

UNIVERSITY OF NOVA GORICA  
GRADUATE SCHOOL

**IDENTITY POLITICS AND THE PERFORMANCES OF  
FEMALE SINGERS IN NIŠKO POLJE IN THE LAST  
THIRD OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY**

DISSERTATION

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## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1. Situating the Fieldwork

This dissertation is based on the results of the project “Research and presentation of the traditional music and dance heritage of the Niš surroundings,” carried out in 2004 by the Center for Balkan Music Research from Belgrade. The area of Niško Polje has not been studiously researched by ethnomusicologists. As opposed to Vladimir Đorđević’s and Kosta Manojlović’s editions of folk songs (Đorđević 1931, Manojlović 1953), sporadic fieldwork conducted by Miodrag Vasiljević and Dimitrije Golemović have not resulted in publications.<sup>1</sup> Therefore, the idea of the project was to collect musical and dance heritage and to cover one of the “blank spots” in the map of ethnomusicological research in Serbia. The project was endorsed by the Ministry of Culture and Media of the Republic of Serbia and the City of Niš. Methodology applied during the fieldwork, which was done by a group of ethnomusicologists and students of ethnomusicology, enabled the collection of information on the state of traditional music among members of a previously determined social group (rural inhabitants of nineteen villages in the area of Niško Polje). Collected music related mainly to the “old” songs, neglecting forms of popular music (e.g. newly-composed folk music)<sup>2</sup> and other music forms (e.g. instrumental music).

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<sup>1</sup> Dragoslav Dević’s research in the neighboring area *Svrlijig* or Sanja Radinović’s and Mirjana Zakić’s in *Zaplanje*, as well as numerous students’ works on music in southeastern Serbia defended at the Department of Musicology and Ethnomusicology at the Faculty of Music in Belgrade contributed greatly to the research of musical practices of this area.

<sup>2</sup> Newly-composed folk music – NCFM (*novokomponovana narodna muzika*) emerged in the mid-1960s in the former Yugoslavia. Its emergence is placed within a process of the migration of rural populations to cities, visible in its aesthetic duality which converged in pop culture idealization and peasant ‘roots’ (Vidić Rasmussen 1995:241).



Table 1: A map of Serbia

During the fieldwork, an interesting phenomenon was noticed: women appeared to be the main informants about music practices in the research area (72% of informants were women born between 1914 and 1951). Women belonging to that generation were recognized by their community members as more competent to talk about “old” songs and musical practices in general. Furthermore, we found that women, typically placed in the background of the “traditional” social milieu, could perform only in private settings (in the house, during agricultural work, or as part of customs or informal gatherings), while stage singing was taboo for them.<sup>3</sup> During the 1970s and 1980s, as a result of the new identity politics introduced by socialism, new practices emerged that enabled women to start performing at public gatherings organized by the state. With

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<sup>3</sup> A more detailed study of this phenomenon can be found in Chapter Four.

respect to that, the stories encompassed by the fieldwork revealed that almost all of the female singers started performing on stage at events called *Village Gatherings* (*Susreti sela*).

Aiming to unravel the causes lying behind this phenomenon, I embarked on my personal fieldwork, shifting the focus of the research to the phenomenon of the female singers. In the course of my fieldwork I spoke to 55 persons (mainly women) in 21 villages (see the list in appendix 1). My focus was on women born prior to and during World War II who had participated in custom practices during their childhood and youth, and who are perceived as the main preservers of “traditional music” in both their communities and the Serbian scholarly discourse. Today, they are the oldest villagers of Niško Polje and the first ones to have participated in organized amateur groups. In selecting the performers I followed the community members’ suggestions and the women’s aspiration to be involved in the research.<sup>4</sup> The initial fieldwork, carried out by the research-team of the Center for Balkan Music Research (including my colleagues and myself), lasted for two weeks, from 19 June to 3 July 2004. My individual fieldwork was realized in a more informal way, since my family lives in the city of Niš. It was a long-term type of research, consisting of many short-term trips during a period of one and a half years (from February 2005 through August 2006). Many neighbors and family friends supported me by introducing me to their relatives and friends from the Niško Polje villages. Using a mini disc recorder and digital camera, I accumulated approximately 44 hours of audio and 4.5 hours of video material. Systematized materials were transcribed and resulted in the book *The Vocal Musical Tradition of the Niš Surroundings*, published by the Center for the Balkan Music Research in 2005 (Hofman and Marković 2005). While collecting the data, I consulted resources from the Archive of Yugoslavia, written resources on Village Gatherings and other “javne manifestacije” (lit. *public manifestations* i.e. public stage events of various kinds), organized in this area during socialism, using personal archives of the participants and organizers, local newspapers and magazines. Despite the statements given by the republic, regional and local organizers, the lack of systematized official documentation

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<sup>4</sup> Female singers who were recommended in local stores and taverns.

and video recordings of the Gatherings made work on this subject more difficult.<sup>5</sup> I found just a few recordings of the stage performances made by a local TV station, participants, and their relatives.

Throughout the time that it took to realize this project, the fieldwork was not conceptually separated from the work on systematizing and analyzing the material, as well as the writing of this dissertation. In my case, all of these phases went on simultaneously.

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<sup>5</sup> The state of the acquired materials on the *Village Gatherings* illustrates how these kinds of events were perceived as marginal cultural activities, which will be discussed in chapters to follow.

## 1.2. Experiencing Fieldwork

My position as a young woman entailed specific advantages and disadvantages, which affected the outcome of my fieldwork. To be more precise, the position of a student-researcher proved to be more useful than potential positions of power (e.g. of a professor or a researcher from some institution). People from the field addressed me with words such as “son” (*sine*), “daughter” (*ćerko*) etc., colloquial expressions which they use for their closest and most beloved ones. To them, I was a young person interested “in learning” about the old songs and their life experiences. This established “equality” between my position (the researcher) and the social subjects involved in the research, and transpired to be of the utmost importance in gathering the data on the field. However, as a result of the authorial power of the researcher’s position, some women, influenced by my presence, endeavored to perform in the manner appropriate to a “researcher’s ear.” They were not sure of the “proper” way of their performing and tried to justify it with my expectations:<sup>6</sup>

Do you want me to sing “I” at the end of song?<sup>7</sup>

*A da ciknem? Pa kad ono ono se tag i cikne, vi oćete da se cikne?*  
(Mirka Jovanović, Malča village)

In two villages (Donja Studena and Vukmanovo) I was guided by local cultural workers who, apart from introducing me to women, participated actively in the conversations. Being recognized as persons of high authority in their villages, their presence affected the way of communication and the repertoire of songs, sometimes even the style of performing.<sup>8</sup> Culture workers (leaders of amateur groups and organizers of different

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<sup>6</sup> My presumption is that this could be the result of the fact that they did not get the opportunity to take responsibility for creating their own performances at the Village Gatherings, but performed repertoire chosen by local organizers and the jury (a detailed explanation of this is in Chapter Four).

<sup>7</sup> A specific kind of exclamation at the end of the verse called *cikanje* or *rucanje*.

<sup>8</sup> The same thing happened when younger and elder singers sang together (but the governing rule was not that the elder ones held the position of authority – sometimes it was vice versa).

cultural manifestations in villages) insisted on performances which would be, from their viewpoint, “representative” for my research:

Come on, sing together that song *Cafti drenak u livade*. Slowly.  
You do not have to sing the whole song.

*Aj srećo zapoj, ajde zajedno, Cafti drenak u livade. Polagačko. Ne mora nešto mnogo da bude.* (Dragan Todorović, leader of the amateurs group talks to two female Gordana Zlatković and Mladenka Ristić, Vukmanovo village)

They tried to impose on me their own reception and interpretation of given musical practices; thus, in the later research, I tried to avoid their assistance.

During the fieldwork, I also noticed that narratives on *public manifestations* organized during socialism were shaped by performers’ personal and familial experiences during that period:

She does not want to speak; she is completely different so she did not like that. That is a generational matter, in fact, something that was forbidden. We grew up in that time, and who had enough strength to dissent.

*Ona neće da priča, ona je sasvim drugačija, ona nije volela to. To je generacijski, što bi rekli da nekada je nešto zabranjivano. Mi smo u to vreme rasli, pa sada ko je imao snage da se suprostavi na taj način.* (Velibor Stanković, Prosek village)

The period of transition in Serbia influenced the dynamic of sentiments regarding the past – denial of the past on the one hand, and nostalgia on the other: “The grey phase of transition, as jump between past and future constructed multiple images of the past, positive and negative, difficult and improving” (Creed 1999:224). It affected a greater pluralisation of memorial discourses which was not characteristic for the socialist period, which was marked by hegemonic forms of memory. As research topic (stage performances) was connected with a certain period – socialism its political, economic

## Introduction

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and social impacts on women's personal lives influenced their attitudes to the very subject, which will be discussed in the conclusion.

### 1.3. Main Research Goals and Expected Results

In the previous paragraph, I illuminated my position as an observer during the fieldwork, but in addition to that, I feel an obligation to explain my position as a writer of this dissertation.

Based on the new anthropological approaches of redefining the relation between the scholarly community and the outside world – “the boundary between science and culture maintained by scientists themselves” (Bajuk Senčar 2004:71), I create the present work as a “reconstruction” of the data I obtained in the field – as a “socially produced interpretation” (Stanley 1992:7). From a subjective standpoint I will create my own interpretation of the female singers’ stories and music practices found in the field. Referring to Derrida’s point, the relationship between researchers and the subject of research is inscribed in the exact phenomenon of observation (Derrida 1989:66). Following that principle, a large number of quotations are included in the present work with the intention of giving a voice to the people involved in the research, but also of offering possibilities for further interpretation (or re-interpretation) by potential readers.

Although I am not taking an activist-like position of a feminist scholar, I cannot neglect the impact of ideologies and agendas, both those inherited and those adopted during the work on this dissertation, on my thinking and writing. As a woman and person who, at least subconsciously, empathized with the female singers’ stories, I certainly adopted some attitudes that can be recognized as engaged.

My specific position, as a person who comes from the research area, but is writing in English and, in this way, mainly for a “foreign” audience,<sup>9</sup> put me in quite a challenging situation. The categories of cultural insider and outsider “may not be particularly helpful terms to describe the kind of dialogic relationship in language, music and dance” (Rice 1997:112), especially in my interactive methods of fieldwork.

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<sup>9</sup> By a “foreign audience” I have in mind readers who do not belong to the mainstream Serbian ethnomusicological discourse.

For that reason, I will explain some strains on my position, challenging the very concept of a “native” or “indigenous” researcher. Drawing on the concepts of heterogeneous culture and multiplex subjectivity, the personal background of the researcher cannot be taken as a mark of his/her “nativeness” or “otherness.” The paradigm that an “insider” researcher has to identify with the language, traditions, memories or dominant values of the given society, is actually based on the colonial discourse and inegalitarian relations of power – “civilized” outsider vs. “native” insiders (Narayan 2003:300). Challenging that dichotomy, I support the attitude that the more (or less) objective insider/outsider perspective is not possible since all researcher positions are subjective and created through an interpretative process.

During the fieldwork I reframed many of my previous experiences and concepts about the Serbian rural culture founded in my urban background. In the same way that Bruno Nettl quotes Oskar Elshek in the book *The Study of Ethnomusicology: Thirty-one Issues and Concept* by, that he conducted research in his native Slovakia throughout his life, but had always seen himself as an outsider in relation with villagers and their musics (Nettl 2005:155), I encountered various dilemmas while “reading” and interpreting the material gathered in the field. For example, is it possible to portray many of the implicit attitudes, values, and unconscious desires in a written text? In which way can I explore some latent expressions or untold words that I noticed?

For that reason, further clarification of some of my explanations, presumptions and concepts, which are influenced by my epistemological background, is necessary. Therefore, I would like to explain a few questions that may eventually arise:

1. Why Niško Polje as the research area?
2. Why the methodology of the fieldwork directed mainly at collecting “ritual songs” and “old vocal traditions”?
3. Why the focus on elderly women?

The paradigm of musical folklore, characteristic of Eastern European scholarship in the first half of the twentieth century (Barz and Cooley 1997:9) is still prevalent in mainstream Serbian ethnomusicology, and one of the main goals of scholarly activities is the collection and preservation of the “old traditional musical practices.” As the area of Niško Polje has not been the subject of examination in more than the last fifty years, the initial idea was to collect old genres of music and determine the state of traditional musical practices in the researched area. Taking into account that almost all of the neighboring areas had already been explored, the data from Niško Polje would contribute significantly to the ethnomusicological research of southeastern Serbia. This scholarly approach is exclusively directed on researching the dominant national culture, where the music of various minorities and marginalized groups are not taken into account, but are usually researched as a part of separate projects. For that reason, this project did not include the musics of minorities, such as the Niško Polje Roma community (the importance of rethinking this approach will be discussed in the conclusion).

The focus on the elderly women is a result of the above mentioned methodology of the fieldwork and the search for “old” musical genres. During my personal research, I did not go beyond the set generation of my interlocutors because of my fascination with the drastic changes in the women’s lifestyle in the past sixty years. Indeed, the older generation of women spent most of their lives in a completely different way when compared to their daughters’ lives. As I will show in the Chapter Two, they were part of extended families, without the possibility of schooling and under the strong sway of the norms of a patriarchal society. They represent the last generation of women who participated actively in the customs and who remember the old singing style and repertoire, but they were also the protagonists of important changes in Serbian rural society, its discourses and practices.

*Public manifestations*, widely explored during socialism, have not been the focus of post-socialist Serbian ethnomusicological scholarship. Many scholars (ethnomusicologists, folklorists, ethnologists) who were active in the socialist period

criticized the concept of the *public manifestations*, emphasizing their significant role in the transformation of “traditional music” (Petrović 1981, Zečević 1968, 1981, Fulanović-Šošić 1981). To them, the folklore adapted for the stage was performed beyond the “traditional” context.<sup>10</sup> Therefore, my idea was not to posture myself in favor of or against stage folklore or analyze the way these manifestations changed (“improved” or “spoilt”) the musical practices in Niško Polje, which were characteristics of the dominant discourse in socialist scholarship. My aim is instead to present the Gatherings as a multidimensional phenomenon that influenced both musical and social life in southeastern Serbia at various levels.

The initial fieldwork revealed many interesting phenomena which inspired me to make a shift in the methodology of my fieldwork and challenge existing paradigms. I will hopefully be able to offer some alternatives to them in the following pages. In Chapter One, I present the theoretical framework which was a base for my examination of the female singers in Niško Polje. I will illuminate the way that the concept of gender is constructed within the ethnomusicological discourses, both in “Western” ethnomusicology as well as in the Serbian school. Chapter Two is reserved for a depiction of the performance of gender in the musical practices of Niško Polje. Chapters Three and Four are more analytical and are devoted to the investigation of the *public manifestations* and politics of the repertoire creation (Chapter Three), and the female singers’ performance at the Village Gatherings as a performative act of re-examining their subject position (Chapter Four). It directs attention to the central issue of the present work, where the focus is on the negotiation of gender hierarchies in the rural environment in Niško Polje. In the conclusion, I take into consideration the way that female singers created their memories about the past when they were musically

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<sup>10</sup> It is important to stress that they were positioned between preservistic approaches which demand “purity” of folklore and the imposed socialistic ideology of development (concept which includes changing). The scholars approved of some level of interaction between the neighboring musical traditions, as a result of togetherness (so glorified during socialism as a potential confirmation of the ideology of “brotherhood and unity”), but emphasized the importance of local musical identity and its purity. The critical questions of value and evaluation of the quality of manifestations’ programs were a crucial part of scholarly interests. The concepts of “worthy” and “less worthy” music, and “appropriate” and “inappropriate” stage stylizations, were debatable at that time. Educational influence on national taste was one of the crucial issues.

active, and, particularly, the manner in which current, the post-socialist context has shaped that memory.

### 1.4. Niško Polje – A Historical Overview

Niško Polje is situated in southeastern Serbia and belongs to a wider region called the Valley of the Južna Morava River (*Pomoravlje Južne Morave*) (Vlahović 1999:46).<sup>11</sup> To be more exact, the region is placed between *Svrljig* and *Zaplanje* to the east, *Leskovačka Morava* and *Dobrič* to the south and west, and *Aleksinačko Pomoravlje* to the north.



Table 2: A map of Niško Polje

<sup>11</sup> Milan Đ. Milićević in his book *Kraljevina Srbija* (Kingdom of Serbia) from 1884 defines Niško Polje as an area bordering the Aleksinac and Knjaževac regions to the north, Pirot and Vranje region to the east and south and Toplica to the west.

There are a few terms used for the same region: the Niš Valley (*Niška kotlina*), the Villages of the Upper Ponišavlje (*sela Gornjeg Ponišavlja*), or the administrative term Niš Municipality (*Opština Niš*) which was changed to the city of Niš in 1993. The vast majority of the villages (73%) are positioned in the Niš and Aleksinac valley, while other ones are part of the mountain and sub-mountain area (Simonović 1995:163). Being one of the most important crossroads in the Balkans in geostrategic terms, this area has been open to various influences over the years. From the last centuries B.C.E. through to the Roman conquest, the demographic structure of Niško Polje was quite diverse (influences of the Celts, Thracians and Illyrians as well as mixing of migrants of various indigenous groups, were all present) (Kanic 1985:137). During the Roman period, Naissus (the ancient name of Niš dating from that period) became an extremely important strategic point, and a military and economic regional center. It stood between Europe, Asia and Africa, with six vital roads connecting Europe with the Middle East and the Danube region with the Adriatic, Ionic, Aegean and Black Sea (Dvorniković 1990:315). From the ninth to the fifteenth century, Niš was invaded by different conquerors, the Bulgarians, the Byzantines and the Hungarians. Instigated by the Ottoman rule in 1428, numerous migrations altered the demographic picture of this part of Serbia. The two biggest migrations, in 1690 and 1728 led by the Serbian patriarchs Arsenije II Čarnojević and Arsenije IV Jovanović-Šakabenta, resulted in the displacement of people from the southern (Kosovo and other areas on the south of today's southern Serbia) to the northern regions of *Podunavlje* and *Potisje* (Vlahović 1999:57). The Ottoman rule marked by repression of the part of the Ottoman authorities, hindered any possibility for the development of literacy and education in rural areas.<sup>12</sup> After the liberation from the Ottomans, the Turks who had made up the majority in the urban environments moved away, enabling migrations from the villages to the city. Shedding the Oriental and Byzantine influences, Niš slowly began to change into a Western type of settlement (Vlahović 1999:163). The new government built roads connecting Niš to its neighboring regions and other Serbian cities, which affected

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<sup>12</sup> In the villages, the first schools opened after liberation from Ottoman rule: in the villages Gornji Matejevac and Kamenica in 1878, Malča and Sićevo in 1979, Donji Matejevac and Jelašnica in 1880 and in Donja Studena in 1883 (Milićević 1884:125,126). In 1882/3 only 27 schools were operating, with just three girls schools situated in Niš (Milićević 1884:55).

the development of the economy (Kanic 1985:160). Foreign travelers also described Western influences in the appearance and behavior of women, who adopted new West European clothing fashions and walked freely without male chaperons (ibid. 157).

Between two world wars, Niš became a regional center encompassing eleven districts (*srez*) and two counties (*okrug*) (<http://www.nis.org.yu/index-e.html>). The main occupation in the valley villages of Niško Polje was and still is agriculture, while the population of the mountain area continues to engage in cattle breeding.



Photograph 1: The city of Niš in the early twentieth century

After World War II, rapid urbanization brought about economic changes in this area. During the 1960s, electrification, the building of aqueducts and asphalt roads influenced a transformation in the lifestyle of Niško Polje. In the 1960s and 1970s, the policy of industrialization and the seeking out of employees for the newly established factories triggered mass migrations from the neighboring villages to the city of Niš. That resulted in a sudden decrease in the agricultural population, from 53.7% in 1931 to 7.49% in 1981. An interesting increase of the mixed population, or daily migrants (i.e.

commuters)<sup>13</sup> also occurred (Simonović 1995:83). These people remained active in agriculture and continued to live with their families in the countryside while also working in industry.

The immediate consequence of these migrations was that a number of Niš citizens doubled in the first thirty years after World War II. In the period from 1961 to 1991, a few villages became part of the Niš suburban area while some others were joined to Niš (the villages Donji Komren, Donja Vrežina, Brzi Brod and Novo Selo became part of the city). Hence, migrants from the poor and distant villages came to the villages closer to Niš. These migrations were visible in the change in the population of villages in Niško Polje (ibid. 163):

<b>Village</b>	<b>1948</b>	<b>1981</b>	<b>1991</b>
Brenica	767	596	600
Brzi Brod	568	2939	3665
Čukljenik	562	357	318
Donja Vrežina	552	2262	2696
Donja Studena	730	464	384
Donji Komren	589	4204	4919
Gornja Studena	523	443	433
Gornja Vrežina	1531	1301	1290
Gornji Komren	606	840	722
Gornji Matejevac	4058	3086	2924
Hum	1270	1435	1497
Jelašnica	1817	1778	1724
Kamenica	2044	1017	900
Leskovik	485	415	347
Malča	1692	1344	1249
Novo Selo	607	2973	3689
Prosek	287	438	470
Rujnik	723	642	585
Trupale	1667	2128	2223
Vukmanovo	633	469	406

Table 3: Population statistics in the Niško Polje villages

<sup>13</sup> Donna Buchanan uses the term “urban villagers” for the same phenomenon in Bulgaria (Buchanan 2006:39).

Today, according to the last census from 1991, this area has 248 086 citizens, 91.43% of that number being urban and 8.57% of it rural (Simonović 1995:158). The ethnic composition included Serbs (88%), Yugoslavs (5.2%), Roma (2.3%), Montenegrins (1.1%), and a very small number of Macedonians and Bulgarians (the 1981 census, *ibid.* 140).

## CHAPTER ONE: METHODOLOGY, THEORY, AND GENDER

### 2.1. Methodology of the Fieldwork

The existing methods of conducting ethnomusicological fieldwork in Serbia contain an artificial gap between a researcher and an informant, often involving the premise of appraisal. The mainstream scholarly discourse is based on a positivistic attitude about an objective researcher who explores music phenomena and reveals objective facts, claiming that “neither music-folklore material nor peoples’ stories, most commonly can provide enough arguments which can be more than presentiment and supposition, and enable credible scientific conclusion” (Radinović 1997:445). The researcher assesses the quality of a performance and selects “authentic” or “first-rate” material from fieldwork. This methodology implies a depersonalized approach when the researcher has no interest in the lives of their informants and has not explored performance in connection with performers’ personal discourses, their attitudes or backgrounds.<sup>14</sup> The present work’s aim is to rethink that researcher’s position in view of the concepts of the qualitative research and the oral history method, shifting the focus from *the performer* to *the person performing* (of a certain age, gender, and having political attitude).

During the fieldwork, I availed myself of two different sources for data collecting:

- Talking about music and music activities – narrative construction (discourse)
  
- Music itself

My approach has its foundation in the qualitative methodology, which considers the researched reality in a subjective and multidimensional way, created by personal

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<sup>14</sup> In the articles of Dimitrije Golemović (Golemović 1978, 1984, 1985, 1992) and Selena Rakočević (Rakočević 1997), performers are presented as individuals, but without intention of introduction of the biographical method.

interpretations.<sup>15</sup> This method provides an intensive connection with social environment and represents “first-hand involvement with the social world” (Adam 1982:166) which proved to be an effective tool in social science research. The researcher does not assume an objective position, but constructs reality together with the social subjects involved in the research who participated actively in the research process, at times even becoming the coauthors of the project.

I also opted for the oral history method (also called the biographic method), which proved to be very appropriate in researching women of that generation who had been socially marginalized. Considering my interest in illuminating the voices of women and their personal stories, confidentiality was of the utmost importance; this method, being “the method of the highest interaction and social relation between a researcher and an informant” (Thompson 1978:117), enabled me to access their personal attitudes towards music and performing. Autobiographical testimony made it possible to keep a record of personal histories of the female singers, their points of view, and their interpretations of the past. Authors such as Paul Thompson, Donald A. Ritchie and Liz Stanley<sup>16</sup> argue that the main purpose of this method is not to get information of value itself, “but to make a ‘subjective’ record of how one man or woman looks back on his or her life as a whole, or part of it” (Thompson 1978:199). Mojca Ramšak, a Slovenian ethnologist who uses the biographic method in her research, asserts that personal memories and life stories are crucial for understanding the way people connect personal experience and an interpretation of the past with their social environment (Ramšak 2000:30). Since my idea was to illuminate women’s personal discourses through emphasizing their standpoint – the way they speak about their activities, what they highlight or what they miss out – I did not have any questionnaires prepared in

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<sup>15</sup> The emergence of critical, participatory anthropology in the 1960s and 1970s introduced the qualitative research approaches as the “participation in”- style fieldwork (the terms used for this method were also participant observation or the Chicago School of sociology). According to Clifford Geertz, what is necessary on the fieldwork is a thick description of the network, its dynamic and the interplay of relations between people, things, activities and meanings (Geertz 1973:5). During the 1970s and 1980s, qualitative research became a dominant methodology among the feminist researchers, even though the relevance of this paradigm produced many debates among theorists. This approach was consistent with feminist values with regards to critics of the essentialist view associated with the quantitative method (Jayaratne and Stewart 1991:85).

