of the modernisation process of the Serbian state.¹¹⁵

112 Bianchini, p. 109.

113 G. Felicitas Munzel, 'Kant on Moral Education, or "Enlightenment" and the Liberal Arts', *The Review of Metaphysics*, 57 (2003), 43–73 <<http://dx.doi.org/10.2307/20131938>>.

114 Slobodan G. Markovich, 'Dositej Obradovich. The Man Who Introduced Modernity to the Serbs', *The South Slav Journal*, 30 (2011), 5–27 (pp. 21–22).

115 Ljubinka Trgovčević, 'The Enlightenment and the Beginnings of Modern Serbian Culture', *Balkanica*, 2006, 103–11 (p. 110).

The period of the Serbian principality (1830-1878) witnessed the first steps towards the secularisation of the primary school curriculum and its 'national shift'. This was achieved with the introduction of scientific subjects (1844 curriculum) and an increase of the hours dedicated to the Serbian language (1850 curriculum). In 1863, the curriculum review saw the exclusion of the psalter (*psaltir*) and the prayer book (*časlovac*), and as mentioned earlier, in 1868, Vuk Karadžić's reformed Serbian language was introduced as the medium of instruction. Further 'nationalisation' of the primary school was achieved with the 1871 curriculum: National history and geography, previously taught in the fourth grade that only existed in town schools, were now also introduced in the third grade. This measure meant that these two subjects, deemed to be of paramount national importance, were now also taught to a more numerous group of country students, who had been excluded from studying these subjects with the previous curriculum arrangement. However, despite these reforms, the 1871 primary school curriculum still maintained a strongly religious character, as subjects such as catechism, Church Slavonic and church singing were still given a significant number of weekly hours.¹¹⁶

In 1871 the first teacher training college was established, in the city of Kragujevac. This event had an enormous importance for the further development of the primary school system, and it also contributed to its national character. The creation of a Serbian-based teacher training college meant that the Serbian authorities could now gradually foster the formation of home-educated teachers in order to meet national needs, bringing to an end to the old practice of relying on teachers from abroad (especially from Austria-Hungary). Moreover, by using the same curricula in all colleges, uniform teacher training was assured, both in terms of subjects and ideology.

2.7.1.2. Further Modernisation and Nationalisation, 1878-1914

After the acknowledgement of Serbian independence in 1878, the transformation of primary education entered a more intense phase. It witnessed the implementation of numerous reforms aimed at improving teaching practice, the material conditions of the schools and teachers' economic conditions. In fact, during this period three laws were

¹¹⁶ Ćunković, p. 91.

passed regarding primary school (in 1882, 1898 and 1904) and numerous decrees aimed at regulating various aspects of state-sponsored education. This intense legislative activity had deep effects on the organisation of the primary education system. Primary education became compulsory, the process of further differentiation of the school system – into kindergartens, primary schools, secondary schools, universities etc. – intensified, and the school curricula were more frequently adapted to meet the current needs of society. Furthermore, increased attention was paid to teaching methodology and to the promotion of girls' education. Although these developments have been interpreted by scholars dealing with the history of Serbian education as clear signs of modernisation, it should be pointed out that the implementation of these measures was often slow and partial, due to a lack of resources.¹¹⁷

During the period 1878-1914, it was the introduction of universal compulsory attendance that constituted the key moment in the development of primary school education (the 31 December 1882 law on primary education). Although very advanced as an ideal and in line with European trends, compulsory and universal education remained a dead letter for decades, given the widespread and severe shortage of material resources and teaching staff. As a result, the law of 1904 acknowledged the impossibility of fully implementing the principle of universal education instead settling on its gradual achievement. The 1904 law also established that the opening of schools, the number of classes and of students enrolled were to be decided on the basis of teaching staff availability and local community specificities. Although spelled out as a rule by the 1904 law, these criteria had already been applied in practice during the previous period, when the laws of 1882 and 1899 were in force.

Statistics from that period clearly illustrate the challenges faced by the Serbian authorities in their attempt to achieve universal primary schooling. When the latter was introduced in 1882, less than 15% of school-age children attended school, and by the outbreak of the First World War the percentage was still less than 50% percent.¹¹⁸ The inadequacy of Serbian primary education's enrolment capability is best illustrated through comparison with the situation in neighbouring Balkan countries. At the turn of

117 Arsen Đurović, *Modernizacija obrazovanja u Kraljevini Srbiji, 1905-1914* (Istorijski institut, 2004), p. 43; Ljubinka Trgovčević, 'Obrazovanje kao činilac modernizacije Srbije u XIX veku: analitička skica', in *Srbija u modernizacijskim procesima XX veka*, ed. by Latinka Perović and others (Belgrade: Institut za noviju istoriju Srbije, 1994), pp. 217–32 (pp. 218–219).

118 Đurović, *Modernizacija obrazovanja*, p. 329; Trgovčević, 'Obrazovanje', p. 225.

the twentieth century, Serbia's enrolment rate was only 17.5 %, while Romania, Greece and Bulgaria scored 35.1%, 37.6% and 43.6% respectively.¹¹⁹

Universal attendance was only one of the fields in which reforms struggled. The increase of the duration of primary education, from four to six years, together with the introduction of education for girls encountered similar difficulties when it came to their practical realisation. In fact, in a scenario where the authorities struggled to convince, or even to force, parents to allow their children to finish a four-year lower primary school, it was unrealistic to make a six-year course compulsory. Girls' education encountered an even fiercer resistance due to the patriarchal cultural background of predominantly peasant Serbian society. Therefore, at the national level, girls' education would not receive the authorities' full attention, although this changed in some particular circumstances, i.e. when schooling was deployed as a medium for the assimilation of the Vlach minorities – as it will be demonstrated in chapter 4.

Given the huge divide between legislative regulations and their concrete application, the very concept of primary school modernisation in the late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century is at stake. Aware of the gap between legislative theory and educational practice, Ljubinka Trgovčević defines this process as a 'slow' and 'partial' modernisation of the education system.¹²⁰

Alongside the modernisation of material, didactic and pedagogical aspects of Serbian schools, Serbian pedagogues were also concerned with the ideological aspect of primary education. After the proclamation of Serbian independence in particular, the idea that education should have a national character was more widely accepted, and was intensely discussed by Serbian education workers. Aleksandra Ilić's analysis of these debates demonstrates that, despite some differences in Serbian education workers' understanding of the concepts of nation and national education, it is possible to speak about the establishment of a 'theoretical foundation of national education' in the period of 1878-1914.¹²¹ Although the terminology used to indicate the nation, such as *nation* (*nacija*), *nationality* (*narodnost*) and *people* (*narod*), were used interchangeably, the concept of national education (*nacionalno obrazovanje*) was understood by all

119 Holm Sundhaussen, *Historische Statistik Serbiens, 1834-1914: mit europäischen Vergleichsdaten* (Munich: Oldenbourg, 1989), p. 555.

120 Trgovčević, 'Obrazovanje', p. 230.

121 Aleksandra Ilić, 'Pedagogues in the Kingdom of Serbia on Nation and National Pedagogical Work', *Pedagogija*, 2 (2007), 313–25 (p. 323).

education workers as being based on and promoting what were considered to be genuine Serbian national characteristics, values and interests.¹²² Therefore, the concept of national education in nineteenth-century Serbia did not have a neutral meaning of state-controlled education, but the partisan meaning of nationalistically inspired education.¹²³

Serbian education workers had no doubt about the necessity of shifting the scope of Serbian primary school education in a national direction. They were aware of living at the time when nationalism was a dominant ideology across Europe, and they were aware of how many peoples, including their own, were still striving for national unification. Sreten Adžić, one of the most important Serbian pedagogues of the time, effectively summed up this general perception in one of his speeches by stating that 'at the time of nationalism, Serbian school must be national'.¹²⁴

The main aim of national education, as conceived of by contemporaries, was the achievement of Serbian national unity. The latter took place on two levels, the cultural and the political, and it was bi-directional: directed internally, within the existing Serbian state, and externally, towards the territories perceived as part of a future Greater Serbian State. Cultural unity might be achieved before the political unification of all Serbs, but its full realisation would take place only with the attainment of the pan-Serb nation state. These specific national aims were not, however, separate from the overall transformation of society that education was expected to lead to. Education had the task of transforming the Serbian state and nation economically and morally, and this could be achieved only by creating ideal Serbian citizens who would internalise a specific set of knowledge, patriotism, and moral values. These aspirations and the expectations invested in the primary school are well illustrated by the words of the pedagogue Ljubomir Protić:¹²⁵

We want good and kind-hearted Serbs and citizens; we want the liberation of

122 Ilić, *Udžbenici i nacionalno vaspitanje u Srbiji*, p. 35.

123 The ambiguity of the meaning of the concept 'national education' appears only in English translation because the term 'national' is also used as adjective for 'state'. In Serbian, this ambiguity does not exist, since 'nacija' (nation) is not synonymous with state; in Serbian the term used is 'država'.

124 Sreten Adžić, *Srpska nacionalna škola* (Belgrade: Štamparija Narodne radikalne stranke, 1891), p.30.

125 Serbian pedagogue (1866-1928). He graduated from the Universities of Jena and Leipzig. During his lifetime Protić worked as a primary school teacher, Gymnasium and teachers college principal, primary school inspector, a member of the Ministry of Education's administrative staff and the headmaster of the Girls' Teachers' School in Belgrade.

[our] subjugated brothers; we want good soldiers willing to sacrifice their own lives for the happiness of the fatherland and the salvation of Serbdom; we want enlightened farmers who will be able to cultivate the land more rationally, contributing in this way to the country's economic prosperity; we want skilful craftsmen who will build factories, and wise traders, [both of whom] will help to strengthen our small state, rich in natural resources but still economically poor, due to unfavourable circumstances. Above all, we want good and devout people, who will be inspired by the faith in the Almighty, and who will believe in the fulfilment of our ideals. [...] And all this is expected [to be achieved], in the first place by the school, specially by the primary school.¹²⁶

2.7.1.3. National(-list) Aspects of the School Curricula

'National education' could not be achieved without adequate curricula and matching teaching material. Three primary school curricula were issued in the period covered by this thesis: in 1884, 1891 and 1899. The overall trend that characterises these curricula is the secularisation of education, achieved through a constant reduction of religious-related subjects and a respective increase of secular subjects, in the first place the Serbian language and mathematics. In addition, the curriculum of 1899 represents a shift towards a more vocational type of education, introducing subjects that were considered more important for the pupils' everyday life, such as 'national economy and agriculture with accountancy' and 'private agricultural enterprise', while the proportion of teaching time taken up by other subjects was notably scaled down.

The curtailing of the didactic material in the curriculum of 1899 did not affect the overall national character of the education. On the contrary, patriotic education was confirmed as the main aim of the subjects – Serbian language, history and geography. The purpose of Serbian language was defined as '[u]nderstanding the correct use of the oral and written literary language, and the development of national and patriotic feelings'; similarly, the teaching of national history aimed to make children 'familiar with the past of their own nation and awake their national and patriotic feelings'; as to

126 Ljubomir M. Protić, 'Naše narodno prosvetivanje', *Prosvetni glasnik*, 1902, pp. 171–84; 303–18; 449–63; 615–28; 706–19; (p. 173).

geography, it was supposed to give pupils knowledge of 'their closer and broader Fatherland, and to awake their love towards it'.¹²⁷ The stress on 'awakening national and patriotic' feelings as the primary purpose of these subjects had a precise ideological purpose. Teaching about the different regions of the state was meant to help to replace the children's local or regional identities with a nationwide one. In addition, historical notions about the Serbian medieval past were used to define the boundaries of 'Serbian territories' as the Greater Serbia and to legitimise these territorial aspirations. The teaching of geography aimed at a same goal but from a different perspective: contemporary representations and statistical data of both Serbia and the territories that were to be included in a future Greater Serbia were given.

The understanding of Serbian national unity as bi-directional concept, namely as concerning the reality of the actual Serbian polity on the one hand, and of the putative Greater Serbia on the other, results also from analysis of the declared aims and content of the 1899 school curriculum. The Serbian 'Fatherland' is here represented as exceeding the borders of the actual Serbian state, and the latter is consequently seen only as the first step towards the restoration of the Greater Serbian state – whose achievement was seen as the ultimate national unity. A similar principle can be detected in the treatment accorded different regions within the Serbian state. They were dealt with exclusively as mere administrative units within the Serbian state, and historical events and figures linked to various regions were interpreted exclusively through their connection with or contribution to the Serbian national cause. Therefore, unlike some other European countries such as Germany and Russia, in which national integration was pursued through the promotion of regional identities, through the concepts of 'homeland' (*Heimat*) and 'small native homeland' (*malaia rodina*) respectively, in nineteenth-century Serbia regional differences were actively discouraged and suppressed, especially if they involved ethnically heterogeneous population.¹²⁸

The dissemination of local or regional geographical knowledge was not supposed to nurture a specific regional identity, but rather to facilitate the awareness of the broader homeland. The choice of teaching children about the broader Fatherland by

127 *Prosvetni glasnik*, 1899, pp. 356–57, 614–15. The subject was called 'Serbian language and Slavonic reading'.

128 Celia Applegate, *A Nation of Provincials: The German Idea of Heimat* (University of California Press, 1990); Vera Tolz, *Russia's Own Orient: The Politics of Identity and Oriental Studies in the Late Imperial and Early Soviet Periods* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), pp. 36–43.

starting with their immediate geographical environment (locality, district, region) was dictated by a purely pedagogical rationale, which aimed at making the learning process more efficient and more suitable for a child's intellectual capabilities. In fact, Serbian pedagogues of the time subscribed to the Pestalozzian methodology of education which, to put it briefly, held that the learning process should progress gradually from concrete to abstract concepts ('object-based' learning), and move outwards from the immediate to the remote environment.¹²⁹

The importance of Serbian language, geography and national history in the pursuit of the national integration of the population is borne out in the number of hours assigned to these subjects in the curricula. Jelavich calculated that in the 1891 and 1899 curricula, the percentage of hours dedicated to these subjects were respectively 43% and 36%.¹³⁰ However, it is also important to stress that the overwhelming majority of these hours were actually dedicated to the Serbian language. This is illustrated by an analysis of the weekly teaching hours allocated to these three subjects by the 1899 curriculum. Primary school students would overall attend 28 hours of Serbian, and only seven hours of geography and history. The privileged position granted to the national language in primary schooling was by no means unique to the Serbian education system. At the turn of the twentieth century, the same tendency was present in the curricula of neighbouring countries: in Bulgaria 32 out of 100, and in Greece 44 out of 122 weekly hours were allocated this subject.¹³¹

The emphasis on Serbian language was due to the very character of Serbian nationalism, which understood language to be the most important national marker. This perception of language and the subsequent dominant position it was given in school curricula were given an additional thrust by the fact that, as argued by Hobsbawm, in the last decades of the nineteenth century the German 'ethno-linguistic' model of nationalism became dominant across Europe. This affected the perception of the national language and its role in education even in those countries that did not rely on Romantic nationalism as the mainstay of their nation-formation.¹³² For instance, for the French elites in the period of the Second Empire (1850-1870), knowledge of French, which up to that period had simply been regarded a prerequisite for participation in the

129 Johan Hienrich Pestalozzi (1746 – 1827) was a Swiss education reformer.

130 Jelavich, *South Slav Nationalisms*, p. 35.

131 Đurović, *Modernizacija obrazovanja*, pp. 331–332.

132 Hobsbawm, pp. 101–110.

nation's cultural and economic life, started to be perceived as the first and necessary 'requirement to be French'.¹³³ Consequently, from the 1870s onwards it became more and more commonplace for explicit instructions to be issued asserting the need to teach children of different ethnic backgrounds exclusively in French, and by the 1880s, leading educational figures defined the teaching of French as 'the chief work of the elementary school – a labour of patriotic character'.¹³⁴

The national integration of the Serbian population became an even more urgent task after the territorial expansion of Serbia attained at the Congress of Berlin (1878). By annexing the territories which stretched southwards towards today's Bulgaria, Macedonia and Kosovo, Serbia gained control over populations whose vernaculars were very different from the Serbian literary language. Moreover, these Slavic dialects had much more in common with the Bulgarian language than with the Serbian vernaculars spoken within the boundaries of the principality. The linguistic affinity between literary Bulgarian and the Slavic vernaculars of the newly annexed territories was seen by the Serbian intelligentsia as a potential source of political instability and disruption of national unity. Therefore, it became an issue that urgently needed to be addressed. In fact, the annexation of populations speaking dialects similar to Bulgarian further complicated the Serbian state's linguistic heterogeneity, which before 1878 was significant. In particular, beside the Vlach ethnic community which spoke Romance vernaculars, in the Eastern parts of the principality Bulgarian or languages similar to it were already used.

The nineteenth-century Serbian state was not alone in having its educational policies shaped by the linguistic and ethnic heterogeneity of the state's border areas. Parallels can be seen in other contemporary European states, where similar dynamics and circumstances in the definition of the educational policies towards minorities can be detected. For instance, Ingegerd Municio argues that in the second half of the nineteenth century the Swedish assimilationist educational policy deployed towards the Finnish minority took place 'when the borders of the Swedish nation-state were still conceived as not conclusively settled', and when 'Sweden's centuries-old fear of Russia was coupled with the distrust of the Finnish speaking population on both sides of the border'.¹³⁵ Similar 'fears' have been detected by Harp within the French political and

133 Harp, p. 38.

134 Weber, p. 311.

135 Ingegerd Municio, 'The Return of the Repressed Other: Linguistic Minorities and the Swedish

cultural circles of the 1860s. The strengthening of Prussia, which led to the wars for German national unification of 1864 and 1866, generated in the French authorities the fear that German expansionist ambitions would turn to the German-speaking French provinces of Alsace and Lorraine. It was only then, namely in 1860, that a new plan was issued to promote the French language as the main language of instruction in this region, except for religious instruction and during German lessons.¹³⁶

The importance of language as both marker of national unity and means of achieving national unity, especially in the border areas where the language greatly differed from literary Serbian, had been defined in 1882 by the minister of education, Stojan Novaković. He issued a circular to remind teachers of the 'most important place' occupied by the 'mother tongue' amongst the other subjects, not only because of 'its scientific value', but also because of its 'huge importance for national life and national education'.¹³⁷ Subsequently, Novaković states that 'we [the Serbs] are in greater need of fostering the characteristics and external features of [our] national integrity and unity, which should come true in all areas [of the country] through the uniformity of the spoken and written language'. 'This is why', he continues, 'the main duty of the Serbian school is to demonstrate how deeply and correctly it performs its task which here [in this circular letter] is reduced to the schools' commitment to bring all parts of the nation, or initially at least its educated members, to speak one, correct and elaborated language, and to achieve national unity from the point of view of the language'.¹³⁸

Apart from this ideological, but yet very important role, the focus on the national language as a teaching subject had also a more practical dimension, since the students' proficiency in literary language was a precondition for success in the other subjects. However, even this practical necessity was the result of the same nationalist-inspired educational policy, which imposed Serbian as the exclusive medium of instruction in primary education, preventing or discouraging schooling in other languages, especially in the case of numerically more significant minorities.¹³⁹ Examples from across

Nation-State from 1840s to the 1990s', in *Racism, Xenophobia and the Academic Response: European Perspectives. Proceedings from the Unica Conference on Racism and Xenophobia, Stockholm 29-31 August 1999* (Stockholm: Centrum för forskning om internationell migration och etniska relationer (CEIFO), 2001), pp. 227–306 (pp. 231, 239).

136 Harp, pp. 38–39.

137 Circular letter number 7,454 of 23 September 1882.

138 Prosvetni zbornik zakona i naredaba (Belgrade: Kraljevsko-Srpska državna štamparija, 1895), p. 935.

139 In a few urban private schools such as Catholic and Protestant schools in Belgrade, German was used, alongside Serbian, as the language of instruction.

contemporary Europe prove that the achievement of national unity had coexisted with certain minorities enjoying some minimum cultural rights. For instance, after the annexation of Dobrugea in 1878, the Romanian authorities allowed the use of minority languages in local schools, on condition that Romanian was also used as language of instruction.¹⁴⁰ A similar situation can be found for the German-speaking population of 1860s Alsace, where, although French had become the main medium of instruction, German as subject was not altogether abolished.¹⁴¹ Therefore, we cannot separate the instrumental aspect of the acquisition of Serbian, which derives from its use as language of instruction, from the nationalist ideology underlying the organisation and scope of the entire Serbian primary education system.

2.8. Conclusion

The late-nineteenth and early-twentieth-century Serbian nation-building process was in the first place determined by its underlying ideology. The latter consisted of a combination of the Enlightenment principles of progress and civilisation, and Romantic nationalism which posited a restoration of an alleged 'true' Serbian nation; on this basis, Serbian nation-building was defined fundamentally as a twofold process of pursuing the cultural and linguistic homogenisation of the state population and transforming them into modern and civilised citizens. Although considered extremely important and actively pursued by the Serbian authorities, the achievement of national unity within the Serbian state was not the final aim of the Serbian nation-building process. On the contrary, it only served as the point of departure for a journey towards the ultimate national unity, the realisation of the Greater Serbian state. By creating citizens of the Serbian state, the Serbian nation-building process was actually forming citizens for the putative Greater Serbia.

Notwithstanding the ideological differences and reciprocal animosities that characterised the inter-party dynamics of the period, the national aims of achieving national unity and the unification of all Serbs enjoyed a cross-party consensus.

140 Constantin Iordachi, *Citizenship, Nation- and State-Building: The Integration of Northern Dobrogea into Romania, 1878-1913* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2002), p. 41.

141 Harp, p. 39.

Therefore, both the nation-building process and the foreign policy aimed at the creation of Greater Serbia were the shared national and political aims of members of the Serbian intelligentsia with different political affiliation, and as such they never suffered real setbacks. In fact, both these aims were actively pursued by all governments throughout the period.

The realisation and the success of Serbian nation-building hugely depended on state institutions. While elite institutions such as the Serbian Academy were created and used in order to construct and canonise what was meant to represent Serbian national identity, the primary school as a mass institution played a pivotal role in spreading notions of national identity among the population at large. The precondition of using the primary school as a nation-building tool was its transformation from a traditional, religion-oriented institution into a modern, secular one. This modernisation process was gradual. It began in the first half of the nineteenth century, mainly through the secularisation and 'nationalisation' of school curricula, entering a more intense phase of modernisation with the Primary School Act of 1882. Although the realisation of mass schooling was a slow process, still not achieved by 1914, the progressive increment of children recruited to primary school did foster the nation-building process.

Primary schooling was expected to achieve the national unification of the Serbian population by imparting to pupils a proper patriotic education. Three subjects were considered particularly suitable for this purpose and therefore prioritised within school curricula: Serbian language, national history and geography. Given the widespread understanding of language as the main national marker, and also the fact that mastering the written and spoken literary language was a necessary condition for competence in other subjects, Serbian language was given special attention and the largest amount of teaching hours in all school curricula issued in the given period.

Devised to create new Serbian citizens, the nationalising educational policies had a major impact on the regional cultural diversity of the Serbian state. This impact was particularly disruptive in those areas where the vernacular Slavic languages differed substantially from literary Serbian, such as the southern territories annexed in 1878, and among ethnic minorities such as the Vlachs. In fact, it was by being denied the right to schooling in their own languages that the latter were exposed to the assimilation process.

Alongside offering a patriotic education that was meant to create nationally conscious Serbs inculcated with the 'holy task' of liberating and unifying all Serbs and seeking 'revenge' for the centuries-old defeat of Kosovo at the hands of the Ottomans, schools were also expected to act as governmental outposts for the modernisation and 'civilisation' of a predominantly peasant Serbian population. These high expectations of primary schooling placed the local village teacher in the position of being perceived as the main agent of the top-down social transformation of Serbian society.

While the achievement of national unity was felt to be a matter of great urgency among the Serbian political and cultural elites, and specific educational measures aimed at realising it were constantly issued or improved, the very process was far from being rapid or efficient. The poverty of both the state and population at large made the establishment and functioning of primary schools a true challenge in many Serbian villages and undermined not only the nationalising role of the Serbian primary school, but also the successful education of pupils.

CHAPTER 3: The Vlachs through Serbian Eyes

3.1. Introduction

As mentioned in the previous chapter, the Serbian intelligentsia's scientific and literary activities aimed not only at defining and representing the Serbian nation and lands, but also at explaining the relationship between the Serbs and the other peoples in whose proximity they lived. They were thereby trying to explain the historical connection of the latter with the territories of the Serbian state or of the putative Greater Serbia. Most of their publications concerned purportedly 'Serbian lands', such as Bosnia-Herzegovina, Kosovo and Macedonia, and their inhabitants, because the Serbian political and cultural elites were determined to legitimise the Serbian state's annexation of these territories. However, a large number of texts also described the contemporary Serbian state from a geographic, historical or ethnographic viewpoint. The latter include descriptions of the Vlachs from north-eastern Serbia.

As this chapter will demonstrate, representations of the Vlachs that appeared in Serbian nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century texts were influenced in the first place by the political agenda and ideological beliefs of the Serbian political and cultural elites. Given these elites' increasing concern with achieving national unity within a Serbian state (see chapter 2), it is not surprising that the perception of the Vlachs vacillated and was adjusted as this political project itself developed. However, the narratives about the Vlachs need to be regarded as far more than mere textual constructs. They both accompanied and were intrinsic to the specific measures deployed by the Serbian authorities to achieve their goal of national unity. In this sense, the discursive strategies of the Serbian elites do not differ from Edward Said's concept of *Orientalism*, seen primarily as a discourse of power, 'as a Western style of dominating, restructuring, and having authority' over the 'Other'.¹⁴²

Being both Serbia's largest minority and of a non-Slavic background (see chapter

142 Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1979), p. 3.

1), the Vlachs were perceived by the Serbian authorities not only as hindering the realisation of the state's national unity, but also as a serious threat to the Serbian nation's interests. In fact, the Serbian authorities feared what they dubbed the 'Vlach question', i.e. that the Vlachs would request cultural and/or political rights which could potentially involve the neighbouring state of Romania. Therefore, discourses about the Vlachs almost always contained recommendations to the Serbian authorities that they take appropriate measures to prevent the emergence of this potential Vlach threat. According to Serbian authors, the Vlach menace could be neutralised by assimilating the Vlachs into the Serbian community, and there was no doubt that the primary school would play the most important part in this process. Consequently, narrative discourse about the Vlachs on the one hand provided an ideological justification for the deployment of assimilation strategies in Vlach areas, and on the other, defined the Serbian primary school as the institution which, when it came to the Vlachs, had to serve primarily to effect their assimilation.

Narratives about the Vlachs played another important role in the Serbian nation-building process: that of providing a negative model against which the positive qualities of the Serbian nation were defined. In fact, notwithstanding the Serbian intelligentsia's awareness of the cultural and economic problems facing its own nation in comparison with Western Europe, the dominant definition of the Vlachs nevertheless was as indisputably inferior to the Serbian people. In other words, when it came to the Vlachs, members of the Serbian intelligentsia positioned themselves and their own nation as a civilised West against an uncivilised East. This discourse fits well into the 'nesting orientalisms' paradigm suggested by Milica Bakić-Hayden. According to Bakić-Hayden, the latter reproduces the 'east/west dichotomy', i.e. a hierarchy in which Western cultures are located at the apex, while the lowest places are occupied by Eastern cultures.¹⁴³

Developed within the context of Balkans, the concept of 'nesting orientalisms' points to a tendency of each region to view the cultures and regions to its South and East as more conservative and primitive. The concept relates to a common feature of identity construction to create hierarchies, putting one's own 'in-group' in a superior position compared to an 'out-group', to which an inferior position is attributed. The

143 Milica Bakić-Hayden, 'Nesting Orientalisms: The Case of Former Yugoslavia', *Slavic Review*, 54 (1995), 917–31 (pp. 917–18).

concept of 'nesting orientalisms' thus alludes to the point of similarity in Orientalising tendencies of colonial and imperial discourses, as well as of discourses of the nation in relation to minority groups.¹⁴⁴

By repeatedly using themes about purported Vlach backwardness, Serbian authors made use of another common Orientalising discursive strategy in their writings, that which aimed at justifying domination over other communities. The assimilation of the Vlachs would thereby be presented as a 'civilising' mission, undertaken in the first place with the best interests of the Vlachs in mind. Consequently, the concept of civilisation and assimilation not only went hand in hand, but in many cases the authors did not distinguish between the two.

Some studies of the representational techniques employed by Serbian intellectuals examine the way in which they typically describe their own nation and other neighbouring nations. The most detailed study of this type is Olivera Milosavljević's *In the Tradition of Nationalism, or Stereotypes of Serbian Twentieth-Century Intellectuals about 'Us' and 'Others'* (2002). Parallel scholarly works concerning the Vlachs are extremely rare. Biljana Sikimić's contribution – *Ethnic Stereotypes about the Serbia's Vlachs* (2002) – explores representations of the Vlachs mostly from the contemporary anthropological perspective and from the viewpoint of twentieth-century Serbian authors.¹⁴⁵ However, it fails to trace the evolution of these stereotypes from the time of their appearance in the nineteenth century. On account of the lack of modern studies dealing specifically with nineteenth-century discursive strategies towards the Vlachs, this chapter is mostly based on published and unpublished primary sources from the period.

The sources analysed in this chapter have been chosen on the basis of the

144 For further discussion on Orientalism, Balkanism and Balkan/South-East-European Occidentalism, see: Maria Todorova, *Imagining the Balkans* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009); Diana Mishkova, 'In Quest of Balkan Occidentalism', *Tokovi istorije*, 2006, 29–62; *A Bibliography of East European Travel Writing on Europe*, ed. by Wendy Bracewell and Alex Drace-Francis (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2008); *Orientations: An Anthology of East European Travel Writing, Ca. 1550-2000*, ed. by Wendy Bracewell (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2009); *Under Eastern Eyes: A Comparative Introduction to East European Travel Writing on Europe*, ed. by Wendy Bracewell and Alex Drace-Francis (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2008); Wendy Bracewell, 'Orijentalizam, okcidentalizam i kosmopolitizam: balkanski putopisi o Evropi', *Sarajevske sveske*, 06-07 (2004), 179–93, (available in English on <http://www.bulgc18.com/occidentalism/bracewell_en.htm> [accessed 31 August 2014])

145 Biljana Sikimić, 'Etnički stereotipi o Vlasima u Srbiji', in *Kulturni i etnički identitet u procesu globalizacije i regionalizacije Balkana* (Niš: JUNIR 9, 2002), pp. 187–203.

authority and influence they enjoyed at the time. Most printed text sources were published by prestigious state institutions, such as the Serbian Learned Society or the Ministry of Education, and as such they circulated widely amongst educated Serbs. Besides these texts, supported and sometimes commissioned by state institutions, travelogues published on private initiative have also been analysed. Travelogues were a very popular genre, and accordingly they were an integral part of village-school libraries, and therefore they were among the sources from which many teachers working in Vlach villages learned about the population with whom they were dealing. The other sources considered in this chapter are published texts and unpublished documents on the Vlachs produced by regional civil servants and educational workers, chiefly school supervisors and teachers.

This chapter consists of four sections. The first section analyses how Serbian intellectuals legitimised their claims that the areas inhabited by the Vlachs were part of Serbian national territory. The second section looks at the representations of the Vlachs' purportedly corrupting influence on the Serbian nation and their reputed attempts to assimilate the Serbs. The third part is concerned with texts that included assessments of the Vlach language, religiosity and morality. The last section is dedicated to the gendered aspects of discourses about Vlachs.

3.2. 'Territorialisation of Memory'

The concept of 'historical right' was extensively used by Serbian nationalists during the nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries to define and justify their territorial claims. It was a principle normally evoked in relation to those territories that Serbian intellectuals and politicians claimed for the future Greater Serbian state. However, the discourse of 'historical right' was also used in relation to the areas of the actually existing Serbian state. When portions of its territory were inhabited by ethno-cultural minorities, the Serbian state resorted to, used and manipulated historical events to legitimise a Serbian right to those territories that were already part of the Serbian state. Due to the high percentage of Vlach inhabitants, the territory of north-eastern Serbia represented one of the areas that needed to be claimed and proved genuinely Serbian.

As the Vlachs amounted to around 50% of north-eastern Serbia's population, the ethno-linguistic criterion could not be drawn on to justify the Serbian state's right to possess these territories, hence the 'historical right' argument remained the only viable option for the Serbian intelligentsia. Accordingly, historical evidence suitable for this purpose had to be interpreted so as to demonstrate that the territories in question had belonged to the Serbs in the past, and that they were, therefore, rightfully in Serbian possession. At the same time, the Vlachs had to be prevented from claiming their right to these territories using the same criterion; this was achieved by depicting them as 'newcomers' and 'intruders' into what had once been 'purely' Serbian lands. In other words, Serbian authors and authorities needed to construct a shared national memory that would firmly include north-eastern Serbia in the Serbian state and nation, in order to 'normalise' the ambiguity that stemmed from the ethnic heterogeneity of this area.

The discursive strategy adopted by the Serbian authorities in dealing with the Vlach-inhabited territories and the Vlachs themselves is characteristic of all modern nationalisms. Smith defines the process of attaching 'certain kinds of shared memory' to territories and places as the 'territorialisation of memory'. Once linked, these two elements acquire a national character: the set of shared memories becomes what Smith dubs 'ethnic landscape' or 'ethnoscape', and the territory in question becomes the 'historic homeland' of a given nation.¹⁴⁶

The representation of the Vlachs as newcomers in originally Serbian areas finds its origin in the very first notions about the Vlachs provided by Vuk Karadžić (see chapter 2) in his *Serbian–German–Latin Dictionary*, printed in Vienna in 1818. In the dictionary, Vlachs appear under the entry *Negotinska Krajina* and *Ključ*. In *Negotinska Krajina*, according to Karadžić, 'there are about fifty villages, but not all of them are Serbian, some of them are Vlach', while in *Ključ* 'there are around thirty villages, but *at present* [highlighted by KK] none of them are Serbian, as they are all Vlach; however the names of these villages are Serbian: e.g. Grabovica, Kamenica, Vrbica, Ostrov gol etc.'¹⁴⁷

Stressing that 'at present' there are no Serbian inhabitants in the district of Ključ,

146 Anthony D. Smith, 'Culture, Community and Territory: The Politics of Ethnicity and Nationalism', *International Affairs* (Royal Institute of International Affairs 1944-), 72 (1996), 445–58 (pp. 453–454).

147 Vuk Stefanović Karadžić, *Srpski rječnik istolkovan njemačkim i latinskim riječima* (Vienna: Gedruckt bei den P.P. Armeniern, 1818), pp. 333–34.

Karadžić implies that in the past the area had contained Serbian inhabitants, as is also suggested by his pointing out that village names are Serbian. It follows that the Vlach population cannot be indigenous, and that at some time in the past Vlachs had settled within Serbian territory. Although written when Krajina was not yet an integral part of the Serbian state, as it had only been under Serbian control for a short period, during the later stages of the First Serbian Uprising, Karadžić's historical representation of the area and its inhabitants' origins would remain dominant even later in the century, after the area was eventually annexed by Serbia (1833). Furthermore, the same interpretation would be extended to the Vlach-inhabited areas of Požarevac and Čuprija, regions that were part of the very core territory of the future Serbian state (see chapter 1).

With time, the basic plot suggested by Karadžić – Vlach immigration into traditionally 'Serbian territory' – was developed and enriched. Authors would suggest different supporting arguments backed by various historical facts. In fact, later authors strove to identify the key historical moments that had led to the Vlach immigration into 'Serbian lands', i.e. when and under what historical circumstances Serbs had abandoned these territories, and when and why the Vlachs had settled in the areas so vacated. At the same time, numerous efforts were made to prove that the contemporary Vlachs were not direct descendants of the Balkan 'Latins', or Latin-speaking population, which had inhabited the area before the arrival of the Slavs. It was imperative that any connection between the two groups was eliminated, to prevent any interpretation representing the Vlachs as an ancestral indigenous population of the area, which would automatically grant them the 'historical right' to the territories that Serbian authors wanted exclusively for their nation.

