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## DEMOGRAPHIC STATISTICS AS A MEANS OF NATIONAL REPRESENTATION IN SERBIA IN THE SECOND HALF OF THE 19<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY

**Abstract:** Statistics was introduced in the state administration of Serbia in the early second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century with the assumption of Western European knowledge and techniques of state management. At the time, statistics was considered a means that could contribute to social progress and the achievement of national objectives. Given the universal character of data it used, statistics was also considered capable of contributing to the increased visibility of Serbia in the international public. This paper focuses on the use of statistics as a means of national representation and the achievement of national objectives.

**Keywords:** Statistics, society, state, Serbia, 19<sup>th</sup> century.

The collection of statistical data in European states in the 19<sup>th</sup> century was one of the key means of state modernisation. In the late 18<sup>th</sup> and the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, statistical services tasked with the collection and classification of data on the population and the economy were established in the majority of European countries. At the time, statistics had a much broader meaning than today – it was considered a discipline studying data on social, economic and political circumstances in the country.<sup>1</sup> By reducing social facts to numerical relations and placing them into large classification groups, statistics became the new source of knowledge about society. According to Michel Foucault, “statistics was state knowledge about the state, understood as the state knowledge about itself and other states”.<sup>2</sup> The universal

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<sup>1</sup> The etymology of the word is also indicative – the New Latin term *statisticum collegium*, which, freely translated, means a study of the state, and the Italian word *statista*, used to denote a person apt at managing state affairs.

<sup>2</sup> Mišel Fuko, *Bezbednost, teritorija, stanovništvo*, Novi Sad 2014, 284–294, 325.

character of statistical data enabled the comparison of different peoples and states according to the same criteria. Given the nature of data it used, statistics was believed to give a realistic and objective picture of the social reality, void of ideological and political interpretations. However, by defining individual categories and parameters, statistics did not depict only the current situation, but it also created new identities and categories which then entered the public discourse.<sup>3</sup>

With the rise of nationalism in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, statistics gained an important role in the formation of national identities. Historian Nico Randeraad used the Habsburg Monarchy and Italian states as paradigmatic examples in this regard. In the Habsburg Monarchy, for instance, the data obtained through the population census of 1851 were used for creating a map which showed the distribution of ethnic groups in the Monarchy. The mixture of members of different nationalities was to imply that it was not possible to create their national states.<sup>4</sup> In Italian states, statistics was used at the time to achieve the opposite objective – the promotion of unique characteristics of the population that lived in the Apennine Peninsula. It became the instrument of national propaganda aimed at creating a single Italian nation and increasing its visibility both in the domestic and foreign public.<sup>5</sup>

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The statistical activity in the modern Serbian state began to develop in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. The precondition for its development was the gaining of autonomy (1830), which marked a break with the Ottoman rule and orientation to the European models of state development. Assuming Western European knowledge and techniques of state management also resulted in the introduction of statistics in the administrative apparatus. Vladimir Jakšić, one of the first students from Serbia educated at Western European universities, had the greatest merit in promoting statistics. In the early 1840s, i.e. the time when statistics was at its pinnacle, Jakšić studied cameral sciences at the universities in Tübingen and Heidelberg. After returning to Serbia (1847), he got employed at the Ministry of Finance and began to collect statistical data, systematise and compare them with data of other European states. Confident about the importance of this work, he submitted to the State Council the proposal on the establishment of a separate statistical department, tasked with collecting and publishing country

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<sup>3</sup> David I. Kertzer, Dominique Arel, *Censuses, identity formation and the struggle for political power*, in: *Census and Identity: The Politics of Race, Ethnicity and Language in National Census*, Cambridge University Press, 2002, 6; Philip Kreager, *Population and Identity*, in: *Anthropological Demography: Toward a New Synthesis* (ed. D. I. Kertzer, T. Fricke), University of Chicago Press, 1997, 37.

<sup>4</sup> Nico Randeraad, *The International Statistical Congress (1853–1876): Knowledge Transfers and their Limits*, *European History Quarterly*, vol. 41, no. 1 (January 2011) 50–65.

<sup>5</sup> See more in: Silvana Patriarca, *Numbers and Nationhood: Writing Statistics in Nineteenth-Century Italy*, Cambridge University Press, New York 1996.

descriptive data. In spring of the following year, he published in *Srpske novine* the article "About the Benefits of Statistics for the State and People", aiming to familiarise readers with the subject of statistical research and its importance.<sup>6</sup>

Introduction of statistics in the state administration was also advocated by the other members of the intellectual elite educated abroad. Milovan Spasić, who earned a doctoral degree in philosophy in Berlin in the early 1840s, emphasised that almost all European civilised states had such statistical services. He believed the publication of statistical data would significantly contribute to better knowledge of Serbia by other peoples: "It need not be explained that each nation must be familiar with other nations, and this is necessary particularly for those nations that are little known."<sup>7</sup> Doctor Milan Jovanović Morski stated that the collection of statistical data was particularly important for "small" and "new" states, such as Serbia, which "had to perform enormous tasks", which implied national liberation and unification.<sup>8</sup>