<sup>16</sup> Thompson 1978, Ritchie 1995, Stanley 1992.

advance. Conversation was never particularly directed towards gender issues, but gave possibility to the female singers an opportunity to speak freely about their experiences during stage performances.

Although the narrative method has been, to a certain extent, used in ethnomusicological research, this method together with the life writing or biography method is rather new to the discipline of ethnomusicology. Mantle Hood in *The Ethnomusicologist* (1971) and Bruno Nettl in *The Study of Ethnomusicology* (1983) used the narrative approach, but the emphasis was more on the events in lives of their informants, and not on the very “telling” (Titon 1997:96). In recent years, several scholars have focused on the musical experiences of individuals including Veit Erlmann (1991), Timothy Rice (1994), Virginia Danielson (1997) and Jonathan Stock (1996b, 2001). I followed an ethnomusicological epistemology in which fieldwork is defined as “knowing people making music” (ibid. 91) and an interactive and dialogic way of researching music. My intention was to examine female singers as individuals who have different life-stories and personal attitudes, not as a separate and consistent category or as the representatives of Niško Polje rural women. This approach disputes the holistic view, supporting reflexive accounts and “polyvocality,” where every representation of the “other” (the observed) is also the construction of the “self” (the observer) (Clifford 1986:14, 15).

Although the emphasis was on them as individuals, the fieldwork revealed that the female singers shared common experiences as members of villages’ amateur groups, which shaped their discourses in a similar way. The women I conversed with were all very good singers, well-known in their villages. As community members emphasized, they had many public performances, mostly at manifestations organized by various local cultural organizations (Cultural Centers – *Kulturni centri*, Cultural-Artistic Societies – *Kulturno umetniška društva, KUDs*). Some of them took an active part in local cultural activities, not only as singers, but also as members of amateur theatres. That kind of “discourse of competency” enabled them to be recognized within the community as first-rate informants. On the other hand, they often did not perceive

themselves as appropriate informants and usually suggested their husbands or local “experts” as a better choice. In the opinion of the Mirjam Milharčič-Hladnik, this modest and humble self-perception is the key element in the understanding how pressing is the issue of representation and interpretation of the women’s experiences, which requires a specific methodological consideration (Milharčič-Hladnik 2003:51). The cooperative nature of the oral history method created an opportunity for them to supply their personal interpretation, as Paul Thompson states in his book *The Voice of the Past – Oral History*, ”to help give ordinary people confidence in their own speech.”

With respect to that, the female singers’ narratives about performing showed an implicit dichotomy in their attitudes. Although they participated actively in conversation, even concerning the more delicate details, they were not always willing to talk about their public performances at the Village Gatherings. In the beginning, they were ashamed to talk about singing, but as the conversation became livelier, they gradually abandoned the position of being on the margin and became the main subjects of the narrative:

That was when we won in Laćerak and they showed us on TV. In Bačka Topola, too. Yes, I was young and we were ashamed to go. Four out of five of the officials from local authorities were coming to ask my husband to allow me to sing. I wanted to participate, but the household was big and it was different from now. But ok, go when they are asking you so nicely and every year. Well, it was ok for me, too, I had good time. Traveling and having fun, we went to Đerdap, I was there for three days.

*Tag smo isto pobedili u Laćerak, smo bili tamo na televizor. U Bačku Topolu, kako se kaže Vojvodina, pa posle u ono drugo ido još jedan put. Još jedan put u Vojvodinu, dva put sam išla. Dobro, mlada sam bila. Pa toj tako. Mlada sam bila, pa napred ali smo se sramovali nismo išli. Pa sve dođu pa me mole opštinari, pa dođu četiri, pet muža da li oću. Ali kuća golema, ono neje tako ko sad. I ajde, dobro, idi kad znaš da te već tako mole. I dok se uvučeš tam, jedna godina i druga i treća, ali svaku godinu te gotovo mole. Ja iskam toj da se manem, ali oni uporni za toj, treba im toj i toj sam išla. Pa dobro i za mene lepo, isprovodila sam se. I putujemo i provedeš i ono kako se kaže, na eskurziju na Đerdap smo bili, tri dana sam tam bila. (Mirka Jovanović, Malča village)*

That kind of “double-voiced” talk indicates that their understanding of performing was imposed from outside, in accordance with social expectations and norms. The implicit propriety or righteousness in the female singers’ statements was obviously the discourse of the majority (or the “authority discourse”), represented by their spouses and the organizers of the Village Gatherings: “Behind community discourses about music, which can be highly formalized, lay all sorts of multiple discourse and practices” (Sugarman 1997:26). They adopted a picture of themselves from another, more “competent” group; in this case the picture is taken from the dominant “male” patriarchal discourse: “the voices of authentic female experiences could be heard only after having been modeled by the male communicative model” (Škokić 2001:6). On the other hand, the female singers’ narratives had a specific subversive nature (the above-mentioned double voice talk), seen by the mainstream patriarchal social narrative as inappropriate and dangerous (Slapšak 2002:153).

In this regard, women’s double-voiced narrative is an imposed discourse of gender hierarchy, operating through a perpetual repetition of cultural practices, while its discourses enable the preservation of existing power relations. The domination of these and their essentially contribution to inegalitarian discourses will be particularly discussed in the final chapter.

## **2.2. Relevant Theories**

The second feminist wave<sup>17</sup> aroused interest in gender topics in all of the social sciences. Feminist approaches based on the criticism of dominant theories on the part of marginalized groups (such as women, racial, ethnic or sexual minorities) developed into a deconstructive power of the very disciplines, directed toward their own concepts and dominant canons (Škokić 2001:5). The feminist theories influenced the rethinking of the existent paradigms, especially the concept of a neutral researcher. These approaches defined the researcher as a “socially located person, one who is sexed, raced, classed, aged” (Stanley 1992:7), which became the fundamental point in the criticism of mainstream scholarship by feminist epistemology. The main issues raised by the theorists were: “From whose viewpoint?” “Why this viewpoint and no other?”, “What would be the effect of working from a contrary viewpoint?” (ibid. 7). In her book *Whose Science? Whose Knowledge?: Thinking from Women's Lives*, feminist philosopher Sandra Harding raised questions about patriarchal hegemony perpetuated through scholarly practices (Harding 1991). She claimed that women are invisible subjects in the sciences. In terms of these approaches, feminist theorists focused on writing a “history of difference,” attempting to illuminate some other (female) view.

In her article *Feminist Standpoint: Developing the Ground for a Specifically Feminist Historical Materialism* (1987), Nancy Hartsock argued that women, being the subordinate group, could understand the world in a different way and challenge the knowledge produced by men. She was one of the co-founders of the “Standpoint theory,” which is based on the category of experience. The Standpoint theorists (such as Dorothy Smith, Sandra Harding, Carol Gillegan and Patricia Hil Collins) claimed that because of their common subordinate position, women have universal experience. They asserted that “women’s experience” can be used as research material for writing the history of repressed identities. That approach was founded in Marxist epistemology as well as the concept of the proletarian standpoint – the experience of the dominated rather than the dominators (Ticineto Clough 1994:67). The Standpoint theory has its

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<sup>17</sup> The period of feminist activities from the early 1960s to the late 1980s.

bases in the concepts of separate female and male spheres, and it seeks to show that women possess different type of knowledge. That was characteristic of the so-called “Difference” feminism which holds that sex differences do have political and social importance.

The idea of common female experience, which unifies women regardless of ethnic group, class or generation, was highly criticized by numerous poststructuralist theorists (such as Judith Butler and Diane Elam). Standpoint’s white, middle-class feminist position was criticized also by African-American feminists, Third World feminists, and Queer theorists. They emphasized that identification with the dominant authorial masculinity is possible for both men and women, so how can women’s experience be simply the inversion of the men’s? In her text *Experience* (Scott 1992), Joan Scott argues that histories of difference provided alternative values and opposition to the hegemonic construction of the social world as evidence of otherness. On the other hand, she held an opinion that, although the main quality of this theory is that it challenged the idea of an “essential truth” and one-sided perception of the world, its main insufficiency is the premise of essentialism (the concept of the unified female subject). Scott problematizes the “objective evidence of experience” and argues that the subject is constructed through discourse and only from that position is he/she able to produce his/her experience: “There is not individual experience, but subjects who are constituted through experience” (Scott 1992:26). She emphasized the discursive character of experience, identifying it as a linguistic event that does not go beyond established meanings.

In ethnomusicological research, methodology based on the concept of experience and, as Jeff Todd Titon defines it, which is narrative musical ethnography (Titon 1997:96) is quite new. Jane Sugarman employs the term “lived experience,” in her opinion, the crucial one for underlying the importance of individual agency in the process of formulating musical practices: “Only through a detailed appraisal of the lived experience of gender we can understand the power of musical performance to shape that experience” (Sugarman 1997:33). She expounds on the significance of examination

of the individual performers and their subjective positions (ibid. 24). Titon's concept of *the study of people experiencing music* rises from the philosophical tradition of phenomenology and hermeneutics, which attempt to confine knowledge within the limits of the world of lived experience (Titon 1997:90).

The above approaches largely influenced my methodology of research and opened possibilities for the further naturalization of this concept in ethnomusicological research. In this study, I will focus on experiences not only as accounts of the female singers' personal discourses, but also as a narrative process through which very discourses and women subjectivities are constructed.

### 2.3. Gender in the Discourse of “Western” Ethnomusicology

Within the domain of critical and cultural theory and particularly in the field of social science, the notion of the subject as the site of discursive constructions and deconstructions of gendered identity has often been central. (Easthope, MGowan 1992:135)

What follows is a short overview of ethnomusicological studies on music and gender, with an example of how certain concepts of gender are produced in ethnomusicological scholarships. In the foreword to the book *Music and Gender*, edited by Pirkko Moisala and Beverley Diamond (Moisala and Diamond 2000), Ellen Koskoff detects three waves (or overlapping historical periods) in scholarship positioned between feminist and music studies. Koskoff formulates the first wave as women-oriented, dedicated to describing female musical activities, as represented in the works of Farrer (1975), Cormier (1978), Bowers and Tick (1985), Briscoe (1986), Pendle (1991), Marchall (1993), and Neuls-Bates (1996). The second wave examines women’s position within social relations in the light of the broader context of gender relations as seen in Koskoff (1987), Keeling (1989), Herndon and Zieler (1990), Cook and Tsou (1994). In the second group of authors, one must certainly include Tullia Magrini and her work on gender representations in Mediterranean musical cultures (Magrini 1995, 1998, 2000, 2003). These two phases in the study of music and gender are generally based on the concept of two separated spheres (that of women and that of men) characteristic of Difference feminism. They procured their approach in the paradigm of music as gendered activity, with its roots stemming from the essentialist view of the category of gender, and authors such as Yvonne Vera, Anne McClintock, Sara Suleri, Dorothea Drummond, Sara Mills (Bressler 2003:208). Their work springs from binaries such as male/female, public/private, inner world/outer world, urban/rural, and variety/homogeneity. The difference between biological sex and the cultural category of gender (Magrini 2003:1) is particularly emphasized. Ellen Koskoff presents four categories of musical performances in relation to gender relations: performances that confirm and maintain the established social arrangement; performances that maintain norms in order to protect other, more relevant values; performances that protest; and

performances that challenge the established order (Koskoff 1987:10). They attempt to explore the representation of gender through musical activities, neglecting the very role of representation in a process of the construction of gender roles. Drawing on the concept of separate spheres, some of the authors believe that female researchers are more apt to study the women musical activities.<sup>18</sup> In her text about the role of female ethnomusicologist on the field, Jones Brandes writes:

It would appear that there are greater possibilities for a female than a male researcher to switch between the several roles described above. One explanation may lie in the possible rivalry or competition which tends to exist between the male researcher and the men of a foreign culture. Furthermore, a man will always be the sexual opposite of a woman and will not be able to slip as easily into role of a woman or neuter because of his lack of female or neutral attributes. (Brandes 1991:47)

Influenced by postmodern thought in feminist theory, gay and lesbian studies, cultural and performance studies and semiotics, the third wave include authors such as Solie (1993), McClary (1991), Citron (1993), Brett, Wood and Thomas (1994).<sup>19</sup> Among the greatest contributions to new approaches in the studies of gender and music is the above-mentioned *Music and Gender*. The articles in this edition are founded on new feminist theories which claim that gender differences are just only one line more of social differentiation (along with nation, race, generation, and class), negating the existence of one essential, universal subject. In their view, gender identity is only one of many of identity positions which make up one individual subject. Approaches to sex and gender as socially constructed categories and their dynamic nature is presented in the term *engendered*, which emphasizes the continuity and constant re-definition of the cultural construction of gender (Ivanović 2003:432). They criticize approaches based on the essentialist attitude toward identity, which views gender identity as being homogenized and one dimensional. Their theoretical base is influenced by James

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<sup>18</sup> It is an equivalent concept to the approach which maintains that ethnic communities can be truly examined only by the members of the very groups.

<sup>19</sup> I would also add Jane Sugarman, Beverly Diamond, Pirrko Moisala, and Jeff Todd Titon to this group. Although Titon does not work in this field, he makes a great contribution to the methodology of the research applicable to the examination of gender issues.

Clifford's paradigm of partial truths constructed from different individual positions (Clifford 1986):

The essentialist lens finds gendered patterns and structures in the interview accounts by either implicitly or explicitly relating them to other sources. There is no denying that such patterns are partial truths – sometimes strong truths. (Diamond 2000:118, 119)

Having a quite different standpoint but within the same epistemological framework, I have based my study on the work of the so-called third wave feminist scholars and their approaches and concepts, while at the same time attempting to re-think them and re-sign them over and again in accordance with the poststructuralist concepts of fluid categories open to continuous re-examination and re-signification. For my theoretical base, I have used the work of Judith Butler and other poststructuralist and queer theorists, who brought into question the canon of traditional definitions of sexuality and gender. They destabilized the binary relation between the “natural” category of sex and socially constructed category of gender, showing that both of these categories are discursive and culturally produced (Butler 1999:11). They also challenged the dichotomy framework of thinking about the gender and binary relations between female and male categories. Luce Irigaray sees “woman” not as a subject, but as a group of linguistic conventions employed to establish gender difference. In her opinion, women represent the differentiating factor in the construction of the category of men, fabricated by hegemonic male discourse (Irigaray 1993:71). Poststructuralist theorists subvert the Self/Other binary opposition and the epistemological heritage of contemporary political discourses concerning identity. According to Foucault, the binary organization of power, based on strict gender polarities, is effected through a multiplication of productive and strategic forms of power (Foucault 1990:94). Butler also sees woman not as a “natural” or “essential” category, but as cultural performance. To her, “right on subject” or “stable subject” is a fake concept, as every position of the subject is produced by politics itself (Butler 1999:182). She is not against the concept of subject as such, yet she argues against a fixed ontology of subject, which is, then, positioned within the frame of a cultural context. From her stance, cultural context is already a part of the process of subject production, since politics and power pre-exist at the level on

which the subject and its activities are constructed (Butler 2003:41). Identity is confirmed through the never-ending process of re-signification, and even though it has already been assigned, it still continues to circle within the scope of the various interconnected discourses. Since the practices which constitute the subject operate through a process of repetition (Butler 1995:134), she suggests subject not as a base or a product but as a category constantly opened to being challenged and rethought, a place of continuous political impeachment.

My intention is to explore how that concept of fluid and porous identity can be employed in ethnomusicological research. I will broadly use the concept of performativity in examining the construction of the female singers' subjectivities and representation of their "personalities." According to *Performance Studies Reader* (Bial 2004), the notion of the term *performative* was primarily related to theatrical performance. John L. Austin conceptualized this term quite differently and defined it as the nature and potential of a language, where "to *say* something is to *do* something" (ibid. 145). Judith Butler combined these two meanings and established the theory of performativity, by which gender is not a condition which one *has*, but is in a social role which one *performs*. According to her claims, the gender categories are constituted through their performance. Following that, I argue that the female singers' stage performances represent a performative act of negotiating the existent gender hierarchies in Niško Polje, and I investigate the ways in which stage performances during socialism influenced changes in the construction of women's subjectivities and self-representations. I focus not only on the phenomenon itself, but also on the very process of its emergence, at the same time attempting to understand the complex process of subjectivity construction through stage performance.

## 2.4. Gender in the Mainstream Ethnomusicological Discourse in Serbia

### A Neglected Topic

Gender issues have not been in the focus of mainstream ethnomusicological scholarship in Serbia. Except for a few texts dealing with the role of women in the field of traditional music in Serbia,<sup>20</sup> gender has generally been a neglected topic within the field of music research.<sup>21</sup> Scholars have not paid enough attention to this topic; yet, many of them have noticed certain phenomena related to gender. Vuk Karadžić first introduced the terms *male* and *female songs* which were used to signify two categories – the male, epic and heroic, and the female, lyric and love songs:

All our folksongs are divided on heroic songs on the one hand, which men sing to the *gusle*, and women's songs on the other, sung not only by women and girls, but also by men, especially young men, mostly two singing in unison. (Karadžić 1964:xvi)

Although today this categorization can be criticized as essentialistic and based exclusively on literary criteria, Karadžić evidently detected some aspects of musical practices connected to gender.

The socialist politics of gender equality affected an increase in the amount of research committed to studying women within ethnology and ethnomusicology. Scholarly attention during socialism was directed mainly to the examination of gender topics in

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<sup>20</sup> Dragutin Đorđević – “The role of women in the some spring customs in Lekovačka Morava” – *Uloga žene u nekim prolećnim običajima u Lekovačkoj Moravi*, 1963; Dimitrije Golemović – “Woman as an founder of the Serbian vocal tradition” – *Žena kao stožer srpske vokalne tradicije*, 1998; and Olivera Vasić – “The role of sexes in the ritual practice of our people” – *Uloga polova u obrednoj praksi našeg naroda*, 1998

<sup>21</sup> In contrast with ethnomusicologists, anthropologists in Serbia have been more interested in researching gender issues. Žarana Papić in her book *Polnost i kultura* explored the way feminist theory influences anthropological thought and challenged the “patriarchal paradigm.” She based her work on the critiques of Lévi-Strauss's nature/culture binary opposition and its connection with the male/female dichotomy. Her idea was to deconstruct that oppositional dichotomy and knowledge based on this relation in mainstream anthropology (Papić 1987).

relation to “the Revolution and the building of the socialist society.” The dominant discourse of a woman-warrior and her active participation in World War II focused on the study of women’s contribution to the “socialist revolution,” emphasizing her pronounced morality. Articles such as Leposava Žunić’s “The Development of the Image of the New Woman in Songs of the National Revolution” – *Razvitak lika nove žene u pesmi narodne revolucije* (1960); Radmila Opačić’s “The Image of Woman in the Folk Heritage of Rebellion and Revolution” – *Lik žene u narodnom stvaralaštvu ustanaka i revolucije* (1981); Aiša Aličić’s “The Shaping of the Image of Woman and its Specificity in Muslim Epics” – *Oblikovanje lika žene i njegove specifičnosti u muslimanskoj epici* (1980) illustrate that approach. On the basis of the grand socialist narrative about unity and collectivism, Dragoslav Antonijević, in his article “Forms of Epic Singing and Story-telling in *Aleksinačko Pomoravlje*” – *Oblici epskog pevanja i kazivanja u Aleksinačkom Pomoravlju* (1971b), shows the importance of the female contribution to the building of the new society. He employed a narrative about “old archaic times” to highlight the power of women as a crucial factor of the community’s endurance and the “main source for the collective spirit” (Antonijević 1971b:155). In general, women were represented as an important social subject in the establishing of socialism, with a crucial role in the “modernization” of the society.

On the other hand, an emerging antifeminist feeling marked the period after the fall of socialism. The break-up of Yugoslavia, war and the founding of new states in the Balkans influenced the growing domination of nationalistic discourses. As Stef Jansen claims (Jansen 2005), these discourses were masculine or male oriented, representing women solely as mothers, sisters or soldiers’ wives. The patriarchal nature of the nationalism propagated through public discourses returned to the traditional gender roles where the “national” was presented as a defining feature of someone’s identity:

In the post-Yugoslav discourses nationality is understood in that ethnical sense, namely, as the ultimate basis of identification, more important than all other criteria (e.g. those of gender, class, age, place of citizenship etc). (Jansen 2005:46)

The female image was created by the dominant politics through its paradigmatic connection with family and nation, placing women as passive actors at the background of social happenings. Related to this, the dominant scholarly discourses in Serbia in the 1990s disregarded gender as a relevant issue, maintaining the dominant paradigms of researching the national culture. To summarize, the discourses on gender were shaped by governing ideologies and official politics – in socialism, by the ideology of progress and emphasized collectivism, and in post-Yugoslav scholarship by nationalistic tendencies, but generally neglected in the ethnomusicological research.

However, regardless of the presented ideological agendas in the scholarly works, the common paradigms that ethnomusicological research in Serbia operates in are authenticity and preservation. The fieldwork methodology is based on the concept of “traditional” music, where tradition is considered as “the older and regionally distinctive part of a peasant repertoire” (Pettan 2001:119). As a result of such an approach, some aspects of musical life have completely been neglected, whereas the other ones have been seen as permanent and transcendent. Therefore, Serbian ethnomusicology was and still is a discipline with a folk music research orientation and, consequently, has mainly focused on internal musical practices.<sup>22</sup> This kind of approach left no space for the examination of alternative discourses (the discourses of “Other”):

The firm emphasis on “Us” did not leave much space for the study of “Others,” i.e., “inside” (e.g. musics of minorities) or “outside” (e.g. musics of the world).<sup>23</sup> (Pettan 2001:121)

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<sup>22</sup> The methodology of the fieldwork that dealt with the collecting of the “old music tradition” is associated with nineteenth century national-romantic discourse of searching for “pure” musical forms, characteristic of East European scholarship (Cooley 1997:9). On the other hand, it is important to bear in mind that this paradigm is not exclusively part of East European ethnomusicological thought, and that Western ethnomusicology also contains theories and methods which can prevent of musical practices from disappearing (Rice 1997:102).

<sup>23</sup> Svanibor Pettan also lists four characteristic sentences which represent this paradigm (Pettan 2001:121,122):

1. The question of our folk music is the question of our national roots.
2. Who will do the research in our country if not ourselves.
3. A researcher is always greater authority for our ‘own’ than for ‘foreign’ music.
4. Folk music is dying out.

With respect to this, the musics of different kinds of marginalized groups (subculture groups or minorities) stay on the margins of ethnomusicological research. For that reason, gender issues are neither considered to be a legitimate topic of ethnomusicological research, nor an important aspect in the analysis of musical practices.

### **Women as Preserves of Traditional Music: Challenging Dominant Canons**

In analyzing how gender is represented in the dominant discourses, I consulted the published works of mainstream scholars in Serbian ethnomusicology. The potential reflexivity of their published material offered a possibility of examining the dominant narrative about music and gender. Although a large number of studies and a collection of transcriptions contained statements about female performers and particularly their role in the preservation of traditional music, all examinations remained on the level of short description:

Woman has the main role in the harvest custom. That important role is especially emphasized in the various Serbian harvest songs. (Antonijević 1978:152)

The general claim of scholars is that gender segregation in traditional musical practices in Serbia has existed for many generations. They assert that old practices in music performing required that women and men always sang separately (Vlahović 1980:16; Dević 1990:70; Golemović 1997:117), except in rare, specific cases, when close relatives could perform together because of a harmony of voices<sup>24</sup> (Golemović 1997:117). Radmila Petrović, exploring folk music in central Serbia (*Šumadija*) writes:

Social norms of musical behavior divide songs on boys and girls, or men and women, which prove that joint singing did not exist in

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<sup>24</sup> Ankica Petrović also mentions the same practice of joint singing of close family members in the cases when that mixture produces good vocal harmony (Petrović A. 1990:73).

the past. Depending on the type (men or women) the song is performed in a particular way. (Petrović R. 1990:164)

She also presumes that mixed-gender performing is a new phenomenon (ibid. 1990:164). Dimitrije Golemović introduces the terms the *women's tune* and the *men's tune* (*ženska i muška arija*), based on his research in *Valjevska Kolubara* (an area in western Serbia). As he describes, the interviewed women refused to sing the so-called men's tune (*mušku ariju*), but after a long hesitation, they finally consented to perform (Golemović 1997:125). He asserts that, in this part of Serbia, certain refrains are gendered – the refrain *I* is considered to be female while *koje* is seen as male (ibid. 127). Furthermore, he argues that the women's tunes belong to the old vocal tradition, whereas the new singing style (“on bass” singing – *pevanje na bas*) is more typical for the men's songs. Sanja Radinović, in her masters thesis “The Old Two-part Singing of Zaplanje” (*Staro dvoglasno pevanje Zaplanja*, 1992) also employs the terms *women's songs* and *men's songs* used by the singers in the field in southeastern Serbia. She associates the women's songs with the old vocal tradition and the men's songs with the new one (in *Zaplanje* the women's songs are monophonic or in the old two-part style and exclusively connected with ritual practices; the men's songs are new in the “on bass” singing style, brought in by male migrants who came back from working abroad). She adds that it was not possible for men to sing the women's songs, while women sang the men's songs without any restriction (Radinović 1992:2). Generally, men are seen as associated with modern, developed genres and women with old and “authentic” styles. Ankica Petrović, examining the female musical tradition of the Serbian, Croatian, Muslim, Montenegrin and Albanian population in the rural area of the Dinaric region (which encompasses Bosnia, parts of Croatia, Serbia and Montenegro), classifies two separate genres of “male” and “female” folk music (Petrović A. 1990:71). She also claims that certain features of musical performance, such as a specific pattern of melodic movement, particularly melismatic tones, stylistic sighs and exhalations, existed only in female interpretations (ibid. 72).