In the various historical reconstructions, the dates and key events that had led to Serbian emigration and subsequent Vlach immigration varied widely, but one tendency emerged, particularly in the second half of the nineteenth century: the placing of the Vlach immigration in the very recent past. According to Vladimir Jakšić, economist and founding father of Serbian statistics, both the Serbian emigration and the Vlach immigration dated from the late seventeenth century, at the time of and immediately after the so-called 'Great Serb Migration' led by patriarch Arsenije III Čarnojević (1690).¹⁴⁸ In his influential work *Serbia: A Description of the Land, People and State*

148 Владимир Якшич, *О племенном составе населения в Княжестве Сербском* (Санкт-Петербург: тип. Майкова, 1872), p. 20.

(1887) Vladimir Karić, geographer and author of a series of geography handbooks for primary and secondary schools, suggested that the population migration that had resulted in Vlachs settling in Serbian lands had occurred at an earlier date, in 1481. This was the year, according to Karić, in which fifty thousand Serbs, led by the Serbian despot Vuk Grgurević Branković, had been removed from Požarevac to the Austrian Empire. In this account, Vlach immigration into the Požarevac region, and even into other districts of the state notable for Vlach presence, started immediately after this event, although it only peaked in the last decades of the eighteenth century, continuing even during the first half of the nineteenth century.¹⁴⁹

The Vlach communities which, according to Karić, migrated to the Serbian territory in the early nineteenth century were the Vlachs from the Krajina region, the so-called Carans (see chapter 1). According to Karić's reconstruction, they had moved into Krajina from the Romanian principalities in 1832, when 'some kind of regulations' were introduced.¹⁵⁰ Remarkably, Karić puts forth his theory of such recent immigration by the Krajina Vlachs notwithstanding his familiarity with two important works that suggested a pre-1832 Vlach presence in Krajina. The first of these is Karadžić's earlier mentioned dictionary, and the second is the very influential *Principality of Serbia* (1876) by Milan Đ. Milićević, a book sponsored by the Ministry of Education.¹⁵¹ Milićević is the only author who devoted space to considering the Vlachs as an indigenous population of the Serbian state, by stating that in the Krajina district '[t]here are not only *indigenous* (*starinci*) Vlachs, but also [Vlachs] who are arrivals from Austria-Hungary and Romania'. Later in his text he identifies as indigenous Vlachs – of the area – the *Carans*, precisely those whose immigration Karić places after 1832.¹⁵²

Notwithstanding the authority Milićević enjoyed amongst later generations of the Serbian intelligentsia, no author endorsed his theory of the possible indigenous origin of some Vlach groups. On the contrary, when it came to demonstrating the Vlachs' lack of 'historical right' to the areas they inhabited, the theory went as far as questioning the very ethnicity of the Vlachs. In fact, a new reconstruction emerged,

149 Vladimir Karić, *Srbija, opis zemlje, naroda i države* (Belgrade: Kraljevsko-Srpska državna štamparija, 1887), pp. 93–94.

150 Karić, p. 94. Karić probably refers to the 'Organic Regulation', an organic law promoted by the Russian empire and adopted in Wallachia in July 1831 and in Moldavia in January 1832.

151 Milan Đ. Milićević (1831-1908): writer, politician and ethnographer. Was a government adviser and a member of the Serbian Academy since 1857 and its president in the period 1896-1899.

152 Milan Đ. Milićević, *Kneževina Srbija* (Belgrade: Državna štamparija, 1876), pp. 922, 1022.

maintaining that the Vlachs, or at least some of them, were originally Romanised Serbs. This theory was particularly developed within the Cvijić anthropogeographic school (see chapter 2) from the first decade of the twentieth century onwards, and was promoted by the same school until at least the early 1940s.¹⁵³ For instance, in his 1903 study *Mlava: The Anthropogeographic Studies*, Professor Ljubomir Jovanović writes that in the second half of the eighteenth century:

In this empty [Mlava] area, there was plenty of arable land which attracted the gradual immigration of families from Transylvania. These consisted in the first place of those families who had once fled from here [to Transylvania], and who after prolonged contacts with the Vlachs learned the Vlach language, but among them there was also a certain number of new [non-indigenous, i.e. Vlach] population.¹⁵⁴

Similarly, Professor Kosta Jovanović, in his work on the origins of the Krajina and Ključ populations, published in 1940, named one of the migration flows the 'Romanian-Serbian flow', explaining that this flow consisted of 'Romanians and Romanised Serbs'.¹⁵⁵

3.3. The Vlach 'Threat'

From the mid-nineteenth century onwards, the representation of Vlachs as newcomers into historically Serbian lands or as Romanised Serbs was coupled with an ever-increasing perception that they represented a serious threat to the Serbian nation and its vital interests. The main reason for the 'Vlach menace' was their alleged great capacity to assimilate Serbs. The very representation of Vlachs as Romanised Serbs, in the eyes of Serbian nationalists, provided a precedent that showed how the Vlach 'element' could easily assimilate ethnic Serbs. As a result, Serbian authors called for the

153 One author subscribing to this theory in the 1930's was Kosta Jovanović, 'Negotinska krajina i Ključ', *Naselja i poreklo stanovništva*, 29 (1940).

154 Ljubomir Jovanović, 'Mlava: antropogeografska proučavanja', *Naselja srpskih zemalja*, 2 (1903), 247–458 (p. 285).

155 Kosta Jovanović, 'Negotinska krajina i Ključ', *Naselja i poreklo stanovništva*, 29 (1940), p. 72.

state authorities to pay more attention to the Vlachs, and they insisted that the Vlach influence could be stopped only if the latter were assimilated in the Serbian nation. Therefore, the Vlachs' alleged assimilation skills and the threat they supposedly posed to the Serbian nation served as an ideological justification for the Vlachs' own assimilation into the Serbian people.

According to Triandafyllidou, the presence of groups perceived as a threat to the nation is an indispensable element in the nation-building process. In fact, as explained in chapter 1, Triandafyllidou argues that 'the identity of a nation is defined and/or re-defined through the influence of 'external' and 'internal' "significant others", namely other nations or ethnic groups that are perceived as threatening the nation, its distinctiveness, authenticity and/or independence'.¹⁵⁶ As far as nineteenth-century Serbian nation-building is concerned, the Ottomans undoubtedly counted as the most relevant 'external significant other', and the Vlachs and ethnic groups who lived within Serbia played the role of 'internal others', in opposition to whom the construction of Serbian identity took place. This 'othering' in relation to these minority groups was realised in very diverse circumstances. For instance, as a consequence of the progressive territorial enlargement of the Serbian state, some ethnic groups shifted from being 'external' to 'internal' significant others – as was the case with the Albanians in 1878 and 1912-13. The Vlachs, however, having been a constituent element of the Serbian state since its inception, could be considered one of the Serbians' very first 'internal significant others'.

As suggested earlier, representations of the Vlachs as a threat to the Serbian nation emerged only from the 1860s onwards. In fact, notwithstanding some colonial traits, such as reference to the poor hygiene and consequent poor health conditions in some Vlach communities, the few pre-1860s texts that dealt with the Vlachs overall represented them in rather positive terms. For instance, at the same time as describing the Vlachs of the *Porečka reka* district (an administrative sub-unit of the Krajina region) as '[people] of mild character and very affected by syphilis because of dirtiness and [their] inappropriate cure for scabies', Andrija Ivanović, in his *Description of the Krajina Region* (1853), also represents the Vlachs of *Ključ* district (another sub-unit of Krajina) as a 'friendly and diligent people, able to build fairly decent houses, used to cleanliness, capable of different types of livestock farming' and 'producers of good

¹⁵⁶ Triandafyllidou, p. 594.

wine'.¹⁵⁷

The 1860s shift in the representation of the Vlachs is linked to the pan-European transformation of nationalism which, as discussed in chapter 2, led to a stronger emphasis on language and its importance for both national unity and the very future of nation-states. In fact, the 'one state one language' model started to be considered the only viable option to guarantee the progress of a state and its (dominant) nation, and as such it gradually gained ground among the authorities of most European nations. This development led to the redefining of indigenous groups of different ethno-cultural backgrounds as ethnic minorities that undermined the very progress and realisation of both the nation and its state. Therefore, it is not surprising that it is precisely from the 1860s onwards that many European states turned their attention to ethnic minorities. For instance, Einar Niemi dates the beginning of the Swedish and Norwegian authorities' assimilation policies towards Finns from the northern areas of their states to the late 1860s.¹⁵⁸ Similar attitudes towards minorities are registered for the Hungarian part of the Dual Monarchy, active since its establishment in 1867 in the forced assimilation of non-Magyar ethnicities.¹⁵⁹

This new, nationalistically-biased perception of other ethnic groups was also based on some racist tenets. As Hobsbawm argues, in the second half of the nineteenth century the concept of race underwent a major transformation, as 'racial distinctions' moved beyond the traditional 'races' based on a skin colour, and began to be applied also to groups of different languages and cultures. In nationalist ideologies this development led to the inter-changeability of the terms 'race' and 'nation', and to the emergence of racist theories in nationalist discourses, concepts such as racial purity and the denunciation of miscegenation.¹⁶⁰

Theories about the degenerative influence that 'inferior' peoples had on the Serbian national character and body did not involve the Vlachs alone. In fact, as shown by Milosavljević, authors who wrote on Slavic-speaking Muslims and Albanians, both

157 Andrija Ivanović, 'Opisanje Okruga krajinskog od Dr. A. N. Ivanovića', *Glasnik Društva srpske slovesnosti*, 5 (1853), 227–53 (pp. 230, 235).

158 Einar Niemi, 'The Finns in Northern Scandinavia and Minority Policy', in *Ethnicity and Nation-Building in the Nordic World*, ed. by Sven Tägil (London: Hurst, 1995), pp. 145–78 (pp. 156–160).

159 Tibor Frank, 'Nation, National Minorities and Nationalism in Twentieth-Century Hungary', in *Eastern European Nationalism in the Twentieth Century*, ed. by Peter F. Sugar (Washington: The American University Press, 1995), pp. 205–42 (p. 233).

160 Hobsbawm, p. 108.

of whom inhabited the Serbian state or the territories the Serbian elites aspired to annex, expressed the same ideas that can be found in texts on the Vlachs. Slavic-speaking Muslims were seen as originally 'pure' Serbs whose character had been 'corrupted' by Islam and the Ottomans. A similar theory was posited about the Albanians, as it was widely believed that most of them were assimilated Serbs, who, notwithstanding the numerous negative characteristics acquired from 'true Albanians', still preserved some positive 'Serbian' features.¹⁶¹

Fear that the Serbian people would be assimilated by a 'lesser' people was not an exclusive characteristic of Serbian nationalist ideology. In fact, the same concern is to be found in numerous nationalistic and colonial discourses produced in the same period by other European authors. For instance, Willard Sunderland has found a similar fear of assimilation expressed in texts published in late imperial Russia. Sunderland demonstrates that the assimilation ('nativisation') of Russian colonists by native peoples in Siberia had been constant since the beginning of their settlement in these areas, in the early seventeenth century, and for most of the time was perceived as a mere 'cultural slippage'. However, in the second half of the nineteenth century this phenomenon was 'reconsidered and re-explained', with the 'nativisation' of Russians starting to be seen as 'an incidence of racial and cultural degeneration'.¹⁶² In her study of French Indochina and the Dutch Indies at the turn of the twentieth century, Ann Stoler has identified similar dynamics in the French and Dutch political and intellectual elites' growing concern about the effects of inter-racial unions and progeny on their countries' national and colonial projects.¹⁶³

In the Serbian authors' representation, the corrupting effects of the Vlachs on the Serbian nation could be partial, with the Serbs losing only some of their national traits; or it could be total, i.e. the complete assimilation of Serb-into-Vlach. This Vlach influence is discussed in the travelogue *The Lyceum Students' Trip through Serbia, Made in 1863* (1867), written by Kosta Popović, one of the students on this journey. The travelogue describes the Vlachs as a 'foreign element' who had already destroyed some

161 Olivera Milosavljević, *U tradiciji nacionalizma ili stereotipi srpskih intelektualaca XX veka o 'nama' i 'drugima'* (Belgrade: Helsinški odbor za ljudska prava u Srbiji; Zagorac, 2002), pp. 203–208, 221–223.

162 Willard Sunderland, 'Russians into Iakuts? "Going Native" and Problems of Russian National Identity in the Siberian North, 1870s–1914', *Slavic Review*, 55 (1996), 806–25 (p. 814).

163 Ann Stoler, 'Sexual Affronts and Racial Frontiers: European Identities and the Cultural Politics of Exclusion in Colonial Southeast Asia', in *Becoming National: A Reader*, ed. by Geoff Eley and Roland Grigor Suny (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), pp. 286–324.

of the most important features of Serbian identity. Discussing the area surrounding the town of Gradište (Požarevac region), the author concludes that '[a]fter the establishment of the foreign [Vlach] element, the most Slavic institutions disappeared: the *zadruga* and the father's authority within the family'. Later on, Popović even dubs the Vlachs a 'flood which Vlachified many Serbian villages'.¹⁶⁴

A similar portrait of the Vlachs exercising an active assimilation of the Serbs even appeared in more authoritative publications. For instance, in Dragoljub K. Jovanović's article on the Crna reka region, which was published in the *Herald of the Serbian Learned Society (Glasnik Srpskog učenog društva)*, in 1883. According to Jovanović,

This assimilation of Serbs by the Vlachs could be found everywhere that the Vlachs and Serbs lived in proximity, except in the areas where the Vlachs constituted a very small minority, as in the case of some villages of Smederevo region. Even today, here, in many Vlach villages of Crna reka, there are traces of Serbs and Serbian families who speak only every tenth word in Serbian, and even that is pronounced with a Vlach accent.¹⁶⁵

Most Serbian authors explain the Vlachs' ability to assimilate the non-Vlachs in essentialist terms, as a result of the specific psychological, cultural and physical features that characterised the Vlachs as a group. They were seen as strongly attached to their language and culture, although both these were seen as clearly inferior to the languages and cultures of other neighbouring peoples. Therefore, the Vlachs were perceived not only as resistant to the cultural influence of 'more cultured' nations, but also able, thanks to their intransigence, to corrupt and assimilate the latter.¹⁶⁶ According to the ethnographer Đorđević, Vlachs could resist Serbian influence because they were both 'more brutal, harsher and less cultured [than the Serbs]', and also 'physically very strong and healthy', all characteristics that, according to Đorđević, 'crushed any Serbian

164 Kosta Popović, *Put licejskih pitomaca (jestastveničkog odeljenja) po Srbiji, godine 1863* (Belgrade: Državna štamparija, 1867), pp. 8, 55. *Zadruga* was a traditional form of extended household typical for certain Serbian communities. In the nineteenth century, it was highly idealised by Serbian nationalists as a typical heritage and identity marker of Serbian people.

165 Dragoljub K. Jovanović, 'Crna reka', *Glasnik Srpskog učenog društva*, 54 (1883), 187–256 (p. 197).

166 Sreten J. Stojković, *Na lepom srpskom Dunavu od Beograda do Radujevca* (Belgrade: Štamparija Kraljevine Srbije 1893), p. 242; Joksir Nović-Otočanin, 'Porodica Karapanža od najnovijeg vremena', *Danica*, I (1860), 361–64 (p. 361).

influence'.¹⁶⁷

According to Serbian authors, the Vlachs' capacity to assimilate, although stemming from a strong attachment to their own language and culture, was neither a consequence nor evidence of an identity awareness on their part. On the contrary, this attachment was defined as 'innate' and 'instinctive', and therefore devoid of any consciousness, including a sense of the national or the ethnic. With Vlach resistance to assimilation downgraded to the status of an unconscious, instinctive reaction, the Vlachs themselves were classified as a childlike 'primitive' people who had not yet developed rationality. An observation made by Stevan Mačaj, a physician in the Crna reka region, clearly illustrates this discourse:

They [the Vlachs] preserve their language with an almost desperate exertion. [However,] [t]here is no reason to suspect that they are driven to do so by [some] national feeling [*osećanje narodnosti*] that they could be proud of, or that [behind this attitude] there could be some political aspiration or foreign agitation. The instinctive attachment they have to their language is the reason that so far this [Vlach] element [living] in Serbia has not diminished in a more consistent way, especially now when they do not live any more in compact settlements [...].¹⁶⁸

Serbian authors' insistence on the Vlachs' lack of, and incapacity to develop, a genuine ethnic or national identity was also propelled by their desire to legitimise the assimilation of the Vlachs into the Serbian nation. In fact, at a time when nation and nation-state were considered to be the only viable forms of community and organisation, people unable to develop a distinct national identity were thought not to have any prospect as communities, and therefore their assimilation was not seen as an objectionable policy, but rather as a positive development for the assimilated ethnic groups. As demonstrated by Milosavljević, a similar discursive attitude had been deployed towards the Albanians, who happened to inhabit 'the cradle' of the Serbian people, Kosovo, and who also stood in the way of Serbian aspiration to gain access to the Adriatic sea. Serbian territorial aspirations regarding these areas were justified by

167 Tihomir R. Đorđević, *Kroz naše Rumune: putopisne beleške* (Belgrade: Štamparija S. Nikolića, 1906), p. 66.

168 Stevan Mačaj, 'Crnorečki orkug', *Glasnik Srpskog učenog društva*, 73 (1892), 1–186 (p. 147).

the claim that the Albanians 'do not have the need to achieve their own state, nor the capacity to constitute a nation', and therefore, the 'benevolent colonisation influence' achieved through their annexation to the Serbian state would give them the opportunity to become civilised.¹⁶⁹

Serbian authors writing about the Vlachs would often urge the authorities to act to prevent the 'Vlach question' from being raised; this could do serious damage to Serbian national interests. Such warnings are frequently expressed in educational workers' correspondence with the minister of education. As early as 1884, less than two years after the introduction of compulsory education, Aćim Pivljaković, head teacher of Jagodina Gymnasium and supervisor responsible for primary schools in the Čuprija region, claims in his letter to the minister that the Vlach 'menace' (*napast*) had '[taken] such deep roots and spread so much, that in a short time all of the eastern half of Serbia will fall in its hands'. Moreover, he identifies primary education as the tool that could most successfully be used to fight against this 'evil' (*zlo*) and outlines what can be considered the core of the Serbian primary school policies towards the Vlachs throughout the following decades:

It's about time to find the rational cure for this evil [the Vlachs]. The only and the safest solution to it is, in my opinion, to open the highest number of schools possible, and to institute universal and compulsory attendance for both boys and girls in all schools in Vlach villages. In addition, a learning support teacher should be assigned to each of these schools to teach children in their first year of schooling only the Serbian language and literacy. [...] Finally, the very curriculum used in these schools will have to be different from the one used in the other schools [attended by the Serbian children], and the utmost attention should be given to the Serbian language, history and geography.¹⁷⁰

As analysed in more detail in chapter 4, in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, the Serbian primary school was considered, and therefore used as, the most suitable tool for assimilating the Vlachs. In fact, pursuing the principle of universal education, fostering girls' education, introducing a 'preparatory grade' as the

169 Milosavljević, *U tradiciji nacionalizma*, pp. 224–228.

170 Belgrade, Arhiv Srbije (AS), MPS P f. XII r. 137/1884.

first year of schooling dedicated exclusively to the acquisition of the Serbian language, and the adaptation of the curricula for the Vlach schools, all became real educational measures implemented in schools attended by Vlach children.

3.4. Vlach 'Backwardness'

The Vlachs alleged lack of national/ethnic consciousness was in Serbian texts coupled with a series of their other 'cultural shortcomings'. Disparate aspects of Vlach culture were seen by Serbian authors through the lens of 'backwardness'. The Vlach language, customs, religiosity and lifestyle were defined as both the causes and the effects of their 'primitivism' and moral 'degradation'. Hand in hand with these 'Orientalist' themes goes another: Serbian authors constantly insisted on the 'civilising mission' that the Serbian authorities, as representatives of a 'more civilised' nation, had a duty to exercise amongst the Vlachs. For the Serbian elites, the only acceptable way of doing this was to assimilate the Vlachs into the Serbian nation. Presented as 'rescuing' the Vlachs from their 'primitive' conditions, the 'civilising mission' had a much more pragmatic goal of preventing the Vlachs from developing a separate national identity and from advancing cultural and/or political demands: both prospects were seen as extremely dangerous and posing a threat to Serbian national interests.

In the texts here presented, Serbian culture features as a 'cure', a set of necessary cultural elements that could 'reintegrate the Vlachs in society so that they can be proud human beings and honest citizens'.¹⁷¹ The first step in the acquisition of Serbian identity is the adoption of the Serbian language, more 'advanced' in comparison to the Vlach idiom. Karić illustrates the necessity of promoting the Serbian language amongst the Vlachs as the first stage of the civilising process:

Illiterate, as they [the Vlachs] are, they do not feel the need to broaden their knowledge by learning Serbian, which is more advanced than their language. Since they rarely have contact with state authorities and institutions, [...] neither do they feel the need to learn Serbian as the official

¹⁷¹ Mačaj, p. 14.

language. On the other hand, [the Serbian authorities] have have never paid much attention to the Vlachs, in regard to this matter. It has not been thought that Vlachs will, after learning to speak both Vlach and Serbian, gradually abandon their mother-tongue and at a certain point adhere more strongly to Serbian, which is definitely much more useful to them, and which will ease their assimilation into the Serbs, – once it becomes familiar to them [...].¹⁷²

The focus on the adoption of the Serbian language as the first step on the path to civilising and assimilating the Vlachs is not surprising, given the fact that language was considered by the Serbian intelligentsia as the main national marker (see chapter 2). Given this, etymology was an argument often used by Serbian authors to demonstrate not only the terminological deficiency of the Vlach language but also, as mentioned earlier, the Serbian origins of the Vlachs. In fact, by stressing that Vlach contains many Serbian words, authors not only implied that Vlach was not viable as a language, and that therefore it was in the Vlachs' best interest to adopt Serbian, but they also reinforced the theory that maintained that the Vlachs were actually Romanised Serbs. Milićević (1876) claims that the two Vlach dialects, which he names *Caranski* and *Ogurjanski*, are 'full' of Serbian words, while Professor Jovanović (1903), who advanced the theory of the Vlachs as Romanised Serbs, describes the Vlach language of Mlava as a 'mixture of Vlach and Serbian words'.¹⁷³

A similar negative assessment is found concerning the religious sphere. The Vlachs' allegedly 'depraved' morality and 'aberrant' social conditions were frequently ascribed to their 'unorthodox' Christianity, as well as to their stubborn attachment to their traditional beliefs and rituals. In fact, Serbian authors often dwelt on the topic of the Vlachs' difficult relationship with the Serbian Orthodox Church. In one of his pastoral visit reports (1896), Melentije Vujić, the bishop of Crna reka, represents the Vlachs as '[...] such [a stubborn people] even in religion', who '[a]t the funeral ceremony or at weddings [...] more venerate their strange, non-Christian customs than the rituals of the Christian Church'.¹⁷⁴ A decade later, this view was reiterated by ethnographer Đorđević: 'Religiosity is almost completely unknown [to them]. They go to church only when it is required by their superstitious beliefs'.¹⁷⁵

172 Karić, pp. 210–211.

173 Milićević, *Kneževina Srbija*, p. 923; Jovanović, 'Mlava', p. 295.

174 Belgrade, Arhiv Srbije (AS), MPS C f. IV r. 15/1896.

175 Đorđević, *Kroz naše Rumune*, p. 55.

Concern with Vlach non-conformity to Serbian Orthodoxy stemmed from the close relationship between Serbian Orthodoxy and Serbian national identity. In fact, from the Serbian intelligentsia's perspective, the Serbian Orthodox Church was the institution that had preserved the identity of the Serbs throughout centuries of Ottoman domination, and the religion professed by its clergy was considered an integral part of Serbian national identity. Contemporary scholars of nationalism acknowledge the relevance of Serbian Orthodoxy in the construction of the Serbian national identity. Hobsbawm argues that the Serbian Orthodox Church contributed to the development and preservation of the Serbian pre-nineteenth century 'proto-national' identity, by keeping alive the memory of the old Serbian kingdom and by canonising Serbian medieval kings.¹⁷⁶

Bogdan Đurović goes even further by stressing the inextricable link between Serbian Orthodoxy and Serbian national identity. In his account, during the Ottoman domination the Serbian Orthodox Church incorporated into its corpus of knowledge, and adapted to Orthodox religious dogmas, the mythology of the Serbian 'glorious past' and its destruction by the 'infidels'. This 'merging of the sacred and profane' in Serbian Orthodoxy created 'an exceptionally strong feeling between the national and the confessional allegiance' among the Serbs.¹⁷⁷ While Đurović's attribution of national identity to pre-nineteenth century Serbs is questionable, it certainly grasps the relation between Serbian Orthodoxy and Serbian identity as perceived by nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century Serbian nationalists.

As identified by Đurović, Serbian Orthodoxy's 'profane' and mythical contents, which drew on a Serbian past, meant that in the nineteenth century being a member of the Serbian Orthodox Church not only required conformity to the general Christian Orthodox belief, but also the internalisation of and identification with core aspects of Serbian national identity. It is, therefore, clear that the specificities of Vlach Christianity represented not only a deviation in dogma, but also a failure to share and identify with the national dimension of the Serbian Church. By resisting adoption of the national content of Serbian Orthodoxy, the Vlachs were actually resisting assimilation into the Serbian community (see chapter 6).

¹⁷⁶ Hobsbawm, pp. 75–76.

¹⁷⁷ Đurović Bogdan, 'Orthodox Christianity and the Development of the Serbs in the Eighteenth Century', *Facta Universitatis – Series Philosophy and Sociology*, 2, 239–46 (p. 242).

The aforementioned observations about the Vlachs' attitude towards Serbian Orthodoxy are just one particular aspect of a broader evaluation of Vlach morality undertaken by Serbian authors. According to bishop Melentije, other 'sad conditions' of the Vlachs needed to be denounced. The Vlachs were 'morally, spiritually and physically' degraded, and amongst them, all manner of condemnable behaviours – 'perjury' (made even 'for a glass of brandy'), murders, thefts and fornication' – were rife.¹⁷⁸ The ethnographer Đorđević is not more lenient when writing about Vlachs (1906):

As to the physical and psychological characteristics of our [Serbia inhabiting] Rumanians, at this moment I am not able to express a correct and final judgment. I would not say that they are particularly bright and nimble. Neither they are brave or proud, but they are treacherous and spiteful. They are also reserved and greedy. One cannot find anything sublime or noble amongst them.¹⁷⁹

Notwithstanding Serbian authors' predominantly negative attitude towards the Vlachs, on some rare occasions they express a more positive opinion, or even challenge the dominant perception according to which Serbs living alongside the Vlachs are more cultured, or morally superior. For instance, when describing the alleged character and behavioural features of the Mlava district inhabitants, Professor Jovanović (1903) does not normally refer to their Serbian or Vlach ethnicity. Even when he does so in few occasions, his judgement favours the Vlachs: 'They [the Mlava population] are of good character, but sly. It is difficult to say who is more devious, whether those speaking Vlach, or those speaking Serbian. It seems that this characteristic prevails among the latter'.¹⁸⁰

In some instances the assessment of the Vlachs is contradictory. For instance, Mačaj balances negative opinions, some even denying the Vlachs human dignity, with more positive, although definitely not idealised, representations of them. He also sees the Vlachs as 'mild', 'kind-hearted', 'sincere', 'obliging', 'friendly' people and 'very moderate' fathers and husbands. Moreover, according to Mačaj, their 'intellectual

178 AS, MPS C f. IV r. 15/1896.

179 Đorđević, *Kroz naše Rumune*, p. 14.

180 Jovanović, 'Mlava', p. 296.

capabilities are not denied', 'they understand very fast, and they are able to develop knowledge and arts to a very high degree'. 'Believing in destiny, they humbly endure the troubles of life, but when offended or damaged, they would easily take revenge, which sometimes can be very cruel'. 'Taking into consideration their neglected education, they are surprisingly good citizens': In fact, as to their relationship with the authorities, they are 'modest' and 'obedient'.¹⁸¹

Milosavljević has identified a similar ambivalent attitude in contemporary Serbian texts about the Albanians, and concludes that the judgement tended to be exclusively negative when Albanians were evaluated in general, i.e. as a group juxtaposed to the Serbian nation. In contrast, when descriptions were the result of a Serbian author's personal experience with the Albanian people, opinions were mostly very positive.¹⁸² This analysis accords with Mačaj's representation: working as a physician in the Crna reka district, he had numerous interactions with the Vlachs, and thus, some positive experiences certainly took place. On the other hand, when thinking and writing as a Serbian patriot and civil servant, Mačaj perceived the Vlachs from the viewpoint of Serbian national ideology and interests. In this case, the existence of another group on Serbian national territory could only be seen as a potential threat, or as an 'other' against which to celebrate the imagined qualities of the Serbian nation.

3.5. Gendered Aspects of Serbian Discourses about Vlachs

Gender studies has frequently shown that nationalist ideologies, since their appearance, have been predicated on a certain perception of gender relations, both in terms of being influenced by them and by socially constructing them. In his study of masculinity, George L. Mosse defines both nationalism and masculinity as middle-class ideologies which developed at the same time and have been intertwined, since nationalism 'adopted the masculine stereotype as one means of its self-representation'.¹⁸³ The protagonists and leading symbols of nationalistic projects are 'men', and it is

181 Mačaj, p. 146.

182 Milosavljević, *U tradiciji nacionalizma*, pp. 230–231.

183 George L. Mosse, *The Image of Man: The Creation of Modern Masculinity* (Oxford University Press, 1998), p. 7.

according to their male viewpoint, understanding and interests that nationalistic politics, actions, definitions and discursive practices have been devised. This is echoed by Cynthia Enloe: 'nationalism typically has sprung from masculinized memory, masculinized humiliation and masculinized hope'. As to the women, they have been seen as 'supporting actors whose role reflects masculine notions of femininity and of the women's proper "place"'.¹⁸⁴ However, gendered stereotypes are not focused only on male and female positive ideals. In fact, the presumed bearers of the normative models of masculinity and femininity have also constructed negative gendered (male and female) stereotypes, targeting antagonistic ethnic groups as well as male and female members of the dominant group who did not fit into the group's gender models.¹⁸⁵

The Serbian long-nineteenth-century nation-building process is no exception to this global tendency. On the one hand, male and female roles within the Serbian community were re-constructed through the nationalist prism, while on the other, the perception and definition of different ethnic groups, including the Vlachs, were affected by the creation of negative gender stereotypes.

The features of the Serbian nineteenth-century ideal of masculinity matched those of the contemporary dominant European ideal. The latter, as Mosse demonstrated, was based on middle-class respectability and morality. As such, it depended on a tradition of 'moral imperative', on 'normative standards of appearance, behaviour, and comportment', typical of the middle classes.¹⁸⁶ This 'normative masculinity' included a series of so-called 'manly-virtues': 'willpower, honour, courage, discipline, competitiveness, quiet strength, stoicism, persistence [...] sexual virility tempered with restraint, and dignity [...]'.¹⁸⁷ The Serbian intelligentsia promoted some aspects of this new Western respectability, which it had become acquainted with through periods of education abroad or by borrowing scientific, political and cultural publications from the West (see chapter 2). Despite having been influenced by some aspects of Western European ideas of masculinity, the Serbian masculine ideal was promoted as traditionally Serbian and, as such, it presented its own specificities. Milosavljević has identified martyrdom, heroism and love of freedom as the most dominant Serbian self-

184 Cynthia H. Enloe, *Bananas, Beaches and Bases: Making Feminist Sense of International Politics*, 2nd ed. (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 2000), p. 45.

185 Mosse, *The Image of Man*, pp. 13, 56–57.

186 Mosse, *The Image of Man*, p. 8.

187 Joane Nagel, 'Masculinity and Nationalism: Gender and Sexuality in the Making of Nations', *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 21 (1998), 242–69 (p. 245).

representation stereotypes, but several other qualities, appeared alongside them: tolerance, hospitality, morality, honesty, intelligence and pride.¹⁸⁸

Diametrically opposed to ideal Serbian man stood, according to Serbian authors, the Vlach. The ethnographer Đorđević (1906) presents the national characteristics of the Vlach male and Vlachs as an ethnic group, as the antithesis of the model Serbian male:

Generally, humaneness, morality, ethics and all that which – being noble – characterises a man and a nation [*narod*], is not appreciated amongst the Vlachs. It is well known, what kind of soldiers the Vlachs were in our wars. What repelled them from fighting and made them cowards was not the conviction that they should not die for the Serbs. No, it is an animal cowardice, the lack of soldierly pride and chivalry [that did so]. Just as they were cowards in battle, so they were equally cowards in supporting the punishments that were inflicted on them.¹⁸⁹

In Đorđević's account courage is directly linked to a series of 'noble' features that are intrinsic both to 'men' as individuals, and to the nation collectively. Lacking these characteristics, which were understood to complement courage, Vlachs were seen not only as less than 'true men', but, collectively, as an incomplete, degenerate people lacking the basic moral precepts each nation should contain.

In some Serbian narratives the Vlachs' lack of courage was represented as a feature that had, even in the past, characterised this community. The claim that the Vlachs did not have an epic poetry of their own was used to support this idea. Apart from being used as a proof of Vlach disinterest in the 'male' deeds normally celebrated in the epic, the absence of this sort of poetry also implied that the Vlachs had no heroic past, the only valid national past to be narrated. Not having a heroic past, especially in relation to the territories the Vlachs inhabited, strengthened the dominant perception that the Vlachs had no historical right to these territories. In other words, the Vlachs had no historic memory linked to the areas they inhabited, which would make these areas their historic homeland.

Epic poetry was as relevant for Serbian historiography of the time as it was in

188 Milosavljević, *U tradiciji nacionalizma*, pp. 131–148.

189 Đorđević, *Kroz naše Rumune*, p. 55.

the construction of Serbian national identity. In fact, as Slavenko Terzić has demonstrated, in nineteenth-century Serbia, the authors of history and geography books drew heavily on the popular tradition, especially epic poetry, to the extent that two genres, scientific literature and epic, were complementary.¹⁹⁰

The first reference to an alleged absence of epic poetry in the Vlach tradition can be found in Milićević's work from 1876. He states that '[t]he Vlachs have no heroic [*junačkih*] songs', and that those they have deal 'with the pleasant moments from life and youth, and sometimes [they sing] about nature'.¹⁹¹ In 1906, the ethnographer Đorđević writes that he cannot find any heroic songs among the Vlachs 'as if they had completely disappeared', although he states that he has heard about their existence.¹⁹² Milićević's and Đorđević's understanding of poetry draws on Vuk Karadžić's classification, which had divided the entire opus of Serbian poetic production into 'male' or 'heroic' and 'female' songs. The former category included epic poetry, while the latter encompassed lyric and all other forms of poetry.

Karadžić's gendered division of poetry in 'male' and 'female' was based on both the content and the performers' gender, as well as on their assumed characteristics. The performers of 'heroic' songs were mostly middle-aged or old men, who sang 'heroic' poetry accompanied by the music of the *gusla* [a one-string instrument], while 'female' poetry was 'sung by women and girls, but also by men, especially young ones'. However, Karadžić himself stresses that 'male' songs could be performed by women, as was common in the regions of Bosnia-Herzegovina, Montenegro and southern Serbia, where women are 'stronger' and 'think more about heroism than about love'. On the other hand, Karadžić attributes the dearth of heroic songs amongst the Serbs of northern Serbia to the 'softness' of the males in these areas.¹⁹³

The presence of epic poetry was, thus, linked to the character of the people: 'Soft' characters, typically assumed to be feminine, produced 'female' poetry, while 'strong', masculine characters produced epic poetry. Karadžić distinguished the Serbian-inhabited areas where heroism was dominant (Bosnia-Herzegovina, south of Serbia,

190 Slavenko Terzić, 'Istorijsko-geografska znanja o Srbima', in *Dva veka obrazovanja u Srbiji: obrazovne i vaspitne ideje i ličnosti u Srbiji od 1804. do 2004.*, ed. by Zoran Avramović (Belgrade: Institut za pedagoška istraživanja; Čigoja štampa, 2005), pp. 205–12 (p. 205).