In the first volume of "Glasnik Društva srpske slovesnosti" issued in 1847, the thematic areas announced in its contents included "Državopisanije (statistika) Srbsko. Različni podatci za državopisanije".<sup>9</sup> In the third volume of "Glasnik", Jovan Gavrilović, a head at the Ministry of Finance, published a short excerpt from the population census of 1846, and in later volumes he also published excerpts from censuses carried out in 1850 and 1854.<sup>10</sup> The established practice of regular

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<sup>6</sup> *О ползи статистике за државу и народ*, Српске новине, бр. 32 (27. април 1847) 125. About Jakšić's biography see more in: *Свечани састанак Српскога ученог друштва 30. маја 1889. у дворници Велике Школе ради прославе 50-огодишњице књижевног рада г. Владимира Јакшића редовнога члана Друштва*, Гласник Српског ученог друштва (Гласник СУД) 71 (1890) 292–325.

<sup>7</sup> Милован Спасић, *Штатистички податци школских заведенија у Књажеству Србском*, Гласник Друштва српске словесности IX (1857) 162–164.

<sup>8</sup> Милан Јовановић, *Општа биостатика с погледом на статистику живота и здравља у Србији*, Гласник СУД 3 (1866) 106. The importance of statistics as a means of national promotion and representation was also emphasised in other European countries. For instance, B. P. Sanguinetti, who in the period preceding Italian unification advocated the development of agricultural statistics of the entire Apennine Peninsula, justified his proposal with the following words: "A statistics aiming at measuring the forces and the resources of our agriculture will greatly benefit the whole community...Therefore let us make all possible efforts to propagate the kinds of knowledge which honor the Peninsula; the best way to make oneself respected is to make oneself known", quoted in: S. Patriarcha, *op. cit.*, 129.

<sup>9</sup> The first volume of the "Gazette of the Serbian Learned Society", under the stated rubric, contains an overview of the state of the educational system in Serbia in comparison with other European countries (*Стање јавног наставленија у Књажеству Србији. У сравненју с јавним наставленијем других земаља*, Гласник Друштва српске словесности (ДСС) I (1847) 201–205). The work was written by Jovan Marinović based on the records of the Ministry of Education.

<sup>10</sup> Јован Гавриловић, *Прилог за географију и статистику Србије. Главни извод пописа Србије у години 1846*, Гласник ДСС III (1851) 186–190; *Idem*, *Прилог за географију и статистику Србије. Главни извод пописа Србије у години 1850*, Гласник ДСС IV (1852) 227–248; *Idem*, *Главни извод пописа у Србији године 1854/55*, Гласник ДСС IX (1857) 224–226.

publication of the censuses results provided the educated public with an insight into the tendencies of population development.

The Statistical Department within the Ministry of Finance was finally established in 1864, headed by Vladimir Jakšić.<sup>11</sup> The edition *Državopis Srbije* was launched at the time, periodically publishing statistical data on the population and economy. It was intended both for the domestic and international public: the titles in all statistical rubrics were given both in Serbian and French. *Državopis* published the excerpts from population censuses (at the beginning scarce, and later with increasingly more detail), data on natural population growth – the rates of natality, mortality, growth, nuptiality, and data on the migratory increase. Apart from data on the population, the data on the state in the economy were also published – trade, import and export, price lists of agricultural products, analyses of inventories of arable land and livestock etc. In the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century, the number of statistical publications increased significantly – until 1913, around a hundred volumes of various statistical records were published. Apart from specialised statistical editions, statistical data were published and analysed in other publications – newspapers, magazines and monographs.<sup>12</sup>

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In the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, statistics was also a means of establishing international connections. In 1853, the International Statistical Congress was established, with the aim of introducing uniform standards in the statistical field. In the following two decades, the Congress held nine meetings in different European towns, where representatives of European countries learned about the latest statistical principles and methods. Vladimir Jakšić, as Serbia's official representative, participated in seven meetings of the Congress. The Congress significantly contributed to setting the uniform criteria in terms of defining the population, methods of collecting and processing data, and presenting the population at the national level. The Congress meetings also served as "the transfer of knowledge" between "big" and "small" countries. By participating in the Congress, the countries which, such as Serbia, just began to create their national statistical services, had direct access to information on the latest statistical methods and census procedures. Apart from this, the representatives of national statistical services, by participating in the Congress, consolidated their own positions and the work of their services in their domicile countries.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Решење о устројству статистичнога одељења у министарству финансије, Зборник закона и уредаба у Књажеству Србији 17, Београд 1865, 194.