In the above mentioned articles by Golemović and Vasić: “Woman as a Founder of the Serbian Vocal Tradition” and “The Role of the Sexes in the Ritual Practice of our People,” the authors argue that women are most important for passing on vocal musical practices (Golemović 1998) and annual-circle customs (Vasić 1998:42). In their opinion, women are the victims of patriarchal social norms, but also the silent keepers of the most authentic musical heritage. Even though Golemović’s text *Pjevala bi’ al ne um’jem-tabu u narodnom pevanju* (1997), does not precisely deal with gender issues, it illuminates the influence that patriarchal relations exerted on certain taboos in vocal practices. Golemović based his approach on the concept of the different social position of women and men: “Gender segregation in singing is just one in a row of similar particularities in the relationship between men and women, which they (themselves) have been creating through their common history and should be viewed in that context” (Golemović 1997:117). All of these works are based on the paradigm of female dominance in the field of ritual music because of their stronger connection with the ritual sphere.<sup>25</sup> In her masters thesis, Sanja Radinović analyzes the old two-part signing style called drone signing (*bordunsko pevanje*), emphasizing that this part of music tradition, associated with ritual-magical syncretism, had its basis exclusively in the female population. To her mind, women were the main protagonists in the calendar and family custom practices in the Balkans:

*Zaplanje* women rarely went beyond the borders of the village area during their lives. They were the real preservers of the regulations of traditional life. (Radinović 1997:443)

In general, women were considered less mobile social subjects (active only in the household and agrarian work), not susceptible to foreign influences, and more able to preserve old and authentic cultural patterns:

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<sup>25</sup> More on women as the main keepers of traditional heritage is presented in the greater part of studies dealing with vocal music tradition (Vasiljević 1960; Đorđević 1963; Petrović 1963; Radinović 1992; Golemović 1997; Golemović 1998; Vasić 1998).

The ritual music of Leskovačko Pomoravlje, as well as that of other parts of Serbia, relies on women. *Lazarica* songs on children and all the remaining ritual songs on girls and young women. They are the preservers as well as interpreters and creators of ritual lyrics. They are the founders of this kind of music from old times through to the period of patriarchal culture when this music was their only amusement. (Miodrag Vasiljević, Foreword to the song collection *Folk Music of the Leskovac county*, 1960)

There are few customs in which the woman is not the main protagonist, to be more exact, we can count on our fingers the customs and activities in which men are the main protagonists. (Đorđević 1963:293)

These claims accentuate further one particular role of women: women as preservers and transmitters of traditional culture (and music as well), especially in the field of ritual practice. In that sense, women are marked as bearers of a more “authentic culture” and the most representative informants (the old illiterate rural women are considered to be the best informants).

Generally, a stress on biological differences is noticeable. Scholars treat woman as a biological being, more connected with the life cycle, with the expressively biological functions: fertility, maternity, sex or menstruation. Womanhood is presented as status, woman situated within nature and positioned in a lower, mystical sphere, while men are shown within culture, as representative of the society. These naturalistic approaches in the researching of gender draw on the paradigm of the sex opposition connection with a culture/nature dichotomy. According to these approaches, all universal and spontaneous activities that do not depend on cultural norms are considered natural; on the other hand, culture is seen as a regulatory system. Men are considered as connected to culture since they made music using instruments as products of culture, while women, using just their voices, were considered more “natural.”

However, not only do the “domestic” scholars base their approach on that paradigm. Many foreign researchers’ works on the Balkans encompass the same presumption.

Marry P. Coote, studying the women's songs in Serbo-Croatian, based her research on the culture/nature dichotomy:

In the field of music, men are the ones who use the instruments of culture to produce art, while women produce it naturally, as it were with the unaided voice. (Coote 1977:334)

In his study on the phenomenon of village celebrations – *Sobors* in Macedonia, Timothy Rice claims that it is normal for women to be the main bearers of the song tradition in Macedonia (Rice 1980:120). Patricia K. Shehan, writing about the folk song tradition of the Balkans, emphasizes women's crucial role in preserving cultural values:

Throughout the Balkans, women are the principal transmitters of the song tradition. Since their labors almost constantly occupy their hands with weaving, knitting, carrying and cooking tasks, song in its vocally presented medium rather than instrumental music in their main musical outlet. Most aspects of daily life that are accompanied by songs are in domain of woman. (Shehan 1987:47)

Anna Czekanowska's text about Slavic women's repertoires raises the question of the universality of this concept: Are women really regarded as the most responsible for the preservation of humankind in more universal terms? Or it is typical only of some agricultural societies? (Czekanowska 1990:69)

In re-thinking the presented approaches, it is necessary to discuss one of its central points: Why are female music activities considered to be more significant cultural practices? That is to say, why is the female repertoire seen as more authentic?

The paradigm of women as the main preservers of traditional heritage is strongly connected with the dominant approach in the methodology of field research. Fieldwork observation is strictly directed to the old, "archaic" music genres, which very often neglect other (not ritual) genres of musical practice. Aiming to discover the most authentic musical tradition, scholars primarily focus on the musical practices which are seen as collective and unprofessional, and on its products and the most prominent

representers (Ceribašić 2004:161). In that approach, the ritual songs are conceptualized as the most “authentic” national heritage and pre-discursive, timeless and non-historical category. As in the custom practice, the gender differences were drawn on in a more radical way (strong gender segregated ritual activities); this kind of method creates the picture that women, who mainly sang within ritual practice, appear to have been more active performers than men. As a result, women become visible exclusively in the ritual field, but invisible in the other part of musical practices.

This paradigm also contains a premise of essentialism, manifested in a representation of women as having a collective identity without any distinguishing characteristics (e.g. what social class women-keepers of traditional heritage belong to, how old they are, what status they have within the community). This kind of methodology emphasizes the collective identity,<sup>26</sup> with a special focus on shared musical forms and “authentic” representatives of the researched group (Stock 2001:8). In that way, one of the central points in the researching of gender – the **generational** is completely disregarded in the examination.

That concept of female collective identity is also reflected in the practice of women being represented by ethnomusicologists as keepers rather than authors. Women are taken as subjects who interpret cultural patterns defined in advance, not only without an understanding of their contents, but also without an awareness of their role in the very process:

But then, she (woman) often does not understand things she is doing; she is not aware of the contents of the lyrics, fables, magic-stories and everything which is in connection with the ritual she is performing, she is happiest when she does everything the right way and as it should be done. (Đorđević 1963:293)

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<sup>26</sup> The collective identity of women is a concept widely criticized by numerous feminist scholars, as a concept which was used for feminist political strategies: “The feminist “we” is only and just a phantasmal construction that has its own purpose, but which is denying internal complexity and indetermination of this term” (Butler 1995:131).

This kind of approach neglects the individuality of women and their contribution to the creation of musical practice, which is seen as a collective act.

In re-thinking the presented paradigms, it is important to re-conceptualize the ritual practices not as practices “a priori” given, but as potential texts. Terms such as the men’s songs or the women’s songs (or the male’s tunes or the women’s tunes, the men’s refrains or the women’s refrains), often used to explain different musical phenomena (the structure of tunes, refrains and so on) are perceived in Serbian ethnomusicological discourse as a “natural” reflection of gender relations in the field, rather than discursive practices through which those very relations are constructed over and over again. The scholars import the discourse about ritual practices from the very field, and represent the role of women in ritual activities as an “a priori” and “natural” activity. If we try to go further and consider the custom practices as a tool of producing a discourse, we find the above mentioned approach insufficient. It is necessary to emphasize that the so-called symbolic activities are part of a cultural production process which are not pre-discursive, but rather the opposite active forces in the ideological production of a symbolic order:

Social stratification, with its differentiated cultural realities and modes of alienation, is more likely to be a projection of the logic of gender relations than gender relations a projection of the logic of social stratification. (Shepherd and Wicke 1987:156)

With respect to that, if we examine the customs and music associated with it as discursive practices crucial for the production, enforcement and maintenance of relations of power, we can understand gender relations not as an implied element of custom practices, but as a result of the constant repetition of the given matrixes of social behavior: “They reflect values and beliefs that are socially repeated and therefore performatively reinforced as ‘normal’ cultural values and beliefs” (Diamond 2000:132).

In the succeeding chapters I will dwell further on all the presented arguments, with the aim of challenging the existent paradigms and examining the female singers’ performances as representational cultural practice which appeared to be an important

element in the performance of gender identity and the construction of women's subjectivities.

## CHAPTER TWO: THE PERFORMANCE OF GENDER IN THE MUSICAL PRACTICES OF NIŠKO POLJE

### 3.1. Portraits of the Female Singers

During the fieldwork, my focus was on the female singers born prior to and in the course of World War II who during their childhood and youth took an active part in the ritual practices such as annual customs (*Kraljice, Lazarice, Đurđevdan*), weddings and other informal gatherings. Almost all of them had spent most of their lives as part of a large, extended family (the so-called *kućna zadruga*):

When I first came to my husband's house, I was the seventeenth member of the family: uncle, aunt, theirs three daughters, father-in-law, mother-in-law, two brothers-in-law, sister-in-law, girls, another aunt, my husband and me and the daughter of my cousin – seventeen.

*Ja sam bila 17 kad sam došla, čiča, strina, njine 3 ćerke, svekar, svekrva, dever jedan, dever drugi, jetrva, devojke, strina, dever od čiču i muž i ja i na jetrvu devojčence, sedamnajest.* (Desanka Petrović, Donja Vrežina village)

The father-husband authority was pivotal in this type of family as well as the patrilineal inheritance of all real estate (Antonijević 1971a:113). Women occupied a subordinate position within the family and consequently were social outsiders. These relations of power were expressed through ritualized norms of behavior such as, for example, table seating (sometimes woman had to remain standing during the meal), or the traditional obligation of women to kiss the hand of the male head of the family or wash his legs. In this specific kind of an age-based hierarchy (elders' dominance), mother-housewife,<sup>27</sup> who was subordinate to her husband, preserved domination in relation to her sons and daughters-in-law. Only in two cases could a woman's social status be equivalent to that

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<sup>27</sup>Married women in rural society in Serbia played only two social roles: the role of a mother and of a housewife.

of a man: as a widow having taken over the role of a breadwinner, and as a *tobelija* or *virđžina* – a woman assuming the role of a man in the absence of male heirs (Gremaux 1996; Pettan 2003:293).

With respect to this, in Serbian villages there was a distinct preference for male children who could carry on the family name and inherit the farm. The birth of a daughter was taken with disappointment since her presence in a household was considered only temporary (Denich 1974:261). Many folk maxims attest to this attitude: “Marry your son when you want, your daughter when you can” (*Ženi sina kad 'oćeš a udaj 'cer kad možeš*), “A daughter is another man’s happiness” (*Žensko je tuđa sreća*). As Vuk Vrčević points out, all of the ritual acts dedicated to fertility were actually directed at securing male descendants. For that reason, on the wedding day, after the bride came into the groom’s household, she took a male baby (*nakonjče*) into her arms to ensure that she would bear sons (in Niško Polje, a bride brought a special present for that child, usually consisting of a shirt, socks and a towel). As opposed to that, no particular action was undertaken to procure the birth of female children since, consistent with the patriarchal superstition, “every female being possesses seven souls (like a cat), and she is (in herself) more than a male child” (*svaka ženska glava ima sedam duša (kao i mačka), ona je više nego muško dete*, Đorđević 1938:93 and 1984:318). Furthermore, in some areas in Serbia, families avoided having weddings on so-called “woman days” such as Wednesday, Saturday, and even Sunday, in order to prevent giving birth to female children (Bandić 1980:346). The vital importance of having a male heir is also visible in the contents of many folk songs I collected on the field:

I wish you all good life and health,  
Ye merry fellows, elder and young.  
But I wish that male children  
Be born in your house,  
In each corner a child.

*Želim da ste nam svi živi i zdravi  
i veseljaci i mladi i stari.  
Ali želim da vam se u kuću  
rađaju muška deca  
u svako ćošence po jedno  
detence.*

(The toast song – *zdravica*, Mitrović Jelena, Malča village)

The marriages of almost all of the women I conversed with were arranged by their parents. The female singers underlined that they had barely spoken to the groom before the wedding. For that reason, a girl's unhappiness caused by an elder's choice of her marital partner was a common topic of numerous women's songs:

• = cca 85

O, ju - ba - va, ju - ba - va de - vo - j - ko,

Vaz - zdan ze - la Ru - zi - ca de - voj - ka.

O.F.

Music example 1: Song performed during the harvest of corn, Olga Stanković, Donja Studena village<sup>28</sup>

*Vazdan žela Ružica devojka,  
vazdan žela, svu noć majku klela:  
“Kleta da si ostarela majko,  
što me dade za crnog Arapa.  
Kad ga ima, men me stra od njega  
kad ga nema, men me žal za njega.”*

Ljiljana Cvetković from Matejevac village gave me an account of the first encounter with her husband-to-be: “You will laugh; I met him on Thursday and married him on Saturday” (*Će se smeješ, vidla sam ga u četvrtak a udala sam se u subotu*). As she went on talking, I understood that she did not have any suspicion of her wedding since her cousin from the neighboring village – the match-maker (*navodadžija*), negotiated with the family of the potential groom without the knowledge of Ljiljana's family. After the

<sup>28</sup> All transcriptions are made by the author

two families agreed on the marriage, Ljiljana went to town to meet the groom. She was given just a few minutes to talk to him, which was the first and last time she saw him until the wedding. She ended the story with a murmur saying she already had a boyfriend from her village at that time, but she was obliged to obey her family and marry the chosen man. Ljiljana's story further testifies that in Serbian patriarchal society the primary function of marriage was not to make connections between two individuals, but between two families (houses or tribes). That was the reason why families were so engaged in wedding preparation, which was seen as a final step in the complex process of "familiarization" (Bandić 1980:344).

Another intriguing story about arranged marriages was told to me by Nadežda Petrović from Hum village. She portrayed her cousin Ranka as a very free-thinking, headstrong girl who did not want to get married. Once her parents had found her an eligible man to marry, they arranged for the wedding at a church and appointed the registration day with the village administrators. As soon as Ranka realized what was happening, she eloped to a neighboring village and missed the registration. That act, very shameful for her family and unconventional in a rural environment, caused her father to punish her cruelly and force her into a loveless marriage.

On the other hand, the story of Desanka Petrović from Donja Vrežina village shows a quite reversed situation: "I did not have any problems with him (the husband). We married each other out of love." (*Ja nisam imala uopšte problemi s njega. Mi smo se uzeli iz ljubav*). She met her future husband at the village dance gathering (*kolo*), when he came from another village to visit his relatives and meet marriageable girls. A cousin of his recommended Desanka and a friend of hers as brides, so he decided to propose to Desanka. At the beginning, she was disinterested, but persuasiveness and persistence won her over. From Desanka's narrative I inferred that she, in contrast to Ljiljana, was allowed to choose her partner.

Upon marrying, a woman's status within the rural society completely changed, and many social activities became forbidden to her. The husband became "the master of his wife," effected though the trade between the bride's and the groom's families before

the wedding. According to various written resources, in southeastern Serbia up until the end of the ninetieth century it was customary for the groom's father to pay a large amount of money to the bride's father, and in that way formally "buy" a woman for his son (Antonijević 1971a:39):

Valued as sex objects, mothers, and workers, wives were acquired by the exchange of gifts, labor, and favors between men, which was seen as a payment for the *rights* to enjoy and to appropriate the products of women's labor, sexuality, and reproductive capacity. (Woodward 1985:237)

In Niško Polje, it was usually the bride's future brother-in-law who symbolically purchased the bride from her brother: when the suitcase of a bride's trousseau (*devojačka sprema*) was put on an equipage, her brother would sit on the case and not let the wedding feast begin until someone gave him money. In addition, on the wedding day, when the groom's family entered the bride's house, the bride's father and her future father-in-law, parted bread and shook hands as an act of agreement between the two families. The bride was very often older than the groom was, as she was meant to be "mature," "strong" and "capable" of working hard, both in the field and at home.<sup>29</sup> All of the ritual acts included in the wedding ceremony were focused on the bride, as the central figure of the ritual, crucial for the young couple's fertility. The importance of the femininity factor is particularly visible in the ritual acts performed by the mother-in-law and the bride together: a symbolic passing of household responsibilities from the older onto the younger woman, and introducing a new member (the bride) into the groom's domestic cult was realized through the complex structure of ritual activities performed between the two of them (Zečević 1983:91). In Niško Polje, upon the bride's arrival into the groom's household, the mother-in-law welcomed her with a sieve and an apple, and after that, they exchanged presents prepared for that occasion. The custom practice required that the mother-in-law bring the bride into the house, where she oiled the entrance door, came to the fire-place and sat in her mother-in-law's lap. In some Niško Polje villages (Gornji Matejevac, Donja Vrežina), the bride even slept with

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<sup>29</sup> Labor was strictly gender determined: men did the plowing and carpentering, and women did reaping, gardening, cooking, and cleaning.

her mother-in-law on the wedding night. This kind of ritual act, in which the contact between two women is most important, confirms the crucial significance of female reproductiveness in the rural society. According to the Serbian ethnologist Veselin Čajkanović, the mother-in-law was actually the most important figure of the wedding ritual, as she was responsible for providing the bride's safe transfer to the new home and negotiating with the forefathers from both (bride's and groom's) cults (Čajkanović 1994:157).

The Serbian folklorist Sima Trojanović takes the view that some of the rituals prior to and in the course of a wedding are evidence of the bride's subordinate position in relation to her husband and his family (Trojanović 1990:48). A record of some ritual acts the bride performed in order to avoid the husband's violent behavior – e.g. before the wedding ceremony commences, if the bride sits on the wedding dress, her husband will not beat her (Đorđević 1984:334) – support that claim. Procedures which the bride had to follow upon the wedding, such as taking off her father-in-law's and brother-in-law's shoes, making their beds or kissing the father-in-law's hand every morning, give us an insight into the patriarchal hierarchical power relations: “That is a confirmation that she came to be under the authority of her husband” (Trojanović 1990:48).

For some time following the wedding, being still a young wife, Desanka Petrović from Gornja Vrežina village had to remain standing during meals, wait for the father-in-law to come home every night in order to take off his boots or wake up first in the morning to light a fire. A recorded wedding song illustrates the bride's duties within the new family:

*Petli mi poju na gredu,  
dizaj se, mori, nevesto!  
Svekrva oganj naklala,  
jetrva kuću pomela.  
zaova vodu donela.  
Dizaj se, mori, nevesto!*  
(Milunka Đorđević, Jelašnica village)

On the other hand, some brides were warmly welcomed into the new household, where they developed good, close relations with their spouses and their kin. Milunka Đorđević, from Jelašnica village, told me that she had been very content during her married life:

“Yes. I had all the freedom with him. We went to Pula many times. Also, we went to Holland three times, we flew. Then to Germany, we have traveled a lot.”

*Da. Ja sam bila slobodna sas njega. Bili smo u Pulu puno puta. Pa smo bili u Holandiju tri puta. U avion smo se vozili. Pa smo u Nemačku bili, pa smo mnogo proputovali, mnogo.* (Milunka Đorđević, Jelašnica village)

Marriage, as the most important act of initiation for a young girl, inevitably entailed various difficulties in adjusting to the new environment. The concept of masculinity excluded an open display of dissatisfaction. For a woman, it would have been inconceivable to speak her mind and express her feelings freely, especially negative ones like anger or frustration (Lanser 1993:31.32). These “subversive” activities were suppressed by the community, and women who disobeyed the given rules were considered to be at fault. The way the young wife and husband conducted themselves was regulated and involved some restriction – e.g. it was forbidden for them to use each other’s first names and address each other directly, which particularly referred to the woman (she was expected to use such expressions as my husband, my man – *mužu moj, moj čovek*).<sup>30</sup> In many Serbian areas, the bride avoided not only using the groom’s name, but also the names of all other members of the new family (Bandić 1980:326). In Niško Polje, during the wedding ritual, the bride was introduced to all other family members through the custom called “the christening” (*krštavanje*). Namely, she gave special names to all members of the new family:

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<sup>30</sup>Andrei Simić, who conducted field research of Yugoslav families from 1966 through 1978, observes that relationships between husbands and wives generally had a sex-segregated nature, especially in those regions that had remained longer under Ottoman rule (Simić 1983:74).

First, mother and father-in-law were christened Mom and Dad, sister-in-law, if she was young, by “dada” (a common nick name for a sister in Serbian), brother-in-law “bata” or “braca” (nick name used for a brother in Serbian).

*Prvo, svekar i svekrva se krste tatom, mamom, pa ono, jetrva ako je mlada – dada, ova. Tu se smisli, dabome, dever – braco, braco, dabome. Ako su poviše deveri, neki bata, neki braca. (Milunka Dorđević, Jelašnica village)*

In addition to that, the possessive form of the husband’s name used as the wife’s name deprived a woman of their social identity. She became recognized within the community at large by the husband’s surname or first name (Pera’s wife – *Perinica* or Žika’s son from Pera’s son Mile’s wife – *na Žiku Perinog Mileta žena*): “For community members who do not know the family well, his name is synonymous with the household” (Sugarman 1997:170).

Dobrisavka Janković from the village of Hum related to me her problems of becoming socially integrated after she got married. Since she did not have the same traditional clothing as other women in the village she had just come to, but wore a new, fashionable skirt instead, they made fun of her and refused to communicate with her. Even though that caused her great pain, she continued wearing the same clothes until community members adopted the same style. Dobrisavka’s story reaffirms that all aspects of a woman’s life, especially her behavior in the public domain, were regulated and socially restricted to a great extent. In the Serbian rural environment, women’s clothes symbolized their social status. According to the dressing code, unmarried girls wore a flower on the left side of the head, married women on the right and young brides on both sides:

A scarf is obligatory; also you have to put flowers on the head. Once you are married, you have to put a flower on each side of the scarf, because (it says) you are a young bride.

*Marama obavezno, pa se mora i zakitiš. Kad se uda, koja kad se uda ona maramu pa na dve strane se zakiti. Znači to je nevesta, čim ima na dve strane cvetovi.* (Ljiljana Cvetković, Gornji Matejevac village)

In that way, particularly at the local gatherings (village festivities organized on particular holidays) such as *vašari*, *sabori*, *preslave*, a woman's marital status was publicly displayed. Public dancing at these gatherings, taking place usually on some religious holidays, represented the initiation of a young girl into her new status of a marriageable girl. In preparation for the first public "displaying," a young girl put on new clothes, combed her hair and all that in order to appear mature:

When she dances publicly for the first time, she is considered ready for marriage. After she finishes the dance, the others congratulate her and from that moment on she can dance in every *kolo*. (Zečević 1983:87)

As Svetlana Slapšak argues, a woman's body is certainly the main symbolic area for exercising different concepts, and accordingly, for creating narratives and images in most of the cultures (Slapšak 2002:152). In Serbian villages, very strict rules regarding visual presentation of the female body were connected with pre-Christian beliefs and old pagan rituals. According to these beliefs, women were in communication with the "other world," and in this way, ritually "unclean" and dangerous for men who are the representatives of the opposite – the "purity" of this side of the world (Vasić 1998:42). These taboos confirm that a woman was seen as having special, magical qualities. Woman's connection with the life-cycle rituals and the vital importance of her fertility reflect the special status of the female body in old religious beliefs. For that reason, the female body represented an extremely powerful ritual symbol in the rural society. Various customs described by Serbian ethnologists and folklorists included the naked female body as crucial element for protection from or communication with the spirits of the dead and natural forces<sup>31</sup> (Bandić 1997; Đorđević 1984): sexuality, reproduction

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<sup>31</sup> In Niško Polje, there was a practice of ensuring prevention of downpours when a woman took off her skirt and revealed her genitals to clouds (Dragan Todorović, Vukmanovo village). Hence, for example, on the fourteenth of May, a day called *Jeremijindan* dedicated to the snake cult, a naked housewife had

and menstruation were recognized as phenomena in which women did not have full control over their bodies and were in special bond with the “other world.” During that period, a woman was forbidden any contact with a man, including touching his personal belongings or speaking with him<sup>32</sup> (especially when man goes on a trip, first sowing or tillage). For example, while giving birth, a woman had to sequester herself, so that she would be hidden from her husband and male members of the household. Very often she went to the garden or basement (Đorđević 1938: 94, 95):

I gave birth to my son Zvonko down stairs in the basement, yes, in the basement.