191 Milićević, *Kneževina Srbija*, p. 930.

192 Đorđević, *Kroz naše Rumune*, p. 57.

193 Vuk Stefanović Karadžić, *Narodne srpske pjesme. Knj. 1, u kojoj su različne ženske pjesme* (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Ertl, 1824), i, pp. XVII–XIX.

Montenegro) from those where people were less concerned with heroic deeds (northern Serbia, i.e. the core territory of the Principality of Serbia). Although epic poetry was not a feature of all Serbian communities, the Serbian intelligentsia nevertheless regarded courage to be a trait common to all Serbs.

The feminisation of the 'inferior people' has been part and parcel of colonial discourse since the early stages of colonialism. In fact, numerous studies have uncovered the same discursive patterns produced about indigenous populations from all over the globe, wherever colonisation took place, from the Spanish colonies in America to the late-nineteenth-century Empires, and explained the use of this discursive practice primarily as a way of justifying and reaffirming the rule of the coloniser over the colonised.¹⁹⁴

Another feature deemed to be typical of the Vlachs and often insisted upon is widespread sexual promiscuity, seen as the main factor of Vlach immorality. One widespread stereotype was the representation of Vlachs as unfaithful spouses, disrespectful towards marriage and unchaste during their youth. 'There are two passions they [the Vlachs] cannot control' – wrote the physician Mačaj – 'prurience and addiction to strong spirits. In this regard they are true descendants of their ancestors, who worshipped Bacchus and Venus'.¹⁹⁵

Although Mačaj judged Vlach men to be good and gentle husbands, he also remarked that they did not attribute much importance to marital fidelity. The author also suggested that a strategic purpose lay behind the purported Vlach custom of marrying young men to much older women: it gave the men, once they had reached their 'prime', an excuse to engage in relationships with younger girls, because by that time their wives would look like 'grandmothers'.¹⁹⁶ Therefore, according to Mačaj, in Vlach culture, promiscuity could in some ways be considered an integral part of the marriage system.

The connection between immoderate alcohol consumption and indulgence in amoral sexual activities was not an exclusive characteristic of Vlach men. In fact,

194 See, for instance, Mrinalini Sinha, *Colonial Masculinity: The 'Manly Englishman' and The 'Effeminate Bengali' in the Late Nineteenth Century* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995); Laura A. Lewis, 'The "Weakness" of Women and the Feminization of the Indian in Colonial Mexico', *Colonial Latin American Review*, 5 (1996), 73–94 <<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/10609169608569878>>.

195 Mačaj, p. 146.

196 Mačaj, pp. 148, 161.

according to the ethnologue Đorđević, even women 'go to the tavern as soon as they get some money' and 'they continue drinking until they have spent all their money, and until they get so drunk they indulge in things that one [for decency's sake] cannot write about'. In dominant Serbian representations, Vlach women indulge in sexual promiscuousness even when sober, a characteristic that Đorđević believed to be shared by the entire female Vlach population:

Amongst our Rumanians it is not unusual to see a wife leaving her husband for another man and then returning again to him. Morality amongst them is at the lowest level. There is no honest woman, girl, and nor thirteen-years-old youngster. All kinds of prostitution are present. If a brother prostitutes his sister, or a mother her daughter it is not seen as a sin or as something to be ashamed of.¹⁹⁷

Alongside the immorality of Vlach adults, Serbian authors also denounced that of Vlach youth. For instance, the teacher Nikola Stojanović (1884) mentions an 'amoral' custom of the Vlachs of the village of Jasikovo, dubbed *sigranje* ('to play'), which consisted in permitting young unmarried couples, who – in Stojanović's words – 'love each other', a certain degree of intimacy, approved by their parents. During village festivals, these young couples, dressed in their best clothes, would look for a secluded spot where they could 'kiss for a half an hour, one hour and even two hours'; then, 'red in face and full of bites, hand in hand, they would join the dance'. Another occurrence at such events was that 'more than one girl passe[d] through the arms of one boy'. This custom was, in Stojanović's opinion, so deeply rooted that 'it would resist the efforts of a legion of perfect moralists'.¹⁹⁸

The “endemic promiscuity” of the Vlachs clashed with both the male and female bourgeois ideal to which the Serbian intelligentsia subscribed. (Self-)control over one's sexuality and passions was one of the main features of the European middle-class masculinity stereotype, while, according to the same stereotype, women – as embodiment of the nation – were primarily characterised by their innocence and chastity.¹⁹⁹ Although extensively used by nineteenth-century European authors, the

197 Đorđević, *Kroz naše Rumune*, pp. 55–56.

198 Nikola Stojanović, 'Iz učiteljskog Sibira', *Učitelj*, 1884, 327–29 (p. 327).

199 Mosse, *The Image of Man*, pp. 48, 98.

sexualised perception of the 'Other' was not a discursive strategy invented by the nineteenth-century European bourgeoisie. On the contrary, older textual sources suggest that this topic had been a long-established tradition in the European production of knowledge even before this period. For instance, Sander L. Gilman demonstrates that the depiction of black people as lustful had taken place as early as medieval times, and that by the eighteenth century this perception had become 'an icon for a deviant sexuality'. However, Gilman also recognises the nineteenth-century authors' contribution to the topic of sexualised perception of 'Others'. He argues that during this century the theme of human sexuality became an integral part of cultured discourse.²⁰⁰

The Vlachs' alleged sexual promiscuity, which was used, together with other expressions of Vlach 'backwardness', as an excuse for the need to 'civilise' them by assimilating them into the 'more cultured' Serbian nation, was only one of a range of gendered perceptions produced by Serbian authors to serve this 'civilising purpose'. The most important perception of this kind was that of Vlach women as bearers and guardians of Vlach identity, who unless tackled, would undermine the whole assimilation project. Attributing the role of national or ethnic identity carrier to women is part and parcel of the nationalist discourse. In fact, as Nira Yuval-Davis argues, being 'the biological "producers" of children/people, women are also, therefore, "bearers of the collective" within the national boundaries'.²⁰¹ This perception of women led the Serbian intelligentsia to pursue two contrasting policies vis-à-vis the education of girls. While on the one hand they aimed at providing Serbian girls with a primary education in a truly 'Serbian spirit', in order to assure the continuity of Serbian identity, on the other hand, they aimed at undermining the culture transmitted to Vlach girls by their communities, in order to stall the continuity of the Vlach identity.

The *topos* of Vlach women as carriers of Vlach identity was particularly present in documents produced by educational workers. In his annual report of 1883, the school supervisor of Krajina, Milenko Marković, described Vlach women as the 'cornerstone on which Romanianism sleeps soundly'.²⁰² Shortly later, in 1887, his Mlava region colleague, Jovan Miodragović, in line with the perception of the Vlachs as a threat, speaks in his report of Vlach women as those who can be held responsible for both

200 Sander L. Gilman, *Difference and Pathology: Stereotypes of Sexuality, Race, and Madness* (London: Cornell University Press, 1985), pp. 79–81.

201 Nira Yuval-Davis, *Gender and Nation* (London: SAGE, 1997), p. 26.

202 Belgrade, Arhiv Srbije (AS), MPS P f. XLVI r. 102/1883.

Vlach resistance to assimilation into Serbian culture and the assimilation of members of Serbian communities into those of the Vlachs:

The Vlach women are particularly resistant to Serbisation. This is confirmed by our well-known saying: “For a Vlach bride it is easier to Vlachify an entire household than to learn one word of Serbian”. And in fact, one cannot find a Vlach woman who speaks Serbian, in either Vlach or Serbian villages. We cannot tolerate this situation any longer, if we do not wish, one day, for the 'Vlach question' to arise in the middle of our country, causing problems to both our internal and foreign policy.²⁰³

The recognition of Vlach girls' upbringing and education as matters of national interest led to the employment of specific measures to contain their influence. Given the predominantly peasant and patriarchal environment in which Vlach women lived, they had little opportunity to interact with state institutions. They were not affected by military service, during which the majority of Vlach males did learn some Serbian, and even in everyday life they hardly ever had any contact with the state authorities. As standard in patriarchal cultures, Vlach women were relegated to the private sphere of the household, while the public sphere was dominated by Vlach men.

Given the lack of other options and the general Enlightenment-inspired belief in the almost miraculous power of education to transform society, it seemed an obvious choice to use primary school as a tool to tackle the 'bearers' of the Vlach identity. The notion that schooling was the most suitable way to annihilate the female-transmitted Vlach culture resulted in educational workers and other civil servants proposing numerous recommendations concerning the need to intensify the education of Vlach girls. These recommendations, as demonstrated in chapter 4, did not fall on deaf ears, and from the beginning of the 1890s they were implemented into educational policy.

203 Belgrade, Arhiv Srbije (AS), MPS P f. V r. 214/1887.

3.6. Conclusion

During the long-nineteenth century the Serbian intelligentsia produced discourses about the Vlachs that were heavily influenced by the developments that took place within Serbian nationalist ideology. The entrenchment, from the 1860s onwards, of the view that the Serbian state should only consist of ethnic Serbs was challenged on the ground by the conspicuous presence of Vlach communities in the country's north-eastern regions. This discrepancy between an ideal ethnic homogeneity and a demographic reality of ethnic heterogeneity generated the production of numerous themes and theories aimed at delegitimising the Vlach presence as a distinct ethnic group. The ultimate aim of this delegitimation strategy was to justify the assimilation policies which the Serbian state authorities intended to – and later actually did – deploy, towards this minority.

One of the oldest and most frequently used discursive strategies against the Vlachs was to represent the latter as newcomers and/or intruders into the Serbian lands. By doing so, the Serbian intelligentsia not only negated the Vlachs' right to the territories they inhabited, but also defined these territories and the events related to them as belonging to the Serbian collective national memory. However, the Serbian assimilation process was not sufficiently justified by the mere claim that the territories inhabited by the Vlachs were part of what was considered the historical homeland of the Serbian nation. Therefore, additional stereotypes regarding the Vlach communities were devised and introduced. The Vlachs were, thus, represented as a threat to the Serbian nation not only because of their alleged capacity to assimilate sections of the Serbian population into their culture, but also because in the future they might forward demands for cultural rights of their own. The assimilation of the Vlachs was further supported by turning to typical colonial and racialising themes, depicting the Vlachs as uncivilised, morally depraved, unable to govern themselves, and therefore in need of Serbian leadership or a Serbian civilising mission.

What furthermore characterises the dominant representations of the Vlachs advanced by the Serbian cultural and political elites, is the fact that they often contain not only recommendations to the political establishment to deal more robustly with the Vlach 'threat', but also suggestions on what kind of measures to employ in order to

neutralise it. With no exception, all these texts single out the primary school as the most suitable institution with which to achieve Vlach assimilation. Moreover, many texts, especially those written by educational workers, contain very detailed suggestions on the educational policy strategies to be applied in the schools attended by Vlach children. This means that the assimilationist educational policies which were subsequently introduced in the Vlach areas, were, in fact, often originally conceived by teachers and school supervisors, i.e. rank-and-file representatives of the Serbian educational system on the periphery, rather than those in charge of the system in the centre.

CHAPTER 4: Serbian Primary School in the Vlach Environment – Between Education and Serbisation

4.1. Introduction

Most studies of the development of the Serbian education system in the 'long-nineteenth century' approach education as both an integral part of the broader process of modernisation of Serbian society and as the means of promoting it. Serbian scholars who have dealt with the connection between education and modernisation, such as Ljubinka Trgovčević and Arsen Đurović, subscribe to the modernisation theory elaborated by Dietrich Rueshemeyer as adapted by the historian Frank-Michael Kuhlemann. In his study of the modernisation of the Prussian educational system in the period 1749-1872, Kuhlemann has applied Rueshemeyer's theory of 'partial modernisation', according to which the adoption of modern norms and values does not necessarily imply the abandonment of traditional aspects of society, but rather allows the coexistence of the two.²⁰⁴ Therefore, both Trgovčević and Đurović investigate the transformation of the Serbian school system primarily from the perspective of the tension between modernisation efforts, on the one hand, and Serbian traditional values and norms with which this modernisation had to come to terms, on the other.²⁰⁵

Studies of the nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century Serbian educational system generally overlook ethnic minorities and their role as catalysts of some specific trends in the development of the education system. In fact, apart from a work on the Sephardic Jews (see chapter 1), existing studies do not investigate how the presence of national minorities influenced the priorities of, and the direction taken by, Serbian primary schooling. Against such a historiographical backdrop, this chapter aims to

204 Frank-Michael Kuhlemann, *Modernisierung und Disziplinierung: Sozialgeschichte des preussischen Volksschulwesens 1794-1872* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1992); Dietrich Rueschemeyer, 'Partial Modernisation', in *Explorations in General Theory in Social Science: Essays in Honor of Talcott Parsons*, ed. by Jan Loubser and others (New York: Free Press, 1976), II, 756–72.

205 Trgovčević, 'Obrazovanje', pp. 217–32; Đurović, *Modernizacija obrazovanja*, pp. 33–34.

demonstrate that some features of the Serbian primary education system that are generally interpreted as evidence of its precocious modernisation, were actually primarily introduced as elements of the assimilationist project targeting the Vlach minority. This reinterpretation is achieved by highlighting which allegedly modernisation-boosting measures were actually conceived by of the Serbian educational authorities as part of an assimilation policy for the Vlach minority, and by investigating how the assimilationist aspiration of the Serbian authorities towards this minority influenced the course and aspects of these policies.

The analysis suggested in this chapter is based mostly on unpublished archive sources or primary published sources such as contemporary periodicals. The chapter first examines the character of the educational policies drawn up for and implemented in the Vlach-inhabited areas as defined by the Serbian authorities, as well as the legislative documents which were crucial for laying the foundations of these policies. Subsequently, it analyses the organisational specificities of the schools established in Vlach communities. The focus will be on how school organisation in these communities was related, on the one hand, to the assimilation task the schools were meant to play among the Vlachs, and, on the other, to the general character of educational policies as they were applied nationwide, i.e. in Serbian-speaking areas. This will be examined in three different sections, dedicated to the preparatory grade, girls' schools and extended schools respectively.

4.2. The Basic Precepts of the Education of the Vlachs

As already discussed in chapter 2, the late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century Serbian authorities both perceived and conceived of primary schooling as inextricably linked to the achievement of two main 'national goals': 'national unity' or ethno-cultural homogeneity within the Serbian state and the liberation and unification of all Serbs into a Greater Serbian state. Although the understanding of education as instrumental in pursuing and supporting these national goals influenced the character of the educational policies on a nation-wide scale, it was in the context of the education of ethnic minorities – especially the Vlachs, given their numeric size and strategic

geographical distribution (see chapter 1) – that the nationalising role of schooling received the authorities' major attention and application.

Serbian educational workers of the period had no doubt that the schooling of the Vlachs was primarily an issue of national interest and security, and that, as such, its tasks and outlook could not be the same as in Serbian-inhabited areas. When it came to the Vlachs, primary school was in the first place tasked with eradicating the Vlach culture and language. This aim was not a secret, or something left to be intuited by the teachers and school supervisors: it was an openly declared aim and discussed in numerous official documents of the time.

Describing the nationalising purpose of schools in Vlach-inhabited areas, many nineteenth-century authors would use not only relatively neutral expressions, such as 'national interest' or 'national tasks', but also terms that are more explicit. For instance, in 1883, Nikola Stojanović, a teacher in the Vlach village of Jasikovo, published in the journal *Teacher* a two-part article titled *Serbisation and school organisation*, in which he openly suggested how to reform schools in Vlach-inhabited areas in order to make the process of Serbisation more efficient.²⁰⁶ More than two decades later, in his 1906 report, the supervisor of the Boljevac-district schools draws the Ministry of Education's attention to the fact that in his jurisdiction primary schools 'are not able to destroy the Vlach culture, no matter how well they are organised', unless other state institutions join the assimilation effort.²⁰⁷

These authors show how in Vlach areas primary schooling was chiefly conceived of as an assimilation tool, and as such it involved the implementation of specific educational measures which were deemed more effective in fostering this assimilation than other measures, even though these measures sometimes clashed with contemporary educational and pedagogical precepts. In other words, when it came to the Vlach pupils, education often gave way to assimilation. This approach can be also illustrated by the 1896 report of the school supervisor of the Boljevac and Timok districts:

Today, Europe-wide primary education is twofold: it either spreads a general

206 Nikola Stojanović, 'Srbiziranje i organizacija škola', *Učitelj*, 1883, pp. 87–90; 102–6.

207 Belgrade, Arhiv Srbije (AS), MPS P f. 70 r. 47/1906.

intellectual and moral progress among the mass of population, or it is linked to national education [which consists of] making and strengthening a certain nation. It is to this second type that our primary schooling belongs. However, in our eastern and north-eastern regions the primary school programme should be even more Serbian than it has been so far, [b]ecause I think that the main educational task will be achieved in these areas [only] when the Serbian language will be the only [spoken] language there.²⁰⁸

The Boljevac and Timok districts supervisor not only recognises that Serbian primary schooling is in the first place regarded as a nationalising education, as opposed to a more neutral or knowledge-oriented schooling, but he also appeals for the adoption of an even 'more Serbian' curriculum in the areas inhabited by the Vlachs. This 'more Serbian' curriculum should focus on teaching the Serbian language, to replace Vlach with Serbian: the linguistic assimilation of the Vlachs was, according to the supervisor, and the Serbian intelligentsia of the time (see chapter 2 and 3), the ultimate educational aim where the Vlach inhabited areas were concerned. Understanding the schooling of Vlach children as primarily an assimilationist project which would lead to the cultural and linguistic homogeneity of the country, led to the main educational role of primary schooling in Vlach-inhabited areas often being reduced to little more than ensuring the successful acquisition of the Serbian language.

As discussed in chapter 2, the Serbian authorities' approach to the education of the Vlach minority did not differ from the general European trend which, apart from few exceptions, was equally illiberal and assimilationist when it came to ethnic minorities. The Serbian authorities chose to refuse the Vlachs any minority educational rights, and even prevented and discouraged any initiative to demand these rights (see chapter 6). In fact, it was thought that strengthening Vlach culture could only represent a threat to Serbian national interests (see chapter 1 and chapter 3) and undermine the desired national unity.

This treatment of the Vlachs does not mean that the Serbian authorities ignored the fact that certain European minorities enjoyed some degree of cultural rights. In fact, they were rather familiar with the phenomenon, as their co-nationals who dwelt in the Hungarian part of the Dual Monarchy were granted cultural autonomy, even though the

208 Belgrade, Arhiv Srbije (AS), MPS P f. XIX r. 1/1896.

Hungarian government was starting to pursue an assimilationist policy, reducing the pluralism it had inherited from Austro-Hungarian policies.²⁰⁹ Moreover, the Serbian government itself was actively engaged in safeguarding the cultural rights of ethnic Serbs within the Ottoman Empire, and, internally, it allowed some urban ethno-confessional minorities to maintain schools in which the medium of instruction was not Serbian. For example, German was used alongside Serbian in Evangelical and Catholic private schools in Belgrade.²¹⁰

4.3. The Legislative Basis of the Assimilationist Educational Policies for the Vlachs

The assimilationist character of Serbian primary schooling in Vlach-inhabited areas was evident from the early years of the Serbian principality, but it was not until the achievement of Serbian independence in 1878 that more intense and organised assimilationist educational policies were enacted. In the early years of the Serbian principality (1830s), the assimilationist tendency of the Serbian educational policies towards the Vlachs was primarily expressed in the act of prohibition of the traditional religious schooling imparted by Vlach-speaking priests, and their replacement with the Serbian primary school system. No study has been published on the cultural aspects of the Vlach communities of Krajina prior to its annexation by the Serbian state (1833), but an insight into this subject can be found in an article written in 1882 by a Serbian teacher, Pera Dimić. Dimić's article operates primarily as a critique of the methodological and pedagogical shortcomings of the Serbian educational system in the schools attended by Vlach children, but the text also gives a short description of the schooling dynamics in the area both before and after its annexation by the Serbian state.

Dimić states that before 1833 almost each village in Krajina had its own school, where Vlach was the language of instruction. These were private schools, mainly dedicated to training future priests and they did not provide regular lessons. Dimić also mentions what could be defined as the cultural centres of the area, as towns like

209 Zoltán Szász, 'Inter-Ethnic Relations in the Hungarian Half of the Austro-Hungarian Empire', *Nationalities Papers*, 24 (1996), 391–408 <<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/00905999608408455>>.

210 Protić, 'Naše narodno prosvjećivanje', p. 461.

Kladovo, 'ostrvo Korbova' (Ostrovul Corbului – nowadays in Romania) and Džanjevo are presented as places where 'more educated' priests would reside and instruct those 'who would like to advance in their learning'. The author also states that many would continue their education in other localities of the Wallachian principality, information that implies the existence of a local and regional Vlach cultural network, linked to centres in the principality of Wallachia. Shortly after the annexation of Krajina by Serbia (1833), local schooling came under the Serbian authorities' control, and adopted the curriculum in use in the rest of the country.²¹¹ This curriculum, originally created for Serbian-speaking children, posed immediate practical and methodological problems to teachers employed in Vlach villages. Notwithstanding the inadequacy of this and subsequent national curricula for the instruction of Vlach-speaking children, and the lack of a properly devised method of teaching Serbian to Vlach children, the Serbian authorities never considered the option of the use of Vlach as an auxiliary language of instruction.²¹²

The year Serbia gained its independence (1878) represents a watershed moment in the crystallisation and definition of the policies of assimilation through schooling. From this date onwards, when elaborating the educational policies for the Vlachs, the motivating concern was that of Serbian national unity primarily envisaged as the linguistic homogeneity of its population. The urge to assimilate the Vlachs for the sake of Serbian national unity was therefore translated into intense legislative activity aimed at transforming the educational system in Vlach-inhabited areas into a more efficient assimilation tool.

Indicative of the post-1878 increased perception of the usefulness of primary schooling for the assimilation of the Vlachs, and its subsequent deployment for this purpose, are the quantitative and qualitative characteristics of the archival sources dealing with the education of Vlach children. While there are only two still extant pre-1878 ministerial directives pertaining to the schooling of Vlachs, after 1878 there is a sharp increase in number. As to content, the pre-1878 directives are mostly concerned with pedagogical and methodological aspects of teaching the Serbian language, while

211 Pera Dimić, 'Nekoliko reči o školama u istočnom kraju Srbije', *Učitelj*, 1882, 213–16, 228–32, 244–47 (p. 215).

212 Some documents suggest that certain teachers would rely on Vlach in the process of teaching Serbian to the Vlach children. They would learn some Vlach and use it to explain the meaning of new Serbian words. However, this practice was not approved by the authorities.

the focus of post-1878 legislative sources shifts towards an explicit preoccupation with the 'national task' of primary school in relation to the Vlachs.

The first of the two pre-1878 ministerial documents, the confidential ministerial directives dated 17 August 1859 sent to the supervisor of the primary schools of Krajina, demonstrates clearly the predominantly pedagogical character of the approach. The instructions are in effect ministerial advice on how to solve the Vlach children's major learning problems, that is, their merely memorising texts from books without understanding their content. In order to 'eliminate' this 'practice, that is damaging for both children, who in this way only waste their time, and parents, who in vain spend money on their children's education', and in order to ensure that the children 'benefit from what they learn', the minister of education suggested a different approach. Teachers were invited to teach some rudiments of oral Serbian (mostly single words and simple examples of communication), before using the primer. In this document, the only non-pedagogic instruction which could be interpreted as having a nationalist connotation is the minister's exhortation to teachers 'not to miss out any opportunity to convincingly explain that for them [the Vlach children], as Serbian citizens, it is of great importance to know Serbian'.²¹³

The stress on the link between citizenship and language was in line with the contemporary pan-European trend, which saw a growing tendency to identify nation with a language (see chapter 2). However, in the texts there are no references to the Vlachs as a 'threat' to Serbian national interests, a topic that, as demonstrated in chapter 3, would become a leitmotif in the documents produced from 1860s onwards.

Of a similar nature was the second pre-1878 ministerial document, issued in 1870. Authored by the minister of education and religious affairs, Dimitrije Matić, this document was envisaged as a set of guidelines for teachers who had to introduce Vlach children to the use of the new primer, published in the same year. The latter, written by Đorđe Natošević, was the first Serbian primer to use Karadžić's reformed Serbian language. Matić's instructions remained the valid legislative reference for teachers working with Vlach pupils throughout most of the period covered by this research, as they were proposed again in 1882 as teaching-method instructions for the preparatory grade (see below).

213 Dimić, 'Nekoliko reči o školama', p. 216. Belgrade, Arhiv Srbije (AS), MPS P f. II r. 135/1871.

The content of the two pre-1878 ordinances is strongly at odds with the content of their counterparts issued after that date, when defining 'the national task' of schooling for the Vlachs became the central topic these directives revolved around. Special attention in this chapter is dedicated to three directives issued in the early 1880s, as they represent the basis of the educational policies adopted by the Serbian authorities in Vlach areas for the rest of the period under consideration. By adapting the existing national curriculum and school organisation to meet the proclaimed 'national role' of primary school as it was conceived for Vlach children, these directives gave an official character to the assimilationist educational policy in Vlach-inhabited areas.²¹⁴

Only one of these documents, dated 23 September 1882, made reference to the schools of both Vlach areas and those of the newly annexed south-eastern territories inhabited, as explained in chapter 2, by a population speaking Slavic vernaculars akin to Bulgarian. The remaining two directives, of 12 September 1882, and 20 July 1884 respectively, focused exclusively on the schools in Vlach-speaking areas. This suggests that in the light of the integration and assimilation process, the Vlachs, as a Romance speaking population, were deemed much more problematic than Slavic-speaking populations who, notwithstanding their linguistic affinity with Bulgarian, were still considered as Serbs by the Serbian authorities.

In the schools within Vlach localities, Serbian was given even more attention than it was prescribed by the national curriculum, which, as stated in chapter 2, already allocated a high number of weekly hours to the teaching of Serbian. The directives of 23 September 1882 not only defined the teaching of Serbian as the principal path to achieving the 'national unity' in the areas where the vernacular differed significantly from the Serbian literary language (see chapter 2), but they also encouraged teachers in the linguistically-problematic south-eastern areas of the country to dedicate even more time to the teaching of the Serbian language. These directives did not specify a precise number of additional hours, but they did promise 'a special consideration' for those teachers who succeeded in fulfilling the programme requested for the subject of the Serbian language. In fact, the directives guaranteed that the teachers who attained good results in the Serbian language would be exempted from any penalty if they did not meet expected levels in all other subjects – except for mathematics.²¹⁵ Such a privilege

214 No.7,454 of 23 September 1882; no. 7,320 of 12 September 1882, and no. 6,191 of 20 July 1884.

215 *Prosvetni zbornik zakona i naredaba*, ed. by Mil. Marković and Zar. R. Popović (Belgrade: Kraljevsko-srpska državna štamparija, 1895), p. 935. Subjects taught in primary school according to

was not given to their colleagues who worked in areas where the local languages were vernaculars close to literary Serbian. Although the circular letter states that this should not be understood as 'exempting the teachers who work in eastern areas from teaching other subjects', in practice it meant the downgrading of the education level for the children from these areas, since the teacher was encouraged to favour Serbian and mathematics at the expense of all other subjects (for the subjects, see the footnote 215).

The ministerial circular of the 12 September 1882 was equally concerned with the successful teaching of Serbian to Vlach children. In order to ensure the acquisition of Serbian by Vlach children, the latter had to repeat the first grade, if they had not reached a command of Serbian deemed sufficient to enable them to deal with the subjects taught in subsequent grades. Moreover, if pupils had not mastered Serbian even after repeating first grade, the teacher could ask for the minister's approval to make those children do first grade for a third time.²¹⁶ This first-grade-repetitions policy had remarkably negative pedagogical consequences for Vlach-speaking children who were not successful in learning Serbian, as they could spend up to three years of their education attempting to learn Serbian and being taught only the first-grade programme. Moreover, these instructions make no reference to whether and how the children's results in other first-grade subjects (religious education, mathematics, art, music, gymnastics and women's handicraft) affected the decision that they repeat the first grade. This could mean that either other first-grade subjects were not taught at all, or that children were forced to repeat the first grade only on the basis of their results in Serbian. In both cases, the pedagogical standards as defined by the national primary school curriculum would not be respected.

Apart from creating a grade-repetition mechanism to assure the acquisition of Serbian by Vlach pupils, the directives of 12 September 1882 explicitly state that successful language learning is also relevant for the broader Serbian national interests. Similarly to the above discussed document of 23 September 1882, they highlight the 'national role' entrusted to the primary school through the duty of spreading the Serbian

the 1884 curriculum are the following: Religious education (all grades), Serbian language (all grades), Mathematics (all grades), Slavonic language (third and fourth grade – boys' schools only), Geography with History (second, third and fourth grades), Serbian history (fourth grade), Science education (second, third and fourth grades), Calligraphy (third and fourth grades), Art education (all grades), Music education – singing only (all grades), Gymnastics (all grades); Women's handicraft (all grades – girls' schools only).

216 *Prosvetni zbornik zakona i naredaba*, ed. by Josif Pecić (Belgrade: Kraljevsko-srpska državna štamparija, 1887), p. 619.

language. In fact, teachers were invited 'to take into the most serious consideration these directives, which are the guidelines for their school work', and 'to do everything they can to help the realisation of the tasks of the Serbian primary school in the areas where the Serbian language is not yet prevalent, although it should be, considering all those state and national interests'.²¹⁷

The third early-1880s ministerial circular, of 20 July 1884, confirms the dominant position of Serbian amongst primary school subjects in Vlach-attended schools. This document regulated the application of the new national primary school curriculum, issued on the same date, by establishing that the latter was not to be applied in those schools where more than half of the pupils did not understand Serbian. In that case, teachers had to adopt a different curriculum, according to which first-grade pupils had only to be taught oral Serbian. These instructions also established that in those schools the other first-grade subjects were to be introduced only from the second grade onwards.²¹⁸ The narrowing down of the first-grade programme to the mere acquisition of oral Serbian signified the *de facto* introduction of the so-called 'preparatory grade' (*pripravni razred*), which would be officially introduced more than two decades later by the Law on People's School of 1904. A separate analysis in this chapter is dedicated to the preparatory grade, given its specificities and its introduction almost exclusively into Vlach-speaking areas.

The trend of adapting the primary school curricula and the organisation of primary schools in Vlach-attended schools to support proclaimed Serbian national interests continued well after the 1880s, but adjustments were often kept confidential. In fact, they were agreed separately between the minister of education and the teachers or – from 1898 onwards – the regional primary school supervisors.²¹⁹ The practice of determining the curricula for the Vlach children through this preferential channel was introduced by the guidelines for the national curriculum issued in 1891. According to these directives, teachers who worked in schools 'where the local language was very different from the literary language', were allowed to modify the curriculum, if they maintained that, given the language difficulties, they were not able to meet it.²²⁰

217 *Prosvetni zbornik zakona i naredaba*, 1887, p. 619.

218 Belgrade, Arhiv Srbije (AS), MPS P f. XIII r. 51/1884.

219 The figure of regional primary school supervisor had been introduced by the Law on Primary School of 1898. This meant that the supervision of the primary schools became permanent.

220 *Prosvetni glasnik*, 1892, p. 174.

However, there were limitations to these concessions. Namely, teachers were expected to complete the Serbian language and mathematics programmes, however, they could modify the prescribed programmes for other subjects (which were the same as those prescribed by the 1884 curriculum; see footnote 215), if they considered them too demanding. In these circumstances, teachers were allowed to compose their own versions of syllabuses, and, once they had requested and obtained the Ministry's approval, they could use them for teaching. How exceptional this measure was can be illustrated by the fact that the same prerogative was allowed only in those schools attended by Serbian children which, for various reasons, were closed for seven months during the school year.²²¹ Therefore, after the introduction of the 1891 directives, and in stark contrast to the declared national policy of standardised education for all citizens, every single school in Vlach villages could have a differently curtailed curriculum, established on the basis of teachers' professional ability and personal evaluation. However, in 1898, with the introduction of regional primary school supervisors, the curricula for schools in Vlach areas became less varied, as regional supervisors were in charge of providing all teachers under their jurisdiction with guidelines.

This tendency to modify the national curriculum for the schools in Vlach regions affected the quality of the schooling provided to Vlach children. The latter learned less than their Serbian counterparts, as the curtailing of the programme not only targeted the first grade in which they were only taught Serbian language, but also the programme for subsequent grades. As evident from the 1891 directives discussed above, the programme reduction for non-core subjects was primarily suggested to allow the demands of the Serbian language and mathematics programmes to be met. The grade-repetition system could damage even further those Vlach children who were deemed unsuccessful in learning Serbian. Although the laws established a four-year lower primary education, the type of school that predominated in rural areas consisted of three grades up until at least the mid-1890s, and parents tended to withdraw children from schools once they had spent the three-year-long period there, no matter whether they had successfully completed all required grades. It is plausible, therefore, that some Vlach children who repeated the first grade twice could have left primary school without being taught anything beyond spoken Serbian, or at best the first-grade subjects.

It could be argued that insisting on the acquisition of the Serbian language in

221 *Prosvetni glasnik*, 1892, p. 174.

Vlach-attended schools was a necessary step dictated by the practical requirements of teaching, as the latter used Serbian as medium of instruction. However, this argument ignores the very ideology underlying the establishment of the Serbian educational system, and focuses on its effects instead. The issue to be raised is not that of the imperative for Vlach children to learn Serbian because Serbian was the language of instruction, but rather, why Vlach children were forced to undertake an education exclusively in Serbian, while the initiatives brought forward by individuals from the Vlach community for an education in Vlach (Romanian), were suppressed or discouraged. As discussed in chapter 2, the Serbian authorities' choice to adopt Serbian as the exclusive language of instruction cannot be seen as a neutral educational choice, but only as part and parcel of the ethno-linguistic nationalist ideology underlying the broader project of creating a Serbian state and nation. The Serbian primary school was expected to contribute to this project by affirming that literary Serbian was the only language of the country (see chapter 2). Therefore, the consequences ensuing from the political and ideological choice of imposing Serbian as the only language of instruction – such as the problem Vlach children had in acquiring Serbian – cannot be seen as or justified in terms of, or exclusively in terms of, practical reasons.