<sup>12</sup> "Glasnik Društva srpske slovesnosti", odnosno „Glasnik Srpskog učenog društva“ (*The Gazette of the Society of Serbian Letters*, i.e. *Gazette of the Serbian Learned Society*) published articles which statistically analysed different social segments – the population, educational and health systems, army. In monographs *Кнежевина Србија* (1876) and *Краљевина Србија* (1884), Milan Đ. Milićević introduced statistical data, as did Vladimir Karić in his book *Србија. Опис земље, народа и државе* (1887).

<sup>13</sup> N. Randeraad, *op. cit.*, 61–62. The seventh meeting of the Congress was held in 1867 in Florence. Its holding in the then Italian capital, only six years after the unification, was the chance for the international promotion of the Italian state, *Ibidem*.

Serbian statistician Bogoljub Jovanović also left a testimony about the transfer of knowledge which was taking place at the Congress meetings: “Smaller states were sending their statisticians to study forms and instructions in well-organised statistical centres. For instance, the Romanian government sent, at its cost, the head of its official statistics, Mr Penković, to Paris, Berlin and Vienna, where he studied the means prepared for the census. He brought from Vienna printed forms and instructions, in line with which the census in Austria was already completed, and it is probable that the census in Romania will also be carried out under the same model.”<sup>14</sup> The Serbian statistical service was also adopting the practice and experiences of developed countries. From 1866, population censuses in Serbia were carried out based on the Congress recommendations.<sup>15</sup>

“Bigger” states most strongly opposed the introduction of uniform statistical procedures and they embraced them only if they did not conflict their interests. In time, different interests of participating countries were increasingly coming to the fore at meetings. For instance, it was hard to establish single criteria for population censuses in national and multi-ethnic states. The increasingly visible differences and misunderstandings at the Congress meetings finally led to its dissolution. The tenth meeting, planned for 1878 in Rome, was not held, and the “merits” for its not being held was ascribed to Bismarck: due to the fear that the Congress was imposing excessive uniformity and thus jeopardising the national sovereignty of participating countries, he encouraged German states to give up on participation.<sup>16</sup>

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As an echo of intellectual developments in Europe, in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, opinions also appeared in Serbia that the successful management of the state entailed not so much knowledge about the past, but primarily knowledge about the present. Such knowledge, as believed, was largely contained by statistics – with the help of data supplied by statistics, the state administration was to direct and regulate the development of the national economy.<sup>17</sup> Vladimir Jakšić propagated the idea that in the modern times, the state was becoming stronger not through conquests, but through the capacity of the state administration to increase the number of its citizens and improve their standard of living.<sup>18</sup> Vladimir Jovanović, who in the early 1880s published a thorough overview of “our economic and social situation”, emphasised

<sup>14</sup> Богољуб Јовановић, *Попис људства у Кнежевини Србији 1874. године*, Београд 1881, 4.

<sup>15</sup> From 1861, Greece also organised population censuses in accordance with the Congress conclusions, as well as Hungary, which from 1867 could independently carry out censuses in its territory, N. Randeraad, *op. cit.*, 62.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibidem*; P. Kreager *op. cit.*, 42, 157.

<sup>17</sup> *Предлог поднесен Совјету у год. 1850*, in: Предлог Првозвано-Андрејској народној скупштини у 1858. години, Београд 1858, 31–42.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibidem*, 27–30.

in the introduction the importance of statistics for contemporary society: "As much as historical sciences are important for shedding light on the past, so much is statistics important for the real knowledge about the present... By comparatively presenting different times and peoples, it gives a comprehensive overview of the situation, and the right measure for the assessment of whether and in what aspects individual nations were progressing or not, including what should be done for their overall development and progress".<sup>19</sup> The importance of statistics for the state administration was also recognised by politicians. In 1889, Čedomilj Mijatović, at the end of the "golden decade" of his ministerial mandate, said that "the statistics is the photograph of the national material and moral situation in all profiles and from each perspective, the apparatus fixating the picture of the national situation with very simple methods, without which it is no longer possible to anyone to become a fortunate administrator and a successful statesman".<sup>20</sup>

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The first data on the population which produced the picture of the nation as a whole were published in the 1860s and 1870s. They showed that Serbia, compared to other European countries, had small population density, high natality and mortality rates, and a large share of the young, economically inactive population. According to Vladimir Jakšić, the population density was the *cause and indicator* of the state strength and well-being: "Densely populated countries show a higher degree of development and civilisational progress. The size of the military power and level of tax income, including national well-being, are pre-determined by the number of inhabitants in the state".<sup>21</sup> High mortality rates were linked to the low degree of social development; in states with a higher civilisational level, the social well-being was higher and mortality was less dispersed.<sup>22</sup> Only a healthy and long-living population is the basis for progress of the state and society: "Human life is the main strength of

<sup>19</sup> Владимир Јовановић, *Статистичан преглед нашег привредног и друштвеног стања, са обзиром на привредно и друштвено стање других држава*, Гласник СУД 50 (1881) 168.