*Ja sam rodila mog sina Zvonka dole u podrum, da, u podrum.*  
(Grozdana Đokić, Leskovik village)

After giving birth, she would be considered “unclean” for forty days, the same way a bride is “polluted” for forty days after the wedding:

Straw was brought in; not even a great bundle of it, then a mat. Mat made of rye was put on the ground and over that some sheets and I had been sleeping with the baby for forty days on the ground, to not be close to my husband. Not at all good for the baby.

*Slama donesena, nije bilo ni bale, nego slama donesena, pa turena asura. To se pravilo od raž, asura. Pa onda trpane čerge, pa onda s dete četrdeset dana na zemlju spim, da se ne mešam s mužem. Ne valja za dete.* (Jelica Jovanović, Donji Komren village)

In these cases, “uncleanliness” is a signifier for cultural disturbance and instability. For that reason, a variety of strategies, both practical as well as ideological, was developed to suppress female sexuality. In recognizing such acts as cultural practices produced by

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to go round the house three times before the sunrise making rattling sounds using metal utensils. Also, the best way to prevent or stop epidemics in central Serbia (an area called *Resava*) was considered to involve few old widows (“čistih baba”) going round the sick men’s houses at midnight and after that take off their clothes and scarves (Trojanović 1990:99).

<sup>32</sup> It was believed that a woman in menopause (no longer fertile), could not present any threat to men (Đorđević 1938:31), which shows that a woman who is no longer sexually active loses her ritual power.

patriarchal norms, it is important to underline that indigenous law even formally forbade some ritual acts:

For a woman, it was strictly forbidden to cross a man's path, they would usually have waited for him to pass (even if he was far away when she spotted him). However, if she had by any chance committed that offence, she would have had to go back. Honoring this tradition, the authorities in Šumadija sometimes punished women who were daring enough to do that. (Bandić 1980:324)

This example illustrates how ritual restrictions, denying women social positions, were put into legal practice.

Woman's hair also bore an important ritual meaning, as a symbol of life-spirit and magical power (Zečević 1983:93; Čajkanović 1994:143). Therefore, it was forbidden for a woman to go around with uncover hair or to comb her hair in front of male members of the family. In connection with that, the scarf put on the bride's hair during the wedding ritual (sometimes after the wedding, Čajkanović 1994:151) called *ubradivanje*, *zabradivanje* (in Niško Polje *zaprevesivanje*, *prevesivanje*), become an integral part of her outfit until the end of her life:<sup>33</sup>

Everyone goes out, through the garden gate, and god-sister puts the scarf on her head and splashes her with a mixture of basil and wine. After that they part the "scud bread," and the bride walks into the room, kisses all the guests and the meal can start.

*Iskoče na avliju, na avliju iskoči starojka ju zaprevesi, meriše sa bosiljak vino. Pa bacaju grabenu pogaču pa tag se lomi i posle ulegne u sobu i preljubi svi ponovo i onda pomeze se, ručak kad je.*  
(Desanka Petrović, Gornja Vrežina village)

According to the Serbian ethnologist Slobodan Zečević, through this act the bride loses her mystical power, and in a symbolical way acknowledges the power of her husband

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<sup>33</sup> Another term used for the woman wearing the scarf was *zabuljena*, which calls to mind an Islamic term used for such a woman: *bula*.

(Zečević 1983:93). In Niško Polje, girls started wearing scarves at the beginning of puberty and thereafter wore them all their lives:

From the beginning, when you are but a little child, they give you the scarf. When I go with the flock of sheep, the scarf dirties and I wear it one side facing out one week, the second week another, not to wash every time.

*Od odma, čim malečko dete, vrže ti maramu i ideš. Ja s ovce idem marama mi se uprlja, ja ju nosim jednu nedelju na jednu stranu, pa ju posle operem pa onako obrnem, da ne perem stalno.* (Ilinka Despotović, Trupale village)

They did not take the scarves off in the presence of any male person, even in the presence of their husbands. Ljiljana Radonjić from Prosek village emphasized that it was shameful for a woman if men saw her arm or leg. Her mother-in-law, even though she was seventy-nine, still hid from her son to wash her hair. That ritual restriction of showing the female body is strongly connected with the “in/visibility” of the female body in public, which will be analyzed in the following chapters.

Presented beliefs confirm the above-mentioned connection of female sexuality with the supernatural and magical forces.<sup>34</sup> Consequently, female sexuality was constantly restrained by the society. For a young girl it was shameful to speak out, sit beside or dance with a young man when not accompanied by elders:

One old grandmother watched on us. Our mothers were tired and sleepy. And that granny was so smart I still admire her. She told us: Don't! They (boys) will seduce you and after that they won't have

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<sup>34</sup> The sexuality in rural environments presented no danger *per se* – it was a vital force, a requisite for the survival of the society. That concept is closer to the Islamic than to the Christian concept of sexuality. In Christianity, sexuality itself is debased as being something animal and uncontrollable, and the supremacy of the soul over the body was proclaimed. In Islam, sexuality is not attacked, but women are instead, as the very embodiments of sexuality as something dangerous and “the embodiment of destruction, the symbol of disorder” (Mernissi 2003:498). Women were considered to be powerful and dangerous beings and sexual segregation represented a way of controlling that power. Although some scholars argue that the concept of women's sexual power in Islamic cultures is different from that in European cultures (Graham-Brown 2003:503), this example proves that in rural areas of southeastern Serbia, sexuality is conceptualized in the same way as in Middle Eastern cultures.

you. And if you go to another guy, they would beat you because you did not come a virgin to him.

*Jedna baba ni čuvala, stara baba. Ali, majke ni pospe, umorne. A taj baba, vrlo pametna ja je se i sad divim: Nemoj, kaže, oni će te prevare, posle neće uzmu, odete kod drugog, oni će vi bije, ne si mu otišla poštena.* (Milunka Đorđević, Jelašnica village)

As seen in the previous quotation, sexual innocence was paramount for marriageable girls, as marriage represented the girl's main initiation into womanhood: "Virginity ("a girl untainted by male hands" – *devojka još ne omilovana*) and martial fidelity were highly valued at the scale of morality" (Dvorniković 1939:341). It was extremely important for girls to remain virgins until marriage; therefore, they were under the constant vigil of the elders. Virginity was equally important to both families (the bride's as well as the groom's) and was especially verified and announced at the wedding ceremony. Female relatives on the groom's side (usually the mother-in-law or godmother) had the obligation of taking the bed sheet used on the first wedding night and verifying the bride's "suitability." If she confirmed that everything was in accordance with expectations, then the bride's virginity was publicly announced by warming the brandy, and a mother-in-law gave her a besom adorned with money to mop the house. The bride's purity having been publicly announced, she went to the village drinking-fountain accompanied by her mother and sister-in-law, sometimes even by musicians. That would be her first public appearance in the community and all the villagers usually came out to see her.

On the other hand, if the bride was not "proper" but a "broken cup" (*slomljen čekrk*), the brandy was served cold and she was publicly put to shame. The girls who had some sexual experience before marrying found it very difficult to get married – they could only marry elderly men or widowers.<sup>35</sup> Miljković Verica from Prosek village had problems with her mother-in-law as she was late for the wedding ceremony. According

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<sup>35</sup> Some very brutal customs were put into practice when the bride did not turn out to be sexually pure. In the villages of Niško Polje, the groom's family could "return" the bride, binding her to a donkey who would carry her back to her family.

to Verica's testimony, she found it very stressful having to spend the first wedding night sleeping beside the groom "as if we were a brother and sister." Because of that, the mother-in-law proclaimed her to be "improper" and did not allow her to go to the village drinking fountain. Then, after the groom had explained what had happened, the wedding ritual continued. Contrary to her case, Milunka Đorđević (Jelašnica village) and Desanka Petrović (Gornja Vrežina village) said that their husbands did not let their mothers, sisters or godsisters check the bed sheets and ask them about the bride's virginity.

Bearing in mind that sexual act was taken as a ritual act and was restricted by numerous rules and taboos,<sup>36</sup> the modesty was an inherently feminine quality, important not only for marriageable girls, but also for married woman.<sup>37</sup> A married woman's bearing had to be demure, her voice low and eyes directed downwards. She had to appear duly bashful, especially in public:

Once you are married, you are not free and you must deport yourself as if you were a blind person. That is true, my son! You have to. First, you do not look at others, you mustn't. One young man told my cousin: "Listen to me, Violeta, you have to look at the peak of your shoes."

*Čim si udata, zauzeta si, ti moraš da se držiš ko slepac. Pa istina, sine! Moraš. Odma ne gledaš u drugi. Prvo i ne smeš, a mani da gledaš. Pa jeste. Ja sam gledala ovdeka što s moju Mariju ovuj dole što se sad udaje. Kaže: "Slušaj ti, Violeto, sve u vr cipele da gledaš."* (Dobrisavka Janković, Hum village)

To sum up the issues discussed in this paragraph, the social position of women in Niško Polje was strongly interrelated with their ritual roles, and was transmitted from the sacral into the spheres of social and juridical practices. The female sex determined the social purpose of a woman's existence. Age hierarchy was crucial in the social status of

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<sup>36</sup> It was forbidden to have sex with a wife during her menstruation and in the forty days following the birth of the baby as she was not ritually clean (Bandić 1980:327).

<sup>37</sup> A woman (wife) behaving in an immoral way was severely dealt with. The data confirm that, particularly in cities which were long under the Ottoman influence, female adultery was punishable by cutting off a woman's nose and ears or pushing her into the water (river) to drown (Đorđević 1984:248).

rural women: “At various stages of their lives, women take different degrees of social status within the family and the community at large” (Petrović A. 1990:72). As stated already, nearly all female singers were under the command of their husbands (or the eldest male in the household) and his kin.<sup>38</sup> Gender norms were constituted in accordance with the socially dominant position of males, where women were positioned as inferior social subjects. The bulk of their activities took place in the private sphere of the household, while the governed public sphere was primarily under the control of men. In the male-oriented society, cultural forms both openly and symbolically epitomized the domination of men over women. They had to abandon their personal activities in favor of the family and community. For example, women had no prospect of either inheriting real estate and usually abandoned it in favour of their male relatives, or of participating in decision-making on issues concerning the village, and very often, even concerning their own families. Their movement was limited to paying family visits and going on short trips to town.

The maintenance of the opposition of the two gender categories is a product of masculine signification and one of numerous strategies pertaining to male domination and a hierarchical gender binary system (Butler 1999:25). In the following paragraphs I will present cultural practices which are incorporated in the production of these discourses as strategies in the performance of gender.

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<sup>38</sup> Scholars involved in researching this phenomenon also confirm that Balkan women were expected to be passive and obedient in a world publicly dominated by men (Beissinger 2001:412).

### 3.2. The Performance of Gender in Musical Practices

In what way were the introduced mechanisms of exclusion and domination articulated in the field of musical practices? The field research revealed that gender segregated performance still exists in the memory of the female singers in Niško Polje. The terms men's songs and women's songs are present in the discourses of my interlocutors, mainly used in their internal communication or in their attempts to categorize parts of the vocal tradition:

You sing on women tune. After that you shift to men tune.

*Pripojuješ na ženski. Posle nakreneš na muški.* (Grozdana Đokić, Leskovik village)

These terms were used in their narratives, but without distinguishing clearly between these two categories: "Well, men tune is not like ours, I mean the high tone when we exclaim...men's songs are different, a different tune. Men are different from women." (*Pa muški glas se peva, nema ovakoj kao mi, mislim većim tonom pa što viku rucnemo, pa...drugše muške pesme, drugši glas se. Muški drugši ženski glas*, Grozdana Zlatković, Vukmanovo village). Female singers performed the songs they had learnt, as I was told, from their fathers or male relatives, without any awareness of their belonging to the category of men's songs: "My father taught me. I sang that when I was going with my father to a *slava*." (*Pa tatko si me učio. To ja pevala sam kad me tatko vodil po slave*, Desanka Petrović, Gornja Vrežina village).<sup>39</sup> The terms men's tune (*muški glas*) or men's song (*muška pesma*) were mentioned in the female singers' narratives mainly in connection with the *sedenjka* custom. The tunes of these songs largely belonged to the short musical form and the new singing style (the role of this custom in the performance of gender will be discussed in the following paragraphs). Another context in which these terms were mentioned was regarding music on TV or radio: "I sing all of

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<sup>39</sup> Numerous folklorists have discerned instances of women appropriating genres normally reserved for men with no recognition that they go beyond their domain (Young and Turner 1993:13).

the men's songs which are actually sung now" (*Ja kada ove muške pesme sag što pevu, sve ja pevam*, Ruža Zdravković, Rujnik village).

As already pointed out, in the patriarchal society some fields of social life were completely forbidden for women. These restrictions were particularly evident in instrumental practice. According to the stories from Niško Polje, children made seasonal instruments that belonged to the type of idiophone or free aerofone-type instruments (so-called children instruments). Very young girls participated in making instruments and performing alongside boys:

*Pištagaljke*, on a holiday called *Mladenci*, you know, in the spring-time. I am a shepherd and I clip off wood and make cuts at some places and play a whistling song like a train coming to a halt. We were capable of everything.

*Pištagaljke, za Mladenci, znaš to su s proleća. I ja čuvam ovce i odsečem znaš ovolko drvo i uzmem i zasečem ovdena i kad svirnem kao za voz za stane. Mnogo smo mi bili za sve.* (Ljiljana Radonjić, Prosek village)

They played a repertoire based on copying of an adult's repertoire, but for girls, at the beginning of puberty this activity ceased. This practice illustrates that between pre-puberty boys and girls the segregation in the field of musical practices did not exist. However, after childhood, the strong division between male and female domains became apparent, and women did not have access to instrumental performing. In Niško Polje, I have encountered no well-known female instrumentalist nor was I given any account of her. During the fieldwork, I heard only of one female *gusle*-player<sup>40</sup> from Malča village, and that example was given to me as the rare exception to the rule since playing was considered to be an exclusively male province.<sup>41</sup> On the other hand, in all

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<sup>40</sup> In the Serbian language a term for the female instrumentalist does not exist (*svirač* is a noun of masculine gender, while the expressions like *sviračica* or *svirkinja* are not in use).

<sup>41</sup> Among published books and papers, I came across only few articles mentioning female instrumentalists in Serbia: women who sing accompanied on the frame drum in Kosovo (Pettan 2003:196), and the female *gusla*-player in Aleksinačko Pomoravlje (Niško Polje neighbor area) (Antonijević 1971a:107). Ankica Petrović also mentioned female *gusle*-players in the Dinaric area, whose behavior in many ways was common with the men (Petrović A. 1990:73). Cvjetko Rihtman writes

the villages I visited people were talking about the legendary local bagpipe, flute (*dvojnica*, *frula*, *duduk*) or accordion (male)-players. They were semi-professionals who learnt to perform from relatives or elder colleagues, and usually played at weddings or local celebrations. Since some of them were well-known in the wider area, they traveled to neighboring villages to perform. Although they were not employed as musicians, they usually received some kind of payment for their performance.

In the eyes of the community, female musical activities were usually not seen as “real music performance.” As mentioned before, performances associated with customs were not considered music: “It is not a song. It is *Lazarica (dodola)*” (Golemović 1997:123).<sup>42</sup> These songs were not discursively framed as “songs” or “music,” but were contextualized only through ritual practice. With respect to that, women who sang within custom practices were not considered “real” performers and, consequently, were not seen as musicians. Discourses of recognition of female performances were strongly linked to the professional/unprofessional distinction in which women were supposed to be in the private, unpaid (domestic) sphere while the work rewarded by receiving wages in public (away from home) was done by men. In that context, male instrumentalists who were usually paid (or got some sort of compensation) for their performances were regarded as performers, while the women singing was sidelined, seen as not “really” performance.<sup>43</sup> This kind of “publicity” and “privacy” in the field of music performance in the rural environment was particularly emphasized. That practice was well-known to many cultures, in which women’s performances were considered “non-music” and female-associated genres not “real music” at all.<sup>44</sup> Moreover, in some societies women who sang publicly were seen as “not real women” (Koskoff 1987:7).

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that there were some cases of women known to be able to play the *gusle* but they did not have to violate the existing norms by performing in public (Rihtman 1971:97).

<sup>42</sup> Many scholars introduce the same phenomenon (see the articles of Susan Auerbach, Patricia K. Shehan, Hiromi Lorraine Sakata and Karen E. Petersen in Koskoff 1987).

<sup>43</sup> The distinction between professional and unprofessional performances came out to be a common cross-cultural characteristic of women’s performances.

<sup>44</sup> This specific concept of “fake music” (not “real” music) is used particularly in relation with a phenomenon of the female instrumentalists, which were usually not considered “real” musicians, but were seen as mere entertainment (this issue will be discussed in Chapter Four).

Therefore, in the field of music making, viewed as “music” in the full sense of the work, men were the absolute rulers. For women, singing within a close community was seen as a desirable gift:

Accomplished dancers, and especially singers, are more successful at attracting the attention of young men, and find marriage partners more easily than those lacking the necessary artistic talents. (Petrović A. 1990:76)

Yet, performance beyond the domestic environment was not taken with approval. It was inconceivable for a woman to exhibit her musical talents in public. By displaying her body (herself in person), she would lose her most important quality in the rural environment – her sexual demureness.<sup>45</sup> Miodrag Vasiljević, in his book *Folk Tunes of the Leskovac Area* (1960), quotes the statement of the female singer Nasta Denić from the village of Babičko, who explains that singing beyond the private, household settings was not “proper” in the rural environments:

When I was young, women did not sing men’s songs. A girl in the house, in front of her parents or elder persons, could not ever sing any other song except a ritual one from that season. Young singers could find love excitement only in the ritual songs they performed for young persons. Only these songs contained love inspiration and that was it. Even these songs we sang alone in the mountains, when nobody could hear us, with stock and in the fields. (Vasiljević 1960:x)

I received a similar testimony from Milunka Đorđević from the village of Jelašnica: “At that time we did not sing, that was very shameful” (*Sine, tad se ne pevalo, mnogo sram bio*, Milunka Đorđević, Jelašnica village). Dragan Todorović, the manager of the female vocal group, also emphasized that women “sang exclusively in the field during agrarian work in the ritual practice without their husbands’ permission” (Dragan Todorović, Vukmanovo village). Same practice can be traced to many societies: Tunisia (Jones 1987), Afghanistan (Doubleday 1990), Morocco (Kapchan 1994),

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<sup>45</sup> The concept of female musical shame has been examined by numerous authors including Susan Auerbach (Auerbach 1987) and Jane Sugarman (Sugarman 1997 and 2003).

Azerbaijan (Naroditskaya 2000), among Albanians in Macedonia (Sugarman 1997), Turkey (Ziegler 1990), and India (Babiracki 1997). Women who performed publicly in these cultures were equivalent to prostitutes or concubines. Some of them achieved some level of social dignity as independent women and won social freedom denied to other women, but in general, they remained on the margins of social relations. The institutional boundaries divide social space and any transgression of social order represents an attack on the distribution of power. On the other hand, challenging the boundaries enables them to be recognized as “the social representers *par excellence* of transgression” (Kapchan 1994:88). Various sources, including this research, confirm that, contrary to dominant assumptions, firmly established regulations concerning women performing in public did not exist only in the cultures of the Middle East (that is to way mostly in Islamic cultures), but in European societies as well (Graham-Brown 2003:504).

### 3.3. Performing “Femininity”

Considering the issues already discussed, customs, along with informal gatherings or agricultural jobs, were during their youth the only space for musical activity for the women I conversed with. I noticed that in their narratives some customs were more connected with “femininity” or considered exclusively female. In their perception, these customs belonged to the separate female reality, where women felt free to express their thoughts, feelings and emotions. These customs were a significant element in the reaffirmation of their female identity, and marked all the important cultural roles that they went through in a patriarchal society. Concerning the observed relation between sexuality and the female social role, I detected a connection between particular musical activities and the women’s age hierarchy and social status. Regarding women’s generational and status differences, some customs were performed exclusively by marriageable girls, married or older women. Ankica Petrović points out that the freedom of girls in expressing themselves musically stopped with marriage, and their repertoire reduced (Petrović A. 1990:78, see also Pettan 2003:290). In the same way, a married woman in Niško Polje was not permitted to participate in certain dances or participate in some customs such as collecting flowers a day before St. George’s Day: “Women went to pluck flowers, which was great. When I got married, I was not allowed to go” (*Išle su u travke žene, mani, to je čudo bilo. Kad sam se udala ovde se ne ide*, Jelica Jovanović, Donji Komren). In the next paragraph, I will present a few customs, which appear to have been an important part of performing the social role of women in Niško Polje.

**Lazarice** (The Lazar’s Day) is a custom traceable in all parts of Serbia. As a part of the spring ritual cycle, the *lazarice* pageant consisted of six young girls (age eight to twelve) who walked around the village on the Lazar’s day also called *Vrbica*. *Lazarice* visited every house in the village, danced and sang the appropriate songs dedicated to house members and gathered gifts (eggs). The most important member of the group was *lazar*, a girl who wore men’s clothes and *lazarka*, her female spouse. Every

member of the group had its own assignment: four of them sang and two danced (*lazar* and *lazarka*). *Lazar* and *lazarka*, as leaders of the group, usually walked first.

Following the strict rules in the custom's performance, *lazarice* stuck to the same ritual pattern in every house: the four girls stood divided into two groups and sang in an antiphonic style, while *lazar* and *lazarka* danced.

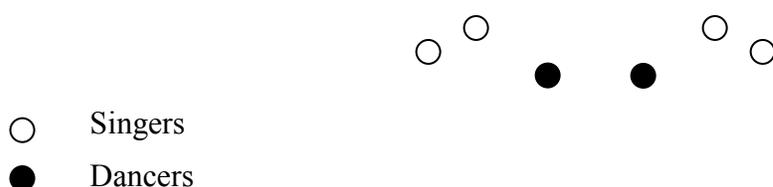


Table 4: The position of singers and dancers in the *Lazarica* group

There are various textual patterns of *lazarice* songs belonging to different phases of the ritual. One pattern was used when the group of girls sang along the open village road:

*Cveće, cveće crveno,  
pored drumca sađeno.  
Tu prolaze Lazarke,  
pa si cveće beraju,  
pa pitaju Lazara.  
Oj Lazare, lazare,  
lazarice devojko.*

(Zagorka Igić, Gornji Matejevac village)

The second pattern was used when the group of girls sang outside the front door of the house announcing their arrival:



$\bullet = 150$

O - tva - raj te ka - pi - je,

O - tva - raj te ka - pi - je. O.F.

Music example 2: *Lazarica* song, Ljiljana Cvetković, Gornji Matejevac village  
(example num. 1 on the CD)

*Otvarajte kapije,  
evo idu lazarke  
da vi sreću donose.*

In the house, the *lazarice* first sang a song honoring the house or the master of the house, and then the other members of the family: a boy, a girl, and a baby. While leaving the house they sang a farewell song:

*Ovuj kući idomo,  
što ne lepo daruva.*  
(Grozdana Đokić, Leskovik village)

A few women mentioned songs which the *lazarice* sang in front of the house where somebody had died, usually many years before:

*Majka Jovu u kutiju čuva,  
da ga kiša ne zarosi,  
da ga vetar na zapiri,  
da ga sunce ne ogreje.  
Jer je nemu večna kuća*

*nije prozor, nije vrata.*

(Desanka Petrović, Donja Vrežina village)

When people did not let *lazarice* enter their house, they sang particular songs condemning their act:

*Ovaj kuća lipova,  
u nju kučka drpova.*

*Ona rži, a mi beži!*

(Grozdana Đokić, Leskovik village)

Girls learnt *lazarice* songs from their mothers or female relatives, mainly older women. I came across various melodic and textual patterns in different villages with identical times of performances and ritual acts. After World War II, in the spirit of the socialist ideology, *lazarice* gradually stopped performing, but they now represent a custom of the great emotional significance in the memories of the women. Although sentimentally attached to memories of their childhood performances in the period up to and immediately following World War II women have mainly forgotten the melodic patterns of *lazarice* songs. As was evident from the female singers' stories, *lazarice* was one of the most joyful customs. Since the performers were children, villagers expected them to come to their houses with joy. Women explained to me that all villagers came out of the houses waiting for the *lazarice*. During the first years after World War II, *lazarice* went from Niško Polje villages to the city of Niš to perform the custom. Desanka Petrović from Donja Vrežina village and Milica Cvetković from Brenica village told me they went to Niš accompanied by their mothers or one old woman. It is interesting that in the last five years, in the villages of Brenica and Malča there have been some attempts to revive this custom. Several older women have tried to teach their grandchildren to sing *lazarica* songs and re-establish the custom.