Although the assimilation of the Vlachs into the Serbian community was the only option considered by the Serbian authorities, a lone voice was recorded arguing for an education in Vlach. In an article published in 1902, a professor of the Teachers College in Belgrade, Kosta Milenović, not only suggested that the learning and speaking of Serbian might be improved in the areas where the local language was Vlach, but he went even further, proposing the standardisation of Vlach, a process which would eventually lead to the creation of a literary Vlach language and, subsequently, a Vlach nation. In Milenović's vision, the teachers should collect pieces of Vlach oral literary tradition (songs, sayings, stories, etc.) and send them to the Ministry of Education which, in turn, would entrust a chosen person to write a Vlach grammar and dictionary on the basis of this collected material. This standardised Vlach language would be written in the Cyrillic alphabet.²²²

According to Milenović, the person appointed to standardise the Vlach language should avoid borrowings from literary Romanian and preserve all Serbian words which

222 Kosta Milenović, 'Srpski jezik u malim školama', *Učiteljski vesnik*, 1902, pp. 268–73; 315–17; 338–40 (p. 273).

had already been adopted in Vlach. This literary Vlach would then become the language of instruction in the schools attended by Vlach children. Being educated in this standardised version of their language, Vlach pupils 'would not learn anything that would damage our [Serbian] interests, and gradually this would lead to the disappearance of the secret [Romanian] propaganda because they would diverge more and more from the Romanians, thanks to their language which has a different script and literature than the Romanian'. As to the Serbian language, Milenović suggests it be taught to Vlach children as a foreign language, by using Ollendorff's method, in which teachers should be trained.²²³

Suggesting the creation of a separate Vlach nation that would not pose a threat to Serbian interests and that at the same time would neutralise alleged Romanian 'secret propaganda', Milenović's idea shows remarkable similarities to the so-called Il'minskii's primary-schooling method for non-Russians.²²⁴ The latter, elaborated by Nikolai Il'minskii, used since the 1860s in the schools of the Russian-ruled Kazan region, had been devised for pagans, recently Islamised populations and non-Russian Christian populations, with the aim of containing the spread of Islam. The containment of Islam was to be achieved, according to this method, by undermining the influence of the Tatar language, the 'lingua franca' of non-Russians of the region, which was considered the 'vehicle of Islam'. Il'minskii resorted to promoting local vernaculars transcribed in Cyrillic script as the early-schooling media of instruction, while Russian was taught as a separate subject; at the next, higher stage of primary education Russian would be promoted to the language of instruction, while the native language would be taught as a separate subject and used as a support language only.²²⁵

Il'minskii's method of educating the non-Russian speaking populations of Russia's East was not only inspired by the religious and political aim of containing the strengthening Tatar culture. It was also based on pedagogical precepts shared by numerous Russian pedagogues of the time according to which the proper development of a child could occur only if s/he is educated in her/his mother-tongue. One of the most

223 Milenović, pp. 273, 316. An oral language learning method consisting of question-answer drill. The method had been elaborated by Heinrich Gottfried Ollendorff, a German linguist, in the mid-nineteenth century. Subsequently, his method was adapted for teaching numerous languages. The Ollendorff method was an innovation in respect to the traditional grammar-translation learning method used primarily in teaching classical languages.

224 Nikolai Il'minskii (1822-91) was a Russian linguist specialised in Turko-Tatar languages, educational reformer and Orthodox missionary.

225 Dowler, pp. 18, 47, 49.

renowned promoters of this pedagogical thought was Konstantin Dmitrievich Ushinsky, who argued that children should start their education in their mother-tongue and should not be introduced to a foreign language before they are around ten years old. Since Ushinsky's works were translated in Serbian at the time Milenović's article was published, it is very likely that the latter drew his inspiration from this Russian pedagogical tradition. However, while Il'minskii's method had a certain success in czarist Russia, and would, with some modifications, even be applied in the Soviet Union, Milenović's initiative remained dead a letter.²²⁶

4.4. Preparatory Grade

The introduction of the preparatory grade, its nature, and its interpretation in scholarly works, represent numerous specificities that merit analysis in a dedicated section. As mentioned earlier, although not officially introduced until 1904, the preparatory grade had in practice been part of the Serbian primary educational system since 1884, when the measure was introduced to limit the first-grade programme to the acquisition of oral Serbian in schools in which more than half the pupils were non-Serbian-speaking children. Although this *de facto* introduction of the preparatory grade as early as 1884 has not been recognised by scholars studying the preparatory grade, it was perfectly clear to educational workers of the period. In fact, since the mid-1880s, and especially from the early 1890s, supervisory reports made unambiguous references to the preparatory grade and to its introduction by the aforementioned measure.

The preparatory grade had been devised because of the Vlach children's deficiency in the Serbian language, which was seen as an obstacle not only to national unity, but also to the very educational progress of these children. Consequently, as in the case of the overall schooling strategies in the Vlach-inhabited areas, preparatory grade was conceived as both an educational and assimilationist institution. Jovan Miodragović, one of the most important Serbian pedagogues of the period, in his discussion on the primary school law of 1898 which officially introduced kindergartens, speaks of them as institutions that 'in the towns would have a normal 'educational task',

²²⁶ Dowler, pp. 50–52, 232–234.

and 'in the areas with [ethnically] mixed population' they would have an additional 'national task'.²²⁷ Although, as said earlier, the preparatory grade was not officially introduced before 1904, it is clear that in his discussion when he speaks about 'kindergartens in areas with mixed population' Miodragović is referring to the preparatory grades which at that time had been in existence for almost two decades.

Concern with the social mobility of minorities, and even more significantly, with the threat they posed to dominant culture and values also underlies American preschool education development at the turn of the twentieth century. Dorothy Hewes argues that the peak of kindergarten proliferation was directly linked to the increase of immigration which took place at the same time. As immigrants of different ethnic backgrounds were considered a threat to American society and its values, kindergartens were promoted as means of assimilating immigrant children into mainstream American culture.²²⁸

The compensatory character of preschool education has been recognised by Stephen May in relation to current preschool programmes worldwide. May argues that deficiency in the dominant language is still perceived in many countries as both a disruption to the cultural unity of the host state and an obstacle to the students' social mobility. Therefore, educational policies in the majority of modern countries are still primarily assimilationist in their character, and aim at bridging the minority students' deficiency in the dominant or host nations' languages and cultures. As the most prominent examples of this type of preschool educational policy, May singles out the United States' *Head Start* preschool programme and its British equivalent, *Sure Start*.²²⁹

In scholarly works on the history of Serbian primary and preschool education, the preparatory grade is generally understood as a preschool institution, or, more precisely, it is referred to as an alternative to kindergartens. Some scholars provide a limited amount of additional information about this grade – for instance, acknowledging that the motivations for its promotion were the language issue and the nationalist interests to be 'defended' in Vlach-speaking areas – but they do not go deeper into the dynamics of the introduction of this grade and its educational tasks.²³⁰ The legislative

227 Jovan Miodragović, 'Duh najnovijih zakona u prosveti', *Prosvetni glasnik*, 1899, pp. 21–26 (p. 25).

228 Dorothy W. Hewes, 'Compensatory Early Childhood Education: Froebelian Origins and Outcomes' (The Education Resources Information Center, 1985), <<http://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED264980>> [accessed 3 July 2014]

229 Stephen May, *Language and Minority Rights: Ethnicity, Nationalism and the Politics of Language* (London: Routledge, 2008), pp. 172–173.

230 Ćunković, p. 158; Stankov Ljiljana, 'Normative Aspect of Pre-School Pedagogical Work in Serbia

text that officially introduced the preparatory grade was so worded that it allowed this grade to be subsumed under the concept of kindergarten. In fact, the wording of the sixth paragraph of the law of 1904 leaves little space for a different interpretation:

[...] In those localities which lack kindergartens, a preparatory grade should be introduced alongside the primary school.

The preparatory grade precedes the first grade and the attendance of this grade is compulsory. It is decided by the Ministry of Education, where kindergartens and where preparatory grades will be opened, on the basis of the propositions made by the regional school committees.²³¹

The very first sentence presents the preparatory grade as an alternative to kindergarten by suggesting that it has to be made available in those places which lack kindergartens. However, for an understanding of the character of the preparatory grade and its relation to kindergartens, the last sentence provides the interpretative key, as it is the minister of education who decides in which places the one or the other should be established, a decision taken on the basis of the propositions advanced by regional school authorities. The restriction of decision making to regional and central institutions, and therefore the exclusion of local administrations, implies that local communities did not have a say in choosing between kindergarten and preparatory grade. Moreover, the sentence suggests that the Ministry decided which of the two types of institution would be chosen on the basis of specific regional characteristics and priorities.

The aforementioned paragraph of the law could also encourage another misleading assumption, i.e. that this grade was to be introduced nationwide into all Serbian schools. This assumption is at the basis of Đurović's interpretation of the preparatory grade in his *Modernisation of Education in The Kingdom of Serbia, 1905-1914*. However, while understanding the preparatory grade as an alternative to kindergartens, Đurović also draws attention to the fact that in the period 1905-1914 the preparatory grade existed only in four districts (Krajina, Požarevac, Crna reka and Morava) and in one school in Belgrade. He explains this nationwide unbalanced

(1898-1957)', *Pedagogija*, 62 (2007), 490–509 (p. 429).

231 Srpske novine, 88 (1904), p. 1.

distribution of preparatory grades in terms of a failure to enforce the law.²³²

In his analysis Đurović completely ignores the ethnic factor, not even mentioning the significant presence of the Vlach minority in all four districts, which in fact appears to be a crucial element in the determination of the distribution of schools with preparatory grade. Moreover, he fails to investigate the reason why a preparatory grade would have been introduced in only one school in Belgrade, whereas the answer to this question is evident from the statistics of the period, which clearly show that the one primary school in Belgrade provided with a preparatory grade was that attended by Sephardic-speaking Jewish children.²³³ Therefore, even in this case the different ethno-linguistic background of the pupils which implied a lack of knowledge of Serbian was decisive for the establishment of the preparatory grade.

The final shortcoming of Đurović's analysis is the lack of reference to the *de facto* existence of the preparatory grade in the same four districts even before its official introduction in 1904, as is evident from both published and unpublished sources. The supervisors not only refer to these classes as 'pripravni razred' at least from the early 1890s, as mentioned earlier, but they also explicitly explain that they had been devised only for Vlach children. In his report of 1896, the supervisor of the Ram and Golubac districts (Požarevac region) writes that preparatory grade 'exists only in those areas where Romanians live'.²³⁴ Therefore, no universality principle behind the introduction of preparatory grade had ever existed. In light of these weaknesses, Đurović's explanation of the preparatory grade as an example of the range of different types of schools in the Serbian educational system, which he interprets as a clear sign of the system's modernisation, is not convincing.

Paragraph 28 of the 1904 law provides further data which contribute to a more exhaustive understanding of the difference between primary grade and kindergarten. This passage of the law states that in the preparatory school pupils were to be taught by primary school teachers, while children attending kindergartens were to be looked after by kindergarten female educators (*zabavilje*) – the latter being personnel specially trained to deal with children of kindergarten age (3 to 7 years old). This fact suggests that teaching methods in the preparatory grade were different from those in use in

232 Đurović, *Modernizacija obrazovanja*, p. 309.

233 Državni kalendar Kraljevine Srbije (Belgrade: Državna štamparija Kraljevine Srbije, 1910), p. 80.

234 AS, MPS P f. XIX r. 1/1896.

kindergartens, which employed differently trained staff.

Another important difference between preparatory grade and kindergarten concerned their curricula. While kindergarten children were supposed to be taught according to a programme specifically issued for this institution, preparatory children were taught according to ministerial directives, which, as demonstrated below, were often improvised and unsatisfactory. The crucial points of the kindergarten curriculum were the emphasis given to playing as a learning method, the maternal treatment of children and the holistic development of the children's abilities. It was explicitly advised not to favour certain activities over others, to alternate them every twenty minutes, and to give plenty of time to physical activities such as dancing, playing and gymnastics.²³⁵ The focus on play as a learning method clearly indicates that the authors of the Serbian kindergarten curriculum drew on the German kindergarten model conceived by Friedrich Froebel in the 1830s-1840s. In fact, at that time, the Froebelian kindergarten model spread through Europe and was imported also in America.²³⁶ Such a curriculum stood in stark contrast to the directives concerning teaching in the preparatory grade, in which the focus was exclusively on Serbian language learning.

The exclusive language-learning emphasis was not the only shortcoming of the preparatory grade teaching programme. Notwithstanding the early (unofficial) institution of the preparatory grade, there were basically no specific curricula or precise official instructions on what and how to teach the children attending this grade. The only text that provided some guidelines was, as mentioned earlier, the ministerial circular issued in 1870 by the minister Matić as a directive on how to use the new primer with Vlach children. Although the numerous ambiguities and pedagogical shortcomings of these directives were soon identified, for several years no attempt was made to amend them. The 1882 article written by Dimić (see above) gave an overall negative assessment of them, mainly pointing to the fact that the directives ignored the children's cognitive and psychological development, and that, being inaccurate and vague, 'they gave freedom to teachers and school inspectors to work on the basis of their

235 Ćunković, pp. 140–41.

236 Caroline Winterer, 'Avoiding a "Hothouse System of Education": Nineteenth-Century Early Childhood Education from the Infant Schools to the Kindergartens', *History of Education Quarterly*, 32 (1992), 289–314 <<http://dx.doi.org/10.2307/368547>>; James C. Albisetti, 'Froebel Crosses the Alps: Introducing the Kindergarten in Italy', *History of Education Quarterly*, 49 (2009), 159–69 <<http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1748-5959.2009.00193.x>>.

own understanding'.²³⁷ Despite these critiques, Matić's guidelines were re-confirmed by the ministerial directives of 12 September 1882 (see above).

The inadequacy of Matić's directives had been widely recognised by both teachers and supervisors employed in the Vlach-inhabited areas even after their reconfirmation in 1882. In 1895, the school supervisor of the Ram and Golubac district (Požarevac region) complained that Matić's directives did not correspond to the scope of the preparatory grade, and suggested that new guidelines be elaborated based on Froebel's method for kindergartens. He also noted that the teachers' work in the preparatory grade was limited to meeting the requirements set out in the primer, therefore teaching children not only to speak Serbian, as required by the directives of 1882, but also to write it.²³⁸ Many teachers ignored the 1870s instructions, given their shortcomings, rather drafting their own programme and asking for its approval by the Ministry. This was the case with Ključ district (Krajina region) teachers, whose programme was approved by the Ministry in 1894. At odds with the practice in the districts of Ram and Golubac, the teachers of Ključ limited their programme exclusively to the oral acquisition of Serbian. A couple of years later their instructions were published in the journal *Teacher*, at the request of teachers from other regions involved in teaching in the preparatory grade.²³⁹

Notwithstanding its numerous flaws and its diminishing use amongst teachers, Matić's guidelines remained the standard reference for preparatory grade teachers until 1899, when new, and apparently more appropriate, directives were eventually issued.²⁴⁰ Therefore, Matić's guidelines remained in use long after 1886, when Natošević's primer – the teaching text they were originally written for in 1870 – was omitted from the body of didactic material for primary school.

Given the language-learning focus of the preparatory grade in Vlach villages, preparatory grade had more in common with the 'public-school sub-primary class' introduced in the first decade of twentieth-century America for immigrant children who

237 Dimić, p. 230.

238 Belgrade, Arhiv Srbije (AS), MPS P f. XXXVI r. 164/1895.

239 *Učitelj*, 1896, pp. 172–74.

240 A few texts of the period mention that these directives were written by the Serbian pedagogue Sreten Adžić, at the behest of the Ministry of Education. They are referred to as more in line with child psychological development, a fact that I could not check, as I could not find a copy of this document.

were not fluent in English, than with a Froebelian-style kindergarten.²⁴¹ An example from the Russian empire further corroborates this interpretation of the preparatory grade in Serbia. Dowler demonstrates that the regulations on the education of non-Russians issued in 1870 by Alexander II – in order to facilitate the attendance of Muslim children in Russian schools – instituted in these schools preparatory classes aimed exclusively at Russian-language teaching.²⁴²

4.5. Girls' Schools

From the early 1880s, the need for separate primary schools for Vlach girls was a frequent topic in discussions among teachers and other civil servants who worked in Vlach-inhabited regions. As discussed in chapter 3, Vlach women were seen as custodians of Vlach identity, and many members of the Serbian cultural and political elites were convinced that without targeting them, the Serbisation of the Vlachs would never succeed. Thus, the promotion of Vlach girls' education and the introduction of separate schools for Vlach girls was taken extremely seriously by the Serbian authorities, and these were soon translated into an actual educational policy.

Andrea Hamilton rightly remarks that the idea of introducing women's education had its roots in Enlightenment philosophy, whose promoters 'had emphasised the capacity of reason in *all* human beings and [...] believed that education should be used to cultivate the minds of *both* women and men'.²⁴³ While Serbian pedagogues and educationalists of the period did subscribe to this Enlightenment precept and tried to promote education nationwide (see below), it would be incorrect to argue that the promotion of Vlach girls' primary schooling was primarily inspired by this idea. Had the Serbian authorities actually wished to put this Enlightenment ideal into practice, they would have promoted girls' schools in Serbian localities in the same way – if not even more extensively – than they did in Vlach inhabited areas. In fact, the available statistics

241 Marvin Lazerson, 'Urban Reform and the Schools: Kindergartens in Massachusetts, 1870-1915', *History of Education Quarterly*, 11 (1971), 115–42 <<http://dx.doi.org/10.2307/367590>>.

242 Dowler, p. 78.

243 Andrea Hamilton, 'School Girls and College Women: Female Education in the 19th and Early 20th Centuries', in *Women's Right: People and Perspectives*, ed. by Crista DeLuzio (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO Press, 2010), pp. 79–92 (p. 79).

suggest the contrary. Especially in the 1890s, but also during the first decade of the twentieth century, the overwhelming majority of girls' schools were concentrated in the four districts where the Vlach population dwelt, and even then predominantly in Vlach or mixed localities (see table 2 below).

In the early 1880s, there was a relatively low number of either girls' schools or girls attending mixed schools. At the end of the 1884-85 school year, nationwide, only 6,918 girls finished the classes they had enrolled on, while the number of boys was 34,785. Moreover, the education of girls in this period was mostly limited to towns, as out of those 6,918 girls only 927 attended countryside schools.²⁴⁴ The huge discrepancy between the boys' and girls' education was due to the authorities' lukewarm approach to enforcing girls' education, and to the generally negative attitude of the population at large towards female education. Being overwhelmingly peasant and overall patriarchal, Serbian society did not envision the usefulness of education for girls.²⁴⁵ Moreover, when compulsory education was introduced (early 1880s) only around 15% of school-age children were enrolled (see chapter 2) and the authorities struggled to convince families to contribute to the establishment of new schools and enrol at least some of their school-age boys. Consequently, foreseeing the difficulties it might entail, the authorities adopted a more gradual approach to enforcing female education – a practice that did not change much even three decades after the formal introduction of compulsory education. In 1908, an article published in the journal of the Teachers' Association of the Mlava district, *Our School*, states that:

[O]ut of the total number of school-age children, only a small number is enrolled, while the rest are left at home to help their parents, as if they were “failed applicants”. In villages, girls are normally not even considered for enrolment, because [in the schools] there is not even enough room for all male children. Moreover, our people believe that schooling girls is a tomfoolery, since they are not going to become “ladies”.²⁴⁶

244 *Statistika nastave u Kraljevini Srbiji za 1884-85. školsku godinu* (Belgrade: Statistično odeljenje Ministarstva Narodne Privrede, 1894), p. CXLII.

245 Nedeljko Trnavac, ‘Indiferentnost prema školovanju ženske dece u Srbiji’, in *Srbija u modernizacijskim procesima 19. i 20. veka. Položaj žene kao merilo modernizacije*, ed. by Marina Arsenović-Pavlović and others (Belgrade: Institut za noviju istoriju Srbije, 1998), II, 55–72.

246 Dragoljub Branković, ‘Obavezna nastava’, *Naša škola: organ Mlavskog učiteljskog udruženja*, 1908, 53–54 (p. 53).

In late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century Serbia, the legislative basis for female primary education was mainly represented by the laws on primary education. Female education was introduced by the law of 1882 which established general and compulsory education for all school-age children of the Serbian state (see chapter 2). Even more importantly, this law stipulated that girls should study separately from boys, if the presence of adequate infrastructures allowed it; otherwise, male and female children were to be taught together. Therefore, as to primary schooling, the legislator expressed a clear preference for a segregation model, which at the time was predominant Europe-wide. However, mixed schools were allowed in every locality that lacked an established girls' school. Given the poverty of the Serbian state and especially its countryside, and the extreme difficulty of setting up and maintaining even one school, mixed schools were the logical and widespread choice in the overwhelming majority of the Serbian villages.

The scarce attention given by Serbian authorities to the gender segregation of school children is confirmed by the two later laws on primary education, issued in 1898 and 1904 respectively. The former mentioned female schools only as a type of primary school, saying nothing about a preference for separate girls' schools over mixed ones; the latter did not mention girls' primary schools at all. Against the backdrop of this general legislative trend and the practice of negligent enforcement of the laws promoting girls' education, the policy adopted by Serbian authorities in the Vlach areas is even more striking, as there separate girls' schools had been intensively introduced since the early 1890s.

This tendency is not only reflected in the official statistics, but also in explicit references to girls' schools as a 'novelty' in many documents produced by the educational workers employed in the Vlach-inhabited areas. For instance in his report of 1895, Boljevac district supervisor, Kosta Đ. Nikolić, speaks about girls' education as a novelty introduced 'a couple a years ago'. He also praises the establishment of girls' schools because 'they not only have the task of sorting out the national issue in this area, but also of [...] contributing to its cultural progress. And without girls' schools this progress would be hindered, if not impossible, since it is known that cultural progress starts from home, and that a "house does not stand on the ground but on the woman"'.²⁴⁷

247 AS, MPS P f. XXXVI r. 164/1895; The author quotes a Serbian proverb which maintains that the progress of a home and family, depends primarily on women.

Girls' education was fostered even in those villages which could not financially support a separate girls' school. In this case, supervisors would impose the compulsory enrolment of a number of girls in the boys' schools, transforming them in mixed type of school. Sreten Adžić, one of the most renowned Serbian pedagogues and the author of preparatory-grade directives of 1899, as supervisor in the Mlava district in 1894 suggested that since opening separate girls' schools in this area 'involved many difficulties', 'it would suffice [...] to order that girls must number half of the enrolled children'.²⁴⁸ A year later, his colleague Luka Jevremović reached a similar conclusion concerning the same district:

I ordered that around 4-6 girls enrol [in existing boys' schools] in the next school year in every Vlach village, and to make sure that they finish at least the first and second grades. [A]fter that they can withdraw [from school], since by then they would have learned the [Serbian] language and changed their dress and customs.²⁴⁹

While clearly unrealistic in its expectations that in two years Vlach girls would not only learn Serbian but also become Serbian at least as to their traditional dress and customs, Jevremović's report indicates that in certain cases the authorities had to reach a compromise with the Vlach communities. In fact, he decided not to put additional financial strain on the locals by demanding the establishment of a separate girls' school, but he insisted that a certain number of girls had to be enrolled and that they had to complete at least two grades. The following year, Jevremović supervised the Morava district (Požarevac region), where he applied the same policy. 'Because of state and national interests', he urged the Ministry of Education to firstly provide six Vlach-inhabited villages with a school, and suggested that one third of enrolled students in these schools should be girls.²⁵⁰

The same trend of promoting girls' schools in the four districts inhabited by the Vlachs continued during the first decade of the twentieth century. Momčilo Isić demonstrates that in this period brides' literacy levels rose steadily only in districts inhabited by the Vlachs, and argues that this progress in female literacy was due to the

248 Belgrade, Arhiv Srbije (AS), MPS P f. IV r. 168/1894.

249 Belgrade, Arhiv Srbije (AS), MPS P f. XI r. 60/1895.

250 Belgrade, Arhiv Srbije (AS), MPS P f. XXIII r. 234/1896.

fact that, because of 'national and state interests', the Serbian authorities dedicated more attention to the success of education in these regions.²⁵¹

Transforming girls from minority communities into one of the main targets of assimilationist educational policies – due to the widespread conviction of the time, which assigned to women the transmission of national identity – was evident also in other countries of the period. For instance the aforementioned Russian legislation on minority education (1870), recommended particular attention to the schooling of Christian or pagan non-Russian girls, because of the belief that native languages and tribal characteristics were mostly maintained by mothers.²⁵²

The Serbian authorities' efforts to secure the acceptance of girls' schooling among the Vlachs had another consequence: it led to the promotion of this type of school even in neighbouring Serbian villages. In fact, many supervisors received complaints from Vlachs who noticed that girls' schooling was only promoted in Vlach villages (see chapter 6), and they feared that Vlachs might use the absence of girls' schools in Serbian villages as an argument against the introduction of these schools in their own localities. Since the early stages of the mass-scale introduction of schools for Vlach girls in the first half of the 1890s, Serbian educational workers noticed that a lack of girls' schools in neighbouring Serbian villages could have a negative influence on the authorities' initiative to introduce such schools in Vlach settlements. As early as 1894, the school supervisors of Krajina, Đorđe Đorđević, voiced the opinion that the Serbian villages should not be exempted from setting up girls' schools, because in this way 'there will be less opposition by the Vlachs'.²⁵³ Therefore, in the four districts containing the Vlach minority, the diffusion of girls' schools in Serbian villages was in the first place promoted as a strategy to secure the success of this type of schooling among the Vlachs.

The argument that the success of girls' schools among the Vlachs was the main reason for their introduction in the Serbian villages of the same area is also proved by the statistics. In fact, the statistics elaborated by Ćunković for the school year 1899/1900 demonstrate that leaving the capital, Belgrade, aside, the majority of girls'

251 Momčilo Isić, 'Pismenost u Srbiji u 19. veku', in *Obrazovanje kod Srba kroz vekove*, ed. by Radoslav Petković and others (Belgrade: Zavod za udžbenike i nastavna sredstva; Društvo istoričara Srbije; Istorijski institut, 2003), pp. 63–79 (pp. 75–76).

252 Dowler, p. 77.

253 Belgrade, Arhiv Srbije (AS), MPS P f. XLV r. 52/1894.

schools (59.28%) were situated in the four districts inhabited by the Vlachs, while the other 40.72% were distributed in the remaining twelve districts of the country (see table 2 below). What also emerges from Ćunković's statistics, but he does not point out, is that in all twelve districts that do not contain Vlach inhabitants, girls' education was an almost exclusively urban phenomenon, as all but one school were situated in towns. Conversely, in the four Vlach-inhabited districts girls' schooling was an overwhelmingly rural phenomenon, involving predominantly Vlach but also Serbian villages.²⁵⁴

Regions	Number of girls' schools	Number of pupils
City of Belgrade	9	1,700
Belgrade	1	44
Valjevo	3	331
Vranje	3	827
Kragujevac	7	733
Krajina	44	2,702
Kruševac	4	359
Morava	8	823
Niš	3	894
Pirot	3	348
Podrinje	4	462
Požarevac	28	1,788
Rudnik	4	377
Smederevo	3	368
Timok	37	2,410
Toplica	2	258
Užice	2	303
Total²⁵⁵	156	13,027

Table 2: Number of Girls' Schools per Region (1899/1900)

Since a growth in girls' education is regarded as one of the defining features of a modern or modernising educational system, as discussed in chapter 2, the Vlachs can be

²⁵⁴ Ćunković, pp. 148–52. Ćunković provides the list containing the names of the localities from each region, which in 1899/1900 contained a separate girls' school, but he does not analyse it.

²⁵⁵ Values for the City of Belgrade not included.

seen to have been the catalyst of the modernisation process which marked the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century Serbian educational system. In other words, the Serbian authorities' decision to enforce the establishment of girls' schools, or intensify the recruitment of girls in localities inhabited by ethnic Serbs – primarily to ensure the acceptance of girls' education in the Vlach villages – also led to the spread and development of girls' education nationwide.

The heyday of girls' education is the period from the early 1890s, when mass girls' education started to be introduced in Vlach inhabited areas, until 1904, when a new law on education shifted the aim towards a gradual achievement of universal compulsory education – this was a new direction which was used as an expedient by local administrations to hinder the enforcement of girls' education. In fact, a decreasing trend in girls' education can be noticed to have occurred shortly after the introduction of the 1904 law. According to the 1907 statistics, there were only 98 girls' schools nationwide, a third of the number in 1888/1900. However, the Serbian authorities perception that girls' education should be fostered especially among the Vlachs did not decrease, since a stunning proportion of those girls' schools – 91 out of 98 – were situated in the areas inhabited by the Vlachs.²⁵⁶

Another conclusion about the Serbian authorities' priorities in regard to girls' education among Vlachs can be drawn. Namely, there is no proportional correspondence between the number of girls' schools and the number of Vlach inhabitants per region, resulting in the Krajina and Timok regions hosting many more schools than the Požarevac and Morava regions. For instance, according to the data from the 1899/1900 school statistics and census, in the Timok region there were 37 girls' schools and 24,788 Vlach inhabitants, while in Požarevac region, where the Vlach population was almost twice as high as in the Timok region, the number of schools was more than ten percent lower than that of Krajina – only 28 (see table 3).²⁵⁷ It is likely that the reason for the more intensive introduction of girls' schools in Krajina and Timok lies in their strategic importance for the Serbian state. As regions bordering Romania and Bulgaria, they were of more concern to the Serbian authorities than the hinterlands and predominantly remote mountain areas of the Morava and Požarevac regions inhabited by the Vlachs.

256 Prosvetni glasnik, 1908, pp. 736–739.

257 Đorđević, *Kroz naše Rumune*, p. 26; Sundhaussen, *Historische Statistik Serbiens*, p. 87.

Regions	Krajina	Morava	Požarevac	Timok
Vlach population in 1900	45,647	8,773	41,457	24,781
Total population in 1900	98,569	171,089	230,562	135,066
Girls schools in 1899/1900	55	8	28	37

Table 3: Number of Girls' Schools in Relation to the Vlach Population per Region (1899/1900)

As mentioned earlier, the fact that the promotion of the girls' schools involved primarily Vlach inhabited areas does not mean that Serbian teachers and pedagogues did not support the principle of girls' schooling nationwide. On the contrary, they would often stress the benefits of universal girls' education, and lament the material and cultural problems hindering the introduction of this type of schooling. But on the other hand, they were aware of the lack of the necessary, mostly material, elements needed for a rapid, nationwide development of girl's education. It is because of this general trend concerning girls' education that the intensity, dynamics, and reasons for which it was introduced primarily among the Vlachs acquires even more significance.

4.6. Extended Schools

The four-year lower primary school was the dominant school model in Vlach inhabited areas, as was also the case in the rest of the Serbian countryside. However, this was not the only form of primary schooling that the Serbian authorities tried to promote in order to achieve 'the national goal' among Vlachs. A second stage of primary education was also introduced, mostly in form of 'extended schools' for both boys and girls.

The extended school had been provided by the first law on primary education of 1882 and it was also confirmed as part of the Serbian educational system by the

subsequent 1898 and 1904 laws. However, contrary to the first law, which established the extended school as compulsory, the subsequent two withdrew its mandatory character. The extended school was regarded as a less demanding alternative to the higher primary school provided by the 1883 and 1898 laws and considered unlikely to take root because of general financial, infrastructural and teaching cadre shortages. It was envisaged as shorter, normally lasting only three semesters, and classes would take place only few times a week – in the evening hours or during the weekends.

For rural areas, extended schools were the more suitable higher primary education option, since attending did not require children and teenagers – an indispensable workforce in the countryside – to be absent from home duties for long periods of time. As to the programme prescribed for these schools, it was also less demanding. Although the Ministry of Education in some cases did issue a list of subjects to be taught, it was normally up to the teachers and the regional school supervisors to decide the programme, on the basis of the local population's characteristics and needs.²⁵⁸ The peak period in which this type of schooling was promoted was quite short. It started to be introduced more intensively in the aftermath of the publication of the ministerial circular of 25 November 1898 exhorting the opening of extended schools, but suffered a steep decline from 1904, when the law on primary school abolished their mandatory character.²⁵⁹ The failure of the Serbian authorities to provide sufficient support for these schools, such as a pay-rise for the teachers setting them up, additional teaching cadres or more tailored curricula, also contributed to these schools' lack of success.

Notwithstanding its less ambitious character when compared to higher primary schooling, the extended school still struggled to take root. Ćunković reports that in the 1889/1890 school year, there were only around a dozen extended schools in the whole country, of which only one was in the countryside. The author notes a more positive trend at the turn of the century: after the issuing of the ministerial circular of 25 November 1898, as in the 1899/1900 school year, 314 extended schools had been registered. This means that around a third of the lower primary schools, which in that year numbered 1,101, were followed by an extended school. However, as Ćunković also remarks, these data might give an impression of a developed extended school system,

258 Đurović, *Modernizacija obrazovanja*, p. 464.

259 *Prosvetni glasnik*, 1898, pp. 632–633.

but in reality it existed only on paper, as these schools were not attended regularly, and the teaching results achieved in them were very poor.²⁶⁰ Đurović's statistical analysis of these schools in the first decade of the twentieth century confirms Ćunković's conclusion, and demonstrates the precarious existence of this type of school. In fact, their 1904/1905 number was approximately one third of their 1900 number (only 113), and this downward trend continued until the beginning of the Balkan wars.²⁶¹

What is particularly striking about the extended schools system, and what both Đurović and Ćunković do not explain, is the fact that the overwhelming majority of them were located in the four districts inhabited by the Vlachs. According to Ćunković's 1899/1900 statistics, 208 out of the 314 extended schools were situated in these four districts, while Đurović in his 1904/1905 statistics places 85 out of existing 113 extended schools in the same districts.²⁶² Moreover, apart from one extended girls' school which, according to the 1899/1900 statistics, was in the Pirot district, all remaining girls' extended schools were situated in the the same four districts inhabited by the Vlach population: 51 according to the 1899/1900 statistics and 18 according to the 1904/1905 statistics. This clearly indicates that even when it came to this type of schooling, the Serbian authorities' concern with Vlach girls, as key figures for a successful assimilation of the Vlachs, was extremely strong.

The way in which the ethnicity of the population played a major role in deciding in which localities the extended school should be established can be illustrated by the 1896 report written by the Mlava district supervisor. He states that in this district no extended schools existed at the time, and suggests some localities which could, in his opinion, also support an extended school: '1. Crljenac, 2. Manastirica, 3. Ranovac, 4. Knežica, 5. Dubočka, 6. Arnaut-Popovac, 7. Melnica'. However, he stresses that 'it is necessary that this type of school be opened in localities under numbers 2, 3, 5 and 7' – all Vlach inhabited villages.²⁶³ Therefore, although the need for an extended school was universally recognised, priority was given to the schools in Vlach localities in which the national role of the schooling was perceived as more urgent.

260 Ćunković, pp. 136, 148–53.

261 Đurović, *Modernizacija obrazovanja*, pp. 467, 470.

262 1899/1900 statistics: Krajina region: 99 (64 boys and 35 girls); Morava region: 20 boys; Požarevac region: 37 boys, Timoc region: 52 (36 boys and 16 girls); 1904/1905 statistics: Krajina region: 10 (7 boys and 3 girls); Morava region: 2 boys; Požarevac region: 36 (34 boys and 2 girls); Timoc region: 37 (24 boys and 13 girls).

263 AS, MPS P f. XIX r. 1/1896.

The process of the opening of extended schools in the Krajina region demonstrates similar dynamics. From an analysis of the regional school supervisor's report of 1899, it emerges that the supervisor's initial intention was to establish 30 extended schools in localities which were identified as 'bigger and more important'. Which these 'bigger' and 'more important' places were, and why they were considered as such, is evident if we analyse supervisor Bašić's list, which included them. While 'bigger' localities might mean urban settlements, their 'importance' no doubt lies primarily in their ethnic composition. In fact, with the exception of a couple of Serbian localities, the rest were ethnically Vlach or mixed villages.²⁶⁴ Accordingly, the relevance of these localities, lay primarily in the fact that their population, or part of it, was not of Serbian ethnicity.

The next detail we discover from the 1899 report is that it was only when the introduction of the extended schools in the original 30 Vlach and mixed Serbian-Vlach localities had failed, that the supervisor decided to extend the order to all localities in the region. And in order to make sure this was taken seriously, he asked the minister of education to apply article 35 of the 1898 law, which permitted the mandatory establishment of, and attendance at, extended schools. The response of the minister was rapid. Only three days after he received the supervisor's request, on 30 March 1899, the required measure was issued and the establishment of, and attendance at, extended schools for the entire Krajina region was declared compulsory.²⁶⁵

As is evident from the analysed source, the supervisor's initial intention was not the mass introduction of extended schools in the Krajina region. These extended schools were in the first place intended to perform their 'national task' among Vlachs. Having in mind this supervisor's original idea and the subsequent dynamics described above, it is more correct to understand the introduction of extended schools in Serbian villages as a measure introduced to secure the success of the extended schools in Vlach villages, than as a deliberate project of expanding and modernising the Serbian educational system.

The primarily 'national task' of extended schools in the Krajina district is also

264 V = Vlach; M = Mixed; S = Serbian; ? - unknown; T- town; Glogovica (V), Luka (V) Dubočane (V), Sikole (S), Koprivica (S), Negotin (M, T), Radujevac (V), Kobišnica (V), Milanovo (?), Mokranje (V), Prahovo (V), Dušanovac (V), Jabukovac (V), Urovica (V), Plavna (V), Štubik (M), Brza Palanka (M, T), Kladovo (M, T), Tekija (V), Vajuga (V), Korbovo (V), Podvrška (V), Grabovica (V), Kladušnica (V), Donji Milanovac (M, T), Gornjane (V), Crnajka (V), Klokočevac (V), Golubinje (M), Rudna Glava (V), Boljetin (V).