<sup>20</sup> *Свечани састанак Српског ученог друштва*, 302. A similar discourse was also present in other European countries. Francesco Lampato, the editor of "Annali universali di statistica", issued in Lombardy, wrote in 1826: "Men, once bellicose, now industrious, address their curiosity to the progress of industry, where earlier they addressed it to the successes of war; and this is demonstrated by the general passion for statistics" [F. Lampato], "Su i progressi dell'industria in Inghilterra", quoted in: S. Patriarcha, *op. cit.*, 24.

<sup>21</sup> According to Jakšić, positive examples in this regard were Belgium, Saxony and Lombardy, В. Јакшић, *Густина насељености Србије*, Статистична збирка из србских крајева, Београд 1875, 27–28. A similar discourse is also found in Italian countries. In his work "Sulla densità della popolazione Lombardia" (1839), Carlo Cataneo stressed that population density was the real "representation of civilization", quoted in S. Patriarcha, *op. cit.*, 152.

<sup>22</sup> Мита Ракић, *Један лист из физике социјалне*, Београд 1877, 67; Б. Јовановић, *Умирање учитеља основних школа, у Кнежевини Србији*, Гласник СУД 43 (1876), 348.

the state, and the citizen's health is its most reliable capital", noted doctor Milan Jovanović Morski.<sup>23</sup> High mortality rates had to be compensated for by even higher natality rates, which resulted in high natural growth rates. In the early 1880s, with the average natural growth rate of 18.4%, Serbia was among the leading countries in Europe. Unlike other countries with high natural growth rates – Norway, Saxony and Great Britain, Serbia recorded high growth at much higher natality and mortality rates than these countries. This resulted in demographic tension – a short and accelerated life cycle of the population.<sup>24</sup>

High natural growth rates reflected negatively on the age structure of the population, which had a large share of young people unfit for work: in 1890, the share of the population aged under 15 was 43.4%. In the *Statistical Overview*, Vladimir Jovanović commented on the importance of this element of the demographic structure for economic and social development: "The classification of inhabitants by age is particularly important for the assessment of the economic, military and, in general, social strength. Only adult inhabitants are capable of carrying arms and defending the country; only adult inhabitants work in the economy; they are active holders of public rights and duties, national independence and state power; under-age inhabitants do not fall under any of these groups".<sup>25</sup> Men prevailed in the gender structure of the population. The prevalence of the male population was the consequence of migratory movements – during the entire 19<sup>th</sup> century, Serbia was a country of immigration, and men always participate in migratory movements in larger numbers. The larger number of men in the total population was positively valued from the aspect of economic development and military power: directly involved in the economy and army, men were considered a more useful part of the population for social and state development.<sup>26</sup>

In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the natality, mortality and growth of the population were no longer considered the matter of God's will and destiny, but the matter of the state and its management policies. The rationalistic and positivistic approach to the phenomenon of the population implied a pronounced role of the state in demographic development. The number of inhabitants, trends of population movement and structure, were the indicator of success of state population management policies: "We believe that progress in the number of inhabitants, just

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<sup>23</sup> М. Јовановић, *op. cit.*, 104.

<sup>24</sup> Unlike the countries of western and northern Europe, which were already in the first phase of demographic transition, characterised by declining mortality rates, in the 1880s Serbia was at the very start of the process, В. Јовановић, А. Вулетић, М. Самарџић, *Наличја модернизације. Српска држава и друштво у време стицања независности*, Београд 2017, 218–222.

<sup>25</sup> В. Јовановић, *Статистичан преглед нашег привредног и друштвеног стања, са обзиром на привредно и друштвено стање других држава*, II, Гласник СУД 51 (1882) 209. В. Јакшић, *Число и покрет људства главнога града Београда*, Гласник ДСС IV (1852) 257.

<sup>26</sup> *Попис људства Србије у години 1866*, Државопис Србије III (1869) 102.

like any other progress, is the result of a wise state policy”, underscored Vladimir Jakšić in the report about the number of inhabitants in Serbia in 1866.<sup>27</sup> Doctor Milan Jovanović Morski emphasised that modern science “knows well that state organisation, particularly concerning education, economy and finances, influences the health and life expectancy of the population much more than medicine”.<sup>28</sup>

Moral statistics became a separate branch of statistics in the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. It emerged as the result of belief that quantitative techniques, applied in natural sciences, can also be applied to the study of human behaviour, which allowed for the uncovering of the types of laws and regularities in social phenomena. The first phenomenon in the field of moral statistics “measured” in Serbia were out-of-wedlock births. They were registered from 1854 in Belgrade and from 1862 in the entire territory of Serbia. Compared to other countries, their number in Serbia was very small – only 0.4% of children were born outside marriage from 1862 to 1873.<sup>29</sup> The small number of such children was due mainly to the early and universal marriage regime. Apart from this, the number of out-of-wedlock births remained under the radar of official statistics given that they were both socially undesirable and punishable by law, which is why they were often hidden from the public. Although statisticians also admitted that these data “are not entirely accurate”, they still emphasised the strikingly small number of out-of-wedlock births in Serbia compared to developed European countries. To confirm the “morality” of the Serbian people, it was stated that the least number of out-of-wedlock births in the Habsburg Monarchy was recorded among the Serbian population. Jakšić found it appropriate to comment that a significantly higher number of out-of-wedlock births in Belgrade was registered among the Catholics compared to the Orthodox population: “and this comes as no moral compliment for the Catholics”.<sup>30</sup>