The *Kraljice* (“Queens”) custom was widely spread in Serbia, and in the Niško Polje villages it was regularly performed until the middle of the last century.<sup>46</sup> This custom contained many elements in common with the *lazarice* custom. For that reason, the songs associated with these two customs were often mixed up in the memory of women. *Kraljice* custom was performed on St. George’s Day (according to the Orthodox calendar the sixth of May). In written records, the most frequent name was *kraljice* (in the region of *Lužnica* it was called *kralj*). As a ritual group, *kraljice* had a strictly defined role for each participant, who were eight “mature” girls aged between sixteen and twentythree. As with the *lazarice* custom, every girl in the group had a particular role – a king and a queen, two more girls who danced (*kralj, kraljička i dve igravačke; dve igraju, a dve preigruju*) and four girls who sang (“four of them dance and four sing” – *četiri šetu, a četiri poju*). The king (*kralj*) was the central figure of the custom. He led the group carrying a banner (*barjak*), or in some villages a kerchief.



Photograph 2: The *Kraljice* group from *Lužnica*, 1939/40<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>46</sup>Traces of this custom are found in the area of *Podunavlje (Bačka and Derdap)*, *Posavina (Slavonija, Srem, Belgrade surroundings)*, *Pomoravlje*, south and southeastern Serbia (*Aleksinačko Pomoravlje, Nišava, Lužnica, Leskovačka Morava, Vranjsko Pomoravlje*) and parts of northeastern Serbia (*Homolje, Negotinska and Timočka krajina*) (Hofman 1999:4).

<sup>47</sup> The photographs used in this study were borrowed from the personal archives of my interlocutors and from the Culture center in village Trupale, thanks to Mr. Vukašin Mitić.

As opposed to the other areas in southeastern Serbia, where the king was dressed in male clothes, in Niško Polje she was dressed the same way as other girls in the *kraljice* group (“Everything is the same, only the king carries the banner” – *Sve je isto, ženska nošnja, samo što se ukite i to je kralj koji nosi barjak*). The king was responsible for conducting the communication with the household members and for choosing the songs that would be performed. The queen (*kraljica*) was the main dance-mate of the king during the custom’s performance (*Kralj i kraljica se menjaju, u krs, tako se prominjuju*). In some villages the other two girls who danced together with the king and the queen were called banner carriers (*barjaktari*). Girls practiced for a few weeks before the very performance of the custom. Usually, one old woman taught girls to sing *kraljica* songs.

As in the *Lazarice* custom, the *kraljice* went around the village visiting every house. The data confirm that the custom consisted of a few ritual phases: walking around the villages, entering the houses, singing and dancing to the household members and, finally, leaving and saying farewell. A special song accompanied each ritual phase. When *kraljice* began their walk from the king’s house, they sang songs throughout the village:

cca 92

U - si - ni se kra - lje,

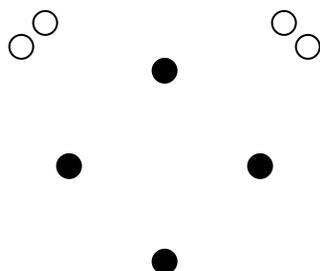
U - si - ni se kra - lje,

kra - lje, bar - jak - ta - re. O.F.

Music example 3: *Kraljica*'s song "on the road," Ruža Zdravković, Rujnik village

*Ušini se, kralje,  
kralje barjaktare.  
Kraljice da projdu,  
kralja da provedu,  
kralja barjaktara.*

After they had arrived in front of the house and entered the courtyard, the dancers formed the characteristic "cross" figure while the two groups of singers stood on both sides:



Singers ○

Dancers ●

Table 5: The position of singers and dancers in the *Kraljica* group

In the *kraljica* dance, the two pairs of dancers constantly switched places (*prominjuju se, kralj i kraljica se menjaju, a ove dve presicaju*). They first sang the song dedicated to the house or the host. The textual patterns of these songs stuck most vividly, and in the greatest variety, in the memories of women:

*Kralje barjaktare,  
otvorte mi porte.  
(Zagorka Igić, Gornji Matejevac village)*

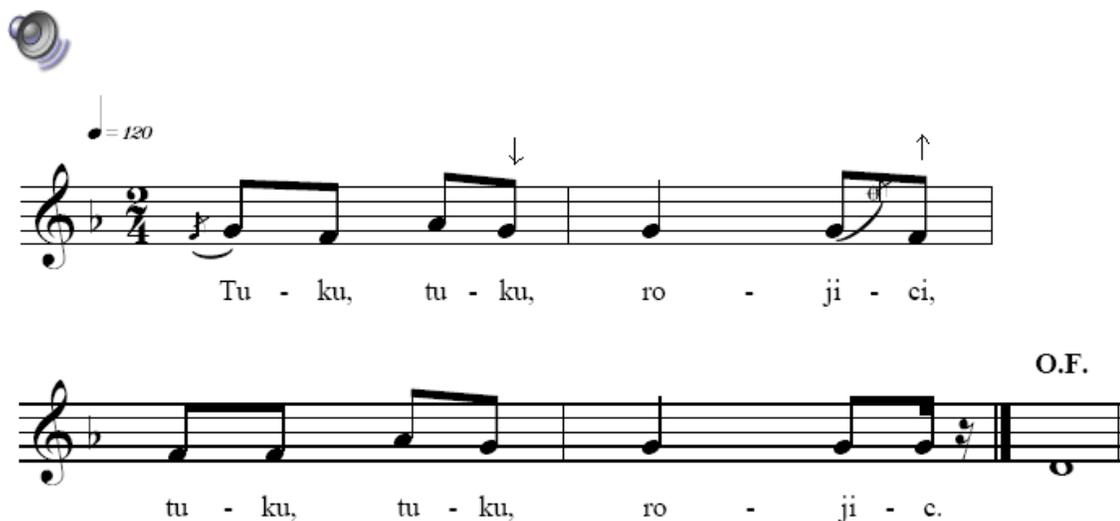
*Ovaj kuća bogata,  
na nju ima troja vrata.*

*Prva vrata od dukata,  
druga vrata od zlata,  
a taj treća od šimšira.*  
(Rusanda Arsić, Donja Vrežina village)

Songs sung to other household members were performed only “if and when the host bids it” (*pevalo se isključivo kada i šta domaćin naredi*). Especially numerous were the songs with love themes dedicated to young boys and girls:

*Oj, devojko, materina brigo,  
sve se brineš, udati se nećeš.  
Udaćeš se i pokajaćeš se,  
steć ćeš svekra, venućeš ko cvečka,  
steć ćeš muža, venućeš ko ruža,  
steć ćeš dece, kajati se nećeš.*  
(Ruža Zdravković, Rujnik village)

Interestingly, the songs “to bees” (“na pčele“) were danced to in a different manner: all girls danced together in the *kolo*. As women told me, it was to prevent bees from escaping, and assemble them for the housewife:<sup>48</sup>



• = 120

Tu - ku, tu - ku, ro - ji - ci,

tu - ku, tu - ku, ro - ji - c. O.F.

Music example 4: *Kraljica* song “on bees,” Desanka Petrović, Donja Vrežina village, (example num. 2 on the CD)

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<sup>48</sup> Singing “to bees” was specific to other parts of southeastern Serbia as well (in *Lužnica* and *Zaplanje* within the *lazarica* custom) (Hofman 1999:29).

*Tuku, tuku rojići,  
dojdete mi pčelice,  
doneste mi čupence,  
sa meda ga napunite,  
na nožicu po lovnici,  
na dupence čupence.*

After the ritual ended, *kraljice* left the house signing a farewell song. For their performance, *kraljice* were given money, which they later shared among themselves in the king's house, during a joint dinner. Community members believed that *kraljice* should visit all houses in a village; otherwise, it would be a bad omen both for the household not visited by them and for the whole community.

The stories from the field reveal that *kraljice* were dear guests in all the households in Niško Polje ("You look forward to them coming your house" – *Jedva čekaš da ti dođu u kuću*) and one of the most revered customs. Some women, like Vera Đorđević from the village of Brenica, believed that *kraljice* were so important that in the event of dissolution of the *kraljice* group or the demise of the custom of performing it, one of the girl members would die. My impression was that the strong symbolic signification of this custom remained very vivid in the memories of the women. Regardless of the minor variations in their individual narratives, in all of their minds the memory of *kraljice* lingered as a custom which had marked their youth.

***Đurđevdan*** (the George's Day or the collecting herbs and flowers – *kad se viju vencì*) is another custom performed exclusively by women. The *Đurđevdan* songs were among the songs most frequently performed by female singers in the field. This custom was connected with raising cattle, and in particular raising sheep, which was frequently encountered in the mountains villages of Niško Polje. One day before the St. George's Day, girls and women went into the hills to gather herbs and flowers. I received different information on the ages of the women participating. In some villages, both girls and women were included, while in others only young girls and newly-married women. Following the prescribed activities, they started into the hills before dawn to

gather herbs that would be used as stock food on *Durđevdan*. Women sang to announce the beginning of the custom and invite other women to join them. I found a few variants of songs performed on this occasion:

*Dizajte se, malo i golemo,  
da vijemo tri venca zelena:  
prvi venac za to belo stado,  
drugi venac za vedro šareno,  
treći venac za domaćina.*  
(Ljiljana Cvetković, Gornji Matejevac village)

*Mi idemo u goru zelenu,  
da beremo, da beremo svakojake travke,  
ponajviše zdravac merišljavac.*  
(Grozdana Đokić, Leskovik village)



cca 51

O.F.

Po- sle de-voj - ke u cvej - ke, po-sle de-voj -ke.

Music example 5: *Durđevdan* song, Radica Zlatanović and Petrija Vučković, Gornja Studena village (example num. 3 on the CD)

*Pošle devojke u cvejke,  
da beru cveće svakakvo,  
ponajviše zdravac zeleni.*

Young wives, as it can be inferred from numerous stories, had a special role in this custom. They had to participate in it during the first year of marriage, clad especially for this day in full-dress for a joint breakfast or lunch in the field. During the lunch,

brides had to kiss each other (*preljube se*) and other women on the cheek. This act denoted the initiation of young women and their integration into the female community.

The most important part of the custom, in all of its local varieties, was the sprinkling of water. In some villages, after women had completed gathering the flowers, they came to the banks of a local river, where they made the wreaths for the evening part of the custom. In the process of making them, women sprinkled themselves and put wreaths on their heads or around their waists, and try to take each other into the water. Women told me that the purpose of bedewing was to ensure that sheep produce enough milk. In some variations of the custom, girls and women danced the *kolo* across the river (the village of Rujnik).

When they came back to the village they adorned houses with wreaths. It was required that one wreath be put above the main entrance. Usually all family members washed their faces using water where the wreaths had been put. One of the widespread textual variants of the songs performed during this custom is:



Music example 6: *Đurđevdan* song, Svetlana Makarić, Jelašnica village

*Venče zdravče beru li te mome?  
Beru, beru, kako da ne beru,  
od dve kite tri venca izviše.  
Prvi venac za veliko vedro,  
drugi venac za raničku ovcu,  
treći venac za malo jagnje.*

The second part of the custom, called *Muzigrudva* (in some villages *Muzigrud*), was performed individually. In the evening, a woman milked sheep through the wreaths she had gathered and the bread (*kravajče*) made especially for that occasion. She usually put the comb in the milk copper pot (*bakrač*) and prepared plants for the sheep to eat.

Women seemed really excited in remembering *Durđevdan*. Milunka Đorđević from the village of Jelašnica told me that she had never been able to sleep the night before *Durđevdan* because she wanted to be ready for the beginning of the custom. For girls, it was an opportunity to spend time together laughing, singing and enjoying themselves:

While we are gathering in the village to go to the mountain we just laugh and make jokes. As we pass through the village everybody watches.

*Nego dok se skupljamo kroz selo da idemo u planinu, a po planinu samo se smeju i saplitaju se. E, a kad prođemo kroz selo, svi gledaju.* (Ljiljana Cvetković, Gornji Matejevac village).

### 3.4. Playing the “Other’s” Role

*Sedenjke* (Spinning bee – *prela*, *sedeljke*, *sedence* in Southeastern Serbia) were female gatherings devoted to doing handiwork as some kind of “female socializing.”<sup>49</sup> Serbian ethnomusicologists usually did not perceive this theme as a part of the custom system, but as an informal party positioned between the work of gathering and a way of entertainment. These gatherings were not a part of the wider annual ritual system, being informal and more spontaneous. Women usually gathered around a fire, brought their handiwork and spent that time weaving, knitting or doing needlework. In Niško Polje, *sedenjke* were organized until the end of the 1960s, when, following the changes in living conditions, women quit gathering in that way. They usually started in autumn (from the holiday called *Preobraženje*, the eighteenth of August) and lasted until the end of winter. Women met in the evenings at the main crossroads or in front of a house if it was too cold in a room. No strict rules had to be adhered to concerning the participants – girls and women of all ages were included. Usually, grandmothers, mothers or mothers-in-law kept an eye on girls and younger women. At the beginning of the *sedenjka*, women performed the song announcing that the gathering had begun:

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<sup>49</sup> Scholarly works in Bulgaria prove the existence of the same custom: the community had bees called *sedenki* or *tlaki* (Buchanan 2006:84).

• = cca 103

Mi - li - ca gu ov - de ne - ma,

da do - dje da ne do - dje,

da do - dje pa da pro - dje.

O.F.

Music example 7: *Sedenjka* song, Jagodinka Mitrović, Rujnik village

*Koja mi gu ovde nema?  
 Milica gu ovde nema.  
 Da dođe da ne dođe,  
 da dođe pa da prođe.*

Singing was essential here, as well as joking and going through some “women’s topics.” Unlike the other presented customs which excluded men totally, *sedenjke* allowed the participation of men to some degree. They usually came at the end of the event to joke with the women. Moreover, their presence was one of the important parts of the custom, particularly for unmarried girls. That was a great opportunity for them to meet their boyfriends in a more informal way, without being hindered by the elders:

And boys come while we are in the middle of the spinning work; pretend that they want to put some woods into the fire. But they extinguish it and we are left in the dark. We scream, run away. But when our parents hear what has happened, they run away, nobody is left. And after, you know we have problems with the parents. They do not allow us to make *sedenjka*, but we slip out and make it anyway. Youth is crazy!

*I dođu momci, a mi predemo u najveće. A oni, kao, će ni nalože vatru. Pa, otud, od ovud, dokle je rasprškaju. Ugase oganj, mrak! Mi pištimo, begamo, čuju roditelji, izađu, oni pobegnu, pa nema niko nigde. I posle, znaš kako, dojde do sukobi. Sa roditelji. Ne daju. Mi se pa iskradnemo, pa napravimo sedenjku. Pa mladost' – ludost'!* (Milunka Đorđević, Jelašnica village)

The central elements of this custom were lascivious behavior and gender transgression. Although certain erotic contents appeared in the lascivious joking (for example playing with the falus shape of the spindle), the songs called *pripojke*, *pripevaljke*, *pripojanje* or *pripevuvanje* were the main sources of sexual insinuation. The textual contents of the performed songs often contained lascivious elements and an imaginary dialogue between a man and woman. Because of that “specific” content, some women were ashamed to talk about these songs:

Dene does not want to talk about that, she is a decent housewife.

*Neće Dene bezobrazno da priča ona domaćica žena.* (Dragan Todorović, Vukmanovo village)

The content of these songs referred to the symbolical coupling of girls and young men from a village:

*Krca, krca, nova kolca,  
koji mi se u njih vozi.  
Jela mi se u nji vozi,  
a Boba mi po nji ide.*  
(Grozdana Đokić, Leskovik village)

*Lenjir mi se klati, klati,  
devojka mi se mlati, mlati,  
koj li će mi u ruke dopadne,  
evo mene ja sam pored tebe.*  
(Desanka Petrović, Gornja Vrežina village)

The most important aspect of performing these songs that it gave women an opportunity to voice their emotions publicly, which was not something that was commonly practiced. Some of these songs with explicit erotic content women referred to as “men,” “rakish” or “on the men tune” (*muške, mangupske, na muški glas*). This transgression at the level of discourse revealed that these songs belonged to the categories of “Other” (men) and were taboo in regular settings. These songs, thus, were an outlet for women’s free, uninhibited spirit, made possible by their special status during the *sedeljke*.”

*Pipa pipa, pa napipa, dragi bre,  
punu šaku sitnu dlaku, Jelena.«*  
(Mladenka Živković, Gornja Vrežina village)

Although *sedeljke* were female gatherings, women were occasionally afraid that their husbands may hear them sing lascivious songs, which proved that their behavior was still checked by the existent norms:

“Aye, our husbands stood there in front of the door, do not sing that.”

*Ej, naši muži leže ovdekaj pred kapiju, nemoj da pevate i ovoj.*  
(Desanka Petrović, Donja Vrežina village)

Through their activities during the *sedenjka* custom, women negotiated the boundaries between gender segregated performance and challenged boundaries between the male and female domain:

“In this particular performance context, they appropriate and subvert male genres to gain power in a new way, by inverting the situation so that it is the males who are stereotyped as these jokes become vehicles for portraying women’s views on male language usage.” (Young and Turner 1993:13, 14)

Transgression is also visible in the masking of the female participants, playing with existing gender roles in that way. They usually masked into men and a bear, or blackened themselves:

“We mask ourselves. Vera and me go in through the window, and roll over women and scratch them. And we get their hemp off, wonderful!” Wonderful!

*Pa se prepravljamo. Ja i Vera pa kroz prozor. Pa izvrtamo žene, pa kao ovo, pa češanje. Pa kudjelje vadimo, pa lepota! Lepota!*  
(Ljiljana Radonjić, Prosek village)

These acts can be perceived as a subversion of dominant cultural practices and “natural” social categories. Through such behavior women played with social norms and “appropriate” female acting. Froma Zeitlin, in her examination of the antique female rituals, argues that these were performed to demonstrate how boundaries are tiny and slight:

All those relations are unstable and reversible; they cross boundaries and invade each other’s territories, erase and reinstate hierarchical distances, reflecting ironically upon each other and themselves (Zeitlin1995:377).

In my view, all these customs are means for women to express their individualities freely without compromising the patriarchal society. Regarding their significant role in the construction of “femininity” and the subjectivity of rural women, the songs associated with it contain their personal attitudes and feelings. During the customs, performing women were in “their own” space out of the “regular time” and free from the control of men, which opened a possibility for them to enjoy all the freedom they did not have in real social life. On the other hand, taking into account that these customs emerged as a part of the wider system of cultural practices of the patriarchal society, it represented a space for the articulation of female ritual power. These customs confirm women’s “internal” authority (women’s power “behind the throne”) compared to the real social power of men. With respect to that, these customs cannot be seen as

subversive activities but as an outlet for female expression. Through constant anticipation, these practices actually maintained the established social roles and protected the existent order.

### CHAPTER THREE: THE VILLAGE GATHERINGS – THE POLITICS OF REPRESENTATION

#### 4.1. The Public /Private Distinction in the Field of Musical Practices

As many scholars emphasize, the public/private distinction stands out as one of the “grand dichotomies” of Western thought. This binary opposition was employed in anthropology as one of the main analytical concepts strongly connected with gender. Michael Zimbalist Rosaldo developed a theory based on the work of Meyer Fortes, in which women are always and everywhere identified within the private sphere while men are related to the public sphere of social activities<sup>50</sup> (Zimbalist Rosaldo 1974:24, Ivanović 2003:422).

Feminist research has successfully shown the mistake of assuming that the boundaries between public and private are stable. Despite the presumption of “separated spheres,” most social practices, relations, and transactions are not limited to the principles associated with one or the other sphere. They emphasize that historical changes in the “content” of what is officially or conventionally meant by public and private largely affected this discursive distinction in social theory: “The use of the conceptual vocabulary of ‘public’ and ‘private’ often generates as much confusion as illumination, not least because different sets of people who employ these concepts mean very different things by them – and sometimes, without quite realizing it, mean several things at once” (Weintraub & Kumar 1997:1).

In light of this, these terms will not be used in the present work as a spatial category, but primarily as an ethnographic one. The notions of public and private will be employed to demarcate important boundaries in the field of musical practices and especially to underline the “visibility/invisibility” interrelation. Drawing from Susan

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<sup>50</sup>This approach was strongly criticized as an unhistorical and transcendental principle of social organization.

Gal's definition of the public/private distinction as a communicative phenomenon that is a product of a semiotic process (Gal 1997:261), these terms will be employed in the same manner that my interlocutors used them in their narratives; their understanding of public and private as constituent cultural categories will be maintained. In the following sections, I will try to clarify why the female singers' stage performances at the Village Gatherings were perceived by my interlocutors as entirely different in comparison to other performance situations. The idea is not to base my approach on the female/male relation with the public/private dichotomy as a structural opposition between domestic and public domains of musical activity, but quite the opposite I would like to discuss how the correspondence between public and private, through a state imposed activity, affected changes in the performance of gender roles.

According to the ethnographical paradigm of a musical performance, it is very difficult for a researcher to define the "true performance situation." According to Charlote J. Frisbie, the definition of a performance cannot be applied in the cross-cultural analyses since it depends on every particular society (Frisbie 1980:80). Furthermore, Frank Dubinskas, in his PhD thesis *Performing Slavonian Folklore: The Politics of Reminiscence and Recreating the Past* (Stanford University, 1983), introduces a debate involving American and international scholars about the definition of staged, organized "cultural performance," presented outside of the "local" audiences (Dubinskas 1983:13). He argues that the central point of demarcation lies in the difference between everyday and special symbolic actions, where a person performing publicly steps out of the regular daily life routine (ibid. 18). The stage/non-stage performance distinction appeared as the important issue in ethnomusicological works during the socialism. As already stated in the Introduction, scholars criticized the stage representation of "traditional" music, seeing it as being extricated from its "natural" context (Petrović 1981, Zečević 1968, 1981, Fulanović-Šešić 1981). In their opinion, the spatial dimensions of performance appeared to be crucial in the perception of "real" and "authentic" performance contexts. For the scholars active in that period, performing in small groups – within informal settings and among well-know people, and without strong division between performers and audience was seen as a "natural" context for

the traditional music performance. In contrast to the notion of non-stage performance as “pure,” “spontaneous” and “naturally developed,” the stage performances were considered “adapted,” “non-spontaneous” and “channelized.” In their opinion, the stage as an artificial space for the “traditional” music performing influenced the transformation of autochthonous musical forms. It is important to take into account that the non-stage/stage performance distinction in the scholarly discourse was created in the particular historical period and social climate, referring to an extension of state control to activities, spaces and relations considered “private.” In that respect, the notion of stage/non-stage performance stayed closely connected to a public/private distinction. In both the official discourse and everyday narratives stage performance was also named public performance (*javni nastup*), which emphasizes specific visibility and the institutional arrangements associated with it.

According to the statements of my interlocutors, stage performances had a different meaning in comparison with other performances unrecognized by community members as “real musical performances.” Community celebrations and parties associated with the annual and life circle and informal festivities were not seen by the community members as a public act *par excellence*. For example, singing accompanying dances at local gatherings such as *sabori* was not understood as music performance. In Niško polje, *sabori* were organized on important religious holidays (Easter or some other spring holiday), and villagers usually visited *sabors* in all neighboring villages. The main purpose of these informal public gatherings was the initiation of young girls and boys into the social status of marriageable persons. These occasions served as meeting places for young people, providing an opportunity for them to speak and dance together:

“It was Easter in Čukljenik (village), we went there and guys came from other villages. That was called to see and be seen. And that was done furtively; I look at someone when he can not notice that I’m eyeing him.”

*U Čukljenik je bio Uskrs, idemo mi tamo i momci dođu sa strane.  
To je se kao zvalo zgedaju se. A to je sve krišom bilo. Ja gledam  
nekoga da ne vidi. (Milunka Đorđević, Jelšnica village)*

Parents usually attended *sabors* to consider their children's potential partners. From that viewpoint, dancing and singing at these occasions was not regarded by the community as real music making, but primarily as a way of establishing social ties.

In that view, state sponsored stage performances, which occurred in different cultural contexts and where performers are displayed outside the local community, were perceived by the villagers in Niško Polje as a "real music event." Although the performers and audience for such events mainly belonged to the same social milieu, the attendance of real "others" embodied in the presence of a jury and the regional organizers added new elements to the usual structure of the musical performances in Niško Polje.<sup>51</sup> Hence, the idea of performing music restricted to local customs and internal gatherings in front of a wider public within a formal framework was entirely new. In that way, the stage performance of the female singers was seen as a completely new practice for that generation of community members.

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<sup>51</sup> What should be considered as "true performance situation" (Seeger 1980:24), the role of audience and performance-audience interactional dynamics, is discussed by Anthony Seeger and Charlotte J. Frisbie in the book *The Ethnography of Musical Performance* (1980).