265 Belgrade, Arhiv Srbije (AS), MPS P f. XL r. 116/1899.

confirmed by a report written by the same supervisor a year later, in 1900. Although aware of the poor organisation of extended schools and of their unsatisfactory educational results, Bašić was still of the opinion that the schools should be maintained in the Krajina region because of the Serbian 'national interest':

The progress of these schools is not good, and if they were in other areas of the country, I would maybe be against this type of school. But if we consider the circumstances of this district where children not only forget to write once they finish the school, but also to speak [Serbian], I am in favour of these schools. Even if they only help conserve the knowledge acquired [at primary school], even if they only offer a venue in which the Serbian language can be used, that should be considered sufficient.²⁶⁶

Therefore, in contrast to the ethnically Serbian regions, where the supervisors did not hesitate not to establish extended schools or to close an existing one if its educational results were unsatisfactory, or because it was impossible to enforce the attendance of enrolled children, supervisor Bašić was of the opinion that even if these schools did not achieve what they were meant to, they should still be kept alive because they could still perform their assimilation task. In other words, while in the case of the extended schools, pedagogical and educational criteria were respected nationwide, to the extent that they were closed if they failed to comply with these criteria, when it came to the Vlachs, even if the pedagogical criteria were not respected, the educational structures were kept on, simply because they offered the possibility of Serbian language acquisition, i.e. assimilation.

However, the nationwide decline of extended schools, which started, as said earlier, with the law on primary school of 1904 abolishing the permanent supervision exercised by regional school supervisors, and explicitly declaring that extended schools were not mandatory, could also be observed in the areas inhabited by the Vlachs. In fact, when writing in 1910 on the history of extended schools in Serbia and the reasons for their failure, Serbian pedagogue Jovan Miodragović states that by that year, extended schools had completely disappeared in all areas of the country.²⁶⁷

266 Belgrade, Arhiv Srbije (AS), MPS P f. IV r. 161/1900.

267 Jovan Miodragović, 'Produžne škole u nas', *Prosvetni glasnik*, 1910, 1028–44; 1114–30 (p. 1127).

4.7. Conclusion

When it came to the Vlachs, Serbian primary schooling was assimilationist in its character from its establishment in 1830s, but only after the achievement of Serbia's independence did primary education receive more attention in regard to the 'national tasks' it had to perform among this population. In this period, the acquisition of the Serbian language, perceived as a necessary step towards the assimilation of the Vlachs into the Serbian nation, was defined as the ultimate goal of primary schooling in Vlach-inhabited areas.

In order to overcome the Vlach children's deficiency in Serbian, and to facilitate the achievement of their assimilation, the Serbian authorities introduced a different mode of organising the primary school in Vlach-inhabited areas, and adapted the national curricula accordingly. The most striking aspects of these adaptations are the remarkable attention paid to girls' education, especially promoted by opening a high number of separate girls' schools, the institution of a preparatory grade aimed at overcoming the Vlach children's lack of knowledge of Serbian, and the establishment of extended schools whose principal aim was to reinforce the knowledge of Serbian received during primary schooling. On the other hand, all these forms of schooling were almost totally absent from the rural areas of predominantly Serbian-inhabited districts.

The adaptation of curricula to the goal of Serbian-language acquisition, which almost always entailed the curtailing of the prescribed national programme, indicates that Vlach children were in practice taught less than their Serbian counterparts. Therefore, the authorities' preoccupation with Serbian language acquisition ultimately quantitatively – and therefore qualitatively – affected the other subjects the Vlach children were taught, a practice that clearly clashed with the pedagogical principles Serbian educationalists subscribed to at the time.

These principles were disregarded not only because children were given a different education on the basis of their ethnicity, contrary to the official policy which allowed for one national standardised curriculum, or because the exclusion of certain

content from the curricula meant that the children's abilities were not developed in a balanced way, but also because no proper directives, guidelines and supporting material were issued for the preparatory grade and the extended schools. The lack of clearly specified programmes, plans and teaching methodology left room for improvisation and unprofessional teaching, creating the conditions for a further decrease of the quality of the education made available to Vlach children.

The promotion or existence of the three forms of schooling that became typical of Vlach-inhabited areas (girls' education, extended schools and preschool education) are in scholarly works normally interpreted as indicators of efforts to modernise the Serbian school system, or as a clear sign of its modernity. However, once their connection with the policy of Vlach assimilation is established, it appears that these aspects of the modernisation of the Serbian educational system are actually the result of educational policies almost exclusively aimed at the Vlachs. Or in other words, as a target of assimilationist educational policies, the Vlach minority actually played the role of a catalyst for the modernisation of the Serbian educational system.

By triggering the measures which some have seen as signalling the modernisation of the Serbian educational system, the Vlachs also contributed to the broader process of Serbian nation-building. In fact, by extending measures devised in the first place for schools attended by Vlachs, such as girls' education and extended schools, into Serbian villages, the Serbian authorities in effect increased the number of Serbian children who were exposed to primary schooling. Given the fact that, as discussed in chapter 2, primary schooling was imparting 'national' and 'patriotic' education in all schools nationwide, the increased number of Serbian children attending school and the prolonged time they spent there ensured a more efficient nationalisation through primary schooling.

CHAPTER 5: Primary School, Nationalising Strategies and the Vlach Local Communities

5.1. Introduction

As discussed in chapter 2, primary school teachers were perceived by the Serbian education authorities as 'the peoples' teacher', i.e. figures entrusted with a key role in the process of both the modernisation and nationalisation of Serbian society. As such, they were expected to promote and perform numerous activities which implied interaction with and the involvement of the local population. Thus, in many of the activities they organised, teachers combined, on the one hand, the delivery of practical knowledge aimed at improving the material conditions of the population, and, on the other hand, an ideological message aimed at developing the populations' sense of national belonging. This twofold aspect of the teachers' involvement with the local communities was even more pronounced in the areas inhabited by the Vlachs, where the assimilation of the latter into the Serbian nation was seen by the Serbian authorities as a priority of national importance.

A series of activities promoted by the local teachers was used for instilling both 'Serbian spirit' and identity into Vlach pupils and the population at large, especially in rural areas. This chapter will investigate only those activities which distinguished themselves by their mass scale approach and/or their importance for spreading the Serbian nationalist ideology. Firstly, it will look at how the Serbian authorities understood and used agricultural and rifle shooting associations as venues to foster the assimilation of the Vlachs. Secondly, the ideological content of public celebrations and their expected impact on the Vlachs will be analysed. Finally, a separate section is dedicated to the regional and local education authorities' role in the endeavour to Serbify Vlach traditional dress, in particular headgear, by spreading dress codes deemed characteristic of ethnic Serbs.

5.2. Teachers and Local Associations

Teachers' involvement in the organisation and promotion of forms of local associations was allowed by the favourable legal framework, namely by the fact that since 1881 Serbian law granted freedom of association. In Serbia, associations developed along the same lines as found in contemporary Europe more broadly. In fact, although associations of some kind had first emerged in several Western European countries as early as the seventeenth century, it was not until the last few decades of the nineteenth century that most of these countries granted the degree of freedom of association that enabled the mass appearance of associations. Known as the 'the age of associations', this period saw the flourishing of different types of private organisations – agricultural, cultural and financial – across the continent.²⁶⁸

The role played by associations in fostering a national feeling amongst the population, especially in the nineteenth- and early-twentieth centuries, has been extensively studied. Mosse identifies choral, rifle and gymnastic associations as the dominant forms of organisations founded on private initiative that contributed to German identity-building during this period.²⁶⁹ Given the cultural, male-centred and military character of these associations, it is correct to see them as an extremely efficient of conveying messages of a nationalist character. However, Mosse's analysis does not fully fit the situation of the Serbian kingdom. Due to its predominantly traditional and rural character, Serbian society lacked the prerequisites for the development of the aforementioned mass-scale western-model associations. For instance, choral associations were very rare and mostly based in towns, where people with some musical education could be found. Conversely, in the countryside school-children's choirs were sometimes established, but these were often an ephemeral

268 Lars Bo Kaspersen and Laila Ottesen, 'Associationalism for 150 Years and Still Alive and Kicking: Some Reflections on Danish Civil Society', *Critical Review of International Social and Political Philosophy*, 4 (2001), 105–30 (p. 113); Timothy W. Guinnane and Susana Martínez-Rodríguez, 'Cooperatives before Cooperative Law: Business Law and Cooperatives in Spain, 1869-1931', *Revista de Historia Económica (Second Series)*, 29 (2011), 67–93 (p. 69) <<http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/S0212610911000012>>.

269 George L. Mosse, *The Nationalization of the Masses: Political Symbolism and Mass Movements in Germany from the Napoleonic Wars through the Third Reich* (London: Cornell University Press, 1991), p. 127.

initiative, and would depend on an individual teacher's interest and musical abilities.

Gymnastics associations faced a similar situation. The first associations of this type were established in Belgrade in 1882, modelled on the turn-of-the-nineteenth-century German *Turnverein*, founded by the German nationalist Friedrich Ludwig Jahn. The Slavic version of the gymnastics association, *Sokol*, initially developed by the Czech professor Miroslav Tyrš in 1862, was only introduced into Serbia in 1891.²⁷⁰ *Sokol*-type associations were extensively promoted only with the formation of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, in 1918, but even then, they still remained a predominantly urban phenomenon. Even though gymnastics associations were not to be found in the Serbian countryside, gymnastics nevertheless reached the peasant population, in the form of a primary school subject.

5.2.1. Agricultural Associations

The most common and widespread associations in turn-of-the-century Serbia were the Agricultural Associations (*Zemljoradnička zadruga*), and as such they played a leading role in strengthening a shared national identity. Considering the overwhelmingly peasant background of the Serbian population and the authorities' project to transform traditional Serbian agriculture into a more modern enterprise, it is logical that establishing Agricultural Associations was a priority for Serbian political elites of the time. The introduction of *Zadrugas* in Serbian society started quite late in comparison with contemporary Western countries, as the first *Zadruga* was created in 1894, more than a century after similar associations had appeared in Denmark and Prussia.²⁷¹ Nevertheless, *Zadrugas* eventually acquired a mass character, and by 1911 their number nationwide reached around 950.²⁷²

Many Serbian contemporaries noticed the importance and convenience of not only using Agricultural Associations, but also other agriculture-related activities and venues, such as school gardens, for instilling Serbian national identity into Vlachs. Opinions on this issue were often expressed by teachers and school supervisors, who

270 Miloš Timotijević, *Sokoli Čačka 1910-1941* (Čačak: Narodni muzej Čačak, 2006), pp. 19–20.

271 Kaspersen and Ottesen, p. 108.

272 Mihailo Avramović, *Zemljoradničko zadrugarstvo* (Belgrade: Štamparija 'Dositej Obradović', 1912), p. 20.

were frequently not only promoters, but also members of rural *Zadrugas*. Concerned with providing the people with an all-encompassing education in which the nationalist side of things was given special priority, teachers used *Zadrugas* for spreading both agricultural knowledge and national sentiment.

An excerpt from the 1899 report written by the regional primary school supervisor of the Krajina district displays how initiatives of an agricultural character stirred interest among the local Vlach population and indicates the potential they held for spreading national sentiment:

It is clear that [the economy] is one of the most powerful means that can be used to promote an all-encompassing beneficial influence on the local people. This is why I paid special attention to it: because I have noticed that the teachers involved in agriculture have the strongest influence on the people in their villages, in every way. I have noticed that their [the teachers'] extended schools are more successful because they focus on agriculture, and that it was around their school gardens that the local population would mostly gather in order to learn different things about rational economy, and that alongside this, they [the population] also acquired the knowledge of the [Serbian] language and a strong feeling of the national spirit, which is the ultimate goal of all this work.²⁷³

This passage demonstrates that the school supervisor was aware that the local Vlach population could be more easily attracted by teachers if they offered a content that was more relevant to their needs, in particular new agricultural techniques. The rural population's increased appreciation for schooling when the school offered what looked like a possible improvement in countryside life was not exclusive to Vlach areas. Similar phenomena has been analysed by Weber, amongst nineteenth-century French peasants of different ethno-cultural backgrounds. Weber argues that the rural population paid attention to school only when the latter offered them knowledge relevant to their material needs.²⁷⁴

Once they had captured the Vlach peasants' attention, Serbian teachers could

273 AS, MPS P f. XL r. 116/1899.

274 Weber, p. 326.

pursue what the supervisor called the 'ultimate goal' of education through Agricultural Associations, which was the nationalisation, or Serbisation, of the Vlachs. This was to be achieved by spreading the Serbian language, which was indispensable for understanding the agricultural directives given by the teacher, and by transmitting other information about the Serbian state and nation which strengthened the Vlach peasants' 'feeling of the national spirit'.

Such reasoning can be found in the writings of the Serbian pedagogue Ljubomir M. Protić on the subject of the role of Agricultural Cooperatives in the education of the population (1902). Protić relies on data regarding the Vlach village of Stamnica. After a detailed description of the economic benefits brought to the population of Stamnica by the cooperative, Protić notes that:

The *Zadruga* was also successful in the fields of religion and national education. Members are advised to attend church regularly, [while] the *Zadruga* itself celebrates its own *slava* [a patron saint] and organises annual memorial services for its deceased members.²⁷⁵ The members are [also] becoming better and more conscious Serbs... They adopt true Serbian names more frequently... They regularly read the periodical *Agricultural Cooperative (Zemljoradnička Zadruga)*, of which five copies are received, together with the *Trade Herald (Trgovinski Glasnik)*. For their general enlightenment [education] they also rely on the school library... and nowadays there are very few people who are not able to read, write or properly speak their Serbian mother-tongue.²⁷⁶

According to Protić's account, alongside the agricultural knowledge and economic advantages the villagers were given, the *Zadruga* accomplished its nationalising and assimilationist tasks. In fact, due to their involvement in the *Zadruga*, the Vlachs of Stamnica had become more 'conscious Serbs', as proved by the increasing tendency to give Serbian names to Vlach children and by the decreasing number of people unable to speak and read Serbian, which Protić paradoxically dubs the 'mother-

275 *Slava*, a short version of *Krsna Slava*, is an annual celebration of the household patron saint. It is celebrated among Serbs, as well as by Macedonians, Vlachs and some of the Roma population. In the nineteenth century, public and private organisations and associations were also given a patron saint, and therefore celebrated their own *slava*.

276 Protić, 'Naše narodno prosvjećivanje', pp. 707–708.

tongue' (*maternji srpski jezik*) of the Vlachs from Stamnica. This result was achieved through a combination of different undertakings. By maintaining and spreading literacy (the members would become readers of specialist journals, and they would also be encouraged to use the school library), and by involving villagers in rituals of local and national character, such as the annual commemoration of deceased *Zadruga* members, or the celebration of the association's patron saint – *slava*. The latter had an especially high symbolic significance in the nationalising process of the Vlachs. Serbian patriots of the period considered the *slava* to be a feature unique to the Serbian people, and therefore, from their point of view, acceptance of this custom would mean the unequivocal incorporation into, or belonging to, the Serbian nation. The saying 'Where you have *slava*, you have a Serb' (*Gde je slava, tu je Srbin*) often found in contemporary texts, clearly illustrates this strongly perceived connection between this custom and Serbian identity.²⁷⁷

That – as Protić argues – the Vlachs' increasing tendency to choose Serbian names for their children was mainly due to the *Zadruga's* successful nationalising influence is rather questionable. Rather, it is likely that this shift was more a consequence of the nationalising activities of the Serbian Orthodox Church, which, as stated in chapter 6, at the turn of the twentieth century stopped accepting Vlach names for newborns.

Regardless of the *Zadruga's* actual influence on the name shift among the Stamnica Vlachs, it is likely that the celebration of the *Zadruga's slava* and commemorations of deceased members were accepted by the Stamnica Vlach community, and that these rituals achieved some level of nationalisation – at least among adult male members of the *Zadruga*. This is due to the fact that, although performed in the Serbian language and probably according to Serbian tradition, these types of rituals were not that dissimilar from those traditionally held in the Vlach communities. As demonstrated by ethnographic accounts from the period, a very rich and elaborate cult of the dead already existed in traditional Vlach culture, and, at the time of Protić's account, the Vlachs themselves were celebrating *slava*. This argument is supported by the findings of Gordana Uzelac, whose analysis of nationalising performances suggests that they are to be considered rituals, and, therefore, lead to the

277 Milosavljević, *U tradiciji nacionalizma*, p. 29.

spectators' emotional participation, only if the latter perceive them as authentic.²⁷⁸ Although a new, or 'invented tradition', to borrow from Hobsbawm, the *Zadruga's* *slava* and commemoration of deceased members, given their similarity with the traditional rituals of the Vlachs, were likely to have had a significant emotional impact on the Vlach members of the association.

The *Zadruga* not only influenced the identity of the Vlachs on the local level. It also offered a way of creating a new identity which related and connected the members in Stannica with those of other *Zadrugas* nationwide. The activities and the national organisation of the *Zadrugas* contributed to the development of a sense of the nation as 'imagined community' among Serbian peasants. This was achieved by linking up all the country's *Zadrugas* to form the *Alliance of Serbian Agricultural Cooperatives* (1895). This national network of cooperatives created a certain shared peasant identity by exposing them to the same administrative rules, issues, interests and literature. In fact, the *Alliance* published its own journals (*Agricultural Cooperative* and *Trade Herald*) which were disseminated among peasant communities through local *Zadrugas*. According to a 1914 article on the situation of the 'enlightenment' of the adult population, published in the journal *Teacher*, the *Alliance* contributed most to this cause. Not only did the *Zadruga* system grow denser, but the *Alliance's* periodicals and books became the most numerous and most widely distributed publications nationwide. From its institution in 1895 until 1914, the *Alliance* published about 100,000 books and periodicals.²⁷⁹

5.2.2. School Rifle Associations

The development of rifle associations in nineteenth-century Serbia was a gradual process. The first formal organisation of this kind had been established in Belgrade in 1866, and it was not until the late-1880s and early-1890s, when they were introduced into the countryside and in some primary schools, that rifle associations, or clubs, as they are sometimes called, started to gain a mass character. By the 1910, there were

278 Gordana Uzelac, 'National Ceremonies: The Pursuit of Authenticity', *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 33 (2010), 1718–36 (p. 1732) <<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/01419871003703243>>.

279 Sreten Dinić, 'Rad na narodnom prosvetivanju', *Učitelj*, 1914, pp. 449–51, 557–63, 663–69 (p. 667).

1,114 rifle associations in Serbia, of which 255 were organised for school-aged children.²⁸⁰

The establishment of school rifle associations (*školske streljačke družine*) initially depended on the initiatives of teachers and regional school supervisors. However, by the end of the first decade of the twentieth century the promotion of rifle associations became part of the official policy of the Ministry of Education. With a specific ministerial circular issued in 1909 (number 23,668 of 19 December), primary school teachers were encouraged to establish school rifle associations in order to achieve two aims. Firstly, to improve the performance in gymnastics, an already taught subject, and secondly, to contribute to the fulfilment of article 1 of the 1904 Law on Primary School. The latter defined the three main tasks of the primary school: 'to educate children in the national spirit (*u narodnom duhu*), prepare them for civic life and, in particular, spread education and Serbian [language] literacy'.²⁸¹

In order to understand how rifle practice could have achieved the aim of improving gymnastics performance in primary schools, the goals of the latter should be explained. Late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-centuries Serbian pedagogues understood gymnastics and its role according to the ideas of the founding father of German gymnastics, Jahn. Inspired by the precepts of Romantic nationalism, Jahn considered gymnastics to be – in Felix Saure's words – a 'complement to a mental mobilization on the basis of the *völkisch* notion of the nation' which implied the development of physical exercises whilst holding in mind a notion of the nation as historically developed and linguistically distinctive.²⁸² Gymnastics was therefore to be developed, in the eyes of its promoters, in harmony with the purported national characteristics ('national spirit') of the people, and with the aim of enhancing them.

In Serbian primary schools, gymnastics was organised according to the Serbian 'national spirit', which was achieved by introducing traditional Serbian children's games into the school programme, accompanied by singing and very basic military training, mostly marching. The introduction of rifle practice was expected to enhance this

280 Ljubomir Petrović, *Istorija srpskog streljaštva* (Belgrade: Institut za savremenu istoriju, 2011), pp. 24–27.

281 *Srpske novine*, 88 (1904), p. 1.

282 Felix Saure, 'Beautiful Bodies, Exercising Warriors and Original Peoples: Sports, Greek Antiquity and National Identity from Winckelmann to "Turnvater Jahn"', *German History*, 27 (2009), 358–73 (pp. 369–370) <<http://dx.doi.org/10.1093/gerhis/ghp031>>.

nationally and militarily inspired physical education by introducing male children to handling guns and to practise shooting itself, and – even more importantly – to develop their courage. In fact, fostering the latter is explicitly mentioned in the circular of 1909 as one of the aims of rifle practice.

Such a militaristic approach to gymnastics in education was a pan-European phenomenon. Michael Krüger argues that from the 1860s onwards gymnastics taught in German schools became increasingly militarised, and by the end of century transformed into a dominant form of body culture modelled on 'exercise for order and discipline'.²⁸³ Similarly, Rachel Chrastil identifies 1870, the year of the French defeat by Germany at Sedan, as the turning point towards the militarisation of gymnastics in France. Inspired by the growing sense of *revanche* against the Germans, the shift of gymnastics in a military direction was also underpinned by the belief that only a well trained population and soldiers could ensure the nation's military success. In France, the most salient point of this militarisation was the promotion of the so-called *battalion scolaires* (school battalions) from the 1880s onwards. The *battalions* were intended as extracurricular activity for boys older than twelve, who would practice militarily-inspired exercises and learn to shoot if they were over fourteen.²⁸⁴

As mentioned earlier, the circular of 1909 anticipated that rifle practice would not only enhance the performance of gymnastics as taught at school, but also contribute to the meeting of article 1 of the Law on Primary School. Rifle associations could contribute to the first two aims of article 1, respectively that of educating children 'in national spirit' and preparing them for civic life, in multiple ways. In Serbian primary schools, civic education consisted mainly of teaching obedience to the authorities and, for boys specifically, the civic duty of serving their country as soldiers. The latter was preponderant, since, as elsewhere in Europe, readiness to sacrifice one's life for the nation and the country was regarded to be the highest form of patriotism and the greatest civic contribution; and so Serbian primary school children were taught.²⁸⁵

Given the belief that it was a civic duty to offer one's life for the national cause,

283 Michael Krüger, 'Body Culture and Nation Building: The History of Gymnastics in Germany in the Period of Its Foundation as a Nation-state', *The International Journal of the History of Sport*, 13 (1996), 409–17 (pp. 411–412) <<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/09523369608713957>>.

284 Rachel Chrastil, *Organizing for War: France, 1870-1914* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2010), pp. 118–119.

285 Aleksandra V. Ilić, 'Nacionalno vaspitanje u školama Srbije (1878-1918)' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Belgrade, 2006), p. 310.

rifle associations provided a venue where teenagers could learn the rudiments of the service they were required to offer as soldiers. In addition to being a practical training, shooting was also meant to develop the pupils' enthusiasm for the national cause and a sense of duty to fight for the 'liberation' of their 'subjugated' brothers. In the first Serbian school rifle club, which was established in the Sićevo village (Niš region) in 1891, patriotism was fostered by making children recite patriotic poetry before starting their shooting practice.²⁸⁶

As to the contribution of school rifle associations to spreading education and Serbian language literacy – the third declared task of the primary school, according to the law of 1904 – it was above all important for ethnically and/or linguistically heterogeneous areas, such as those inhabited by Vlachs. In these areas, rifle associations were expected to support the assimilationist profile of educational policies and their consequent Serbian-language-centred curricula (see chapter 4), by offering an additional venue for practising Serbian, and by attracting students to attend extended school. Indicative of this understanding of rifle practice are the dynamics of their first mass-introduction in the Krajina region. Regional school supervisor Bašić stated in his 1899 report that he had ordered all school principals to establish shooting associations in their schools primarily in order to motivate students to attend extended school.²⁸⁷

Therefore, although the benefits of rifle practice for Vlach children's patriotic and militaristic education were recognised, as was its role in the development of the 'courageous spirit' – which the Vlachs were thought to lack (see chapter 3) – supervisor Bašić saw the associations primarily as a supplementary activity which would contribute to the success of the extended schools in the area. In fact, alongside male pupils of third and fourth grade, it was the extended school students who made up the majority of rifle club members. The supervisor's orders were obeyed, and by the following year (1900), 42 rifle practice associations of this kind were registered in the Krajina district.²⁸⁸ Concerned as he was with the reinforcement of the Serbian language in the Vlach communities, Bašić saw these associations as yet another venue that would contribute to the Krajina Vlachs' adoption of the Serbian language and consequent identification with the Serbian nation:

286 Petrović, *Istorija srpskog streljaštva*, p. 27.

287 AS, MPS P f. XL r. 116/1899.

288 AS, MPS P f. XL r. 161/1900.

The aim of these associations is to strengthen the courageous spirit [of the students], but, even more importantly, to contribute to the strengthening of the national spirit and the spreading of the [Serbian] language, which, once achieved, will make these children more attracted to schooling.²⁸⁹

5.3. State and Religious Celebrations

As in other contemporary European countries at the time, public celebrations were increasingly used by the Serbian authorities as venues to boost the populations' national identity. Miroslav Timotijević shows that in the last quarter of the nineteenth century celebrations of public festivals intensified in Serbia, but it was not until the late 1890s that primary schools were involved in their organisation.²⁹⁰ Even after this date, neither the establishment of a set of public celebrations to mark the most important events in Serbian national history nor the involvement of primary schools in their promotion became a straightforward and long-lasting processes. It was difficult for public celebrations to take root due to the dynastic shift (1903) and changes in primary school legislation (1904). After the *coup d'état* which brought about the dynastic shift of 1903 (see chapter 2), public celebrations previously developed around the cult of the Obrenović dynasty were downplayed, while the law of 1904 abolished the figure of regional school supervisor, who, as shown later in this section, had played a pivotal role in promoting public celebrations both regionally and locally. These two developments affected the process of actively involving primary schools in the celebration of public festivals, and their chronological proximity amplified the setback of the celebration practice nationwide.

Public celebrations have been identified as both key venues for the symbolic representation of the nation and as an efficient tool to inculcate loyalty towards and obedience to state authorities. These symbolic and instrumental functions have been highlighted as the main characteristics of state celebrations by scholars such as Mosse and Hobsbawm. The former argues that public rituals characterise nationalist

289 AS, MPS P f. XL r. 161/1900.

290 Miroslav Timotijević, 'Jubilej kao kolektivna reprezentacija: proslava 50-godišnjice takovskog ustanka u Topčideru 1865. godine', *Nasleđe*, 2013, 9–49 (p. 12).

movements and serve to celebrate the nation itself, and the latter stresses their constructed nature and instrumental purpose, by defining them as 'invented traditions' that aim to instil norms and values through the deliberate exploitation of the past.²⁹¹

As to Serbian nineteenth-century official celebrations, they have not yet been extensively studied, but the Serbian scholar Miroslav Timotijević is one of the few who have dealt with this topic. As with Hobsbawm's approach, which focuses on the instrumental nature of public celebrations, Timotijević's analysis is on rituals as part of the official representative culture of the newly established Serbian state. In particular, he is concerned with the role celebrations played in constructing a collective memory of the Serbian national past.²⁹²

The first Serbian public celebration appeared shortly after the very first events of this kind had taken place in America and France, during and in the aftermath of the revolutions, which took place in 1775-83 and 1789-99 respectively. In 1807, at the time of the First Serbian Uprising, an annual memorial service was introduced to celebrate the conquest of Belgrade that had taken place one year earlier.²⁹³ Mosse has identified a similar timing for celebrations in the German lands, where the first public festivals took place in the aftermath of the Napoleonic wars (1813-1814) as a nationalist reaction to dissatisfaction with the political solution for the German principalities decided at the Congress of Vienna.²⁹⁴ However, as Timotijević notes and as mentioned earlier, it was only during the second half of the nineteenth century, after the Serbian state had been granted autonomy (1830) and later independence (1878), that a more elaborate system of official celebrations started to take shape.²⁹⁵

Despite appearing at roughly the same time, the dynamics of the development of Serbian public celebrations differ somewhat from their French and German counterparts. In the latter cases, public celebrations were subjected to a greater contestation than in the former. In both France and Germany, as demonstrated respectively by Chrastil and Mosse, official public celebrations and commemorations were challenged and influenced by parallel events promoted by various civic

291 Mosse, *The Nationalization of the Masses*, p. 2; Eric Hobsbawm and Terence O. Ranger, *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), p. 1.

292 Timotijević, 'Jubilej kao kolektivna reprezentacija', p. 10.

293 Miroslav Timotijević, 'Memorijal oslobodocima Beograda 1806', *Nasleđe*, 2004, 9-34 (pp. 9-10).

294 Mosse, *The Nationalization of the Masses*, p. 17.

295 Timotijević, 'Jubilej kao kolektivna reprezentacija', pp. 10, 12.

associations.²⁹⁶ In Serbia, on the other hand, public festivities were exclusively introduced and regulated by the authorities. In fact, the first official 'all-people's festivities' (*opštenarodni praznici*) were not promoted by private associations, but introduced by Prince Miloš Obrenović in 1836, a practice which was continued by his successors.²⁹⁷ These top-down interventions not only decided which events should be marked publicly and nationally, but they also aimed at regulating the content and outline of public celebrations. As demonstrated later, a similar attitude was adopted by the regional school supervisors once they were assigned the role of organising public festivities at the local level.

The directives written by king Milan Obrenović in 1884 are indicative of the fact that by the time of their issue, top-down intervention in the development of Serbian public celebrations was a well established practice. In fact, the directives not only redefined the protocol of official greetings at inter-institutional levels but they also reconfirmed existing guidelines according to which public events had to be celebrated. The directives stated that all-people's festivals should be celebrated 'according to the established ceremony and by displaying a military parade, where possible'.²⁹⁸ According to Timotijević, the official nineteenth-century modality of celebrating public festivities was predominantly of a religious character, as it involved a fitting church service, normally followed by a patriotic speech.²⁹⁹

The religious character of Serbian public celebrations is further confirmed by the fact that they coincided, certainly intentionally, with already existing and well-established religious festivities. For instance, *Srpske Cveti*, commemorating the Second Serbian Uprising and the figure of Prince Miloš Obrenović, was celebrated on Palm Sunday. The coincidence of the new national celebrations with well established religious festivals and their predominately religious outlook was a norm at the time, even in the Western Europe. Mosse argues that during the nineteenth century, national

296 Chraštil, pp. 93–111; Mosse, *The Nationalization of the Masses*, pp. 73–99.

297 The festivals introduced were strictly linked to and aimed at promoting the figure of Miloš Obrenović and his dynasty: *Cveti* (Palm Sunday) was the day when the 'Second Serbian Uprising' was celebrated; *Sveti Andrija Prvozvani* (Saint Andrew the Apostle) celebrated the issuing of the so-called 'Second Hatti- Sheriff' which established that Muslims from the Principality should sell their goods and leave for a Muslim-ruled area, and of a Sultan's Act (*berat*) which granted hereditary status to the title of 'Prince', at the time held by Miloš Obrenović. This act founded Obrenović ruling dynasty. Finally, on *Teodorova Subota* (St Theodore Tiron of Amasea), Prince Miloš's birthday was celebrated.

298 *Srpske novine*, 63 (1884), p. 1.

299 Timotijević, 'Jubilej kao kolektivna reprezentacija', p.12.

festivals across Europe not only borrowed from the Christian tradition when rituals were developed, but also included church services as an integral element.³⁰⁰ For instance, the celebration of Saint-Napoleon Day during the French Second Empire (1851-1870) not only coincided with one of the most important Catholic festivals, the Assumption of the Virgin Mary, celebrated on the 15 of August, but the official directives on how to celebrate Saint-Napoleon Day required the active involvement of Church authorities. Priests nationwide were asked to perform the *Te Deum* and *Domine Salvum* in the emperor's honour.³⁰¹

As mentioned earlier, while the introduction of Serbian public festivals dates back to 1830, a more significant involvement of primary schools in their celebration did not take place until the late 1890s. In fact, it was in 1899 that the first directives establishing that public festivals had to be celebrated in schools were issued by regional school supervisors, and that the first explicit reference to this new trend appeared in education periodicals. This does not mean that the idea of involving primary schools in public celebrations was a novelty. On the contrary, the terms according to which primary school staff and students were supposed to participate in public festivals had been defined as early as 1884, as part of the directives on church attendance which they were supposed to abide by.³⁰² According to these rules, rural teachers were expected to attend church services on the occasion of both religious and 'all-people's' festivities, while the modalities of the pupils' attendance, which mainly depended on the proximity of the church to the school, were only broadly defined and the final decision left to the head teacher.³⁰³

However, as to the modalities of primary school involvement in public celebrations, there is a substantial difference between those of 1884 and those initiated from the late 1890s onwards. While during the 1880s and the earlier part of the 1890s, the participation of teachers and students in public celebrations would only consist of attendance at the specific church service, from the last years of the final decade of the nineteenth century onwards, the primary school would become the protagonist and

300 Mosse, *The Nationalization of the Masses*, p. 77.

301 Sudhir Hazareesingh, 'Religion and Politics in the Saint-Napoleon Festivity 1852-70: Anti-Clericalism, Local Patriotism and Modernity', *The English Historical Review*, 119 (2004), 614-49 (pp. 614, 620) <<http://dx.doi.org/10.2307/3489501>>.

302 Ministerial directives n. 1,793 of 27 February 1884.

303 Staniša S. Stanišić, *Učiteljski zbornik* (Belgrade: Štamparija Pavlovića i Stojanovića, 1899), pp. 60-61.

organiser of these festivals. Teachers became responsible for the secular part of the celebration, which would take place inside the school or in the open air, and in which the local population would be encouraged to partake. The more active involvement of local primary schools in the organisation of the secular aspect of public celebrations was part of the broader transformation of Serbian public festivities which took place from the second half of the nineteenth century onwards.³⁰⁴

The active involvement of rural primary schools in celebrating public festivals brought the nationalist symbolism of these events, previously present only in the capital or some bigger towns, to the rural population. For instance, the regional school supervisor of the Kragujevac district, an overwhelmingly Serbian inhabited area, stated in his directives of 1899 that public festivities should be celebrated in all primary schools of the district in order to provide 'role models', figures for the pupils to identify with. Celebrating public festivals in the schools should, in the supervisor's view, inspire school children 'to look to these figures as models, and follow their example, while feelings of gratitude and patriotism will be nurtured'.³⁰⁵

The need to spread patriotic and nationalist education amongst the rural population through mass events was even more urgent in the areas inhabited by the Vlachs. In 1896, the regional school supervisor of Krajina referred in his report that in an assembly, teachers in his jurisdiction had discussed 'how to develop the population's consciousness and feeling [of belonging] to the Serbian nation (*srpskoj narodnosti*)', and concluded 'that organising festivities (*zabava*) in which speeches of a national character would be given' would certainly contribute towards this aim.³⁰⁶ A similar approach was taken by supervisor Bašić in regard to public celebrations in his report of 1899, where he explicitly refers to the influence public celebrations could have on the locals, but only if performed 'properly and not in a formal and cold way'.³⁰⁷ In other words, according to Bašić, public rituals should transmit the profile of the national character to the population in a warm and passionate way, and the entire atmosphere of the celebrations had to appeal to the population's taste.

Enhancing the popular outlook of public celebrations was not the only strategy

304 Timotijević, 'Jubilej kao kolektivna reprezentacija', p. 12. Timotijević points out that the secular part of public celebrations started to develop only from the mid-nineteenth century onwards.