The population census covered literacy for the first time in 1866. The share of the literate population was small – 4.2%; the percentage of the literate in urban areas was 28% and in rural areas only 1.6%. Vladimir Jakšić commented on these data as follows: “Although our government does and spends a lot in the field of national education, we can see that the results of these efforts are very weak, as in the entire country only 42, out of 1000 persons, know how to write. This, however, does not prove that each person recorded as literate in the defter truly knows to write and calculate at least in a mediocre way; this may be the case only with a half of inhabitants, the second half may have given the statement only for the sake of showing off, but are, in fact, illiterate as the rest of the people. In this regard, we hold

<sup>27</sup> *Ibidem*, 109.

<sup>28</sup> М. Јовановић, *op. cit.*, 124–125.

<sup>29</sup> В. Јакшић, *Число и покрет људства у Београду*, Гласник ДСС 7 (1855) 272; *Покрет људства Србије кроз 12 година, од године 1862. до 1873*, Државопис Србије, VIII, Београд 1874, 112–113.

<sup>30</sup> *Покрет људства Србије у години 1862*, Државопис Србије II, Београд 1865, 5; В. Јакшић, *Число и покрет људства главнога града Београда*, Гласник ДСС 4 (1852) 259.



the last place among European peoples”.<sup>31</sup> In 1884, the percentage of literate inhabitants of Serbia increased to 9.3%, which was accompanied with a moderately optimistic comment: “Literacy in Serbia has still not engulfed the masses of people as it is the case in other states. However, progress to this direction is also evident and is increasingly being developed”.<sup>32</sup>

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The data on population movement in Serbia were almost always observed compared to analogous data in other European countries. The main parameter for comparing peoples and states was the trend of the increase in the number of inhabitants: “The numerical increase is of great importance for the comparison of peoples and measuring their strength. The peoples who reproduce more cause concern and fear among those whose growth is slower, no matter how progressive they are in other aspects”.<sup>33</sup> Jakšić emphasised Prussia as a positive example (“a state equipped with wise and reasonable administration”), as well as other German and Scandinavian countries. On the other hand, he associated the declining power of Spain in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, and of the Ottoman Empire in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, with the declining population growth in these countries.<sup>34</sup>

Serbian statistics was particularly interested in demographic circumstances in the Ottoman Empire: “The Turks... were frightening for Europe as long as there were many of them compared to other European states, but since the human capital of the Turkish ethnicity remained without growth on the European side and the neighbouring peoples became strong in numbers – the Turks also lost their erstwhile glory”. The successes of Serbia and Greece in the uprisings against the Ottoman Empire were ascribed to the favourable numerical relation between the domestic population and conquerors. The failures of the Christians in Bosnia were, according

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<sup>31</sup> *Попис људства Србије у години 1866*, 102.

<sup>32</sup> The percentage of literacy is calculated relative to the overall population, including children aged under 6. The number of literate persons in urban areas was 27.6%, and in rural areas 5.3%. There were many more literate men than women; in urban areas the ratio of literate men to women was 2:1, and in rural – 24:1, *Попис људства у Краљевини Србији 1884. године*, Државопис Србије XVI, Београд 1889, XXXIV–XXXVIII.

<sup>33</sup> В. Јовановић, *Статистичан преглед*, Гласник СУД 50 (1881) 182.

<sup>34</sup> *Покрет људства Србије у години 1863*, 6. In another remark on Prussia, Jakšić noted that from the establishment of peace in Europe in 1815, this country “owing to comprehensive wise measures which improve the well-being of masses of peoples... progressed very well, almost doubling its population at the time. The consequences were shown in the political triumph won in 1866; the direct benefit for each country where the population grows quickly concerns the number of soldiers and financial strength, but not less important is the indirect benefit as in such society people are much more benevolent and therefore the state spends less on the investigation of misdeeds, vices and crimes”, *Попис људства Србије у години 1866*, 113.

to Jakšić's judgment, the consequence of the domination of the Turkish population. However, a gradual decline in the number of Turks in Bosnia inevitably led to the end of their political domination. The head of Serbian statistics draw the conclusion, with unhidden satisfaction, that "the Turks in Europe are hurling themselves towards the unwanted death of their ethnicity, against their will".<sup>35</sup>