#### 4.2. *Public Manifestations during Socialism –A Short Overview*

All partisans dance *kolo*,  
a Serb, Croat and Muslim.

All nations are merry,  
merry are all villages.

We are building socialism  
and do not ask for any help.

*Igra kolo sve partizan,*  
*Srbin, Hrvat i Musliman.*

*Svi narodi veselo,*  
*veselo je sve selo.*

*Socijalizam mi gradimo,*  
*ničju pomoć ne tražimo.*

(Nedeljković, in manuscript)

When attempting to explore the Village Gatherings, it is necessary to give a short overview of the political climate and official culture policy in socialist Serbia and its impacts on representational practices.

The idea of Yugoslav integration was based on the concept of a strong and unitary federation of equal nations on the one hand, and the construction of a Yugoslav identity on the other. Official cultural politics aimed to achieve the homogeneity of ethnic and regional diversity and create a canon of Yugoslav folk heritage. Establishing a new, “common” tradition was based on the conceptualization of folklore heritage as the joint product of the working class (peasants, workers and intelligentsia):

Music folklore is the music created and passed on from generation to generation by wider layers of working people, who do that in accordance with their natural artistic instinct, disregarding the learned conventions of music theory. (Žganec 1962: 6)

The socialist notion of the term *narodno* (which meant both “national” and “folk”) included both the rural population and the so-called working intelligentsia (Marjanović 1959:108). In comparison to the connotation that this term had in the nineteenth

century, especially in relation to romantic nationalism, during the socialist period it was used to propagate the homogeneity of people and “undifferentiated” masses (Buchanan 2006:35). Party administrators emphasized that “national” had a different meaning compared to its past when it favored exclusively the rural environment. However, its socialist reinterpretation included both workers and intellectuals, and therefore the inhabitants of both villages and cities (Nedeljković 1962:100; Nedeljković 1968:45). Regarding that, national and ethnic identity was hidden beneath the local/regional identity, and the national culture in the mainstream discourses was transformed into a local one:

The secular rural musical repertoire is determined far more by locality than by nationality or religious affiliation. It supports a rather narrow, local, rural identity, usually connected to a village, valley, or mountain. (Laušević 1996:122)

The idea of a Yugoslav nation was based on the concept of Slavic cohesion and belief that all nations that had participated in the creation of the new country shared the same origin. Research was devoted to examining ancient Balkan and Slavic groups in order to provide the common elements needed for the making of a Yugoslav culture. In other words, the mainstream discourse attempted to impose a new Yugoslav supra-identity which would include the existent (more particular) identities. The political agenda of progress and modernization was directed at eliminating national differences, supporting a shared identity based on economic development, economic and gender equality, tolerance among nations and equal legal rights for all citizens (Sekulić, Massey, Hodson 1994:95). The official discourse claimed that existent differences would vanish under “the supremacy of the proletariat” (Echols 1981:4).

In the first years after World War II, party committees supervised all aspects of social activities: civil organizations, economy, international relations, education and culture (Petranović 1988:72). The Ideological Commission of the Central Committee of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia (*Ideološka komisija Centralnog komiteta komunističke partije Jugoslavije*) and the Commission for Education of the Department for Propaganda and Agitation of the Central Committee of the League of Communists of

Yugoslavia (*Komisija za školstvo Uprave za propagandu i agitaciju Centralnog komiteta SKJ*) called the *Agitprop* services were aimed at “channeling” all spontaneous behavior of the people, and directing it in the “right direction.” (Archive of Yugoslavia, League of Communists of Yugoslavia, in the further text: AJ, Central Committee of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia, Minutes from the Commission Meetings, 507, VIII-1).

The culture department of the *Agitprop* provided prospects for the organization and development of culture by establishing theatres, orchestras, vocal groups, expositions, literary and cultural performances. The concept of mass culture spread through the cultural centers, and was organized at a local level. The voluntary character of the manifestations was particularly imperative as a symbol of the new enthusiasm: “Volunteerism connected volition and creativity with new ideology and true belief in a better future” (Đorđević 1997:230). By the end of 1947 more than 400 cultural centers – houses of culture (*domovi kulture, zadružni domovi*) were built. In the newly opened cultural institutions, “responsible party administrators/comrades” (*odgovorni drugovi*) organized cultural and educational activities, propagating the idea of “brotherhood and unity,” Slavic solidarity and Marxist theory (ibid. 73).

As a part of the symbolic representations of the new multinational society, the *public manifestations* at the state level were established with the purpose of making evident that “unified” cultural heritage. Organized on federal holidays (such as the celebration of President’s Day – Marshal Tito’s birthday, The Day of the Republic), they had a highly standardized structure. The most important part of their repertoires were “revolutionary songs,” which were usually performed by choirs, with patriotic contents and were directed toward maintaining social cohesion and developing patriotic feelings and a Yugoslav identity (Laušević 1996:119).

One of the main protagonists in cultural policymaking were the state-sponsored amateur Cultural-Artistic Societies – KUDs (constituted in cities in every one of the six

Yugoslav republics),<sup>52</sup> which propagated the ideology of “brotherhood and unity” by basing their repertoire on the folk heritage of all “nations” and “nationalities” of Yugoslavia. Higher authorities insisted on the close cooperation between KUDs from cities and villages in all Yugoslav republics (Fulanović-Šošić 1981:268). Providing a sense of unity was realized through the inclusion of a dance and music repertoire from all Yugoslav republics in the KUDs’ performances, apart from the local (national) repertoire.<sup>53</sup> By practicing each other’s folk songs and dances, diversity was displayed as a positive aspect of Yugoslav society (Laušević 1996:119).

Party administrators insisted on the equality of all Yugoslav national cultures, as well as on the “appropriate” representation of cultural heritage (Petranović 1988:319). In that way, the KUDs espoused cultural purity since each nation or ethnic group was represented through its most “representative” folk pieces. The emphasis was on the most “artistic” presentation of the folk heritage, but in accordance with the “folklore spirit.” In the official discourse these “stylized performances,” were presented as the main elements in the battle against “backwardness” associated with the old forms of folklore performing. Making of “highest quality of interpretation,” by opinion of the policy makers would affect on the further development of folk dances and music (AJ-142, Materials of Commission for Ideological-Educational Work, 47-165). The government supported both state and local amateur cultural-artistic ensembles. They usually consisted of junior and senior folklore groups, and folk music orchestras, and

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<sup>52</sup> The most prominent professional ensembles in Serbia were KUD “Branko Krsmanović”, KUD “Žikica Jovanović Španac“ and KUD “Kolo“ from Belgrade. These top ranking ensembles, led by professional choreographers and experts in the field of folk heritage, were and still are considered to be the so-called “folk-ballet” ensembles ([http://www.krsmanovic.co.yu/files/main\\_en.php](http://www.krsmanovic.co.yu/files/main_en.php)).

<sup>53</sup> In 1961, in Niš, a manifestation called “The Gatherings of Serbian Amateurs” was established celebrating the twentieth anniversary of the beginning of the socialist revolution. At the beginning of the program a cantata called “Homeland,” composed by Dušan Kostić, was performed, a musical piece which contained the text of the rebellion manifesto of the Central Committee of the Yugoslav Communist Party. Then, a cantata entitled “Serbia,” by Mihajlo Vukdragović, was also included in the program of the Culture-Artistic Societies of all parts of Serbia. The non-musical accompanying programs included books, exhibitions, visual art and amateur photographs exhibitions (magazine *Politika*, Beograd 28.6.1961.).

they performed at the various state, republic or local manifestations, but also traveled to the international festivals.<sup>54</sup>

With the beginning of the 1950s, the strong state-party model of the cultural policy was abandoned. The political relations of Tito's regime with the West progressively warmed up, which effected further liberalization of certain segments of political, public and economical spheres of life in Yugoslavia (Naumović 2006:56). Party administrators began to support artistic freedom as well as domestic and international cultural cooperation. In that time (in 1951), the first folklore festival was organized in Belgrade (Petrović and Zečević 1981:283).<sup>55</sup> The second half of the 1950s was marked by ideological tensions between mass-culture and artistic "high" culture, and increased interest for culture-entertainment life (*kulturno-zabavni život*). Policy makers criticized the invasion of amateurism, particularly "low" quality of repertoire and absence of contemporary, realistic topics. They insisted on "modernization" of peasant culture by importation of "high culture" elements to the cultural life and entertainment in villages (for example, the modern dances at the internal dance gatherings). Importance of close cooperation between village and city KUDs and their joint contributions to various cultural manifestations that combine rural/urban repertoires was especially emphasized (AJ-142, Materials of Commission for Ideological-Educational Work, 47-164).

From the 1960s, with the establishment of brass band's festivals and corresponding manifestations, the movement of bureaucratized amateurism began, along with a new phase of "re-actualization" of local heritage (Lukić Krstanović 2004:57). In official discourse, festivals and reviews represented crucial elements in "channelizing" amateur cultural-artistic activities (AJ-142, Materials of Commission for Ideological-Educational Work, 47-164). Amateur organizations were the main organizers of the

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<sup>54</sup> KUD "Kolo," founded in 1948, in the first twenty years of work gave concerts in more than thirty countries: Switzerland, Austria, United Kingdom, Netherlands, Belgium, France, Monaco, Italy, Greece, Turkey, Germany, Soviet Union, China, Burma, Canada, USA, Israel, Poland, Tunis, Japan, Australia, Indonesia, India, Egypt, Morocco, Luxembourg, Bulgaria, Ireland, Hungary, Finland etc. ([www.kolo.co.yu](http://www.kolo.co.yu)).

<sup>55</sup> The folklore festivals and manifestations do not have a long history in Serbia. Before World War II in Belgrade there had been only one manifestation of this kind (that was in 1938, organized by the Association of Journalists).

*public manifestations* together with individuals from local communities – writers, ethnologists, composers, journalists, along with local authorities and party administrators. In the mid-1960s, the cooperation with the West even more intensified. The tourist industry that developed in Yugoslavia called for the establishment of several regional folklore festivals<sup>56</sup> (Ceribašić 1998:25). With the revived interest in village culture and increasing scholarly work in the field of folklore, different courses of action in the preservation of musical traditions were undertaken, not only at the state level, but also in local settings (Petrović 1981:283). In the dominant discourse of “traditional folk heritage,” festivals and manifestations played a critical role in the “natural process of the development of folk heritage,” and its function in the “future development” of the nation (Zečević 1968:219).

During the early 1970s, the political and economic transformations became even more complex. The Constitution adopted in 1974 introduced a concept of cooperative relations among the republics as independent entities within the Yugoslav federation (Petranović 1988:415). The main organizers of cultural life in Serbia were the institutions called “Self-governing interest societies” (*Samoupravne interesne zajednice – SIZs*) and the Culture-Educational Societies (*Kulturno-prosvetne zajednice – KPZ*). In the 1980s, that centralized system of supervision was changed in favor of the grater engagement of predominantly local authorities, associations and cultural centers (*Domovi kulture*). A certain number of manifestations still remained under the authority of the republican ministries, but many of them were organized by local cultural organizations (Lukić Krstanović 2004:57).

Despite the ideological emphasis on progress and modernization, sluggish agrarian reforms, the emphasis on industrialization and low investment in agriculture showed that the rural areas and their cultural life were largely neglected by official policy (Hoffman 1959:562). Party administrators criticized the concept of tradition, seeing it

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<sup>56</sup> Within the organization of The First Belgrade Touristic-Fair in Belgrade in 1960 was organized The Balkan Festival of Folk Dances, Music and Songs (AJ-142, Materials of Commision for Ideological-Educational Work, 47-165).

as connected to retrograde social forces that were not able to participate in the modernization and development of the country, and on the other hand, as a mere amusement:

But church gatherings (*crkveni sabori*), *slava*, and various entertaining village dances from the ancient times are not only the outcome of some backward influence or a result of wider intention for their perseverance, but in a great part a desire for amusement and expression. (AJ-142, The report from the plenum of the Socialist Federation of Working People of Yugoslavia 1959, F-616)

For that reason, the policy makers did not consider it useful to forbid the “old” patterns of entertainment life in villages through administrative regulations. Their intention was to offer some new, “contemporary” contents created in accordance with socialistic demands, substituting in that way the “old cultural forms”<sup>57</sup> (*ibid.*). While the state sponsored amateur and professional KUDs propagated common Yugoslav identity with a repertoire imposed by the state or party administrators, the local KUDs performances were supervised only in cases when they performed at big reviews (*smotra*), political manifestations or the mass working activities (*masovne radne akcije*) (Petranović 1988:124).

Unlike the way the state manifestation, the local music events in Serbia stayed far away from control of party leaders and policymakers:

“The traditional rural music....confirms a local rather than a national (ethnic) identity. For this reason it has never been considered dangerous to the supracultural ideology and so was not placed under its strict control.” (Laušević 1996:119)

Manifestations such as Village Gatherings (*Susreti sela*), which was focused on local music styles and achievements in local rural culture were not seen as a real treat to the

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<sup>57</sup> As a part of the celebration of the state holidays such as the Day of the Republic or the First of May, policy makers suggested the establishment of a new village holidays connected with the revolution and socialist past – the day of the foundation of the local school, the day of the village’s electrification or the building of a canal for irrigation (AJ-142, The report from the plenum of the Socialist Federation of Working People of Yugoslavia 1959, F-616).

state's multicultural politics, but just a way of people's entertainment – customs, music and dances were regarded as a part of people's everyday lives, deeply rooted in their lifestyles and mentality (Petranović 1988:136).

### 4.3. A Stage in the Field

Village Gatherings (*Susreti sela*) were established in 1973 by the Government of the Republic of Serbia. In the same year the “Regulation” for it was ratified as well, functioning as the main official document of the manifestation (see adapted version of the Constitution from 1990, appendix 2). There were some corresponding manifestations in other republics of the former Yugoslavia, but, overall, the manifestation was and still is focused exclusively on Serbia and its two provinces, Vojvodina and Kosovo. It was organized as a state (read republic) project, but the very organization was based on the work of cultural organizations and amateurs at the local level. The official organizer was the Serbian Cultural-Educational Association (*Kulturno-prosvetna zajednica Srbije*) situated in Belgrade with local branches in all regional centers. However, the real organizers, as well as the last link in that bureaucratic chain, were the Cultural-Educational Associations and the Cultural Centers in villages. These institutions were established as a part of the overall project of “enlightenment of villages,” with a function of educating of the village population and the cultural development of rural areas (AJ-142, The status of women in villages, materials from 1959-1962, F-616). The official name of the manifestation was “The Competition of Serbian Villages,” but in a local variation in Niško Polje, as well as in everyday talk, it was called the Village Gatherings. The competitions were organized at four levels of territorial governance: the local (*lokalni-seoski*), the municipal (*opštinski*), the regional (*regionalni*) and the republic (*republički*). All activities were assessed by a jury appointed by the Regional Board of the manifestation and comprising five to seven qualified cultural and educational workers, medical doctors, agricultural experts, architects, ethnologists, music teachers and journalists (from the Regulation).

The principal objective of the manifestation, according to the Regulation, was estimating conditions in and enhancing the development of villages, providing better living conditions and upgrading cultural life, as well as production, health, communal

and other services concerning the village populations (clause 1 of the Regulation). The villages competed in five domains:

1. The organization of agricultural production and the results accomplished in that field;
2. The development of education;
3. The building and settling of the village;
4. Cultural activities;
5. The protection and development of the environment.

In the field of the so-called cultural activities, villages competed in the following disciplines:

- Usage and popularization of books
- Usage of press, radio and television
- Organization of amateur cultural activities and mass-participation of children, teenagers and adults in work in different courses (theater, music, dance, literature, visual arts, photography, etc.)
- Collecting, systematizing and preserving the cultural heritage
- Knowledge on local history
- Collection of oral folk heritage and data for the book series “The Chronicles of Villages” (*Hronike sela*)
- Variety of cultural events (literary and music events, theatre shows, exhibitions, movie shows, etc.)
- Sports activities

Local competitions were organized within one region as specific Village Gatherings, where one village hosted its rival (another village). Local winners got the opportunity to compete at a regional level, and, if successful, at the final manifestation organized on the republic level. The so-called final parade was organized in the village which the winner of the final competition came from (see the list of village winners in appendix

3). The program of the final competition was broadcast by the media (a television show *Znanje-Imanje*) and the winners at all levels were awarded various prizes (usually books, television sets or grants).



Photograph 3: The Village Gatherings in Trupale village in 1983

The attitude towards the manifestation varied over the years, depending on political and economic changes in Serbia. The Village Gatherings began losing momentum after the break up of Yugoslavia, but still continued to exist during the leadership of Slobodan Milošević.<sup>58</sup> Milošević's controversial politics of flirting both with socialist and nationalistic ideas (propagating at the same time Serbian nationalism and the Yugoslavian idea), resulted in a phenomenon that many of the socialist cultural practices sustained, apart from the new ones created in accordance with the new political demands (Jansen 2005:21). That politics of continuity with the socialist past enabled the preservation of several socialist cultural patterns. Paradoxically, in the rural environment, which was at the same time proclaimed to be the main force supporting

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<sup>58</sup> Marija Bišof, the current secretary of the Serbian Cultural-Educational Association, states that some leading administrators of that organization during the 1990s were closely connected to Milošević's Socialist Party of Serbia.

nationalistic politics, cultural life functioned the same way it had in the last thirty years. As mentioned, during Milošević's regime, the Village Gatherings continued to be held without considerable changes.



Photograph 4: The Village Gatherings in Trupale village in 1990

However, with the beginning of the 1990s, the weakening of administrative support and state funding and the closing of state institutions that made up the institutional framework caused a loss of interest in the Village Gatherings. Interlocutors emphasized that the multiparty system, which brought about strong polarization of political orientations was the main obstacle in organizing the manifestation. One of the main organizers of the manifestation and the former General Secretary of the Serbian Cultural-Educational Association, Mr. Marković, emphasized that after the Democratic orientated parties won at the local elections in 1996, and dissensions between the republic and local authorities, the organization of the Gatherings became more difficult.

After the end of Milošević's rule in 2000 and even earlier,<sup>59</sup> the Cultural-Educational Associations began shutting down and the manifestation was claimed to be irrelevant and frivolous:

The Village Gatherings lasted long, until 1996, or maybe 1995. And then the politics started and war and it changed, shut down and changed.

*A Susreti sela bili su dugo, do 1996, valjda godine 1995. I onda su počeli politike, počeo je rat i onda se to promenilo, ugasilo se i promenilo. (Vukašin Mitić, Trupale village)*

Many of the people who actively participated in organizing this manifestation stated that the frequent alternation of the local authorities and the party conflicts are the principal reasons why it is very difficult today to find people willing to cooperate on the same project. In the opinion of the villagers, the new democratic government in Niš (the parties of the so-called “Democratic forces” – *Demokratski blok*) gave preference to urban culture, neglecting cultural activities in the rural areas. Some of them even told me that their policy was directed at building up a civil society (*građansko društvo*, which in the very etymology of the phrase excludes peasants), trying to distance themselves from their rural origins.

Apart from the political changes, additional factors that caused the discontinuity of the Village Gatherings included the lessening of the once crucial role of schools and the closing of local cultural centers. Today, in many villages of Niško Polje the culture-educational associations are closed, their possessions stolen, and local libraries and museums abandoned. Because of the absence of strong state supervision, the active

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<sup>59</sup> What was particularly interesting is that the most important discursive boundary for my interlocutors was not 1991, the year when the war on the territory of the former Yugoslavia broke out, but 1996 (the year of the first significant political changes at the local level since World War II) and 1999 (the bombing of the Federative Republic of Yugoslavia by the NATO forces). That attitude is a result of the feeling that many people in Serbian rural areas shared that war was happening far away and that they were not personally involved in it. On the other hand, the NATO bombing had a completely different meaning, and in internal communication was characterized as “the War” (the first War after War World II).

participation of local schools in the realization of the manifestation was not imposed anymore, and teachers quit participating in the organizing of the Village Gatherings.

Organizers' stories confirm that the Gatherings were not under the strong supervision of the higher authorities. As one of the main reasons for this they cite the lack of a firmly established framework for music making and the representation of traditional music. Mr. Marković from the Serbian Cultural-Educational Association is of the opinion that the manifestation was established with a specific purpose, as a free, unsupervised space, an outlet for subversive activities, allowing people to express their feelings and opinions: "People could talk about everything without repression and fear of imprisonment."<sup>60</sup> Quoting my interlocutors, this manifestation was considered marginal, in accordance with the overall cultural policy toward villages in Serbia during socialism. They stated that party functionaries and cultural policy creators were not particularly interested in a manifestation program; their function was just to show up in order to underline a formal nature of the manifestation.

Due to the socialist concept of "village development" along with the ideology of progress, the main aim of the Village Gatherings was to introduce development and improvement in the field of culture in rural areas. The educational aspect of the manifestation in suppressing "retrograde" ideas and an "old" attitude towards life and culture, and the creation of "healthy" socialist subjects, appeared as very important. The activities within amateur groups and collectives were seen as crucial in reinforcement of sociability, sense of responsibility and organization and many other positive qualities to young people (AJ-142, Materials of Commission for Ideological-Educational Work, 47-164). For that reason, the local schools were particularly included in the creation of the program. Apart from the performances of local folklore and vocal and instrumental groups, the required part of the program included school choir performances, music school students' performance, or a modern dance.<sup>61</sup> Modernization, which was one of

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<sup>60</sup> A good illustration of that is the song "Heroes dance on the ground of Serbia" that was often performed at the Village Gatherings despite its overt national connotation.

<sup>61</sup> The organizers especially emphasized the educational character of the manifestation.

the primary tasks of the socialist regime, was visible in the structure of the repertoire of the manifestation. The local organizers told me that in the beginning there were not many “modern elements” included in the program:

As this modern trend came, the program was more and more arranged in accordance with contemporary requirements to gain the attention of the audience.

*Posle toga se, pošto dolazi ovaj trend savremenosti, onda se sve više i više program pravio prema savremenim uslovima, da privuče što više publike da gledaju. (Vukašin Mitić, Trupale village)*

By the 1980s pop and rock music with electrical instruments had become widely popular in villages, and these kinds of performances were included in the program of the Village Gatherings (Radaković 1997:11) (See the program of the Gornja and Donja Studena village in the appendix 4).

The music of minorities was represented at the Village Gatherings through participation of minority groups' villages from Vojvodina, a multi-cultural province which is populated by up to twenty six various ethnic groups. In the case of Serbia proper, the republic organizers confirmed the active participation of *Vlah* community villages in northeastern Serbia. According to their statements, since the Gatherings were primarily dedicated to rural areas, Roma community members, who were not well integrated to the peasant society, were not active in the manifestation. In the area of Niško Polje, Roma communities' musics were not represented at the Gatherings, and remained neglected in local settings.



Photograph 5: The Village Gatherings in Trupale village in 1987

What were the possible reasons for that conceptual mixture and representation of the “old, traditional” repertoire alongside the “new” genres of modern culture? Were the female singers’ vocal groups just a product of an increasing interest of the experts in preserving the “traditional” music practices? Or was the main goal to include all generations of performers in complying with the concept of enthusiastic amateurism and mass-participation criteria? My assumption is that both factors undoubtedly had a great impact on the programs’ structure; however, I would argue that the incorporation of the elements of both rural and urban styles was of vital importance.

The Village Gatherings represented the rural social milieu, as well as the urban, in an attempt to reconcile the “old” with the “contemporary” which was a feature of the socialist lifestyle in general. The possible reasons for that conceptual mixture did not lie only in the ideology of modernization and development of rural areas by the above-mentioned importing of “high culture” elements and introducing urban contemporary

trends, but also in the emphasis on the equal significance of rural and urban cultures and an attempt at their mixture. That concept was not only represented in the new ideology of modernization that was propagated by state policy, but also in accomplishment of the desired harmony between rural and urban cultures, as an integrating process of all social subjects in building a classless socialist society.

The elements of stability and change important for the urban-rural transformation processes (Halpern 1963:176) in the program of the Village Gatherings enabled that perfect connection. Different generations participated in the program (old people as well as young ones) and the connection between the contemporary trends and “old” tradition was created:

We had around 5 generations and all of them stayed on the stage – including these singers who sang the old, “genuine“ songs,<sup>62</sup> that is to say, folk songs.

*Mi smo skoro imali oko 5 generacija i svi ostaju na pozornici i oni pevači koji pevaju izvorne ove stare pesme, kako bi rekao, ove narodne pesme. (Velibor Stanković, Prosek)*

These kinds of amateur activities were highly encouraged by the local authorities. More extensive participation in the Village Gatherings was requested, which could engage all villagers regardless of their age and occupation:

Today’s village, a village of socialist relations, maintains only the socialist culture. That requires that the amateurism in a village should be, in true meaning, part of the overall amateur and cultural life in our society. (Radojković 1974:7)

As Gail Kligman notes, in her examination the state control of the public sphere in Romania: “In the political culture of anti-intellectualism, elite professionalism was displaced by the celebration of mass amateurism” (Kligman 1998:34).