305 Stanišić, p. 165.

306 AS, MPS P f. XIX r. 1/1896.

307 Belgrade, Arhiv Srbije (AS), MPS P f. XL r. 16/1899.

deployed by Bašić to ensure the local population's attendance. He also relied on a more coercive strategy, by contacting regional and local administrative and police authorities who would help ensure people's attendance. This was in the first place done because the festivals and/or their modality of celebration represented a novelty, and thus no spontaneous adherence could be expected from the population. Moreover, in certain cases, as will be demonstrated in chapter 6, the population was not willing to contribute financially or attend public celebrations, sometimes openly resisting their introduction. Notwithstanding the need for the local authorities' intervention to ensure the successful involvement of the locals, the supervisor's overall satisfaction with the population's response to these events was expressed in two different reports, which indicates that the celebrations were properly tailored to suit popular taste.³⁰⁸

Three types of public festivities were celebrated in Krajina by order of the regional school supervisor: those referring to the recent national past, those inspired by or celebrating events or figures from the Serbian medieval past, and those linked to Orthodox festivals, but inspired by Serbian popular tradition. In the first category, in the years 1899 and 1900 Krajina teachers organised the Proclamation of the Serbian Kingdom (22 February) and *Cveti*, a festival marking the Second Serbian Uprising led by Miloš Obrenović. In the second category, Krajina teachers celebrated *Vidovdan* (St Vitus' Day) and Saint Sava's Day.

Besides being one of the oldest and most important national saints of the Serbian Church, Saint Sava was a figure of huge symbolic significance in nineteenth-century Serbian national culture.³⁰⁹ Bojan Aleksov argues that in this period the cult of Saint Sava started to acquire meanings inspired by the nationalist ideology, becoming the symbol of a national 'golden age', of national reconciliation and unification, as well as of martyrdom and self-sacrifice for the Church and the nation.³¹⁰ Moreover, in 1841, Saint Sava was proclaimed patron saint of the Serbian school. As to Saint Vitus, his day was promoted to the status of a public festival in 1889, as the day of commemoration of

308 AS, MPS P f. XL r. 16/1899; AS, MPS P f. IV r. 161/1900.

309 Saint Sava was the youngest son of Stefan Nemanja, the founder of both the most important medieval Serbian dynasty (Nemanjić) and of the Serbian medieval state, and, even more significantly, he was the 'father' and the first bishop of the Serbian Orthodox Church, whose autonomy and autocephaly he secured in 1219. As Archbishop, Sava himself also contributed to the establishment of the Serbian medieval state by appeasing his brothers who fought over the territories, and by consecrating one of them, Stefan the 'First crowned' (Prvovenčani), as the first Serbian king.

310 Bojan Aleksov, 'Nationalism in Construction: The Memorial Church of St. Sava on Vračar Hill in Belgrade', *Balkanologie. Revue d'études pluridisciplinaires*, 2003, 47–72 (p. 47).

those who had 'given their life for the fatherland', i.e. all soldiers who since medieval times up to the recent past had fought for what was understood as the Serbian national cause.³¹¹ *Vidovdan* was celebrated on the date of the Battle of Kosovo (28 June 1389), which, seen as the moment marking the fall of the glorious Serbian medieval kingdom, was felt by nineteenth-century Serbian patriots to be one of the most important moments in Serbian national history. Finally, *Vidovdan* had a special importance and appeal for primary-school students, as it also marked the end of the school year.

The third group of public festivals promoted by the primary school were those drawn from the religious calendar: Lazarus' Saturday (*Lazareva Subota* or *Vrbica*) and St. George's Morn (*Đurđevdanski uranak*). Since these two Orthodox festivities were already celebrated by the Vlachs according to their own traditions, their contribution to the Vlach-assimilation policy consisted of promoting Serbian popular culture among the Vlach population. By starting to celebrate Lazarus' Saturday and St. George according to supervisor Bašić's directives, inspired by what he considered to be the Serbian popular tradition, the Vlachs were expected to start changing their own religious rituals and the beliefs attached to them.

In order to ensure that public festivals celebrated in the Krajina region met the task of instilling patriotic feelings and fostering the identification of the population with the Serbian nation, their outlook was strictly prescribed by the regional school supervisor. The celebrations included moralising speeches, aimed at eradicating the supposedly 'superstitious' practices embedded in the rural population, especially the Vlachs (see chapter 3), or addresses on health or economic issues, and also speeches dealing with some 'nice episode from [Serbian] history that contributed to the development of love for King and country'. Delivered by teachers, these speeches would be followed by a programme prepared by school children. The programme was heavily inspired by Serbian nationalist ideology, as it would consist of 'a series of beautiful [Serbian] popular and heroic songs and poetry', 'playing of *gusla*' and 'short theatre pieces on historical episodes as represented in epic poetry'. In addition, 'the pure [Serbian] popular dance (*narodna igra*) was not neglected'. Finally, on the Day of the Proclamation of the Serbian Kingdom, the Serbian national anthem was performed.³¹²

311 Miroslav Timotijević, 'O proizvođenju jendog nacionalnog praznika. Spomen dan palima u borbu za otadžbinu', *Godišnjak za društvenu istoriju*, 1-3(2002), 69-77.

312 AS, MPS P f. IV r. 161/1900.

The inclusion in the programme of epic poetry accompanied by *gusla*, a traditional Balkan one-string instrument, is extremely significant. In fact, not only did Serbian epic poetry play a significant role in the process of the definition of Serbian national identity and the construction of Serbian national past (see chapter 3), but since it was traditionally performed accompanied by *gusla*, the latter also acquired a high symbolic value in Serbian national identification. In fact, by the second half of the nineteenth century the *gusla* instrument was already regarded as a well-established 'patriotic symbol' among members of the Serbian educated middle-class.³¹³

In rural areas, primary school involvement in the celebration of public festivals was neither a straightforward process, nor a widespread practice during the period this research is concerned with. As already mentioned above, the celebration of public festivals in Serbia's countryside started in 1899, when a regional school supervisor was introduced by the 1899 Law on Primary School. Archival material and published sources from the period 1899 to 1903-1904 confirm the supervisor's crucial contribution to the success of celebrating national festivals in rural schools. Therefore, it is possible that when the post of regional school supervisor was abolished in 1904, the drive to involve schools in celebrations diminished. However, even at its peak (1899-1904) this practice had not taken root nationwide, and sources do not suggest that it was enforced in all Vlach-inhabited areas. For instance, in 1901/1902 public celebrations were held in the Krajina and Morava districts, but not in two other districts with a conspicuous Vlach minority: Požarevac and Timok.³¹⁴

Besides abolishing regional school supervisors, the dynastic change of 1903 also hindered the consolidation of a calendar of national festivities. It was also hampered ultimately, in 1914, by the Serbian politicians' endorsement of the state project which implied the creation of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, which was eventually achieved in 1918. In order to accommodate the other nations which joined the 1918 state, in the first place Croats and Slovenes, the Serbian authorities had to modify most of the national symbolism they had adopted and developed in previous decades.

313 Miroslav Timotijević, 'Guslar kao simbolična figura srpskog nacionalnog pevača', *Zbornik radova Narodnog muzeja – Istorija umetnosti*, 17 (2004), 253–83 (p. 255).

314 Protić, 'Naše narodno prosvetčivanje', p. 617.

5.4. Serbisation of Vlach Traditional Dress

One aspect of the Vlach culture which attracted the Serbian authorities' attention, and that the primary school was meant to influence and change was dress. The description of Vlach dress was an integral element of Serbian ethnographic production; for the late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century Serbian texts often described it in great detail, alongside the traditional attire characteristic of other populations of Serbia. These descriptions made the Vlachs visually identifiable and recognisable to the Serbian intelligentsia. Consequently, what was depicted as the Vlach traditional dress was increasingly perceived as visually disrupting the unity of the Serbian population, and as such, it became another aspect of Vlach culture that had to be Serbified.

The perception of dress as a way of expressing and defining a group's ethnic or social identity, and also as a marker of distinction between 'civilised' and 'uncivilised' groups has long been a feature of human history. In his *Geography*, the Greek author Strabo distinguishes between the dress codes of civilised Greeks and Romans, on the one hand, and uncivilised barbarians, on the other.³¹⁵ A similar division is to be found in texts produced on the western fringes of Europe from the middle-ages until the late nineteenth century, namely in descriptions of the Irish people by Welsh and English authors.³¹⁶ Similarly, in late-nineteenth-century Chinese texts, the non-Chinese populations of border regions were presented as wearing 'barbarian-style' costumes and, thus, 'dressing them up', became an imperative of the Empire's 'civilising mission'.³¹⁷

The perception of dress as a way of expressing identity, and as a criterion used for inter-group differentiation was not characteristic of ancient, medieval or early modern authors alone. The link between dress and ethnicity has been recognised, and therefore conceptualised, in recent scholarship. Manning Nash sees dress, alongside language and culturally designated physical characteristics, as the most frequent 'surface pointer' of a given ethnic group.³¹⁸ Nash's position is echoed in Joanne B. Eicher's

315 Edward Ch. L. van der Vliet, 'The Romans and Us: Strabo's "Geography" and the Construction of Ethnicity', *Mnemosyne*, 56 (2003), 257–72 <<http://dx.doi.org/10.2307/4433447>>.

316 Christian Huck, 'Clothes Make the Irish: Irish Dressing and the Question of Identity', *Irish Studies Review*, 11 (2003), 273–84 <<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/09670880310001629811>>.

317 Qi An, 'To Dress or Not to Dress: Body Representations of the Ethnic Minorities on China's Southwestern Frontiers', *Inner Asia*, 13 (2011), 183–203 <<http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/000000011797372878>>.

318 Manning Nash, *The Cauldron of Ethnicity in the Modern World* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989), p. 12.

definition of 'ethnic dress' as '[t]he body modifications and supplements that mark the ethnic identity of an individual'.³¹⁹ Although both authors acknowledge the nexus between ethnic identity and traditional costume, they do not imply the immutable nature of either.

In late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century Serbia, the intrinsic connection between ethnicity and traditional dress was reinforced by the fact that peasant clothing was almost entirely produced locally, within the communities themselves. Therefore, notwithstanding certain common traits, being hand-made and of local origin, the traditional clothing of Serbia's rural communities varied depending on the geographical location and/or the ethnic background. Although local and regional variety in traditional costume was preserved throughout the nineteenth century, Jelena Arandelović-Lazić argues that in that period a degree of homogeneity was achieved among the Serbian-speaking population, through the full or partial adoption of the costume typical of the rural area surrounding the capital, Belgrade. However, Arandelović-Lazić also points out that this new dress standard did not spread amongst the Vlachs, who preserved most of their traditional clothing unchanged throughout the century.³²⁰ In this context, while dress was becoming more uniform throughout the various areas of the Serbian state, Vlach dress conservatism became more evident and was interpreted as yet another proof of Vlach resistance to Serbian cultural influence and an indisputable statement of Vlach identity.

The Serbian authorities were mostly concerned with those Vlach costumes they perceived as most singular and markedly different from those worn by the majority of Serbia's population. Attention was paid to the dress of the mountain Vlach population, the so-called *Ungureani* Vlachs (see chapter 1), in particular to male and female headwear (see figure 4). In their reports, school supervisors often referred to *moce*, the peculiar hair-style of Vlach girls, which, as explained by twentieth-century ethnographers, consisted of a tress over the forehead. Married Vlach women, on the other hand, wore the so-called *šapsa*, a hat which varied in shape depending on the geographical area, fixed on a rigid structure (*plečar* or *kléiš*) padded with wool or hemp, and decorated with coins and embroidered cloth (see figure 3). As to male headgear, the

319 Joanne B. Eicher, 'Introduction: Dress as Expression of Ethnic Identity', in *Dress and Ethnicity: Change Across Space and Time*, ed. by Joanne B. Eicher (Oxford: Berg, 1995), pp. 1–6 (p. 1).

320 Jelena Arandelović-Lazić, 'Nošnja Vlaha Ungureana krajem XIX i početkom XX veka', *Glasnik Etnografskog muzeja u Beogradu*, 1963, 109–37 (pp. 111–12).

Vlach garment in question was a large hat, made of an unshorn and untanned sheepskin, predominately of a white colour (*šubara*).

While *šapsa* and *šubara* were considered as typically Vlach, it should be stressed that similar sheepskin hats and women's hair-styles were also characteristic of the Serbian or Slavic-speaking population of north-eastern and eastern Serbia. In his description of Serbia (1887), Karić speaks of *šubara* as 'the everyday headwear in almost all of eastern Serbia, both in summer and in winter time', and states that in the western and south-western regions of the county they are extremely rare.³²¹ Contemporary authors report that males of these areas would wear the Turkish-style fez or the *šajkača*, a Serbian military cap in use at the time. The basic types of Serbian female headgear mirrored the same east-west division. In the eastern areas wool or hair extensions, the so-called '*trvelji*', were used, while decorated rings or dish-like structures ('*konge*') combined with a headscarf were worn in western Serbia. Since the western half of the Serbian state was inhabited by an overwhelmingly Serbian population, its dress varieties were consequently perceived as genuinely Serbian. On the other hand, the costumes worn in eastern Serbia were associated with the Vlachs and Vlach influence.

Not only was the Vlach *Ungureani* headgear identified as typically Vlach in late-nineteenth and early twentieth-century Serbian texts, but in line with the 'orientalising' tendency of these texts (see chapter 3), they were also presented as aesthetically poor and hazardous to people's health. In his *Principality of Serbia* (1876), Milićević describes the female Vlach dress from the Mlava and Zvižd areas (Požarevac region) as 'ugly' and compares their *šapsa* hat to 'a sort of sock' fixed by 'a cloth string wrapped around the forehead, [which] made them [Vlach women] look even uglier'.³²² On the other hand, the male *šubara* was not only seen as impractical and unhealthy because it was too large for the Serbian intelligentsia's taste, but it was also associated with crime. In his 1896 report the school supervisor of the Mlava district (Požarevac region) suggested that 'it would be good if the teachers of this district teach their pupils to make straw hats so that the latter would gradually replace that cumbersome hat, at least in the summer'.³²³ It was also believed that a Vlach would only make his hat out of the unshorn skin of a stolen sheep, as illustrated by the Jasikovo village teacher's account:

321 Karić, p. 120.

322 Milićević, *Kneževina Srbija*, p. 176.

323 AS, MPS P f. XIX r. 1/1896.

[...] For the people in this area having a fleecy hat [made of an unshorn sheepskin] is a status symbol. But, since a sheep with long wool is also the best one [of the flock], the owner is sorry to kill it. However, others would also notice this sheep and wait for the occasion to steal it. And if one manages to do so, and on top of that, to avoid police investigation – well, this is considered to be courageous [by the Vlachs]!³²⁴

The impracticality of the *šubaras* and the thieving it was ultimately supposed to encourage were stated as the reasons for the first prohibition on wearing them. The ban imposed on male inhabitants of the Boljevac district (Crna reka region) in November 1883 was issued 'because these *šubaras* are very impractical, and because many resort to theft to get a sheepskin and make them'.³²⁵ A similar ban was instituted in the same region almost two decades later, in April 1899, this time also including women's headgear. What distinguishes this ban from the previous one is that the argument of impracticality was dropped, while the stress was put on concern with the distinctiveness of Vlach dress when compared with costume in the rest of the country, and the alleged health hazard implied for those wearing it:

In some localities of this region, traditional dress is very different from dress worn in other areas of Serbia. This difference is particularly evident in the headgear which is used either as protection, or, as in case of women, as decoration. The latter are rather an eyesore than a decoration. [...] Apart from the fact that this headgear spoils the appearance of those who wear it, it is also very unhealthy.

According to the medical board report, commissioned by the Governor, wearing '*trvelj*', '*plećar*', *šubara* of unshorn and untanned skin, etc., is extremely damaging to the health, because by wearing them diseases such as *headache*, *fainting*, *various wounds* and *scabs*, [and] *scabies* appear. Moreover, they contribute to the transmission of *syphilis* and *other*

324 Nikola Stojanović, 'Iz učiteljskog Sibira', *Učitelj*, 1883, pp. 61–63, 77–80, 92–93, 119–20, 385–88, 403–6 (pp. 327–328).

325 *Istorijski arhiv Timočka krajina*, Zaječar: 1948–1988, ed. by Tomislav Mijović (Zaječar: Istorijski arhiv Timočka krajina, 1988), p. 55.

Although the issue of the Vlachs' singular attire opened and propelled the 1899 ban, scholars dealing with the history of Serbia's traditional costumes would generally ignore this part of the ban, and would interpret it as primarily inspired by hygiene and health reasons. The text quoted above, apart from primarily expressing the Serbian authorities anxiety about the lack of national unity, in line with the 'orientalising' approach set out by the aforementioned quotes from Milićević, presents Vlach women's headgear as very unattractive. The health concern, which is normally interpreted by Serbian scholars as the main motivation behind this ban, is only featured last in the regulations introducing this prohibition.³²⁷

The fact that the 1899 measure forbade only the *šubara* of unshorn and/or untanned sheepskin that was predominately worn by the *Ungureani* Vlachs, but did not mention other types of *šubara* used in the same area by the Serbian-speaking population, suggests that the measure was primarily targeted at Vlach headwear. This argument is supported by documents produced during the same period by the regional school authorities, who made unambiguous references to the Vlach headwear. In July 1900, the school supervisor of the Morava district informed the minister of education that the regional police 'issued measures against wearing their "Vlach" *šubara* and buns' and states that this issue 'has been paid due attention, as it deserves'.³²⁸

The educational authorities of the areas inhabited by *Ungureani* Vlachs would themselves actively participate in the effort not only to eradicate the habit of wearing the traditional headgear, but also to change the rest of the traditional costume. The aforementioned supervisor of the Morava district informed the minister of education that the Požarevac Regional School Committee had reserved one thousand dinars for the acquisition of *šajkača* hats and 'what is most necessary for female dress', items to be distributed to Vlach children.³²⁹ Similarly, a year earlier (1899) the Požarevac region supervisor had written to the minister that, in relation to the Homolje Vlach population, he had 'endeavoured to substitute [Vlach] *šubara* with fezzes, *šajkača* hats, or with

326 Marinko Stanojević, *Zbornik priloga za poznavanje Timočke krajine, knj.3* (Belgrade: Štamparija 'Jovanović', 1931), pp. 88–89.

327 Milenko Filipović, 'Uticaj vlasti na narodnu nošnju', *Rad vojvođanskih muzeja*, 10 (1961), 59–68 (p.65); Jasna Bjeladinović-Jergić, 'Narodna nošnja u Timoku i Zaglavku', *Glasnik Etnografskog muzeja u Beogradu*, 61(1997), 351–420 (p.359).

328 Belgrade, Arhiv Srbije (AS), MPS P f. XLV r. 104/1900.

329 AS, MPS P f. XLV r. 104/1900.

simple *šubara*, and to make the girls comb their hair into *trvelj* [instead of *moce*]. Although the attempt to change male headwear had been unsuccessful according to the supervisor's own report, he was still pleased that the girls had stopped combing their hair in *moce*. However, the supervisor did not abandon his plan to rid male Vlach children of the Vlach-style *šubara*. He asked the minister for permission to order the local school committees of the Homolje district to reserve in their yearly budget a certain sum for the acquisition of fezzes and *šajkača* hats for male pupils.³³⁰

Apart from the education authorities' direct interventions to change the dress code of Vlach children, schooling was also expected to exercise the same influence in a more gradual and subtle way. This was to be achieved in the first place through the education of Vlach girls, since as future mothers they were not only seen as playing the main role in child raising, but also as crucial transmitters of Vlach culture (see chapter 3 and 4). It was thought that if girls learned about and adopted Serbian-style dress, they would later pass this on to their children, contributing in this way to the affirmation of Serbian culture at the expense of Vlach culture. During the hours of handicraft lessons, when female teachers instructed them in different handicraft techniques, Vlach girls were introduced to what the Serbian intelligentsia considered to be Serbian dress and ornamentation. School supervisors deemed that handicraft should be inspired by traditional Serbian designs, motifs and styles of dress. For instance, the Boljevac and Timok districts' supervisor in his 1896 report wrote about the need to teach Vlach girls to adorn themselves in a Serbian way. Several years later, the regional school supervisor of Krajina defined the scope of handicraft in the villages of the area as 'corresponding to local needs, but inspired by purely national taste'.³³¹

Serbian nineteenth-century authorities' intervention in changing the population's dress did not only affect the Vlachs. On the contrary, the very first prohibitions of this kind were directed towards the Serbian population, and took place in the early nineteenth century. The most notorious measure was the order issued by the leader of the First Serbian Uprising, Karađorđe, who ordered the Serbian rebels to cut off their pigtails, (*perčin*) at the time the characteristic hairstyle of ethnic Serbs. According to the most popular explanation of this ban, in hand-to-hand combat Ottoman fighters could topple their Serbian opponents by grabbing and pulling their pigtails, and Karađorđe

330 Belgrade, Arhiv Srbije (AS), MPS P f. XX r. 182/1899.

331 AS, MPS P f. XIX r. 1/1896; Belgrade, Arhiv Srbije (AS), MPS P f. II r. 27/1900.

wanted to deprive his enemies of this advantage. While such an explanation is still used by many contemporary Serbian scholars, it would be more convincing if the measure was regarded as an element in the modernising dress reform which was part and parcel of Enlightenment philosophy, still at its height at that time. Another ban was issued during the First Serbian Uprising, forbidding a type of female headwear, the *tarpoša* hat, that was worn in some western areas of what would later become the Serbian state. Vuk Karadžić in his *Dictionary* describes this hat as more than two feet in diameter and extremely impractical.³³²

The ban on the Vlach headwear should be also seen as part of the 'modernising' enterprise which saw the Serbian authorities intervening in the dress habits of the population in the name of latter's health and well-being; but it is important to note that Vlach dress did not attract any particular attention until the early 1880s. The Serbian authorities' sudden concern with the Vlachs' dress could, to a certain extent, be seen as the result of changes that occurred in European hygiene standards and medical science throughout the century. For instance, it was in the last quarter of the nineteenth century that health was again brought forwards as the key argument in the movement for dress reform, especially regarding female costume. However, the coincidence of this attention with the Serbian intelligentsia's rising anxiety about achieving national unity within the country (see chapter 2), and the consequent perception of the Vlachs as an element disrupting this (see chapter 3), indicates that 'national interests' could have played a major role in the Vlach headgear ban. Consequently, the 'health reasons' should be understood as a discourse of 'rational' and instrumental justification of the ban rather than the primary motivation behind it.

332 Stefanović Karadžić, *Srpski rječnik*, p. 811.



Figure 3: *Šapsa* headwear³³³



Figure 4: Vlach man and woman from Homolje mountains³³⁴

333 Karić, p. 127.

334 Karić, p. 844.

5.5. Conclusion

Shortly after the introduction of compulsory primary education, the Serbian authorities realised that the mere schooling of Vlach children would not suffice to secure the integration and assimilation of the Vlach communities in the newly-established Serbian nation. In order to support the assimilation process undertaken by primary education, it was also deemed that adult members of the Vlach ethno-linguistic group had to be reached, involved and re-educated according to the nationalist ideology promoted by the Serbian intelligentsia. In order to reach out to the adult Vlach population and ensure their exposure to the nationalist message, local teachers were required to promote a series of extra-curricular activities and the nationalist education of adult Vlachs.

The means used by the Serbian authorities to reach the broader Vlach population and expose it to the various elements of nationalist content varied, but fundamentally, they used the same structures, venues and events that were present nationwide. In their choice of the ways to mobilise adult Vlachs for the Serbian national cause, the Serbian authorities considered the appeal that certain topics or practices could have for them. The attraction these initiatives exercised onto the Vlach population, facilitated the exposure of the latter to the nationalist content transmitted by these initiatives.

The most efficient device for captivating the Vlach adults' attention, the Agricultural Associations (*Zadruga*), certainly offered various material benefits and agricultural knowledge to the Vlach peasant, whilst at the same time they also created the conditions required for keeping up and further spreading the use of the Serbian language amongst the Vlachs. In fact, encouraging the Vlach members of local *Zadrugas* to read agricultural publications written in Serbian, facilitated their access to other genres in the Serbian language. Moreover, teachers, as founders and members of these associations, had the opportunity to promote and make the *Zadruga* members participate in several symbolic practices inspired to what was considered the genuine Serbian tradition.

While the *Zadruga* aimed at attracting Vlach adults by offering material benefits, the rifle associations were primarily introduced to induce Vlach teenagers to attend the

extended school. The latter, as explained in chapter 4, was seen as necessary by the Krajina region supervisor in order to consolidate the effects of the Serbisation of Vlach children achieved by the lower primary school. Moreover, rifle clubs helped teach young Vlachs obedience towards the authorities, developed their courage and willingness to offer their lives for the national cause and provided them with some basic military training.

The Serbian authorities also understood the nationalising potential of public celebrations, and, therefore, exploited them to instil into the Vlach population a sense of belonging to the Serbian nation. In 1899, the task of bringing public festivals to the rural population was entrusted to the local teachers. The latter were expected not only to prepare a programme which appealed to the local population and involved school children, but also offered a platform for various speeches of different character. Although the themes of the programme ranged from health issues to moralising content, the stress was on the nationalist and nationalising topics linked to the event celebrated by the festival. Therefore, as in case of the agricultural associations, public celebrations were used to both 'modernise' the lifestyle of Vlach peasants – and peasants in general – and to develop their awareness of and identification with the Serbian national cause.

Notwithstanding their enormous symbolic potential, public celebrations did not manage to establish themselves as a solid tradition in either urban or rural areas of the Serbian state. What prevented them from taking root was primarily the political changes that occurred, which necessitated the reinvention and reinterpretation of the national past and consequently of its symbolic representation during public festivals. Despite their failure to take root and become a stable part of Serbian national symbolism, national celebrations and the attempt to create a calendar of festivals demonstrates the correspondence of the Serbian authorities' nationalising strategies with their West-European counterparts and models and at the same time their awareness that this type of activity could play a role in the project of assimilating the Vlachs.

While the nationalising of the Vlachs through associations and public festivals was mostly achieved by seeking ways to induce the Vlachs to partake voluntarily, the same cannot be said for the Serbian authorities' initiatives to change elements of traditional Vlach dress. Vlach costumes, especially the headwear of the *Ungureani* Vlachs, which was perceived as a visual disruption of national unity, became a target of

Serbian legislation. In its turn, the primary school contributed to the successful eradication of the *Ungureani* Vlachs' habit of wearing certain garments. School authorities were involved in an active promotion of Serbian-style dress and headgear among the Vlachs by purchasing and distributing the kind of clothing and headwear that were worn by ethnic Serbs, and – more subtly – by teaching Vlach girls women's handicraft inspired by Serbian national motifs, designs and style.

To conclude, the role of teachers as 'people's teachers' in Vlach-inhabited areas implied great attention to and involvement in the Serbian authorities' project of the assimilation of the Vlachs. Consequently, all activities and initiatives promoted in these areas by the Serbian authorities aimed, to some degree, at fostering the spread of Serbian national sentiment among the Vlachs or contributing towards the deployment of the Serbian language. In addition, the teachers also supported the Serbian authorities' coercive measures issued for the same assimilation purpose, such as the headwear ban.

CHAPTER 6: The Vlachs' Responses to Serbian Education Policies

6.1. Introduction

The introduction of universal and compulsory primary schooling in 1882 was a measure that had an enormous impact on Serbia's peasant population. It not only challenged the existing lifestyle and culture of the peasants, by propagating a combination of modern bourgeois knowledge and values, but it also deprived families of their traditional and exclusive right to educate and control their children. Given this, it is not surprising that in Serbia's countryside compulsory schooling was seen by many as an unjust imposition of the state, the equivalent of forced labour (*kuluk*).

The uneasy relationship between peasants and compulsory schooling was not a peculiarity of the Serbian countryside alone. In the nineteenth- and early-twentieth centuries, this friction was a pan-European phenomenon, noticeable everywhere primary schooling was introduced, whether on a compulsory basis or not. Drop-outs, irregular attendance and absenteeism at the busiest periods of the agricultural calendar marked the history of nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century primary schooling across Europe and even beyond it.³³⁵

The association of compulsory education with *kuluk* and its negative impact on the peasant population were nationwide Serbian phenomena. However, when it came to the Vlach peasants, they were generally represented as those most staunchly opposed to the introduction and enforcement of compulsory primary schooling. In fact, primary sources such as school inspectors' reports repeatedly refer to the difficult relation between the Vlachs and the Serbian primary school, due to the Vlach population's lack

335 Ben Eklof, *Russian Peasant Schools : Officialdom, Village Culture, and Popular Pedagogy, 1864-1914* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), pp. 352–388; Barbara Heather and Marianne O. Nielsen, 'Quaker Ideology, Colonialism and American Indian Education', *Culture and Religion*, 14 (2013), 289–304 (pp. 295–296) <<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/14755610.2012.758162>>; Weber, *Peasants into Frenchmen*, pp. 318–323.

of interest, open opposition and even hatred not only of primary school, but also the Serbian nation and what it represented. The Vlachs were often depicted as the main 'enemies' of the Serbian school, and many authors agreed that in no other part of Serbia was school as detested as it was among the Vlachs. In his 1883 report, the school inspector of the Požarevac region, Stevan Čuturilo, stated that 'in [a]lmost all Vlach villages an extreme hostility towards school prevails, and especially towards the Serbian language'.³³⁶ More than two decades later, in 1906, the Boljevac district school inspector, Milan J. Gajić, terms the Vlachs 'a major enemy of the Serbian school'.³³⁷

The representation of the Vlachs as a group that was particularly reluctant to accept Serbian primary schooling persisted not only throughout the first half of the twentieth century, but it has also been accepted by – and is still widespread among – contemporary Serbian scholars. In his study of Serbian primary schooling during the inter-war period, Isić speaks about the Vlachs' resistance to enrolling their children in Serbian schools, and he argues that in some cases this was also motivated by their aversion towards the Serbian state.³³⁸

However, this widespread view of the Vlachs as the major opposition force to primary schooling is not supported by available contemporary statistical data from the period. What the latter demonstrate, on the contrary, is that the districts inhabited by the Vlachs often occupied the leading place in the country as regards the proportion of schools and enrolled pupils in relation to the total population of the districts. For instance, statistics from 1888/1889 showing the number of students per 1000 inhabitants place the four districts inhabited by the Vlachs among the first nine out of the total of 22 districts.³³⁹ In 1905, statistics showing the number of schools per inhabitants per district confirms this trend. The Krajina district is found in the leading position, having one school per 0-1000 inhabitants, and is followed by the Požarevac and Timok districts, in which one school served 1501-2000 inhabitants.³⁴⁰

This large discrepancy between dominant perceptions of the Vlachs' attitudes towards primary schooling and the available statistical data makes it imperative to

336 Belgrade, Arhiv Srbije (AS), MPS P f. XLVI r. 4/1883.

337 AS, MPS P f. 70 r. 47/1906.

338 Momčilo Isić, *Osnovo školstvo u Srbiji 1918-1941* (Belgrade: Institut za noviju istoriju Srbije, 2005), pp. 235, 247.

339 *Prosvetni glasnik*, 1891, p. 334.

340 Đurović, *Modernizacija obrazovanja*, p. 334.

interrogate the widespread perception of the Vlachs as the main enemies of the Serbian school. In other words, it is necessary to investigate whether and to what extent the representation of the Vlachs as a population particularly reluctant towards the Serbian primary school reflected reality, or whether this perception trend should rather be considered and interpreted as part of the Serbian intelligentsia's 'orientalising' attitude towards the Vlach ethno-cultural group. The latter, as explained in chapter 3, depicted them primarily as a threat to Serbian national interests.

Analysing the character and motivations behind the Vlachs' acts of resistance against primary schooling is a rather challenging task given the conditions and types of available sources. The difficulty is in the first place due to the fact that members of the Vlach communities left very few written sources which allow insight into their intimate thoughts. This lack of first-hand evidence forces us to rely on information written, and therefore filtered and interpreted, by individuals belonging to the dominant (Serbian) ethnic group.

The majority of documents containing references to the Vlachs' negative attitude towards primary school were produced by the primary school supervisors, and to a lesser extent by the teachers. The supervisors would normally write these observations in the form of reports or letters to the minister of education. The sources produced by educational workers normally contain observations regarding the behaviour and resistance strategies towards schooling deployed by the common people and members of the local administration. Information regarding more organised forms of resistance to schooling, such as agitation for the cultural rights of the Vlachs led by individuals, are on the other hand, very rare in these documents.

The scant references to organised acts of resistance among the Vlachs in documents produced by educational workers is certainly an indicator that not many, nor extensive, actions of this kind actually occurred. In fact, since teachers were expected to exercise surveillance over the local population in relation to various different matters (see chapter 2), any significant organised activity by the Vlachs against primary schooling would certainly be reported. However, this assumption cannot be fully verified given the conservation state of archive collections which are most likely to contain the detailed information on 'national security' issues, in the first place the confidential correspondence of the Ministry of Internal Affairs. The latter contains only

a couple of dozens of boxes of documents for a thirty-year-long period.

The fragmentary conservation of sources not only makes it impossible to establish the exact number of organised primary school resistance incidents, but it also leaves us unable to reconstruct a fully-detailed picture of registered resistance acts, or to establish how these cases were handled by the Serbian authorities. However, given the fact that no results seem to have been achieved in the sphere of the Vlachs' cultural rights, and no major ethnic clashes or tensions have been registered, it is safe to conclude that these resistance initiatives were stamped out at their very outset, or long before they could have assumed a truly mass character.

The nature of the sources containing data about Vlach attitudes towards primary school, especially the matter of authorship, namely, that the overwhelming majority of these sources were written by individuals of Serbian ethnicity, demands that particular attention be paid to their interpretation. They must be read 'against the grain', and the consequences of the power relations between the authors (members of the Serbian intelligentsia) and the object of their writings (the Vlachs) should not be underestimated. In fact, as James C. Scott argues, the interaction between the subordinates and the members of dominant group, a process which he names 'public transcript', never reveals the true power relations. From the perspective of the subordinate, the interaction would mostly testify to apparent compliance with the dominant ideology and domination order, while any potential disagreements and critique of dominant policies or ideologies would normally remain concealed.³⁴¹

The present chapter will identify and examine the main forms of resistance carried out by the Vlach communities against primary schooling. In the first section, the so-called 'everyday resistance' strategies will be investigated. The aim of the analysis in this section is to establish the motivation behind these resistance strategies, to consider whether – or the extent to which – they were specific to this group, and whether – or to what extent – the Vlachs' group affiliation determined them. Subsequently, the chapter will consider the forms of open or public resistance to primary schooling. Particular attention will be given to the social and cultural background of the actors of these resistance acts, the Serbian authorities' responses to these acts, and the role played by the Romanian state. In the following section, the chapter will then consider the 'cultural

341 James C. Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts* (New Haven: Yale U. P., 1992), pp. 2–4.

resistance' form and its impact on the Serbian primary school educational aims.

6.2. Everyday Resistance Strategies

As to the resistance strategies deployed in rural environments against compulsory primary education, their analysis at a nationwide level shows that in the majority of cases there was little or no difference in form and motivation whether carried out by Vlachs or Serbians. This appears quite natural, since the population of both ethnic groups had to deal with the same legislation and institutions, whose rules often dictated the course and the direction of the resistance acts themselves. Moreover, since both populations lived in a very similar rural environment, they also shared a set of economic interests and many lifestyle and cultural traits which influenced the way in which they perceived and valued the usefulness of school. In addition, both Vlach and Serbian peasants shared a subordinate social position, since as a social stratum they were seen by the Serbian elites as an ignorant mass in need of enlightenment and an education to bring them up to middle-class standards. As explained in chapter 3, Vlach peasants occupied an even lower position on this 'civilisational scale', but still both groups were viewed by the ruling elites in roughly the same way. Considering these factors, many of the resistance strategies, and the motivations that laid behind them, discussed below as occurring in Vlach villages, were also common and widespread in all other rural areas of the Serbian state. However, as will also be demonstrated, there are still distinguishing features that characterise the resistance which took place in Vlach villages, amongst which the ethnic factor will be shown to have been the most important.