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The interest in population trends did not arise only from the wish to achieve social progress and national well-being. That was to serve a higher objective – the liberation and unification of the Serbian people. According to Vladimir Jakšić, one of the decisive factors for national liberation and unification was the number of the population: "Once it reaches the number of two million inhabitants and the same amount of ducats of government revenue, including 100,000 well-trained soldiers, Serbia will find it hard to continue to pay harač, but will take a befitting place in the family of European states, which it lost five hundred years ago".<sup>36</sup>

During the 1850, '60s and '70s, statistical indicators were not only insipid data, but were often placed in the historical context and veiled in the national ideology. Jakšić commented on the data on a reduction in natural growth in the Serbian capital with the words that, for him, it was "a sad report, which will never allow us to wipe our Kosovo polje tears". The human losses in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century moved from the battlefield to statistical tables. Jakšić interpreted data on the negative natural growth in Belgrade with a national pathos:

"This damage, in our small city, must be called enormous, particularly in the last time section, as not even on the Kamenica battlefield did more Serbs lose their lives than they have died here in the last 11 years, at the time of the deepest peace and economic progress... If we have lost several hundred of our brothers in the battlefield, they will be mentioned as martyrs and holy victims as long as the Serbian people exist, but the loss of 2,429 souls amid the overall contentment, desired progress, citizens' incessant singing and playing, is an obvious tragicomic act".<sup>37</sup>

Demographic data were examined in the context of the struggle for the achievement of national objectives. Unfavourable indicators made Serbia farther from that objective, and the head of the Serbian statistical service considered it his duty to warn the public: "Isn't this the subject of the most urgent study for our patriotism? What deed is more important in the state than the one relating to Serbia's independence?"<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> *Ibidem*, 16–17; *Известије поднешено г. Министру Финансија о числу житеља Србије у години 1859*, Државопис Србије I, Београд 1863, 94.

<sup>36</sup> *Попис људства Србије у години 1866*, 109.

<sup>37</sup> В. Јакшић, *Число и покрет људства главнога града Београда*, Гласник ДСС IV (1952) 249–250, 258.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibidem*, 111.

The ultimate goals of population management policies were not social prosperity and national well-being, but the achievement of national tasks – gaining independence, liberation and unification of the Serbian people. The increase in the number of inhabitants and improvement of the demographic structure were to contribute to social prosperity that would enable the achievement of national objectives. At the celebration of Jakšić's jubilee – the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his public work, his erstwhile student and later the minister in charge, Čedomilj Mijatović, emphasized that western schools managed to make from Serbian students people who were educated and learned in European terms, but that these students received this advanced learning on the already set moral and national foundations.<sup>39</sup> Implanting the national ideology on contemporary scientific knowledge was not, however, Serbian specificity, but the legacy of the social and political development of Europe in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Demographic statistics was used to promote national and political objectives in other European states of the time as well; "patriotic statistics" was a special term coined for using statistics for such purposes.<sup>40</sup>

Impatiently waiting for the moment of liberation and unification, Serbian statisticians followed the development of the Serbian population in the Ottoman and Habsburg Empires: "As soon as we began to deal with the statistics of Serbia, we immediately defined it as our task the development of statistics for other areas where the Serbs live".<sup>41</sup> The indicators of the demographic development of the Serbs in the Ottoman Empire and the Habsburg Monarchy were unfavourable and Serbian statisticians found the causes of negative demographic trends in the foreign rule: "The Serbdom outside Serbia is no longer able to find the grounds for its national development as foreigners are immensely preventing it".<sup>42</sup>

After the two Serbian-Turkish wars (1876–1878), at the Congress of Berlin in 1878, Serbia gained independence and territorial expansion to the south, with around 300,000 hitherto subjects of the Ottoman Empire becoming part of its territory.<sup>43</sup> The

<sup>39</sup> Свечани састанак Српског ученог друштва, 297.

<sup>40</sup> For more information see the collection of papers: *Census and Identity: The Politics of Race, Ethnicity and Language in National Census* and the book by S. Patriarca, *Numbers and Nationhood*.

<sup>41</sup> Попис људства Србије у години 1866, 109. Jakšić gave a similar observation several years before: "Since we have become independent over the past 60 years, our national task has become not to lose from our sight the social development in our neighbouring and akin Bosnia", Попис људства Србије у години 1863, 16–17. Also see: В. Јакшић, *Нестанак српскога народа у Унгарској*, in: Статистична збирка из српских крајева, 57–53; Idem, *Становништво Ђаковачке бискупије у Славонији*, in: ibidem, 154–227; Anonymous, *Статистични подаци о Босни, Херцеговини и једном крају старе Србије. По званичним турским изворима*, Гласник СУД 20 (1866) 221–228.

<sup>42</sup> Somewhat more favourable were the indicators of advancement of the Serbian people in Bosnia, but they were also under the negative influence of unstable political circumstances, Попис људства Србије у години 1863, 16–17.