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<sup>62</sup> The translation of the term *izvorne pesme* is used from the Aleksandra Marković’s masters thesis “*Our Genuine Songs*”: *Music’s Role in Representation*, University of Amsterdam, 2005.

How did the female singers and local organizers perceive the Village Gatherings? Talking about the socialist period, as already mentioned in the Introduction, sometimes triggered contradictory emotions in my interlocutors. As we were talking about the old customs and music, all of them emphasized that after World War II many of the customs were forbidden by the new authorities. They stated that higher authorities sanctioned customs and celebrations which were seen as contradictory to the Communist Party ideology. Deemed as especially “dangerous” were the collective customs connected with the religious holidays and the Orthodox church, first and foremost a custom called *Krstonoše* (village custom dedicated to fertility of the fields, led by an Orthodox priest, see the picture in the Photo Galery, p.234). Similarly, the custom called *Kraljice*, whose name was reminiscent of royalty (in Serbian *kraljica* means queen, and its plural form is *Kraljice* – queens), was also strictly proscribed. In some villages custom participants tried to rename this custom to “Titovke” (instead of saying *Kralj* – King in the refrain of the songs they used Tito):

Text:

*Reci, kralju, kraljice gospođo.  
Da podigne barjak u visine,  
da vidimo vojsku devojačku.*

became:

*Reci, **Tito**, **titovke** devojke,  
da podigne barjak u visine,  
da vidimo vojsku devojačku.*

However, that altered version in practice did not take firm root:

With *Titovke*, it was like that. And just when it should be done, they did not allow us. In the municipality, in the villages, they did not allow us to organize *Kraljice* and mention the word *Kralj*. And we changed it so that instead of *Kraljica* (Queen) we turned the words into Tito, Tito's girls.

*Jeste, jeste, a kad je bilo ono da se menja, znate vi to, da se menja Kralj – Tito, Tito kad je došo, e mi smo baš išli, a za kraljicu smo učili kralja a za Tito posle prebacili i ne daju nam da posle idemo u*

*kraljicu. A mi kažemo, preokrenemo: reci Tito, titovke devojke. Umesto kralju ono Tita. I tako smo lepo to preokrenule.* (Rusanda Arsić, Donja Vrežina village)

Moreover, I heard from Vera Đorđević from Brenica village that in the first years after World War II her father was punished and fined since he allowed her to be *Kraljica*. Životka and Zorica Stanković from Brzi Brod also told me that they, as young girls still in primary school, were flogged by their teacher because they participated in the *Lazarice* custom. Kostadin Gocić from Donja Vrežina village was imprisoned and questioned at the local intelligence service (*UDBA*) as to why he had participated in the *Krstonoše* custom. Furthermore, the information I obtained confirmed that many domestic customs were forbidden because of their association with the Orthodox Church. Local authorities punished un-loyal villagers who practiced customs such as their family's Patron Saint's Day (*Slava*), Orthodox holidays, Mother's Day (*Materice*) and Father's Day (*Oci*) or celebration of the Old New Year (*Vasuljica*). Villagers told me that in the first years following World War II, there were many punishments for practicing the old customs, but later the authorities became more lenient and many people practiced religious customs but mainly in the domestic sphere.

Resistance to rapid industrialization and urbanization, as well as changes in social relations was manifested in the rural environment. The emergence of new patterns of daily life was not taken with approval in the villages. Villagers were not open to new tendencies and the socialist concept of "modernity:" "Peasants became the backdrop against which 'progress' was measured, while at the same time they were its source" (Buchanan 2006:41). Organizers emphasized that during the first few years of holding the Village Gatherings, it was very difficult to introduce this new activity to villagers:

You know, that was all a difficult struggle, I needed great patience. That could not be worked out so easily.

*Znaš kako to je sve bilo to je teška borba, veliko strpljenje. To ne može da se radi baš tako lako.* (Stanković Velibor, Prosek village)

Dragan Todorović from Vukmanovo village explained to me how he had serious problems in persuading people to participate in the Village Gatherings. He decided to apply for participation in the regional competition in the name of his village by himself. Yet, Vukmanovo was a very poor village and there were not enough ambitious people to support that idea:

No, they did not know what was good. I told them: People, we are expanding our society, but we are stuck here, we closed ourselves and do not talk with anyone, just field – house, field – house and that's it. We are blind, what is there, here we are blind even though we have eyes. Let's opening to neighboring villages, to see how they live, what kind of people they are, what they drink, eat, wear, what they think. And to get to know that, let's apply.

*Oni nisu znali sta je lepo. Ja njima kažem: ljudi proširavamo društvo (moram da pričam na seoski način sa njima), mi smo se ovde zakopali, zatvorili smo se, sas nikoga ne pričamo, samo znamo njiva-kuća, njiva-kuća i gotovo. Slepci smo, šta ima tu, pri oči smo slepci. Daj da se otvorimo, iz ovaj okolna sela da vidimo kako tamo žive, kakvo oni, kakvo jedu, kakvo piju, kakvo nose, kakvo razmišljaju. A da bi znali ajdemo će se prijavimo. (Dragan Todorović, Vukmanovo village)*

He had obstacles in organizing vocal and dance groups in the first years of the manifestation, as villagers considered his work as faulty and irrelevant:

I went from house to house to ask the housemaster first: “Would you allow your wife to sing in the group, we want to perform at the Village Gatherings?” – “No chance, to go there to waste her time, go away, you do not have more important work but to go around the village gathering women.” My God, they told me something like that, like I was a loser.

*Idem od kuće od kuće pa pitam prvo domaćina : “Će li pustiš ženu da poje ovamo u grupu, očemo Susreti sela ?” “More ajde bre vi ste azdisali da mi žena tamo dangubi, begaj, ajde, ti nemaš kakvo da radiš nego će se mandaš po selo da zbiraš žene.” Kako mi beoše govorili, Bože, u tom smislu kao da sam dangubaš. (Dragan Todorović, Vukmanovo village)*

He started preparations without a proper place for meeting and training, and in the beginning they had rehearsals in a big room, performed in the old school or built stages out of benches and equipages. This kind of improvised stage was not convenient for dancing as it was very unstable and precarious for dancers. However, after the first difficult years, they got a village Cultural Center, which made working conditions much better, and Vukamanovo became one of the best village participants at the Village Gatherings.<sup>63</sup>

The Gatherings were represented to me by the villagers of Niško Polje with a very positive attitude and they agreed that this manifestation was extremely beneficial to village development. They saw the Gatherings as a space for their personal promotion and that it their village. As the older customs were not practiced anymore, the Gatherings, in their place, represented a specific kind of substitute for community gatherings and celebrations. They emphasized that this manifestation was an excellent opportunity for young people to be engaged in some extra activities, to learn old songs, dances and customs, and to meet their peers from neighboring villages. For older people, it was a good means of reviving memories from the past and having a great time together. The Village Gatherings functioned as a new way of socializing and a specific “outlet” for villagers’ everyday life. Due to what has been written about Niško Polje villages, mostly in a series published by the Serbian Culture-Educational Association called the Chronicles of Villages (*Hronike sela*), as well as local newspapers, articles and books written by local amateurs and cultural workers, the Gatherings were presented as one of the cornerstones of cultural life in this area. The material contains many descriptions of the activities regarding the Gatherings, with special emphasis on the local amateur groups and their good results:

From 1974, *Donja* and *Gornja Studena* have been included in the big manifestation of village competition of Niš municipality called the Village Gatherings. The main goal of the manifestation

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<sup>63</sup> Today, Dragan is the manager of two of the most famous female vocal groups in this area called “Kovilje.”

was the development of inter-village cooperation, cultural life and agricultural production and other activities in the villages. (Mladenović 2002:168)

All local organizers pointed out that this manifestation became one of the most popular cultural activities for the villagers, and that they were very dedicated to preparing for the competition at the Village Gatherings. The amateur groups from some villages won many times at the regional gatherings. These groups also participated in different manifestations in the former Yugoslavia: a group from Donja Studena performed at the Festival of the Folklore Heritage of Serbia (*Sabor narodnog stvaralaštva Srbije*), the Review of the Folklore Groups (*Smotra narodnog stvaralaštva izvornih grupa*), the International Folklore Festival in Zagreb (*Medjunarodna smotra folkloru u Zagrebu*) and the Balkan Festival of Folklore Heritage held in Ohrid (*Balkanski festival narodnog stvaralaštva u Ohridu*). Hence, to a large degree owing to their participation in these festivals, the village of Komren and its bagpiper Kostadin Cvetković, as well as its vocal group “Komrenka,” were one of the most distinguished in the Niš region (the Chronicles of village Donja Studena, Mladenović 2002 and Donji Komren, Radaković 1997).



Photograph 6: The performance of Donja Studena village at the International Folklore Festival in Zagreb in 1979 (the picture taken from the series the the Chronicles of village Donja Studena, Mladenović 2002)

Marjan Radaković, writing about cultural life in his village of Donji Komren, states that during the 1970s cultural life in the villages of Niško Polje flourished, and the local cultural centers had various sections: folklore groups, a dance school, literary groups and others (Radaković 1997:5). Vukašin Mitić, a local organizer in his village Trupale, was very disappointed when this manifestation ceased after the democratic changes had taken place in Niš. He professed that the Village Gatherings had contributed greatly to the life in villages, especially during long winter days when there was little to do. As he testifies, the cultural life in Trupale had become livelier, but after the manifestation ended, there was hardly any cultural activity in the village.

Presented statements illustrate how the Village Gatherings, as a new way of cultural activity in the rural environment of Niško Polje, became a popular and important part of the everyday lives of the villagers. Challenging the dominant attitudes about state sponsored *public manifestations* in socialism as imposed and rigid public forms, this

manifestation showed a state sponsored activity that was completely accepted by the community members as a part of their communal cultural activities and everyday life strategies.

#### 4.4. Repertoire

The creators of the repertoire at the Village Gatherings directly influenced the phenomenon discovered in the fieldwork of the songs selected for the manifestation being performed by women as the most “authentic” musical heritage. Namely, this manifestation largely influenced the selection of songs that would be remembered and reinterpreted as “representative” within the field research: according to the acquired information, this manifestation now epitomizes the “authentic” and “pure traditional style,” not only in the eyes of the performers themselves, but also in the eyes of the wider community. The female singers mostly chose to perform the songs which were part of their repertoire at the Gatherings, that is to say, a majority of the collected material is actually the repertoire of the amateur groups prepared for that manifestation. That practice raised an important issue of repertoire selection and the role of manifestation organizers and authorities in shaping memory about the repertoire through stage performances.

#### “Official Music” and “Local Taste”

As mentioned above, the Village Gatherings were a marginal form of the state-sponsored *public manifestation*, where the main organizers were local cultural organizations and volunteers. Even though strong censorship regarding the repertoire did not exist, a certain degree of guidance was existent: the program requirements concerning folk heritage presentation included one dance performance (so-called *foklor*), reconstruction of one custom, a performance of “genuine” songs and an instrumentalist playing on a traditional instrument. The repertoire was mainly based on the choice of the local cultural workers in villages, but the jury composed of eminent cultural workers had the final say. Village organizers were given formal propositions and program requirements by the deputies of the regional Culture-Educational Societies: every year they held a meeting with the regional organizers who forwarded to

them the instructions concerning the contents of the program. According to the statements from the field, the regional organizers' demands were based on a concept of authenticity in repertoire selection and a more "original" style of performing:

They asked for traditional customs or rituals. Yes all that, but to be adapted for stage. And furthermore, they asked for songs, music, groups, duets or solos. That was a rule for both sides, female and male. Regarding dances, they asked for old dances and original costumes.

*Pa su nam onda tražili narodne običaje ili obrede. Da, sve to, da se to prilagodi sceni. Pa onda pesme, muzika, tražene su grupne, duetalne ili solo. Znači to važi i za jednu i za drugu stranu. I za žensku kolko važi i za mušku. Što se tiče igranja, tražili su igre. Pa su tražili originalnu nošnju. (Dragan Todorović, Vukmanovo village)*

We had original costumes. For example, these yellow scarves. They were, as folk say, folded, not under the chin, but around the head. Well, we looked for that. Old traditional peasant footwear, we even made them of pig pelt.

*Originalno. Imali smo na primer onih žutih marama. Pa su, kako bi narodski rekli, žena je bila zabuljena, neje preko lica ali dođe i prevezana je ovamo. Znači sve smo mi to tražili. Opanci sa ovim vrhovima, pa smo čak imali jedno vreme smo pravili ove svinjske opanke kako ih nazivaju, od svinjske kože. (Velibor Stanković, Prosek village)*

Local organizers told me that the regional organizers did not insist on "patriotic" content (revolutionary songs etc.). Yet, Vukašin Mitić from Trupale village described that some villages (he mentioned Hum) prepared plays based on the adaptation of important events from the socialist past which always got the highest assessment grades. The organizer from Prosek village also told me of similar plays that had been performed. Furthermore, it was not appropriate to adapt old customs with some religious content as, for example, the custom of family's Patron saint's day custom (*Slava*). These kinds of performances were not explicitly forbidden, but got extremely low assessments. In this way, some customs (and songs associated with them) were more appropriate for stage adaptation (e.g. the wedding ceremony, *Sedenjka*, *Lazarice*,

etc). Taking this into account, certain customs were not included into official repertoires, while the performance of other ones was encouraged.

According to the stories from the field, the regional organizers insisted on the local (village) heritage. The jury's imperative of "positive aesthetic criteria" allowed only stylistic, but not in terms of melody and rhythm. New genres, as for example, newly-composed folk songs or other genres of popular music could not be included in the repertoire. As one of the jury members stated (Ms. Nada Zamfirović), there had been attempts to introduce these kinds of genres to the main repertoire, but the jury would not relent. She added that it was very interesting that after the official program, at a dinner party, the participants indulged themselves by singing the newly composed hits. On the other hand, when I asked the village organizers about the newly-composed folk song performances, they confirmed that they sometimes included singers or instrumentalists who perform that kind of genre:

They asked for a ballet group, for example. They also asked for the newly-composed folk songs, and also for modern instruments such as the accordion, synthesizer and so on.

*Tražila se recimo baletska grupa. Tražile su se novokomponovane pesme, pa ovi, ti savremeni instrumenti poput harmonike, sintisajzera, šta ti ja znam. (Dragan Todorović, Vukmanovo village)*

Contradictions in the statements of the jury-member and local organizers illustrate differences between the "official" discourse and the "unofficial" one: the jury-members obviously wanted to present to me (as an expert, an ethnomusicologist) the Village Gatherings as a manifestation which was dedicated to the preservation of "authentic" musical forms, where any kind of "kitsch" was unacceptable.



Photograph 7: Staging of the sedenjka custom, Trupale village in 1990

Taking into account the competitive nature of the manifestation and the important role of the jury, the local organizer's aim was to create the most striking performance. Conforming to the prescribed procedures, every local organizer of the Village Gatherings had to make his own decision about the performance which could bring them more chances of winning. Amateur groups practiced for a few months in advance having rehearsals at village Cultural Centers or in group members' houses. They tried to create a distinct program for every year:

We anyway changed songs, because it was part of the competition, that you cannot sing same songs every year.

*Ipak promenimo pesme, jer to je takmičarski deo bio da ne možeš ti na svaki Susreti svake godine sve jednu istu pesmu da pevamo.*  
(Jadoginka Mitrović, Rujnik village)

They often included jokes or funny elements into a performance to get the jury's attention. Aiming to present an attractive program and get better assessments at the Village Gatherings, many villages employed professional musicians (instrumentalists, singers), music teachers, choreographers or directors:

We did not have a gusla-player, so we brought one Montenegrin man who works here, he is a colleague of mine. Unfortunately, he passed away. He had a gusle and we brought him to contribute to our program. But there were people who worked; sometimes we could not do it alone, if we wanted to produce something of good quality. I am not skilled enough for that, I can organize a program, but I did not have enough quality and I am not qualified and knowledgeable enough to do that. But we engaged people from Niš to do that. Mića Verić was the director of that program, maybe you have heard of him, he is now the director of the Puppet Theater. Thus, for example we brought choreographers from Abrašević, Stanka Paunovića and Din-a (all KUDs).

*Pa nemamo guslara, nego smo doveli jednog Crnogorca koji radi ovde, moj kolega. Na žalost, pokojni, on je imao gusle i onda smo njega doveli da nam popuni program. Ali tu su radili ljudi, nekad nismo mogli ako hoćemo nešto kvalitetno da uradimo, ne možemo sami. Nisam ja sposoban, ja mogu da osmislim program, ali nisam dovoljno ni kvalitetan, ni stručan da to uradim. Ali smo angažovali ljude iz Niša da to urade. Meni je bio Mića Verić režiser tog programa, vi ste čuli možda za njega, mislim da je sad direktor lutkarskog pozorišta. Pa onda recimo za folklor smo dovodili koreografe iz "Abraševića," iz "Stanka Paunovića," iz "Din-a." (Vukašin Mitić, Trupale village)*

Having this in mind, every village had its "stars" who were widely popular (Mr. Velibor Stanković from the village of Prosek told me that they had a pumpkin orchestra (*orkestar lejki*) and an old man, Grandfather Mika, who were real attractions on stage:

Concerning the program, others did not have any chances in quizzes, customs and folklore performances, reciting. Since recently, we began engaging a professor, it is, if I may say it more artificial, that was not real traditional, but the programs demeaned such a concept. The professor who prepared recitals came, for folklore, a man who teaching dances and who knows about that. Also, one man came for the plays.

*Ali što se tiče programa, nisu imali šanse, niko nije imao šanse, od kviza, običaja, folkora, recitatora. Mi smo u zadnje vreme doveli profesora, ako to mogu da kažem, da je, ajde da kažem, izveštačeno, nije ono narodno, ali je program takav, tako je predviđeno. Dođe profesor koji sprema recital, za folklor dođe čovek koji igra u folklor koji to zna, pa nam dođe čovek za dramski deo. (Velibor Stanković, Prosek village)*

### **Indirect Influences on the Repertoire**

As their stories confirm, female singers prepared themselves for the stage performances through organized rehearsals. At these meetings, they refreshed their memories of the songs they had performed in their childhood and youth (mainly before World War II):

Well, we practiced, gathered at one woman's house. We usually went to Dina's house. To join voices. We were alone, we needed no help. With music what is important you have to know by yourself.

*Pa vežbamo, otidemo kod jednu. Ma išli smo dole na Dinu, da se zglasimo, da ide glas. Same smo bile, same, šta će ti pomaga, kude muzika nema tuj ti ne treba ništa, samo sam si čovek treba da zna. (Ilinka Despotović, Trupale village)*

Since women often came from various villages (many of them changed village after marrying) they combined different memories about the song's repertoire. That kind of combination of memories of women from different areas resulted in the process of adjusting their individual repertoires to a common sound: "Underneath collective memory there is a network of different interpretations, which are in accordance with the perspectives of groups, which are taken as appropriate at a particular time and place" (Halbwachs 2001:9). Dobrisavka Janoković for Hum village told me that she learned songs from women whom she had sung with, since she came from a distant village. Other women retold to her the songs' lyrics: "They recited the songs to me – and then they would say to me to sing this word here, that word there" (*Ali, mislim, pesme su mi sve one pričale. E, sad ćemo ovuj reč, sad ćemo onuj reč da pevamo*). Her village repertoire was sung differently in style and melody, and she affirmed that now she

knows neither theirs, nor the songs from her village. For Jagodinka Mitrović, who moved from the distant village of Kravlje to Rujnik village, it was particularly difficult to sing in a different singing style, so she had problems when it came to stage performing:

Here, they have different tunes. Completely different. As if they distort the tune little bit. We sing differently. When we went to the Village Gatherings I could not sing, even if you killed me, I could not.

*Ovi ovde njim su drukši glasovi. Mnogo drukši. Ovde oni malo kao zavrtaju. A mi kao drukše. I kad pojdomo na Susreti sela ja ne mogu, da me ubiješ.* (Jagodinka Mitrović, Rujnik village)

Mladenka Ristić from Vukamnovo village stresses that young women taught each other, but at the same time learned from the older ones (*Pa mi se od njima naučimo a one pa druge od nas se nauče*).

Mixed-generation ensembles, where younger singers learned old songs from the elder ones, enabled the continued passing down of music practices. Since custom practice was not any more a part of everyday life and there was no possibility of refreshing memory through practice, performing at the the Village Gatherings enabled the preservation of “old” repertoires. On the other hand, that kind of practice of “learning” the old songs did not include such a variety of musical material and left no space for improvisation. The standardized structure of the official repertoire at the Gatherings, the musical diversity of local repertoires and various songs were just molded into several tune patterns. Songs are practiced and performed to fit a canonized pattern, without the possibility of personal expressions and improvisations on the part of the performers. This formalizing eliminated the possibility of free improvisations, play and spontaneity<sup>64</sup> as the individual styles became canonized. That affected the process of the individualization of performance, the practice where one woman (usually the leading singers with the best vocal abilities) became the ultimate source for the songs,

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<sup>64</sup> Applause after every performance was also a completely new element in the informal performances of the female singers.

or for one particular song that was considered a part of the repertoire of that one woman, e.g. Vera's song. Almost all of the female singers remember which woman in the village sang the "old songs" and who continued to sing them after these women had died. That individualization of performances became exemplary of the ideal performing style, especially to younger performers, and a pattern to follow when passing the song on:

Anda sang these songs. Anda, and after her Mara, but no one could sing as Anda sang that.

*Bila je jedna Anda i posle Mara nešto to pevala. Anda pa Mara, ali niko ko Anda ne može to da otpeva. (Zlatković Grozdana, Vukmanovo)*

The Village Gatherings represented a specific way of communication and correlation among people from different villages and regions. The important changes in the local repertoire influenced by participation in this manifestation were visible in the practice of "borrowing" the repertoire from other villages and regions. The organizers confirmed that they included songs from neighboring villages which they had heard from individuals, groups or at village informal gatherings:

I have taken something from Suvi Do, from Prva Kutina. For example, I have one song from Matejevac (all villages around Niško Polje).

*Uzimao sam isto. Imam iz Suvog dola, iz Prve Kutine. Recimo imam jednu pesmu iz Matejevca. (Dragan Todorović, Vukmanovo)*

In this way, apart from the village repertoire, the program also contained some "neighbouring" genres, which resulted in the mixing of local repertoires and styles of performance. This practice created a base for the popularity, spreading out and adaptation of tunes performed at the Village Gatherings, particularly because of the authority this manifestation had gained among local population. That "new way of culture consuming" (Ceribašić 2003:18) in the rural environment gave a different meaning to the music performed on stage. The amateur groups, due to their visibility in

the public sphere, modeled the suitable music styles and aesthetic criteria. The best performances from villages all around Niško Polje were presented at a joint show organized at the Military Club of the city of Niš. The winner of the regional contest usually earned the honor of performing especially in the home village. Radio Niš recorded the local competitions every year and broadcast the chosen performances in Saturday night shows. In other words, the representation of music practices, as described above, was selective which opened a possibility for a centralist cultural policy to influence music making in local settings. Even though the Village Gatherings had no highly politicized settings, it created and controlled the concepts of “right” and “wrong” in representation, looking upon certain cultural patterns as “more proper.”

### **Direct Intervention into the Repertoire**

The direct intervention of the organizers and the jury concerned the arrangement of performances in accordance with the program rules and time schedule. The time limit was three minutes per each performance, so songs had to be reduced and the text pattern was usually adjusted to two or three stanzas:

They did not allow us to perform the whole songs. The program was not long. A song can last three minutes, it was not only us who performed, there were many people.

*A nam nisu dali celu da je izvedu. Pa ne davaju tam program tolko. Tri minuta mora da traje pesme, nismo samo mi nego je imalo mnogo.* (Despotović Ilinka, Trupale village)

Taking into account a very precise time schedule, organizers told me that it had been most difficult for them to organize a good quality program which would not overrun its allotted time:

In the old times, the program lasted precisely two hours and if you had the performance of more than two hours they (regional organizers

- KPZ) would cut a part of your program. Sometimes, I went so far as to bring the stop-watch to reduce something that was surplus.

*Ranije je pravljen ovaj program i to je bilo precizirano dva sata, i ako prekoračite dva sata skidaju, ako imate manji program manji je program. Pa sam ja svojevremeno toliko išao daleko da sam štopericu nosio i gde treba reducirati i gde šta i kažem. (Velibor Stanković, Prosek)*

The local organizers told me that they usually performed just three dances in accordance with the jury's requirements. Sometimes even the jury chose dances that would be performed, to avoid the repetition of certain dances and to make the overall program more attractive.