The most common types of Vlach resistance to primary schooling can be categorised as 'everyday resistance'. As defined by Scott, everyday resistance is a 'prosaic but constant struggle between the peasantry and those who seek to extract labour, food, taxes, rents and interest from them', and it is carried out through the use of the 'ordinary weapons of relatively powerless groups': 'foot dragging, dissimulation, desertion, false compliance, pilfering, feigned ignorance, slander, arson, sabotage, and so on'. According to this model, another characteristic of everyday resistance is its

informal character, since it is performed largely at the level of the individual, and is concerned with immediate *de facto* gains, while refraining from any explicit reference to public and symbolic goals.³⁴²

Since Scott developed his definition of everyday resistance within the context of his study of local class relations in a Malaysian rice-farming community, focusing primarily on the economic aspects of these relations and their consequences for both the material and cultural dynamics of the community, the model needs to be adapted to be applicable to the resistance strategies of the Vlach community's members against primary schooling. The adaptation is particularly needed because of the character of this study, which, instead of adopting a local perspective, focuses on the relations between the Vlach minority, on the one hand, and the Serbian authorities and institutions they represent, on the other.

Since the introduction of compulsory primary schooling challenged the existing life-style of the Vlach peasantry as a whole, the attitude adopted towards schooling would not have depended on, or changed exclusively as the result of, the internal economic or social stratification of the Vlach communities. In fact, as explained below, both rich and poor Vlachs as well as those involved in the running of local administration would regard school in a similarly negative way and, consequently, adopt similar strategies to avoid enrolling their children. Therefore, contrary to Scott's model of 'everyday resistance' which implies that the resistance strategies of peasants occurring at the local level was both a result of and directed against the economic stratification and relations within the communities themselves, the Vlach peasants everyday resistance strategies against the primary school was primarily an expression of similar interests and shared culture characterising the majority of the Vlach communities' members, regardless their socio-economic status at the local level.

Given the all-encompassing hostility towards primary schooling, two levels of everyday resistance strategies can be identified in Vlach villages: on the one hand, those carried out by individuals who locally held an institutional position, such as mayors or to lesser extent scribes, and, on the other hand, by common people. Although taking place at the institutional level, the resistance acts deployed by the mayors and scribes were in character very similar to those performed by the common peasants. In fact, as

342 James C. Scott, *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance* (Yale University Press, 1985), pp. xvi, 33.

will be illustrated below, instead of openly refusing to implement the educational measures the mayors would commonly resort to slyness in order to trick the system and bend the school regulations to their and/or communities' needs.

The institutional position of the mayor which allowed him to act on behalf of the community implied that he rarely acted independently from those whom he represented. In fact, there was often an implicit or concealed agreement between the two, an understanding which actually created the very conditions for the resistance to take place. As Scott argues, it would be hardly possible to deploy everyday resistance strategies in the absence of some level of cooperation among members of the community.³⁴³ The mayors were generally chosen from the same community they represented, and, at least nominally, by the members of that community. Even if, in practice, state authorities did exercise a major influence on the choice of local mayors, they would nevertheless rarely impose a mayor external to the community. As a result, in Vlach villages the mayors would normally be of Vlach ethnicity and from the same village they were representing.

Although occupying a position within the state hierarchy, mayors of Vlach origins were still an integral part of their communities. Apart from the local prestige they generally enjoyed, due to the fact that they were chosen from better-off families, culturally, they did not much differ from the rest of the peasantry. In fact, they were mostly illiterate and shared the same cultural patterns and social values with their co-villagers. Therefore, coming from economically more advantageous families did not imply that the Vlach mayors had a different perception of the school and its usefulness. On the contrary, as it will be demonstrated later, the richest people had more resources to deploy when it came to keeping their children off school. Being richer, they were both better connected and more able to bear the cost of the bribe, if it was necessary to resort to this.

6.2.1. Local Authorities as Resistance Actors

The Vlach mayors were the most important institutional figures to promote

343 James C. Scott, 'Everyday Forms of Resistance', *The Copenhagen Journal of Asian Studies*, 4 (2008), 33–62 (p. 36).

forms of resistance to the primary school through acts undertaken in their official capacity. Apart from having the political power locally, a mayor also acted as president of the local school committee, a body which had both supervisory and executive functions over school matters. As a key figure in both local politics and local school management, the mayor had various opportunities and the means to jeopardise the functions of the primary school and therefore thwart its policies. However, it would be wrong to assume that only the Vlach mayors in Vlach villages hindered the functioning of local schools. Complaints about mayors' reservations towards local schools also came from predominantly Serbian regions, and this was such a widespread phenomenon that it became a constant object of ministerial attention and legislation. Notwithstanding its national character, school supervisors' reports concerning the schools in Vlach areas continued to represent the Vlach mayors as particularly keen on frustrating the functioning of the primary school. For example, the school inspector of the Zaječar district (Crna reka region) stated in 1895, that in this jurisdiction '[t]he Vlach mayors were in the lead as to carelessness and indifference towards the school'.³⁴⁴

Another important figure in local resistance towards the school was the scribe, when of Vlach background. The scribes were seen by Serbian civil servants as particularly dangerous because they were often the only literate indigenous people in the village, and therefore the only individuals able to read and interpret the law. Bishop Melenije Vujić noted the major influence scribes had on the villagers. This awareness, or better still, this perception, actually induced him to write to King Milan about the necessity of removing Vlach-speaking scribes from the Vlach villages, because of the prestige they enjoyed among the population.³⁴⁵

One of the most common strategies of resistance on the part of mayors or scribes (alone or in cooperation) consisted in not enforcing the laws at all, or finding loopholes in the legislation on primary schooling in order to prevent the law from being instituted and enforced. For instance, in his 1894 report, the school inspector Miloje M. Vasić pointed to one example of this behaviour as a widespread practice among the Vlach mayors of the Boljevac district.³⁴⁶ The inspector complained that the very ministerial instructions on the imposition of fines on parents whose children did not regularly attend the school was being used to sabotage the punishment system itself, thus

344 AS, MPS P f. XXXVI r. 164/1895.

345 Belgrade, Arhiv Srbije (AS), PO 30/44.

346 Administrative unit of the Timok region.

allowing parents to keep their children off school without consequences.

According to the inspector, this was achieved by misapplying these instructions, according to which a new fine could not be issued until a previously imposed fine had been paid. The mayors, who were the figures in charge of fine collection, would simply not collect the first one they had issued, creating a backlog situation in which no further fines could be imposed.³⁴⁷ Less frequently, mostly in the cases dating back to the 1880s when the enforcement of compulsory education was still a novelty, the mayors would be hesitant about collecting fines because they were intimidated by the people from their own village. This was, for instance, the case with the mayor of the village of Zlot (Crna reka region), who in 1883 confided to the school inspector that he could not levy fines on parents because he feared that they would take revenge on him through arson. In fact, he informed the inspector that within ten days of his being appointed mayor, he had already lost three haystacks to fire.³⁴⁸ The practice of not collecting the fines is documented for the following decades: for instance, in the school year 1905-1906 no fine was collected in the Vlach village Duboka (Požarevac region), despite the fact that 222 of them had been issued.³⁴⁹

Another common way to jeopardise the functioning of the primary school was by not providing the necessary financial and material support. This was a rather straightforward task, since, with the exception of the teachers' salary, all the expenses incurred by the local school were to be covered through a separate locally-founded school budget, the management of which was entrusted to the mayor. In a peasant environment where the primary school was often seen as a useless and unjust imposition by the state, these expenses would be regarded as of minor importance when compared with other fiscal obligations, such as taxes for the local and central administrations.

Although there were frequent complaints about the financial and material shortages suffered by primary schools, which were often explicitly interpreted as the Vlach mayors' strategy of hindering the functioning of the primary school, the police authorities in some cases treated the practice with relative tolerance. In fact, aware of the widespread poverty of the peasant population and the financial burden in terms of the taxes they were already expected to pay, the regional police authorities would

347 AS, MPS P f. IV r. 168/1894.

348 Belgrade, Arhiv Srbije (AS), MPS P f. XLVI/1883.

349 Belgrade, Arhiv Srbije (AS), MPS P f. 72 r. 29/1906.

generally intervene only if the very basic needs of the school, such as firewood and main teaching aids, were not satisfied. In the words of the police commissioner of the Boljevac district in his letter to the Ministry of Education: 'The horrible reality of poverty imposes caution in everything, including this [the financial pressure on villages to sustain all the school expenses required by law].'³⁵⁰

The joint resistance action of villagers and local mayors can best be observed in the process of enrolling new pupils. The enrolment was performed by the school committee of which, as mentioned earlier, the mayor was the president, but which also consisted of the local teacher and a limited number of other local individuals. The critical moment in the enrolment process was deciding whose children would be asked to attend the school. In fact, in spite of the pressure to enforce a more intense enrolment policy in the Vlach villages, not all school-age children could be included due to material limitations of the school, for example the insufficient size of the classrooms. The limited number of places available offered the opportunity to more influential and better connected families to have their children left out or even cancelled from the enrolment list. This was achieved through nepotism, bribe or threat to the mayor, and also on the committee's own initiative, on the basis of the child's true or alleged health conditions, of the family's size and wherewithal. However, even if not all enrolments were irregular, the dominant impression of the teachers and school inspectors was that this was the moment that provided the occasion for most cases of corruption and abuse. In line with this perception is the view of the school inspector for the districts of Homolje and Zvižd (Požarevac region), as expressed in his 1895 report. He states that he noticed 'that school committees enrol the children they want, out of benevolence [towards the children's parents], friendship, or for a reward. In this way, the children from the richer families, who have the best conditions to be educated, are exempted from school attendance while two or three children are enrolled from poorer families [...]'.³⁵¹

6.2.2. Peasants as Actors

As to the one-off actions of resistance performed by individual Vlach peasants,

350 Belgrade, Arhiv Srbije (AS), MPS P f. XIV r. 19/1892.

351 AS, MPS P f. XXXVI r. 164/1895.

they varied greatly, but the most dominant and straightforward was simply to refuse to send the child to school. The children would only occasionally attend, or not at all, and this would be particularly common when parents needed the children's help in agricultural activities. This would happen particularly often in spring, during sowing times, and in autumn, during the harvest, but also on the occasion of local festivals. Sometimes, children would not be sent to school because of weather conditions and the long distances involved, especially during the winter. In some other cases, where economic pressures were especially great, parents send younger children in place of their enrolled older siblings, since older children provided a more valuable workforce. This would take also place because many Vlach children would still be attending primary school as teenagers. This was due not only to the legislation, which set the school leaving age at fourteen for girls and fifteen for boys, but also because of the existence of the preparatory grade in the Vlach schools (see chapter 4), which lengthened the schooling curriculum by one year compared with Serbian-speaking localities.

Vlach children often had to repeat the school year because of language difficulties, and this could prolong the five-year-long primary schooling in Vlach villages to six, seven or even eight years. As explained in chapter 4, repeating a year was especially common in the first grade, as Vlach children who did not master Serbian well enough to deal with second grade subjects could have to repeat the first grade up to three times. The rigour with which this rule was applied is confirmed by the statistics of the period, For instance in the school year 1903/1904, the percentage of children successfully finishing their first grade in the districts inhabited by the Vlachs was notable inferior to the national average of 75.88%. The worst results were registered in the Krajina district, where the Vlach population was the most numerous. There only 51.82% of first grade students moved up to the next grade.³⁵²

A less frequent, but still very interesting resistance strategy – because of the ingenuity that characterises it – consisted of instructing children to pretend to be deaf-mute or have other health-related issues, in order to induce the teacher to apply to the

352 Đurović, *Modernizacija obrazovanja*, p. 159. The other two districts with a substantial Vlach minority, Požarevac and Timok, registered the first-grade pass rate of respectively 67.16 and 67.11 %. On the other hand, the Morava district, given its overwhelming Serbian population, scored much higher: 79.57 %.

minister of education for their exemption from school attendance.³⁵³ This strategy was expected to work because, according to the laws on primary school, children with health problems were exempted from schooling. However, a more frequent version of exploiting these legal options was to provide a fake medical certificate stating that the child was affected by some incurable disease.

The enormous financial impact school had on the peasant population was certainly one of the key reasons why school itself was so unpopular in the Serbian countryside. In the Vlach localities, this economic pressure was even heavier than elsewhere due to a more intense application of the schooling policies, which resulted in a higher number of schools and pupils to sustain. This occurred especially because, on average, in the Vlach villages more children were enrolled than in their Serbian counterparts, and, consequently, some families were required to support more than one child at school. The high enrolment of Vlach children seems to have become an established rule by the first decade of the twentieth century. As the school inspector of the Krajina district writes in his report in 1906, in this area all school-aged children were enrolled, and thus one family was expected to send to school '2, 3 and even 4 children'.³⁵⁴ Therefore, this excessively intensive enrolment, requiring the school attendance of more children than what an average family could bear financially, certainly increased non-attendance and drop-out rates of Vlach villages.

Another common feature of both Serbian and Vlach peasant resistance to primary school was a staunch opposition to girls' education (see chapter 4). Both cultures, being traditionally patriarchal, little appreciated the benefit country girls could gain from education. On the contrary, many saw the school as an institution that prevented them from properly instructing the girls in their roles within the household, i.e. childrearing, household and agricultural duties. Resistance to girls' education was extremely strong even in Serbian villages, although, as Ana Stolić argues, in late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Serbia girls' education was mostly based on traditional Serbian values, rather than on modern pedagogical principles.³⁵⁵

353 AS, MPS P f. XLVI r. 4/1883; AS, MPS P f. IV r. 168/1894.

354 Belgrade, Arhiv Srbije (AS), MPS P f. 46 r. 169/ 1910.

355 Ana Stolić, 'From Childhood to Womanhood: The Ideological Basis of the Upbringing of Female Children in Serbia at the End of the 19th Century', in *Childhood in South East Europe: Historical Perspectives on Growing Up in the 19th and 20th Century*, ed. by Slobodan Naumović and Miroslav Jovanović (Belgrade: Udruženje za društvenu istoriju; Graz: Institut für Geschichte der Universität Graz, 2001), pp. 97–110 (pp. 100–101).

6.2.3. Ethnicity as the Factor of Resistance

As shown so far, everyday resistance strategies registered in the Vlach villages, were, to a certain extent, motivated by the identical or similar life conditions and ideologies as those which took place in Serbian villages. What now remains to be established is whether the ethnocultural specificities of Vlach communities played any role in shaping attitudes towards schooling.

Some scholars argue that the existence of an intention, in political or ideological terms, behind the everyday resistance has no bearing on the resistance itself, since what matters is the resistance act and its potential to 'undermine power'. However, the same scholars admit that identifying intent is 'indispensable for understanding the ideas, strategic thinking, plans, psychology or cultural meaning that actors articulate when they resist'.³⁵⁶ Therefore, an examination of whether ethnicity played any role in acts of resistance by the Vlachs will give us an insight into the extent to which Vlachs were conscious of their group identity.

It is not an easy task to establish whether Vlachs' different ethnicity influenced their resistance acts against the primary school. As pointed out in the introduction to this chapter, the Vlachs rarely openly challenged the schooling system or its ideological underpinnings in their direct communication with the Serbian authorities. The Vlachs also refrained from asserting their distinct ethnic identity, since doing so would openly threaten the very basis of Serbian nationalism and the nation-building process, which, as explained in chapter 2, aimed at the homogenisation of the entire population of the state, and would be regarded by the Serbian authorities as an explicit national security issue. Instead, in opposing the education policies in the context of these public interactions, the members of the Vlach communities would turn to motivation that would be ideologically more neutral, and therefore safer.

Resistance against the educational measures by using ideologically neutral arguments can be illustrated by the following case, in which Vlachs of the village of Radujevac in the district of Krajina raised their voice against the introduction of girls'

356 Stellan Vinthagen and Anna Johansson, "‘Everyday Resistance’: Exploration of a Concept and Its Theories", *Resistance Studies Magazine*, 1 (2013), pp. 18, 21 <<http://www.rsmag.org/>> [accessed 24 April 2014]

education. In his annual report of 1894, the Krajina district school inspector Miloje Vlajić criticised the fact that the Vlachs of Radujevac opposed the introduction of girls' education by quoting the Vlach protesters as saying: 'Why does the state demand and pressurise our female children into going to school, and does not open girls' schools in Serbian villages? If female children in Serbian villages are not forced to go to school, our children should be left alone too, because in Serbia the law is equal for all'. The inspector further comments that this reaction might be both the result of 'Vlach agitation' which is 'very low-key at the moment', 'almost imperceptible, cautious and hidden', but which 'hinders the Serbisation of the Vlach villages', or the result of the Radujevac Vlachs' ignorance about the benefits of girls' education, a characteristic shared with the Serbian peasants. In the end, the inspector concludes that the latter might be the true cause of their resistance, because, the Vlachs of Radujevac seemed convinced and satisfied with the supervisors' 'brief explanation' of the usefulness of the girls' education.³⁵⁷

The first impression one gets from the incidence described in the supervisor's report is that what the Vlachs reproached the Serbian authorities for was not the principle of girls' education itself, or the fact that the latter was promoted primarily for assimilation purposes, but the fact that girls' education had not been enforced equally in Serbian and Vlach villages. Therefore, Radujevac Vlachs accused the authorities of not respecting the very rules of the social contract that they themselves had established: that of equality before law.

Critiquing the authorities' shortcomings or violations of the declared social rules is, according to Barrington Moore, a common strategy deployed by subaltern groups when questioning the dominant order.³⁵⁸ However, as Scott elaborates on Moore's idea, this is not necessarily due to the fact that the subordinated internalised the precepts of the dominant ideology, and therefore, as victims of so-called 'false consciousness', became unable to discern the injustice of the ideology imposed. Rather, the choice of their vocabulary and the target of their open critique is constrained by the daily exercise of power.³⁵⁹ In other words, it would be incorrect to assume that the Vlachs uttering the aforementioned sentences lacked any awareness of the assimilation they were exposed

357 AS, MPS P f. IV r. 168/1894.

358 Barrington Moore, *Injustice: The Social Bases of Obedience and Revolt* (London: Macmillan, 1978), p. 84.

359 Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance*, pp. 91–92.

to because of their different ethnicity. On the contrary, it is more probable that by critiquing the authorities' failure to comply with the principle of the equality of all citizens before the law and within institutions, they chose the safest way of expressing their opposition to these policies.

It is unlikely that the Vlach peasants were ignoring the fact that their female children were targeted by the Serbian education authorities in the first place because of the fact that they did not speak any Serbian, since this fact was well known among the Serbian peasants of the area. In fact, as a teacher from the Krajina village Brusnik writes in one of his articles, Serbian peasants from the area would defend their position not to send their daughters to school by saying that their daughters 'neither need science nor are they Vlach so that they have no need to learn Serbian [as they already speak it]'.³⁶⁰

What the aforementioned act of opposition furthermore demonstrates is that those Vlachs who spoke up had an awareness of their distinct ethnic identity, inasmuch as they distinguished between Vlach ('us') and Serbian villages ('them'), and denounced the fact that the girls' education policy was being decided on the basis of the ethnic composition of a settlement. Therefore, the supervisor's conclusions, that the resistance was probably due only to the Vlachs' ignorance of the benefits of girls' education, are likely to be misleading, and should rather be understood as a reflection of the 'orientalising' attitude the Serbian elites had towards the Vlachs. As explained in chapter 3, the latter were seen by the Serbian authorities as lacking, or being incapable of developing, a distinct ethnic or national identity.

Although the reference to a Vlach identity as an argument for opposing the school policies was evoked rarely, since it would inevitably imply the attention and intervention of police authorities, it would still occur occasionally. In fact, a few examples of this kind of resistance are reflected in archival sources and do prove that some form of Vlach ethnic awareness existed in the given period, and could be a factor in the elaboration of resistance strategies.

Scott argues that all subordinate groups inevitably develop their critique of the dominant order or ideology, but that this critique is rarely spoken openly to those in power. The subaltern critique to power, which Scott names the *hidden transcript*, is

360 AL. Đ. L., 'Škole i učitelji u Krajini', *Naša škola: organ Mlavskog učiteljskog udruženja*, 2 (1911), p. 50.

generally spoken 'behind the back of the dominant', only between members of the subordinate group. Nevertheless, parts of the hidden transcript sometimes surface in interactions involving members of the dominant group, the process that Scott defines as 'the most explosive realm of politics' of the subalterns.³⁶¹

One episode of what Scott calls the 'rupture of the political *cordon sanitaire* between the hidden and the public transcript' occurred in 1899 in Mihajlovac, a Vlach village often referred to by local school and church authorities as the 'harbor' of 'Vlachism'.³⁶² The episode of open defiance of the dominant nationalist ideology took place at a meeting of the local school committee, during which the preparation for the upcoming celebration of the proclamation of the Serbian Kingdom (22 February) was being discussed (see chapter 5). The teacher reported on the instructions concerning some aspects of these celebrations issued by the regional school supervisor Bašić, and then suggested that the municipality should provide a band to perform the national anthem. To this suggestion the members of the school committee replied: 'Here [in Mihajlovac] and around here [in the neighboring villages] live the Vlachs and they do not need the Serbian anthem, and therefore they do not know it'.³⁶³

In contrast to the previous example in which the Vlach actors chose to challenge the educational policies in an indirect way, here the message is blunt and little space is left for alternative interpretations. The explicit declaration of a separate Vlach ethnic consciousness, and of the ethnic heterogeneity of the area, directly challenged Serbian authorities' aspirations of an ethnically homogeneous state. Moreover, by refusing to perform the Serbian national anthem, one of the symbolically most important 'invented traditions' of the modern nation, members of the Mihajlovac school committee were openly declaring their refusal to comply with the Serbian nationalist ideology promoted through primary schooling, and therefore – in effect – they were rejecting assimilation.

Another case in which the hidden transcript demonstrating the ethnic consciousness of the Vlachs broke in the public domain and was used to oppose the school policies took place in 1883, in Ranovac village (Požarevac region), on the

361 Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance*, pp. xii, 20.

362 Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance*, p. 19. Such a reputation was gained because of the activities of a local priest with a Vlach background, Dinul Popović, who was repeatedly identified as a figure who fostered awareness of Vlach identity, and therefore worked against Serbian national interests.

363 Belgrade, Arhiv Srbije (AS), MPS P f. X r. 45/1899.

occasion of the school celebration of Saint Sava's day (see chapter 5). The dispute arose between the teacher, on the one hand, and the mayor and pupils' parents, on the other, because of the menu the latter opted for. Namely, the locals had prepared a meat-based meal, ignoring the fact that that year Saint Sava's day fell on Friday, a fast day in the Serbian Orthodox Church, when abstinence from food of animal origins was practised. The teacher tried to prevent children from committing, in his view, a major religious irregularity, but the mayor was determined not to allow the teacher's further interference and ordered the children to join their parents for lunch.

The episode became the object of a police investigation, on the occasion of which a statement by the mayor and local representatives was also issued. The statement is brief, but extremely significant:

We are Vlachs. We never observe the fast if Saint Sava's falls on Wednesday or Friday. We had meat-based meals this winter [in the occasion of the festivity in question], and we will have them in the future [if Saint Sava falls on Wednesday or Friday]. However, we did not force anybody to eat meat, and we will not do so in the future. Our children ate the same food as we did. We hold that in relation to this [the choice of the menu] nobody can decide for our children except us. This is all our answer. If the authorities reckon that we committed an offence, they can proceed as they think is right.

The most striking aspect of this text is that it starts with an unambiguous and explicit statement of the Vlach identity. Actually, it is their Vlach identity that, in the view of Ranovac inhabitants, determines the way they celebrate Saint Sava's day. The specific approach to fasting on Saint Sava's day was here presented as their peculiarity as Vlachs, and, therefore, in opposition to the Serbian custom of observing abstinence on the same occasion. Moreover, the Ranovac Vlachs did not limit themselves to publicly acknowledging their different identity and specific culture, but they also clearly stated that they would continue to be 'Vlachs who do not fast on Wednesdays or Fridays if Saint Sava's day falls on these days' even in the future. In other words, they refused to comply with the rules imposed by the Serbian church and school which were perceived by their authors as reflecting the genuine customs of the Serbian people.

6.3. Public Resistance

Organised resistance acts against primary schooling and the assimilation which the latter promoted were, judging from the available archive evidence, very rare among the Vlachs. Two factors are the main reasons behind this scarcity of structured communal action. On the one hand, the very illiberal political climate in Serbia of the period, which discouraged actions that could be seen as a threat to national unity, and on the other hand, the lack of committed support by the Romanian political elites, i.e. of an independent and strong external support for the Vlach minority.

Alongside these two factors, there were also other factors that, to different degrees, determined the scarce Vlach initiatives to publicly challenge existing schooling policies. One of these factors is the willingness, or at least the acquiescence of some Vlachs to comply with both the schooling itself and the assimilation it entailed. What percentage of Vlachs were willing to assimilate is difficult to establish, but it is realistic to expect that this phenomenon would take place in urban areas where the population was mixed and the institutions of the state more visible. Moreover, it is more likely that this voluntary assimilation would occur among those Vlachs pursuing further education rather than those only attending primary school. In fact, after finishing their secondary or higher education many Vlachs would eventually become state employees and fully partake in Serbian urban culture. However, as will be demonstrated later in this chapter, being a civil servant with a Vlach background and partaking in political and administrative life of the country did not necessarily entail assimilation.

The Serbian authorities' relative tolerance of the use of the Vlach language in the regional administrative bodies and courts is another factor that had an impact on the Vlach population's low-level interest in organised resistance against primary schooling. In many cases, when dealing with Vlach-speakers, local and regional institutions would employ interpreters, or Vlach-speaking officials would use Vlach as the language of conversation. For the average Vlach peasant or town-dweller, this meant that s/he could exercise most of her/his rights granted by the Serbian state in her/his own language. In such a situation, and notwithstanding the efforts made by primary school teachers to make the Serbian language the main language of the Vlachs, the majority of Vlachs most likely did not feel particularly pressurised or urged to assimilate. This relative

tolerance lasted up to around the late 1890s, when the Serbian authorities adopted much more repressive measures towards the usage of the Vlach language. One of the measures of 1904 imposing this trend will be discussed later.

The prohibition against speaking Vlach in public was part of a broader shift towards the repression of the cultural liberties of the Vlach communities. For instance, Milić J. Milićević identified a similar tendency in the military system of the time. According to Milićević's findings, in the period 1897-1900, Vlach conscripts were prohibited from speaking Vlach in their private conversations, and in order to foster their ability to speak Serbian, various strategies were adopted.³⁶⁴ Similar repressive measures were registered in the Serbian Orthodox Church in the same period. The ethnographer Đorđević himself admits in his study on Vlachs, of 1906, that the policy of the Serbian Orthodox Church at that time was to prohibit the Vlachs from giving their children Vlach names; only Serbian were permitted.³⁶⁵

Before proceeding with the analysis of public resistance acts, it is first necessary to explain why the attitude of the Romanian authorities towards this minority mattered for the development of this type of resistance strategy and of what it consisted.

6.3.1. Romania: A Failed 'External National Homeland' of the Vlachs

As discussed in chapter 2, the ethno-linguistic principle played a major role in the process in which the aspiring Balkan nations defined themselves and their 'legitimate' territories. Given this general tendency, it would be logical to expect that the Romanian authorities would have expressed some interest in the Vlachs from north-eastern Serbia, since, as explained in chapter 1, Serbia's Vlachs showed a very high ethno-linguistic affinity with the core population of the Romanian state. Moreover, as inhabitants of territory adjacent to the south-western border of Romania, the Vlachs offered a good pretext for the further territorial expansion of the Romanian state. However, notwithstanding both the ethno-linguistic kinship and geographical proximity of Serbia's Vlachs, during the period this thesis is concerned with, the Romanian authorities never expressed an official position towards, nor serious interest in, this

364 Milić J. Milićević, 'Reforma srpske vojske 1897-1900. godine' (unpublished master's thesis, University of Belgrade, 1996), pp. 102–103.

365 Đorđević, *Kroz naše Rumune*, p. 54.

population.

The political developments involving the newly established Balkan states and the interests of the Great Powers in the area are the first reason why the Romanian authorities expressed little or no interest in the Vlachs from north-eastern Serbia. The Great Powers' influence in the area is well reflected in the dynamics that emerged in the period of the 'Eastern crisis' (1875-1878), during which the compensation to the Romanian state for the loss of Bessarabia to Russia was also discussed.³⁶⁶ One of the territories considered for this compensation was the area of Vidin, an Ottoman territory adjacent to the Serbian region of Krajina, today part of the north-western Bulgaria; both Krajina and Vidin hosted a significant Vlach population. However, this compensation option was soon abandoned due to Austria's opposition to any territorial extension of the Romanian state in the area. As Miodrag Milin argues, the Austria-Hungarian authorities opposed this plan in response to an explicit request from the Serbian Ministry of External Affairs. By meeting the Serbian authorities' requests in this circumstance, according to Milin, the Austro-Hungarians actually wanted to secure their compliance with the Austrian annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, regions on which Serbia nurtured its own claims.³⁶⁷

The fact that Romanian authorities did not express any official interest in the Serbian-ruled Vlachs in the period of the Eastern crisis, does not mean that such interest was completely absent from the country's political and cultural agenda. On the contrary, the Vlachs appeared to be an integral, although not dominant, part of the discussions that took place among Romanian public figures concerning Romanian foreign policy and national aspirations. This interest was reflected in discussions in parliament, as some deputies explicitly called for active political engagement with the Vlachs from north-eastern Serbia, and it had also featured in informal debates within various political circles.³⁶⁸ For instance, in one of his letters to the Serbian minister of foreign affairs, Bucharest-based Serbian diplomat, Milan A. Petronijević, wrote that he had heard numerous voices speak in favour of the annexation of the Serbian north-eastern districts

366 The Romanian state was supposed to be compensated with new territories, because, during the Russo-Turkish war of 1877-78 the Tsar decided to re-annex the south Bessarabia – traditionally a Moldavian territory but under Russian control in the period 1812-1856.

367 Miodrag Milin, *Relatii politice româno-sârbe în epoca modernă* (secolul al XIX-lea) (Bucharest: Editura Academiei Române, 1992), pp. 120–121.

368 Milin, p. 120; Gheorghe Zbucnea, *O istorie a românilor din Peninsula Balcanică: secolul XVIII-XX* (Bucharest: Editura Biblioteca Bucureștilor, 1999), p. 179.

as a territorial compensation for the loss of Bessarabia.³⁶⁹ However, notwithstanding such explicit public interest, neither the idea of requesting the Serbian territories inhabited by the Vlachs nor an attempt at political involvement with the latter were adopted as an official position by the Romanian government.

A second reason why the Romanian authorities decided not to get involved with the Vlachs from north-eastern Serbia lay in the very nature of Romanian national unification priorities, which fully crystallised a few decades preceding WW1. Romanian nationalists were concerned with the annexation of the much larger and more important Austria-Hungarian regions of Transylvania, Banat and Bukovina, and with the re-acquisition of Bessarabia from Russia, rather than with the peripheral north-eastern Vlach-inhabited areas of Serbia. As Gheorghe Zbucea puts it, in the decades preceding the Balkan Wars, Romanian 'true national interests [...] were directed elsewhere, respectively beyond the Carpathians and towards Dniester, [the areas] which will later become Greater Romania's borders'.³⁷⁰

Not the least important motivation defining the Romanian government's position towards Serbia, and consequently towards Serbia's Vlachs, was the unsettled relationship the former had with the Bulgarian state. Keith Hitchins identifies the origin of these unfriendly bilateral relations as the Romanian authorities' dissatisfaction with the border demarcation between the two states, decided at the Congress of Berlin. Namely, the Romanians aimed at annexing the city of Silistra, situated on the southern bank of the Danube, but the city was eventually given to the Bulgarian state. This frontier dispute, which continued until the Balkan Wars, when it was finally settled in favour of Romanians, was further complicated by the perception of Bulgaria by the Romanian authorities as Russia's client state.³⁷¹ Given these long-term unfriendly relations between the Romanian and Bulgarian states, it was in the Romanian authorities' interest to maintain good relations with the Serbian authorities, who in their turn also had numerous unresolved political issues with the Bulgarian state, especially in relation to the Macedonian territories on which both states advanced pretensions.

A renewal of the Romanian public's interest in Serbia's Vlachs took place only in the late 1910s, when Romanian authors first started publishing ethnographic studies on

369 Belgrade, Arhiv Srbije (AS), MID PO rol. 49/1878 f 3, dos. 8 p/5-3. Letter dated 28 January 1878.

370 Gheorghe Zbucea, *România și războaiele balcanice, 1912-1913: Pagini de istorie sud-est europeană* (Bucharest: Editura Albatros, 1999), p. 9.

371 Keith Hitchins, *Rumania: 1866-1947* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994), pp. 52–53.

the Vlachs, and especially from 1916 onwards, due to the activities of Atanasie Popovici Furnica, a Serbian Vlach pedagogue who had settled in Romania.³⁷² However, the explicit and official intervention of the Romanian authorities in relation to the Vlachs took place only during the Second World War, under Antonescu's fascist government. In fact, in 1941, in the aftermath of the German invasion of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia (April 1941), Antonescu submitted a 'memorandum' to the German government in which he raised the issue of the autonomy of the Vlachs from north-eastern Serbia, alongside that of the Aromanians from the South of the Balkan peninsula.³⁷³

Given the Romanian authorities' general lack of interest towards the Serbian-ruled Vlachs in the period 1878-1914, it could be concluded that the Romanian state failed to establish itself as an 'external national homeland' for Serbian Vlachs. As explained in chapter 1, the 'external national homeland' is a state whose cultural or political elites recognise certain residents from other nation-states as a part of their own nation and, therefore, assert their right and obligation 'to monitor the condition, promote the welfare, support the activities and institutions, assert the rights, and protect the interests' of these populations.³⁷⁴ As demonstrated above, the Romanian authorities never asserted this right when it came to the Vlachs of Serbia, while they did so in case of the Aromanians from Ottoman Macedonia and even the Vlachs from Bulgaria, as is confirmed by abundant archival evidence.³⁷⁵

6.3.2. Examples of Public Resistance Acts

The aforementioned position of the Romanian authorities implies that the task of overtly challenging the assimilating aspects of Serbian primary education was mostly left to the initiative of individuals backed up at most by support from some local community members. It is true that in a minority of cases a certain amount of support from individuals living within the Romanian state has been registered. However, even in

372 Ștefan Vâlcu, 'Istoriografia română antebelică despre Românii timoceni', *Analele Universității Spiru Haret, Seria Filologie*, 2008, 231–40 (p. 235).

373 Gheorghe Zbucă, p. 214; Dragoljub Petrović, 'Iredenta fašističke Rumunije u severoistočnoj Srbiji 1941–1944. godine', *Jugoslovenski istorijski časopis*, 3-4 (1966), 31–54 (p. 33).

374 Brubaker, *Nationalism Reframed*, p. 5.

375 The volumes containing the Romanian authorities' involvement with the Vlachs from the Ottoman Empire and Bulgaria can be found in the Archives of the Ministry of External Affairs (*Arhivele Diplomatice*), collection: *Problema 15 – Școli și biserici române din străinătate, întreținute și subvenționate de statul român din perioada 1877-1949*.

these cases, this support cannot be considered as an organic element in official Romanian policy, but rather as the outcome of individual initiatives of Romanian nationalists sympathetic to the Serbian-ruled Vlachs' cause.