<sup>43</sup> According to the census carried out in 1879, the number of inhabitants in the new districts was 299,640 and in the old districts 1,402,997, *Кретање људства у Србији од 1874–1879. године*, Државопис Србије XV, Београд 1889, 18.

first comparisons of demographic parameters of the population that had lived for already half a century in the autonomous Serbian state were made with the parameters of the population that had until then lived under Ottoman rule. The rates of natural population growth in the old and new areas of Serbia were identical (18.4%), but the natality and mortality rates were somewhat higher in old areas, which suggested a more unfavourable demographic situation compared to the areas hitherto a part of the Ottoman Empire. At that time, the mortality rates were still under the dominant influence of the ecological factors of particular areas. The policy of state interventionism in the field of improving the health, sanitary and housing conditions of the population was nascent and its first results, reflected in the reduction in mortality rates, became obvious in the 1880s.<sup>44</sup>

The areas under Ottoman rule until 1878 had a higher percentage of the urban population, which suggests a higher degree of development of urban economy, compared to other areas of Serbia.<sup>45</sup> In terms of literacy, as an important aspect of modernity in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the population that from 1834 belonged to the autonomous Principality of Serbia was in a more favourable position than the population that became its part in 1878; the percentage of literate persons in old districts (10.3%) was almost twice higher than in new (5.3%). The comparison of the old and new areas of the Principality of Serbia based on demographic parameters showed that in the 1830–1878 period, the autonomous Serbian state did not manage to improve the majority of characteristics of its population, apart from literacy.

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The mention of lofty national objectives, often seen in the documents of the head of the Statistical Service Vladimir Jakšić, did not stem only from his patriotic feelings. Indicting the link between statistical data and the capacities of the Serbian state for the achievement of national tasks was also the way of pointing out the importance of the service which he headed, and the importance of his own work. The hope in the fast progress of the Serbian state which he cherished at the start of his career, subsided in the early '80s. Statistical indicators that were increasingly less encouraging and the insufficient interest of the state in the service that he headed were continually undermining his faith in "the bright future" of Serbia.

Bogoljub Jovanović succeeded Jakšić at the head of the Statistical Department in 1888. He had even less illusions about the fast progress of the state and the increase

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<sup>44</sup> In the early 1880s, Serbia entered the first phase of demographic transition, featuring a decline in mortality rates. The start of the demographic transition was the result of the gradual improvement of life conditions of the population. See more in: A. Vuletić, *Природно кретање становништва Србије пред почетак демографске транзиције*, Српске студије 7 (2016) 203–221.

<sup>45</sup> It should be borne in mind that the population of Leskovac was not calculated as the urban population. Leskovac had the status of a *varoş*, but with 9,788 inhabitants in 1879, it was the second largest settlement in the new districts.

in the general well-being than his predecessor. Although he did not lag behind him in terms of diligence in collecting and publishing statistical records, Bogoljub Jovanović did not expect that his work would contribute to social progress. In his works there is no mention of the great national objectives and tasks.<sup>46</sup> In the last two decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> and the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, an impressive quantity of statistical records was printed. However, unlike the statistical publications printed in the earlier decades, the publications from this period contain mainly “dry” data, void of political, “patriotic” and other kinds of interpretations.<sup>47</sup>

Although they declaratively emphasised the importance of statistics, politicians admitted they did not use a lot its results in practice. At the official academy marking the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of work of Vladimir Jakšić (1889), his erstwhile student at the Lyceum and later his minister of charge – Čedomilj Mijatović said: “I can say today that I grieve a lot over not acting more often in line with his lessons and over not having justified his expectations in my practical work as the minister, although I was his good student at the Lyceum”. Instead of progress, Mijatović could only state that those who were assuming and leaving ministerial positions “are working in wrong directions, and by no longer being on those positions we are leaving the people increasingly poorer”.<sup>48</sup>

In the last decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, statistics began to be understood primarily as the indicator of the social situation and not as a means leading to social changes and the achievement of national objectives. The changed attitude towards statistics in Serbia was not the result of merely own experiences, but a part of wider ideological currents of the time, among which the most important was the waning influence of positivism, owing to which statistics experienced an upturn in the 1830s and 1840s.

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<sup>46</sup> Jovanović is the author of a large number of analyses and contributions published in official statistical publications in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century. He also published five editions of *Statističke beleške* (*Statistical Notes*), several papers in the *Gazette of the Serbian Learned Society*, *Otađbina*, *Delo* etc. He also dealt with the translation and preparation of foreign statistical literature; see: *Организација званичне статистике (по Scheel-u)*, Београд 1873, and *О статистици људства и морала* (по проф. Г. Шмолеру), Београд 1874.