Before proceeding with the analysis of some of the public resistance initiatives performed by the Vlachs, it is necessary to define the concept of public resistance and the background of relevant actors. Public, or organised resistance will be here understood in Scott's terms, as a 'publicly organised political opposition' which 'poses a declared threat' to those who hold power. This form of resistance is generally performed by middle-class and intelligentsia individuals, and is concerned with *de jure* changes in power relations or dominant ideology.³⁷⁶

As to the cultural background of the individuals who were engaged in public resistance initiatives in Vlach-inhabited areas, the majority of them were educated within the Serbian educational system itself. This not only means that they were bilingual (Vlach- and Serbian-speaking), but also suggests that they were bearers of both cultural patterns: their native Vlach and the modern Serbian, absorbed through the schooling experience. These members of the Vlach intelligentsia can be understood in terms of Homi Bhabha's concept of 'mimic men': as subaltern (colonial) individuals who, by miming the coloniser's dominant culture, do not become the same as the coloniser (assimilated), but acquire a revised version of the dominant identity ('almost the same, *but not quite*'). Such mimicry is 'at once a resemblance and menace' to the dominant power, since the mimic man with his split identity (in this case Vlach and Serbian) 'under cover of [...] mimicry [...] radically revalues the normative knowledges [...]'.³⁷⁷ In other words, members of the Vlach intelligentsia who became actors in the formal resistance to the Serbian assimilation policy, started to question these policies and the Serbian nationalist ideology only when they became acculturated to its very values and precepts.

The initiatives undertaken by the Vlach individuals that openly challenged the existing organisation of primary schooling, as well as its ideological aim, in case of the Vlachs that of assimilation, were seen by the Serbian authorities as an imminent threat to national interests. In fact, these initiatives were seen as the realisation of that latent

376 Scott, 'Everyday Forms of Resistance', p. 34; Scott, *Weapons of the Weak*, pp. xv, 299.

377 Homi Bhabha, 'Of Mimicry and Man: The Ambivalence of Colonial Discourse', *October*, 28 (1984), 125–33 (pp. 127, 131) <<http://dx.doi.org/10.2307/778467>>.

fear expressed by Serbian authors in various texts dealing with the Vlachs, that the 'Vlach question' would inevitably arise, if the Vlach population was not dealt with properly (see chapter 3). Understood as a matter of national security by the Serbian authorities, any sign of activity directed towards the attainment of some cultural rights for the Vlachs was dealt with accordingly. In fact, these initiatives would not even be considered as an option to be discussed, but, rather, discouraged and readily suppressed by the Serbian police authorities.

It was in the early years of Serbian independence, and at the very heart of the state, that the first registered public resistance act challenging the assimilationist aims of primary schooling occurred. This resistance act was carried out by a Vlach MP from the district of Krajina, Jovan Popović, who, during the period of the Progressive governments (1880-1887), attempted to put forward a motion questioning the government's approach to the cultural rights of the Vlachs of Serbia. Since the archive documents only mention Popović's 'attempt' to propose this motion, and no traces of it can be found in the published assembly proceedings of the period, it is very likely that the motion was not considered by parliament.

The only known details about what happened to Popović's attempt to the propose the motion was written by a physician and amateur ethnologist Jovan Đokić, sixty years after the event actually took place. In his ethnographic description of the areas of eastern Serbia and Banat, inhabited by Vlachs and Romanians respectively, Đokić argues that he obtained the details about this episode from the Krajina district head of police. According to Đokić's account, Popović was forced by the Serbian authorities to withdraw his motion. Moreover, the prime minister, Milutin Garašanin, had threatened him with a gun. The same author also claims that after this 'meeting' with the prime minister, Popović gave up his 'Romanian propaganda', and that this decision was the outcome not only of the threat he had received, but also of the fact that the members of the 'secret Romanian propaganda committee' had shown a lukewarm response to his initiatives.³⁷⁸

It is not clear what exactly the 'secret Romanian propaganda committee' was that Đokić was referring to, but what is relevant is the fact that even the Serbian authorities seem to have been aware of the fact that the Romanian authorities had little interest in

378 Jovan Đokić, *Kroz naselja s.i. Srbije, Banata i susednih krajeva: istoriska etnografska opažanja* (Belgrade: Štamparija 'Škerlić', 1934), p. 381.

initiatives forwarded by the Vlachs of north-eastern Serbia. The Serbian authorities' awareness that no official propaganda orchestrated by the Romanian state was present in the areas inhabited by the Vlachs is confirmed by official police reports of the period, and it was also a well-known fact in contemporary military circles.³⁷⁹ Nevertheless, the suspicion that secret subversive intentions or activities existed within the Vlach communities was never abandoned by the Serbian authorities, and consequently, the Vlachs continued to be seen and treated as a security issue.

A similar attitude of indifference was displayed two decades later by the Romanian authorities towards initiatives undertaken by Vlach individuals. On this occasion the actor involved was the agronomist, Milosav Bogdanović, from the town of Petrovac na Mlavi (Požarevac region), who asked the Romanian authorities for help and support in preparing the ground for the eventual attainment of cultural rights for Serbia's Vlachs. This case is also the best documented one, since two letters written by Bogdanović are available in the Romanian archives. These letters offer precious details about Bogdanović's activities and the network of contacts he used in order to reach figures within the Romanian government. The first letter is dated 21 August 1911, and it is actually a *Memorandum* addressed to both the *League for the Cultural Unity of all Romanians* and the Romanian Minister of External Affairs.³⁸⁰ The second letter, of 5 September of the same year, is a desperate reminder to the Romanian authorities from the author that he is still waiting for a reply.

What emerges from these two documents, and especially from the *Memorandum* of August, is that Bogdanović had been campaigning for Vlach cultural rights for almost a decade and that this activity had involved numerous initiatives, including two trips to Bucharest, in 1906 and in 1911, contacts with the Romanian Embassy in Belgrade, and interactions with members of the *Macedonian-Romanian Society* – a society, registered in Bucharest in 1880, whose main political and cultural goal was the cultural autonomy of the Aromanians in the Ottoman Empire. In fact, it was through the latter organisation that Bogdanović managed to get access to the highest levels of Romanian political circles.³⁸¹

379 Milićević, 'Reforma srpske vojske', p. 103. Belgrade, Arhiv Srbije (AS), MPs P f. XLV r. 125/1900.

380 Founded in 1890 by émigrés from Transilvania and Romanian nationalists, the league was acting as an irredentist organisation agitating for the rights of Romanians abroad, especially those from Austria-Hungary.

381 Bucharest, Ministerul Afacerilor Externe (MAE), fond 71/1900-1919 dos. 20 B.13 vol. XVII, pp. 225-233, 235-136.

It is astonishing to read the names on the list of Romanian politicians that Bogdanović had the opportunity to speak with, especially during his first visit in 1906: the minister of finance Take Ionescu, the minister of external affairs Jacob (Jacques) Lahovary, Lazar Duma, the then vice-consul in Monastir Eyalet (an Ottoman district geographically situated in what was considered to be Macedonia) who was responsible for the establishment of Romanian language schools in the localities inhabited by the Aromanians, and finally, Stefan Grecianu, a Romanian academic and publicist. However, these meetings seemed to have ended up only with an expression of sympathy for Bogdanović's cause and promises to help, but without any concrete results. As to Bogdanović's exchange with the Romanian ambassador in Belgrade, the negative outcome was even more explicit. The ambassador stated that the Romanian authorities would continue to pursue a friendly relationship with the Serbian state, even if that entailed that the Vlachs from Serbia 'will suffer and disappear'; moreover, he explicitly suggested that Bogdanović abandon his nationalist idea and 'bury it forever'.³⁸²

Bogdanović suggests in his *Memorandum* that his initiative was not only supported by a group of Vlach intelligentsia sensible of the modern understanding of national identity, but that he had also enjoyed the support of the Vlach peasants from the district. In fact, he presents himself as acting on behalf of the Vlach people, who had 'sent him' to fulfil a mission at the Bucharest government, and he also refers to a petition sent to the latter in 1906, which was 'signed by many Romanians from many localities of the Požarevac region'.³⁸³ However, since this petition has not been conserved and, until now, no other archival documents regarding the episode have emerged, it is not possible to establish whether this wider popular support really existed, or whether Bogdanović acted on his own initiative, or at best solely with the support of a small group of Vlach intelligentsia of the area.

However, what is demonstrable is the fact that it was precisely in the mid-1910s, namely at the time of Bogdanović's initiatives, that the discriminatory and repressive measures devised from the late 1890s onwards by the Serbian authorities against the Vlachs, were strengthened. In 1904, a decree by the Ministry of Internal Affairs further restricting the usage of the Vlach language was issued. The decree listed the public

382 MAE, fond 71/1900-1919 dos. 20 B.13 vol. XVII, p. 227.

383 MAE, fond 71/1900-1919 dos. 20 B.13 vol. XVII, p. 227.

spaces from which the Vlach language should be banned, it instructed regional police authorities not to allow Vlach interpreters in tribunals and district governmental offices, to prohibit local police staff from speaking Vlach when dealing with the Vlach population – in case of infringement of this instruction, police officers had to be 'most severely punished' – and it ordered that all village mayors who did not speak Serbian were to be replaced. The same decree also forbade shopkeepers to speak the Vlach language with their customers, and priests and teachers were invited not to use Vlach in informal conversations with pupils outside the classroom, or with the population at large. As the author of this decree argues, these measures should teach the Vlachs that 'in Serbia, when dealing with the state authorities, there is no other language than Serbian'.³⁸⁴

This further curtailing of Vlach cultural rights, which as mentioned earlier, in the Serbian state of the time reduced their freedom by prohibiting them from speaking their language in public and dealing with institutions by relying on an interpreter, was certainly felt by and affected the Vlach peasants who spoke no or insufficient Serbian. Bogdanović himself denounced this illiberal treatment of the Vlachs in his letters. He mentioned the prohibition on using the Vlach language in public spaces and institutions, the physical punishments Vlach boys were exposed to if speaking Vlach at school or in the army, and the insults and mockery common people would receive if they spoke Vlach publicly. Therefore, Bogdanović's decision to act was certainly influenced by the repressive shift in Serbian policies regarding the Vlachs, which drastically reduced the liberty of using the Vlach language in public.

The aforementioned activities undertaken by Popović and Bogdanović are certainly the most significant instances of Vlach-organised public resistance, given the political level at which they occurred. However, this does not mean that they were the only cases of this kind to oppose Serbian schooling policies. Two more cases in particular are documented and deserve mention: one occurred in the Morava district (Požarevac region), and the other in the region of Timok. The former resistance act was led by a physician, and was denounced to the authorities in 1887 by Jovan Miodragović, the school supervisor of the Morava district.³⁸⁵ The supervisor states that he 'found out'

384 Belgrade, Arhiv Srbije (AS), MUD PO 1904, box 1, pov. br. 291 – letter dated 8 July 1904.

385 State statistic publications (*Šematizam*) for the years 1887 and 1888, mention a certain Ilija Rozenštrajh as a doctor of the Morava district. Given his name and surname, as well as the widespread practice of the Serbian state at the time of employing doctors from Austria-Hungary, it

that the doctor 'uses every occasion to promote among the Vlachs the idea of their emancipation in Serbia, asking for schools in their language, their own courts, books, etc.[,] and the Romanians from the area have already started to stir up and move into this direction'.³⁸⁶ As to the resistance act from the Timok region, it was registered in 1901, and it involved a teacher from the town of Brestovac, Jovan Ilić. In a confidential document produced by the police commissioner for the Timok region and addressed to minister of internal affairs Nikola Stefanović, Ilić is represented as a 'dismissed teacher who had addressed in Vlach the members of a certain Romanian corporation in Belgrade', who at the time lived in Brestovac and who, in this locality, 'attempts to agitate [the population] in favour of the Vlach nationality and Vlach schools'. Moreover, the commissioner suspected that Ilić was a recruited Romanian agent, and suggested that after observing carefully his activities, he would 'take care to shut him up, or decide how to proceed in his case'.³⁸⁷

The common feature of all public resistance acts illustrated above is the nature of the nationalist ideology which inspired their actors. What emerges from the available data regarding their activities is that all these individuals perceived the Vlach ethnic group to be part of the Romanian nation, and therefore they understood the attainment of cultural rights for the Vlachs primarily as the adoption of the modern Romanian national identity and cultural constructs derived from it: the corpus of literature, the standardised literary language, national(-ist) history, national church, etc. In this regard, the Vlach nationalists were in line with the dominant perception and classification of the time, which did not distinguish between the Vlachs from north-eastern Serbia and Romanians (see chapter 1). Taking place in the very beginning of the Vlach 'national movement', this identification of the Vlachs with the Romanian nation meant that Vlach nationalism started with what Hroch identifies as 'phase two' of the national movement, namely with patriotic agitation. 'Phase one', which according to Hroch's model, consists of purely scholarly interest in the characteristics of a given ethno-linguistic group is completely absent.³⁸⁸ In fact, as already mentioned, the first ethnographic interest in the Vlachs, which took place in the first decade of the twentieth century, did not emerge

is likely that Rozenštrajh was an ethnic Romanian from the Dual Monarchy. The proximity of his disappearance from state statistics (1888) to Miodragović's warning of his agitation activities (1887), is rather significant, and might imply a connection between the two events. However, further archive research should be undertaken to clarify this assumption.

386 AS, MPS P f. V r. 214/1887.

387 Belgrade, Arhiv Srbije (AS), MUD PO 1901, box 1 – letter dated 28 March 1901.

388 Hroch, p. 23.

among the native Serbian-ruled Vlachs, but rather was shown by Romanian authors.

6.4. Cultural Resistance

Numerous complaints were made by school supervisors and teachers concerning the fact that assimilation could hardly work in current conditions, i.e. with the children speaking Serbian only for few hours a day at school and then spending the rest of their time in an exclusively Vlach-speaking environment. Moreover, many observed that in most cases the effects of education, including the capacity to speak Serbian, were bound to disappear shortly after the children had finished their education, when they would be fully reintegrated and re-absorbed by their native community and culture. What the educational workers were describing in their reports has been conceptually defined by the scholar Stephen Duncombe as a *cultural resistance*, i.e. a 'culture that is used, consciously or unconsciously, effectively or not to resist and/or change the dominant political, economic, and or/social structure'.³⁸⁹

Before proceeding with the analysis of the main features of the Vlachs' *cultural resistance* to primary schooling, it is first necessary to define what type of culture this section is concerned with. Given the fact that this study deals with a predominantly peasant ethnic minority from an area which, at the time, was experiencing only the very early stages of modernisation, it is safe to argue that the dominant cultural pattern of this minority consisted of traditional culture. The latter, which preceded the process of the creation and introduction of modern Serbian cultural pattern, and which survived its imposition, is here understood in the terms given by Hirai Naofusa, as 'all human activities such as religion, philosophy, moral standards, laws, politics, economic, history, literature and art, such as have been preserved, learned and transmitted in a given community or group over a long period of time'.³⁹⁰

389 Stephen Duncombe, *Cultural Resistance Reader* (London: Verso, 2002), p. 5.

390 Hirai Naofusa, 'Traditional Cultures and Modernization: Several Problems in the Case of Japan' (presented at the Cultural Identity and Modernisation in Asian Countries, Institute for Japanese Culture and Classics Kokugakuin University, Tokyo, 1983) <<http://www2.kokugakuin.ac.jp/ijcc/wp/cimac/hirai.html>> [accessed 10 March 2014]

By continuing to practice various aspects of their traditional culture such as language, beliefs, music, oral literature and customs, the Vlachs effectively hindered the assimilation project of the Serbian elites. The cultural assimilation deployed towards the Vlachs was undermined by the Vlachs simply continuing to be, and do, what was spontaneously transmitted and believed in the local Vlach communities. By maintaining their ethno-cultural characteristics, the Vlachs impeded the realisation of the state and the national ideal pursued by the Serbian authorities, which, as explained in chapter 2, was in the first place understood as the linguistic and cultural homogeneity of the polity's population.

The first condition working in favour of the Vlachs' cultural resistance was the fact that the state was unable to closely monitor and control Vlach peasants. This was not only due to the ethnic homogeneity of the overwhelming majority of Vlach villages, or to local arrangements which saw local Vlach figures occupying administrative roles, but also to the geographical characteristics of most Vlach villages. Many were scattered highland communities, in which the authority of the state was often represented only by the figures of the teacher and the priest. In addition to these demographic characteristics and geographic isolation, many aspects of traditional Vlach culture could be preserved and practised freely because their scope was limited to the private and local sphere of Vlach communities' members.

As often implied above and in chapter 3, one of the most important forms of cultural resistance undertaken by the Vlachs was the maintenance of their language. The relevance of linguistic resistance is here determined not only by recent scholarly understanding which attributes to language the role of mediator in the transmission of a broader culture, and the latter's intrinsic dependence on it, but also by the Serbian authorities' attitudes towards this phenomenon.³⁹¹ Given the importance the Serbian cultural and political elites attributed to language in the process of defining their own nation, and to linguistic homogeneity as the goal of the nation-building process, these elites were extremely sensitive to, and frustrated by, the vitality of the Vlach language. In fact, as demonstrated in chapter 3, of all the forms of the Vlachs' resilience in maintaining their distinct cultural identity, the Serbian political and cultural elites mostly focused attention on the Vlachs' attachment to their language. Considering this

391 Claire Kramsch, 'The Cultural Component of Language Teaching', *Language, Culture and Curriculum*, 8 (1995), 83–92 (p. 85) <<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/07908319509525192>>.

central role of language in both identity perception and identity building, it is not surprising that the aforementioned repressive measures spelled out in the decree of 8 July 1904, which were specifically meant to 'tackle the issue of the Vlach element from Eastern Serbia', converged on the prohibition of the public use of the Vlach language.

Although linguistic resistance predominantly consisted of simply using the Vlach language, privately or publicly, notwithstanding teachers' efforts to make children abandon it in favour of Serbian since the early 1880s and the 1904 decree banning the Vlach from public space, there were cases in which this type of resistance acquired a more formal and 'modern' character. Certain Vlachs, in fact, went further than the mere preservation of the oral form of their language, by acquiring and possessing printed books in the Romanian language. These books, smuggled into the country in various ways, were mostly printed in Cyrillic characters and were predominantly of a religious character. While the majority of these texts were imported by Vlachs who travelled in Romania for work – the emigration of agricultural workers from north-eastern Serbian to Romania was a very common phenomenon at the time – there were cases when the books were brought into Serbia through other channels.

A remarkable case illustrating these alternative ways of book distribution dates to 1899 and concerns the region of Požarevac. According to a confidential letter written by a police officer of the Požarevac region to Minister of Education Andra Đorđević on 4 March 1899, numerous religious books in Romanian were discovered in Jasikovo village, in an operation which involved the teacher of the village of Jasikovo, the Ministry of Education and the police. According to the source, apart from already dispatched religious books, a number of Romanian spellers were also ready to be distributed. The source also contains the names of the people responsible for smuggling these books: the director and manager of the Majdanpek mines, and the local Majdanpek shoemaker. Needless to say, after their discovery these books were confiscated by the police.³⁹²

Cultural resistance to the Serbian authorities' assimilation project achieved through Vlach language and custom preservation, was not practised by the Vlach peasants alone. On the contrary, even highly educated Vlachs, especially those from the urban settlements, would conserve Vlach traditional culture and continue to use their

392 Belgrade, Arhiv Srbije (AS), MUD PO 1899, box 4 – part 1 – letter dated 4 March 1899.

mother-tongue, notwithstanding the fact that many were also state employees. This phenomenon was noticed by the provincial governor of the Krajina region, Ljubomir Obradović, who, in a confidential report to the minister of education, of 1900, accused the Vlach intelligentsia of the region of 'almost unconsciously slipping into Rumanianism', because they 'retain old Rumanian customs, and their mother-tongue'.³⁹³

Having well-educated Vlachs and civil servants of Vlach background still continuing to speak Vlach and live according to the Vlach culture was for the Serbian authorities of the time very problematic. Firstly, these Vlachs were, in certain sense, evidence that the policy of the assimilation of the Vlachs through education would not necessarily work, since being well-educated and proficient in Serbian did not necessarily imply the abandonment of the Vlach language and culture. In addition, by occupying various positions in the local civil service, before the decree of 1904 which explicitly prohibited the use of Vlach in institutions, these educated Vlachs actually hindered the very assimilation of the Vlachs. In fact, by offering their service in the Vlach language Vlach-speaking civil servants actually made the knowledge of Serbian, if not redundant, at least not necessary for many Vlach peasants.

6.5. Conclusion

The introduction and establishment of primary schooling in the areas inhabited by the Vlachs was not an uncontested and straightforward process. On the contrary, the Serbian authorities faced numerous forms of resistance, inspired by multiple factors and performed at different social and institutional levels. The significance of these Vlach resistance acts did not only relate to primary schooling *stricto sensu*, but they also had a major impact on the Serbian nation-building process as a whole. In fact, given the central role the primary school played in the latter, resisting primary education meant hindering and opposing the very process of Serbian nation-making, especially in its assimilationist aspirations towards the Vlachs. The resistance attitudes of the Vlachs are also indicative of what at the time were the identity dynamics within the Vlach communities themselves. They demonstrate that among the Vlachs there were those

393 Belgrade, Arhiv Srbije (AS), MPS P f. XLV r. 125/1900.

who were not only conscious of their own specific identity, but who were also able to self-define themselves according to modern understandings and precepts of nation and nationalism.

While it should be acknowledged that the resistance strategies deployed by the Vlachs share many features with similar dynamics in the Serb-inhabited areas, especially when it came to the rural population of both nationalities, it should be also pointed out that the different ethnic background of the Vlachs further influenced and complicated these resistance dynamics. In fact, the everyday forms of Vlach resistance to primary schooling were certainly motivated by the material and social factors that characterised the Serbian peasantry as a whole (poverty, reliance on children's workforce, patriarchal culture), but underlying, and in some cases strengthening, these motivations was also the ethnic factor. This has been demonstrated in the chapter by the analysis of several cases: through the instances of cautious critique of school policies, in which an awareness of underlying ethnic discrimination is made clear but not central; through episodes in which ethnic motivation is openly stated, and by direct challenge to the nation-building school policies and their ideological underpinning in public, such as in the case of the promotion of cultural rights for the Vlachs; lastly, schooling was most efficiently opposed through what could be termed a cultural resistance, which, being deeply rooted in the community and encompassing multiple aspects of the community life, was difficult to control and eradicate.

The identity dynamics of the Vlachs of the time were also determined by a lack of external support. This in the first place was due to the attitudes of the neighbouring Romanian state authorities who did not show interest in backing the initiatives promoted by the native Vlachs, or nationalist aspirations of members of the Vlach intelligentsia. Left without an 'external national homeland', the identity dynamics of the Vlach minority were primarily a result of their position within and interaction with the Serbian state. In other words, the Vlach identity, as it was constructed in the late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth centuries, was in the first place a product of the Vlachs' subaltern condition.

CONCLUSION

This multi-disciplinary study has approached Serbian nation-building as an outcome of the interaction between Vlach communities and compulsory primary education in the period 1878-1914. This concluding section will highlight the main findings and their implications for this specific case study, also pointing out the thesis's contribution to the historiography on nation-building in Serbia and beyond.

Focus on the Vlach ethnic minority allowed the thesis to examine the dynamics and processes that mainstream historiography on nation-building tends to overlook. Because the majority of relevant studies highlight the nationalising aspects of educational policies as they had been conceived at the national level, they fail to question the reception and success of these policies, and to investigate deviations from the national educational policies guidelines, legislation and curricula, which are drawn up in order to nationalise ethno-cultural minorities.

The findings of this dissertation demonstrate that the character of the educational policies the Serbian authorities deployed towards the Vlach communities differed from the general educational policies conceived at the national level, i.e. for the ethnic Serbs. The need to devise a separate set of educational measures for the Vlach-speaking population stemmed from the nationalist agenda of the Serbian authorities, which aimed at achieving national unity through the ethno-linguistic homogenisation of Serbia's population. In order to fulfil its 'national task' amongst the Vlachs, who had a distinct linguistic and cultural background, primary schooling for them needed to be conceived of differently than that devised for Serbian children. In fact, as the available evidence demonstrates, in Vlach-inhabited areas primary schooling was chiefly defined as an assimilation tool, whose main task was to ensure the spread and establishment of the Serbian language.

The ideological underpinnings of the assimilationist educational policies devised for the Vlachs have been explained in this thesis by exploring both the tenets of Serbian nationalism of the period and the corpus of texts in which the Vlach communities were

represented. As the Serbian nationalists identified their nation primarily in ethno-linguistic terms, i.e. as a Serbian-speaking Slavic population, the presence of a conspicuous Vlach Romance-speaking minority was inevitably seen as problematic. In fact, the analysis has demonstrated that hand-in-hand with the establishment and crystallisation of the Serbian nationalist ideology went the increasing perception of the Vlachs as a threat to both the Serbian nation and Serbian state interests. Part and parcel of this 'othering' of the Vlachs was the idea that the 'Vlach threat' had to be neutralised by assimilating them into the Serbian community, and that the main role in this process was to be played by the primary school.

Both the school organisation and school curricula were adjusted to make the acquisition of Serbian as successful as possible. The most striking features of these special measures were the introduction of the preparatory grade, the intensification of girls' education and, to a lesser extent, the promotion of extended schools. The preparatory grade was an exclusive feature of schools in Vlach areas, whose purpose was to teach oral Serbian to Vlach pupils before they started their first grade; the extended schools were introduced to consolidate the knowledge of the Serbian language and some of the knowledge acquired during the lower primary education (1-4 grades).

As to girls' schooling, it was promoted mainly because of the belief – widespread among the Serbian intelligentsia – that the assimilation of the Vlachs could not occur successfully if Vlach girls, seen as the bearers and transmitters of Vlach culture and language, were not reformed, i.e. educated 'in the Serbian spirit'. Girls' education and extended schools were not specifically devised for the Vlachs, as was the case with the preparatory grade, but they were nevertheless almost exclusively present in Vlach-inhabited areas. This was the consequence of the Serbian authorities' perception that schooling had to be more intense, successful and inclusive among the Vlachs, if their assimilation was to be achieved.

Efforts to assimilate the Vlachs through specifically designed educational policies also affected the Serbian population living in the proximity of Vlach communities. In fact, in order to induce the Vlachs to accept certain nationalising educational measures, such as girls' education and extended schools, the Serbian authorities also promoted them in neighbouring Serbian localities. Although introduced to secure the schooling of the Vlachs, this strategy – by preventing them from justifying

their opposition to primary schooling with the argument that certain educational measures had not been enforced in the schools attended by the Serbian children – affected both the broader nation-building process and the general development of the Serbian educational system. In fact, promoting the girls' and extended schools in Serbian villages, alongside those introduced in Vlach localities, led to higher enrolment rates of Serbian children as well, which in turn meant that more children nationwide were educated in the 'national spirit' and according to 'patriotic' precepts. Given these developments, the Vlachs can be seen as a catalyst for the intensification of the Serbian nation-building process.

The same educational measures devised for or intensely promoted among Vlachs – namely preparatory grade, girls' schools and extended schools – had an impact on the development of the Serbian educational system in general. Since these forms of schooling represented at the time a novelty not only in Serbia but also in the majority of European countries, promoting them meant that the educational system was following the latest modernisation trends. In fact, contemporary scholars have recognised this by defining the diversification of the Serbian educational system and the increasing schooling of girls in turn-of-the-century Serbia as an indication of its modernisation. However, what the scholars have failed to acknowledge is that these educational policies were primarily promoted as part of the assimilation project devised for the Vlachs. Instead, they have explained the outcome of these measures in terms of a result of the interaction between two opposing tendencies: the modernisation aspirations of the authorities on the one hand, and the traditional aspects of the majority of Serbian society, on the other.

This study argues, instead, that the modernisation of the Serbian primary school cannot fully be explained as an outcome of a clash and interaction between modern educational reforms and the traditional values of Serbian society. In fact, it draws attention to the influence exercised by the diversified ethnic composition of the population, which it identifies as the core reason behind some of the educational reforms. This dissertation has demonstrated that the presence of the Vlachs – and also of other communities in south-eastern Serbia, whose vernaculars differed significantly from literary Serbian – played a significant role in the Serbian authorities' decisions in the matter of primary education. By showing that the achievement of the assimilation of the Vlachs was the principal reason behind some of the Serbian authorities' educational

reforms (girls' education, preparatory grade and extended schools), the thesis identifies the Vlach communities to be one of the main triggers of the modernisation of the Serbian primary education system. Some scholars have argued that at times Europe's colonial domains acted as incubators of modernisation policies, which only later would be introduced into European metropolises.³⁹⁴ This thesis shows that the same was true of the areas populated by ethnic minorities within Europe's nationalising states.

Whereas the educational reforms targeting the Vlachs had a formative effect on Serbian nation-building and the modernisation of the primary school by fostering both these processes, the influence they had on the Vlach communities cannot be defined in such positive terms. As education of the Vlachs was primarily conceived as an assimilation project, the *stricto sensu* educational strategies for Vlach children were often poorly defined and contradicted the pedagogical precepts the Serbian educational workers subscribed to. In fact, the overwhelming attention paid to the acquisition of the Serbian language had detrimental effects on Vlach children's overall education, as it involved the curtailing of the programmes of other subjects. The quality of the Vlach pupils' education was further reduced by a lack of appropriate methodological directives on how to teach in the preparatory grade. Inappropriate language teaching methodology resulted in low success in learning Serbian and, consequently, it generated difficulties for the pupils with other subjects, for which the knowledge of Serbian was essential.

This dissertation has also broadened the way primary schooling is studied in relation to the nation-building process, as it has explored the modalities in which the primary school was employed to nationalise the broader local population. Analysing the initiatives promoted by teachers outside the classroom – i.e. in addition to their regular work in primary schools – gives a more complete understanding of the contribution of the primary school to the nation-building process.

The use of the primary school to reach out to the broader population and expose it to nationalist messages was particularly present in the Vlach-inhabited areas, where even apparently ideology-free organisations such as agricultural cooperatives were exploited to achieve national unity. In fact, these organisations not only served to improve the population's material conditions and introduce it to innovative agricultural

394 Astrid Swenson and Peter Mandler, *From Plunder to Preservation: Britain and the Heritage of Empire, c.1800-1940* (Oxford: Published for the British Academy by Oxford University Press, 2013), p. 18.

techniques, but they also served as venues where rituals moulded on the model of traditional Serbian customs were performed and knowledge of the Serbian language promoted. Moreover, teachers were in charge of organising public celebrations, during which school children would perform an apposite programme rich with nationalist themes, and they also actively supported the Serbian authorities' initiatives aimed at changing elements of the Vlach traditional costume. The latter, considered both as a visual disruption of the coveted national unity and a statement of Vlach ethnic identity, was to be replaced by garments deemed by teachers to be 'truly' Serbian. Therefore, in the case of the Vlach communities, the nationalising task of the primary school extended well beyond the classroom, and the school served as the outpost for the nationalist mobilisation and assimilation of the local population at large.

Another important contribution of this dissertation is that it offers an insight into the Vlach population's reactions to the Serbian primary school and the nationalising strategies it involved. Adopting the 'bottom-up' perspective, this study has explored the Vlachs' resistance strategies in relation to primary schooling and its nationalising task, trying to establish whether and to what extent their ethnicity played a role in these dynamics. Many resistance acts which occurred among the Vlachs were inspired by the same material and cultural reasons as those that triggered similar actions in Serbian communities and across contemporary rural Europe. However, the findings of this research also suggest that ethnicity further complicated the already difficult relationship between compulsory schooling and the predominantly peasant Vlachs.

When opposing the educational policies, the Vlachs would seldom refer to their Vlach identity or use it as the motivation behind their resistance acts. This cautious approach was due to the repressive attitude of the Serbian authorities towards any sign which might indicate the existence of a desire or intention of the Vlachs to cultivate a separate national or ethnic identity. In fact, not only were open requests made by members of the Vlach intelligentsia suppressed, but also private initiatives of the common people, such as owning a book in Romanian, were considered and treated as acts that posed a threat to national security. However, although rare, the cases in which the Vlach identity was used as the reason for opposing primary school efforts to nationalise the Vlachs, indicate that a certain Vlach identity did exist, and that it could have influenced Vlach resistance to schooling.

The Vlachs' dominant and most efficient form of resistance to primary schooling and its nationalising effort was what can be defined as 'cultural resistance'. In fact, not only did the peasant Vlachs remain faithful to their traditional culture and language, but even those living in urban areas, including those employed as civil servants, continued to both use their mother-tongue and preserve their traditional customs. The persistence of the Vlach culture and language, despite the assimilationist efforts of the Serbian authorities, demonstrates that the very process of Serbian nation-building of the time was a contested and a bi-directional process. By maintaining their language and culture alongside some degree of acculturation, which certainly took place, the Vlachs thwarted the very process of Serbian nation-building. The latter, aimed at achieving the ethno-cultural and linguistic homogeneity of the state population, was in fact undoubtedly hindered by the Vlach populations' decision to cultivate their traditional language and culture.

Insight into the identity dynamics of Vlach communities and their attitude towards the assimilationist policies of the Serbian authorities allows us to have an alternative perspective on Serbian nation-building and nation-building processes in general. It suggests that studying nation-building endeavours only from a top-down perspective gives an incomplete and often misleading interpretation of this process, as it mainly deals with the aspirations and measures of their promoters. This approach fails to evaluate the actual results of nationalising policies, which, as demonstrated by this case study, not only could yield scarce results in ethnically heterogeneous areas, but could also trigger the very identity dynamics that they meant to prevent. For instance, Vlach identity awareness and nationalist aspirations were in some cases brought forward by Vlach individuals primarily as a reaction to the assimilationist attitude of the Serbian state towards the Vlachs. Therefore, instead of or alongside their assimilation, in the period under discussion the Serbian nationalisation of the Vlachs fostered Vlach identity awareness.

Exploration of the Vlach identity dynamics offers an useful insight into the development of minority nationalism in nineteenth-century European states. This case study suggests that external support for the minority nationalism could be crucial for its success. In fact, the lack of political and material support from the Romanian authorities was the decisive factor in the failure of Vlach nationalists to bring their aspirations to a higher level and involve the broader Vlach population. The Romanian authorities not

only never took any interest in the Vlachs – as might have been expected to happen, given the ethno-linguistic principle, which at the time was widely used in Europe for defining the nations and their territorial aspirations – but they also ignored and discouraged the Vlach activists' demands for support.

The Romanian authorities' disinterest in Serbian Vlachs indicates an aspect of nation and state formation which has not been granted due attention in existing literature. At the time when the main criteria for the creation of modern nations and states were the perceived ethno-linguistic characteristics of the population, the Romanian authorities, notwithstanding the widely accepted belief that Vlachs and Romanians represented the same people, decided to exclude the Vlachs from their nation, a position that appears rather peculiar. A further investigation of this and similar cases will certainly offer a better understanding of the nation and state-building dynamics, for instance explaining how and under which circumstances in the nation-building process the nationalist ideology is underplayed and portions of population excluded from the nation for the sake of other national or state interests.

Another relevant contribution of this work regards the methodology adopted in studying the nation-building process. Opting for an interdisciplinary approach allowed me to analyse several aspects of Serbian nation-building through education which would otherwise have remained excluded, although an integral and relevant part of the process. Arguably the most important methodological contribution is the subscription to Subaltern Studies' philosophy and methodology. The analysis of Serbian nation-building from the perspective of the Vlach communities has demonstrated that the marginalised groups, who in dominant historical narratives are denied any real influence in political and social processes, can, in fact, play a significant role, and, as such, merit due scholarly attention. In the period under discussion, Serbian nation-building was not only a result of the dominant group members' activities at either the top or the bottom level of society, but it was also affected by the presence and activities of minorities, and in the specific case of this research, the Vlach communities. In fact, the latter not only served as a catalyst for the Serbian nation-building process, but they proved capable of consciously negotiating the nationalising policies they were exposed to, by accepting, modifying or resisting them.

Understanding and analysing the Vlachs and their actions by applying Subaltern

Studies methodology has, in addition, demonstrated that there are numerous common traits shared by subaltern groups, regardless of the historical period they lived in or the political and ideological settings of the states they inhabit(-ed). The attempt made in this thesis might encourage a further testing of Subaltern Studies methodology in the investigation of Europe's ethnic minorities, especially in the disciplines of history and anthropology.

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