<sup>47</sup> The trend of mass publication of statistical records was present in all European countries in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century; see more in: Patrick R. Galloway, *The Golden Age of Published Demographic Data in Europe 1850–1915: Sources and Research Possibilities*, Max Planck Institute for Demographic Research, WP (2008), [http://www.demogr.mpg.de/files/research2/1678\\_25\\_en\\_Galloway%20Golden%20age%20of%20statistics.pdf](http://www.demogr.mpg.de/files/research2/1678_25_en_Galloway%20Golden%20age%20of%20statistics.pdf).

<sup>48</sup> *Свечани састанак Српског ученог друштва*, 299, 306.

**Aleksandra Vuletić**

## **LA STATISTICA DEMOGRAFICA COME MEZZO DI RAPPRESENTANZA NAZIONALE IN SERBIA NELLA SECONDA METÀ DEL XIX SECOLO**

### **Riassunto**

L'attività statistica nel moderno Stato serbo iniziò a svilupparsi a metà del XIX secolo. Il presupposto per il suo sviluppo fu l'acquisizione dell'autonomia politica, che segnava la rottura con l'amministrazione ottomana e la svolta verso modelli europei di sviluppo statale. Fu Vladimir Jaksić colui che ebbe il maggior merito per l'introduzione della statistica nell'amministrazione statale, dopo aver acquisito le dovute conoscenze di statistica presso le università di Tubinga e Heidelberg. La statistica all'epoca era considerata uno strumento che poteva contribuire al progresso sociale. Con l'aiuto dei dati forniti dalla statistica, l'amministrazione statale doveva indirizzare e regolare lo sviluppo dell'economia nazionale. Dato il carattere universale dei dati con cui essa operava, si riteneva che la statistica potesse anche contribuire alla maggiore visibilità della Serbia presso l'opinione pubblica internazionale.

L'interesse per la statistica demografica non derivava solo dal desiderio di raggiungere il progresso sociale e il benessere nazionale. L'aumento del numero di abitanti e il miglioramento della struttura demografica avrebbero dovuto contribuire alla prosperità sociale che avrebbe consentito la realizzazione degli obiettivi nazionali: la liberazione e l'unificazione del popolo serbo. Durante gli anni '50, '60 e '70 del XIX secolo, gli indicatori statistici non erano solo dati aridi, ma erano spesso inseriti nel contesto storico e rivestiti di ideologia nazionale. Un confronto delle caratteristiche demografiche della popolazione del vecchio e del nuovo territorio serbo, effettuato dopo l'espansione territoriale del 1878, dimostrò che la popolazione del Principato che viveva da quasi mezzo secolo all'interno dello Stato autonomo serbo, non aveva fatto grandi passi avanti rispetto alla popolazione presente allora sotto la gestione ottomana. Da allora l'atteggiamento nei confronti della statistica comincia a cambiare e inizia a essere inteso principalmente come un indicatore dello stato sociale e non come un mezzo che avrebbe portato al cambiamento sociale e alla realizzazione degli obiettivi nazionali.

**Parole chiave:** statistica, società, Stato, Serbia, XIX secolo

**Александра Вулетић**

**ДЕМОГРАФСКА СТАТИСТИКА КАО СРЕДСТВО НАЦИОНАЛНЕ РЕПРЕЗЕНТАЦИЈЕ  
У СРБИЈИ У ДРУГОЈ ПОЛОВИНИ 19. ВЕКА**

**Резиме**

Статистичка делатност у модерној српској држави почела је да се развија средином 19. века. Предуслов за њен развој било је стицање политичке аутономије које је означило раскид са османском управом и окретање европским моделима државног развоја. За увођење статистике у државну администрацију највећу заслугу имао је Владимир Јакшић, који је знање о статистици стекао на универзитетима у Тибингену и Хајделбергу. Статистика је у то време сматрана средством које може да допринесе друштвеном напретку. Уз помоћ података којима је статистика снабдева, државна управа треба да усмерава и регулише развој народне економије. С обзиром на универзални карактер података којима је оперисала, сматрало се да статистика може да допринесе и повећаној видљивости Србије у међународној јавности.

Интересовање за статистику становништва није проистицало само из жеље за постизањем друштвеног напретка и народног благостања. Пораст броја становника и побољшање демографске структуре требало је да допринесу друштвеном просперитету који би омогућио остварење националних циљева – ослобођење и уједињење српског народа. Током 50-их, 60-их и 70-их година 19. века статистички показатељи нису били само сувопарни подаци, већ су неретко убацивани у историјски контекст и заодевани у националну идеологију. Поређење демографских карактеристика становништва старих и нових области Србије, које је извршено после територијалног проширења 1878. године, показало је да становништво Кнежевине које је готово пола века живело у оквиру аутономне српске државе није много напредовало у односу на становништво које је до тада живело под османском управом. Тада почиње да се мења и однос према статистици –почела је да се поима првенствено као показатељ друштвеног стања, а не као средство које ће довести до друштвених промена и остварења националних циљева.

**Кључне речи:** статистика, друштво, држава, Србија, 19. век