As has been said, the jury's demands left little space for adapting and reworking the songs, but in the manner of a singing style there were many interventions. Two-part singing, which was a characteristic of female performances in this area, underwent the biggest changes. The characteristic of this singing style is the drone or syllabic drone singing based on non-metric or parlando-rubato rhythm. It belongs to the two-part singing practice which, together with heterophony and combination between heterophony and drone singing, represented the dominant signing practice in rural areas in southeastern Serbia. The upper voice sings the melody while the lower voice accompanies on tonic, making the intervals of major or minor second. The accompanying voice is passive in text articulation and usually pronounced only vocals. The melody scope is very narrow (up to fourth), in chromatic and usually non-temper tonal structure:



The rhythm is predominantly parlando-rubato with defined metrical pulsation – it is a syllabic style similar to speak with simple rhythmic figures. The singing style is loud, with an open-throat. For almost all songs it is typical to have a refrain, an exclamation

at the end of the each verse, sometimes at the caesuras. That refrain is performed on the vocal *I* in the very high falsetto register as a specific kind of signal:

Music example 8: *Durđevdan* song, Ljiljana Radonjić, Prosek village

The usual formal structure is two-strain type A A1. Two-part singing typically went along with the antiphonal style where two groups repeat verses without a break. Regarding the time limit, this kind of performing style had to be reduced and every strophe was performed only once. As a result, one of the significant elements of the two-part style in this area, the repetition of each verse (*Jedna peva, druga raspojuje*), was abandoned in stage performances:

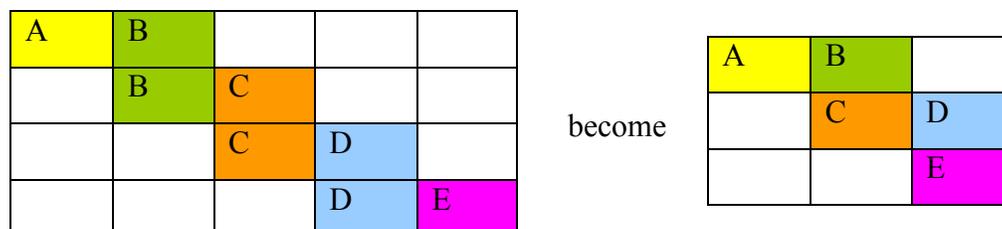


Table 6: Changes in the textual component

Hence, at stage representation, songs associated with customs, which followed strict rules regarding the singing style, became more flexible. Instead of the usual three

singers, the leaders of amateur groups in some villages introduced two singers performing, finding it as more attractive:

Well, it was more attractive if we sang in pairs. Two sing, two sing after. We gained lots of points in that way, and won a couple of times.

Pa mi smo pevali, bilo je više atraktivnije da pevamo dve i dve. Dve pevaju, dve otpevaju, znaš. I na to smo skupili bodove te smo osvojili nekoliko puta prvo mesto. (Velika Jovanović, Gornji Komren village)

In addition, two-part singing was gradually replaced with singing in unison, mainly because women who usually sang together were not alive any more. Very often, the interviewed women could not remember the number of singers that had participated in the performance:

Did two of them sing together, or three, or...?

G.Z.: Well, two of them.

M.R.: Also, one woman sang. She performed alone.

G.Z.: But mostly two.

*A jel to pevaju po dve, po tri, kako?*

*G.Z.: Pa po dve.*

*M.R.: I po jedna je pevala. Sama si iskočila, sama je pevala.*

*G.Z.: Al većinom po dve.*

(Grozdana Zlatković and Mladenka Ristić, Vukmanovo village)

The majority of songs in the field were recorded in a monophonic version, although some of them were remembered (though not performed) in a two-part form. The next couple of examples give a good illustration: the first example was recorded in 1978 in Donja Studena village in a two-part version,<sup>65</sup> and the second one twenty seven years later in the same village in a monophonic version:

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<sup>65</sup> The record is borrowed from the Phonoarchive of the Department for Ethnomusicology of Faculty of Music, University in Belgrade. The record contains no data about the person who made it.



Oj, u -ba - va, ma - la(j) mo - mo,  
va - a - mo - o -

Oz - dol i - de be - la bu - la.  
o - i - de la bu - la.

O.F.

Music example 9: *Sedenjka* song, Donja Studena village (example num. 4 on CD)



cca 71

Oj, u - ba - va(j), ma-la(j) mo - mo,  
oz - dol i - de be-la bu - la.

O.F.

Music example 10: *Sedenjka* song, Savka Milanović, Olga Stanković, Donja Studena village (example num. 5 on CD)

Women emphasised that the jury usually assessed highly the “harmony of their voices.” For that reason, they hardly tried to sound “like one” or “to sing at one tone,” and generally became more sensitive in recognizing what would be a “good” or a “bad” performance, taking the jury’s standards as an aesthetic norm.

Regarding the singers’ stories and recorded music material, some generational changes in interpretation are visible mainly in the style of singing: specific (guttural) style, ornaments and harmonics. The textual changes are also noticeable, since old singers more often used local dialects while younger ones usually mixed it with the standardized language. The modifications at the end of the word which are usual at the caesura were not present with young singers (for example instead of the modification of the last vocal *Šta se ono na planini belejo*, they used the grammatically correct version *Šta se ono na planini beleje*). In addition, the usage of extra syllables by adding *j* or *æ* is more common for older female singers:

Ko - li - ko je sln - ce o - gre-ja - lo.

Music example 11: The *sedanjka* song, Miroslava Jovanović, Malča village

*Koliko je slnce ogrejalo,  
još toliko vojska pretisnula.  
Konj do konja, junak do junaka,  
zarosila sitna letnja rosa.  
Barjak Stojko, družbina mu potijo govori:  
"Uvij, Stojko, barjak da ne kisne."  
Barjak Stojko barjak ne uvija,  
nego njima odgovara:  
"Mi smo bili devetina braća,  
svi smo devet pod njegovinuli."*

• = 120

Ko - li - ko je su - nce o - gre - ja - lo,

nis - ko gre - je, vi - so - ko se vi - je. O.F.

Music example 12: Ballad, Jelena Mitrović, Malča village

*Koliko je sunce ogrejalo,  
nisko greje visoko se vije.*

Changes in musical practices influenced by the stage performance were also visible in the widening of the female singers personal repertoire. The activities in amateur groups and contact with other groups' repertoires, apart from the strong media influence (since many villagers in the 1970s had radios in their houses) influenced the broadening of repertoire:

After we got electricity, we had radio, and I bought a gramophone and gramophone records, and after that the cassette and now a CD player. I turn that on and they sing. I had lots of songs. My mother gave me money to buy lunch, but I bought the records and as soon as I came home, I immediately turned the radio on and went to chop wood.

*Pa posle kad smo struju uveli tag smo radio imali, i ja sam iznakupovala i gramofonske ploče. Šta si imam.. pa skoro posle toga iskočiše one kasete, kasetice, pa posle toga ovaj cd. To staviš tamo pa ti pevaju. A prvo sam imala gramofonske ploče. Kakve ti pesme, nema. Mlogo pesme sam imala. Majka mi dade da ručam dole a ja kakvoj, pa kupim onu ploču i kad dojdem ja odma pustim radio i sečem drva. (Mladenka Ristić, Vukmanovo village)*

Especially important were the parties organized after the official program, where women got connected with people from other villages. Those moments affected the sharing and passing on of the repertoires.

Consequently, some of the new-style songs were presented to me together with the ritual songs as a part of their stage performance. These songs are diatonic, with a more developed melody compared to the two-part signing or songs associated with the customs. The tonal structure is based on a minor or major scale:

• = cca 110

Za - pe - va - la, za - pe - va - la,

co - ba - ni - ca mla - da,

za - pe - va - la, za - pe - va - la,

co - ba - ni - ca mla - da. O.F.

Music example 13: The harvest song – *žetvarska pesma*, Miroslava Jovanović, Malča village

*Zapevala čobanica mlada,  
jasno peva, ovde gora ječi*

*da Jevrope ljute rane leči.*

All of these “interventions” or “adaptations” that had been made under the influence of political strategies in the choice of repertoire, determined the state of the repertoires as I would find it decades later and, as the field research revealed, the way it was directly recreated in the memory of the female singers.

Through the Village Gatherings, the higher authorities created not only the repertoire itself, but participated in shaping a collective memory about the music repertoire. Certain songs stayed vivid in the process of refreshing the memory through stage performance, and that repertoire was frozen and presented on the fieldwork as the most representative musical heritage. From that point of view, musical practice recognized by both the community and the scholarly discourse as the authentic one is actually based on the memory of the singers about their stage performance, which had been canonized through the Village Gatherings: “Analysis of performance forms thus also requires an attention to discourse: to the ways that distinct historical discourses shape activities within the performance arena” (Sugarman 1997:30).

On the other hand, the Village Gatherings represented an important feature of music-making in Niško Polje. Almost all of the songs performed on the field survived because of the constant refreshment (or freezing) of performers’ memories through their stage performances. As the post-World War II period was characterized by intense industrialization and rural-urban migration, ritual singing and many other musical practices began to vanish under the influence of the new economy and the media. Songs practiced within the customs were revitalized through these state supported cultural events: “Such manifestations and festivals supported by cultural policy continued transition and enabled preservation of folk culture” (Czekanowska 1996:93).

In this way, through organized music performing, higher authorities obviously modified the musical practice in Niško Polje, but also kept a good part of the repertoire vivid in memory.

## CHAPTER FOUR: SINGING EXCLUSION

### 5.1. “State Feminism” and the New Body Discourse

After World War II women in Yugoslavia formally received more rights: the new socio-political conditions opened a space for women’s active participation in the public sphere. At the Antifascist congress of the National Liberation of Serbia (ASNOS) on 22 – 24 February 1944 social equality was proclaimed, and women got the formal right to participate at elections for the constitutional meeting in 1945 (Božinović 1996:151). The Constitution of 1946 guaranteed women political, economic and social equality with men for the first time in history. Women were given the right to vote, to be educated and employed without discrimination (Woodward 1985:240). By 1946, civil marriage had become obligatory on the entire territory of Yugoslavia. Customs which were recognized as discriminatory towards women, such as the dowry or selling of the bride, were forbidden. Women were permitted to choose between keeping their surname and adding the name of their marital partner’s family after marrying. State law safeguarded the reproductive rights of women, equal prospects for employment of men and women and various aspects of social protection (such as maternity leave or caring for the elderly) (Božinović 1996:151).

Activities of the newly founded women and feminist organizations (the most important state organization was the Antifascist Women's Front, AWF – *Antifašistički front žena, AFŽ*) particularly tried to reach women in rural areas:

“The first and basic interest is that women, through modernization in agriculture and participation in the communal movement, improve their cultural level and get involved in the socialistic transformation of the village.” (ibid. 171)

Associations called the Federation of Women Societies of Serbia (*Savez ženskih društava Srbije*) were established in villages with the purpose of supporting rural women emancipation (AJ-142, The status of women in villages, materials from 1959-1962, F-616). One of the crucial acts the activists singled out was the ban on the wearing of veils (Božinović 1996:171), which was directly related to the visibility of the female body in public, as discussed in Chapter Two. Education, as the most important element of the new Yugoslav peasant family idea (Woodward 1985:244), was dedicated to rooting out illiteracy among the older population in villages.<sup>66</sup> Electricity and mechanization introduced into the working process made agricultural work much easier. The authorities particularly underlined those economic similarities and bonds between city and village, trying to make the differences between urban and rural environment less visible (Somerville 1965:351).

The policy concerning women was introduced as an integral part of the political and cultural project of development for the entire society: economic changes would, the creators of the new ideology felt, eventually improve women's social position. The “new woman” established by socialist identity politics was made equal to men, not only in battle and the socialist revolution, but also in the building up of the new society. The legal emancipation of women was realized through employment, since economical independence was represented as crucial factor of women emancipation.<sup>67</sup> Employed

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<sup>66</sup> Most of the female singers finished four grades of primary school.

<sup>67</sup> According to data, the number of employed women after World War II rapidly increased in compare to 1939 (AJ-142, The status of women in villages, materials from 1959-1962, F-616).

women were represented in the public discourse as the main driving force in the modernization of Yugoslav society; thus the discourse of ‘woman – mother’ was transformed into ‘mother – worker’ (Brunnbauer, Taylor 2004:230).

These changes provided more possibilities for women to build their social identity outside marriage and family, but the Communist party program and state strategy for gender equality in Yugoslavia found different obstacles in putting the ideas into practice. The fast economic transformation after World War II Yugoslavia and the regulation of women’s equality did not go abreast – while the economic reforms were being carried out rapidly, the customs and patriarchal relations were changing very slowly.

The universal “we” of socialist feminism described women as a homogeneous social group, propagating their equality regardless of all regional, ethnic, religious and other differences (Kligman 1998:26). Yet the rural society, far from the centers of power, was particularly ignored: “Opportunities reached only a very small number of women: the urban middle class predominantly in the northern regions” (Woodward 1985:240). Adhering to rural patriarchal social relations, many women, despite having been offered the opportunity of being equal to men, for a long time expressed negative attitudes towards their own potential (Somerville 1965:352). Records from the beginning of the 1960s show that although women were formally members of the Socialist Federation of Working People of Yugoslavia or other organizations, they did not participate in elections, celebrations, working actions etc. Instead of them, their husbands, considered to be the masters of the family, participate at Federation meetings and other actions, in accordance with the general opinion that women are not capable to take part in political and social life.

## Singing Exclusion

	Total number of board members	Women	Total number of superior council members	Women	Functionaries	Women
Municipality	1071	146	131	21	5	–
Regional	167	32	20	6	6	–
Republic	255	37	20	1	16	–
Main board	78	7	5	–	3	–

Table 7: Female members in the boards and female funcionarios in the Sindicatos of agricultural, nourishment and tobacco workers – statistics from 1964

The data show that even wives and female relatives of active Communist Party members very rarely took part in political meetings and cultural manifestations (AJ-142, The status of women in villages, materials from 1959-1962, F-616):

“Party leaders frequently opposed giving governmental or economic leadership position to women. The household of party members frequently included women still illiterate, still wearing the veil, and still forbidden from taking up jobs outside of the home.”  
(Woodward 1985:242)

The low level of all services and their practical non-existence in villages resulted in the fact that women’s life in rural setting was falling farther behind the standards in the city. Results demonstrated in Vera St. Erlich’s book: *Family in Transition: A Study of 300 Yugoslav Villages* (1971), illustrate how rural women remained in very difficult positions within families, particularly in relation to their husbands and mothers-in-law. They did not complain about their problems, moreover, they did not express any demands for changing that inferior position (Erlich 1971:227). Official reports concerning women’s position in rural society also illustrate a tension between official policy and real state on the field, where women were still in almost a slavish subordinate position. Even though young women were strongly against “old” patriarchal norms, such as arranged marriage or the selling of the bride, they rarely were supported by a wider community or local institutions (AJ-142, The status of women in villages, materials from 1959-1962, F-616).

As Hilda Scott in the book *Does Socialism Liberate Women? Experiences from Eastern Europe* claims, women in socialist countries, despite the propaganda generally did not achieve a higher degree of liberalization (Scott 1974:2). Paid work was considered less important for a woman's social identity than the performance of domestic duties. Hence, despite the ideology of equal employment possibilities and equally paid work, women's actual work was either clerical or manufacturing (particularly in the textile industry, but also within the categories of nurses or primary school teachers)<sup>68</sup> (Massey, Hahn, Sekulić 1995:363). The problems that employed women faced were related to the above-mentioned segregation of fields of activities associated with women and men, and labor division. The new ways of socialization outside the narrow circle of household activities enabled women self-recognition on two levels: as mother/daughter/wife and the productive individual. To them, that was a possibility to be visible as individuals and to gain a sense of individual autonomy (Pine 2002:103), for which they paid a price of double burden – taking upon responsibilities both at work and at home. Consequently, the postwar admission of women into labor did not seriously reconsider power relations; moreover, socialism in Yugoslavia preserved long-standing gendered cultural roles:

“This may be attributed to a certain patriarchal mentality and the consequent gender representation that was skillfully introduced over many years of social stability by all the nomenclature. Although not openly promoted, this patriarchal mentality was in fact the easiest way of exploiting traditional views, incorporating them into ideological texts, and consequently redistributing power, without exposing such views to unfavorable communist criticism.” (Slapšak 2002:148).

In this way, the “emancipation” of women was realized only at the surface of gender relations, without penetrating into the private sphere and inter-family relations.

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<sup>68</sup> In 1988 a very low percentage of women pursued engineering careers – electrical engineering numbered 13.4% female professionals, mechanical engineering 10.2%, as well as physical and biological. 90% of women were students of secondary textile schools, while 84.1% were studying to be teachers and nurses (Massey, Hahn, Sekulić 1995:363).

To summarize everything stated so far, in the new political system – women as less mobile social subjects – started to get fresh opportunities (education, employment). On the other hand, the presence of women in the public sphere was by and large symbolic, reflecting an operative quota system for the participation of women and minorities in leadership roles (Slapšak 2002:149). Thereafter, women had only representative, symbolic roles in the socialist power system; as Gail Kligman writes: “Gender equality was not understood, or lived, in cultural terms; it was simply proclaimed politically” (Kligman 1998:28).

How did these changes affect the lives of the women in Niško Polje? Both urbanization and ideology influenced changes in the structure and functioning of the family. An increasing fragmentation of the extended family after World War II resulted in the division of land and the establishment of the nuclear family. A way of living in which several generations of people live in one household was abandoned. Even though that improved the position of women in many respects, as a consequence of the fast process of industrialization their husbands who were employed in factories moved away to town, which influenced the changes in the existent distribution of labor. Much of the agricultural work fell on women’s shoulders – in addition to household and childcare duties they had to do the farm chores formerly done by men. Women became the main agricultural labor force, but that “job” was masked by kinship, inseparable from the kin’s joint work or kin obligation in general; it was considered simply a part of the life of rural women. Unlike their husbands, they rarely got employment at local factories. In Niško Polje, just a few of the women I have talked to started working after World War II, but quitted because of the minimal social support for employed women in rural environments:

“I worked in the company “The 22<sup>nd</sup> December” for four years and six months. We sewed in the sewing-factory. I also have worked as a student. I quit the job a long time ago; I did not have anyone to take care of my children.”

*Radela sam u 22. decembar, dole u preduzeće. Četiri godine i šest meseci. Šile smo u šivaru i ko učenica sam radila. Odavno sam napustila poso, nemaše ko decu da mi čuva.* (Mladenka Ristić, Vukmanovo village)

Some of them were also active in working co-operatives (*radničke zadruga*) established in villages, within special sections – The Section of Women Co-operatives (*Sekcije žena zadrugarki*). However, a long time after World War II employment outside the home activities was considered inappropriate for women. The local newspapers and village editions highlighted that men and women were equal, but that female work was still not valued in industry (Stamenković 1975:6).

The women I am focusing on remained housewives, but their daughters mostly started working outside the home. However, some of them still had problems because of ambitions in their professional lives: Ljiljana Radonjić from Prosek village told me that her daughter could not get married in the village since she had been working in a company situated in the city of Niš. The main problem was to find a husband who would accept her night shift working hours.<sup>69</sup> Ljiljana added that she eventually got married to a man from Niš, and that they are very satisfied with the son-in-law.

As it presented in Chapter Two, the female body in rural Serbian society was considered to be a “ritual body” and had to be under the constant supervision of the authorities (supernatural forces or patriarchal social norms). The female body, as I showed, was qualified, unqualified and analyzed as the body overwhelmed by sexuality, a social body which has to provide the expected fertility (Foucault 1990:104). The authority of male “disembodiment” over the female “embodiment” was realized through different sanctions, taboos and proscriptions, which were part of the cultural practices in rural society. The female body was defined in the social context as “a peculiar nexus of culture and choice, and “existing” one’s body becomes a personal way of taking up and reinterpreting received gender norms” (Salih and Butler 2004:29).

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<sup>69</sup> It is interesting that the special meeting dedicated to the night work of women was organized by the Socialist Federation of Working People of Yugoslavia in 1979 (AJ - 142, List of the Archive Materijal of the Socialist Federation of Working People of Yugoslavia)

Body in socialism was conceptualized in a different way, as a classless body, a worker's body which could erase any differences between social layers. The socialist body politics was directed at homogenizing the society, with the intention of adjusting rural and urban areas (Kligman 1998:33). Representation in the public discourse was based on unification – the sameness of dress codes at schools, factories and other state institutions.<sup>70</sup> Clothing standards became urbanized and less differentiated regionally (Somerville 1965:359). In the reports of the Socialist Federation of Working People of Yugoslavia, the changes in female clothing were presented as an important indicator of the rural areas' developments. Drastical changes in a way of dressing within younger generations of women who started to wear new textiles such as buckskin, silk and cotton instead of home-made (weaving materials), were identified as a positive tendency (AJ-142, The status of women in villages, materials from 1959-1962, F-616). In the socialist discourse on femininity, a village woman in a traditional dress with a scarf was the epitome of backwardness and she was a social subject not capable of making use of the newly-founded rights and obligations.

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<sup>70</sup> Jelena Đorđević, in her book *Political Celebrations and Rituals*, examines the important role of the body as a symbolic element in mass celebrations and rituals in totalitarian regimes. In her opinion, the body in *socialism* was healthy, a physical body with strong muscles that symbolized well-organized and healthy society (Đorđević 1997:232).



Photograph 8: Women from Kamenica village, 1944

This kind of unification caused certain changes in rural areas, which depended on the age and social status of a woman. After World War II, older women in Niško Polje still maintained their dressing style with the mandatory scarf. As a result of the new body politics, the post-World War II generations of women, started in a great number to change way of dressing: they first ceased putting flowers on the scarves (decorating their hair at the internal Village Gatherings- *kititi se*):

“They wear them; women wore scarves in our village. But they quit putting flowers as they were ashamed. Girls also quit putting flowers.”

*Nose si, žene su si nosile marame kod nas. Ali, počеше da se ne kite sramota gi više, gotovo. Batališe i devojke da se kite. (Sevljija Stanković, Trupale village)*

As a next step, women gradually abandoned the practice of wearing a scarf, cut their hair and replaced the traditional clothing with “urban” – “fashion” clothes.<sup>71</sup> They started wearing folk costumes only special occasions such as various public events and festivals. In the same way, before World War II and in the first year after women had been ashamed not to dress in accordance with village norms, in the new socialist context they came to be embarrassed by that “old” way of dressing.

The socialist body politics produced a new representation of the female body in the public sphere in rural areas. In the following paragraphs I will present in which way these changes in representation affected the stage performances of female singers and vice versa: stage performances participated in producing new patterns of embodying women.

## **5.2. Overstepping the Boundaries**

As discussed, although socialist identity politics brought about the formal equality of genders, the patriarchal social order in rural areas remained rigid and very deeply rooted. The social hierarchy deprived women of the individual freedom to make choices about their lives, and their roles were established through their relationship with men: they were regarded as sisters, mothers, and wives. How did the female singers’

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<sup>71</sup> Certainly, it is important to bear in mind that individual and family differences, caused by family’s financial status influenced variations at the level of liberalization.

stage performances reflect on the performance of gender roles in rural society? Which changes in representing women in the public spheres had taken place? What were the consequences of such changes? How did female singers, their families or community members react to that?

The official records of women's contribution to cultural and educational activities in Serbian villages from the beginning of the 1960s confirmed the low level of female participation at local cultural-artistic manifestations and cultural life in general (it is specified that only 20% of young rural women in Serbia are members of KUDs) (AJ-142, The status of women in villages, materials from 1959-1962, F-616). Authorities appealed for effective action to arouse women's active participation in village cultural life, claiming a low number of female participants in any kind of state-supported social activity.

The statements taken from the local organizers in Niško Polje also prove that it was very difficult to find women willing to perform on stage during the first years of the Village Gatherings. Dragan Todorović, an amateur collector of folk music, who was the main organizer of the program in his village of Vukmanovo, reveals that he had to visit each house in the village and ask husbands if they would allow their wives to sing. He stresses that many of them were not open for cooperation and he explains it by the strong patriarchal model to be the main reason for that:

“Why go there and waste her time? I did not bring her to my house so that she would doll up for everyone else. She has to be beautiful only for me.”

*A, ti li se dodesuješ tamo za nekoga? Ja sam te dovel ovde za men, ne za drugoga. Ako treba da budeš za men će budeš ubava a ne za drugog.*

Women had to ask for their husbands' permission for every performance. The female participants at the Village Gatherings usually had a male guide, who was accountable to their husbands for their safety and proper behavior. Generally, husbands agreed to let their wives perform when accompanied by male supervisors, but in some cases they

insisted on their own presence. For that reason, it was easier for the organizers to persuade their family members – sisters, cousins or wives to perform. Dragan Todorović also claims that his godmother, who performed at various manifestations over the years, still had to ask her husband for permission to go with him to a festival in Bulgaria. He allowed her to go only because she would be under Dragan’s patronage.

However, a few years after the Village Gatherings had been established, villagers mostly adapted to the new activities and became more tolerant toward stage performance. Women told me that by time their husbands were accustomed to their performing in public:

“Our husbands do not care about that. When they saw that it was all right, all became well. That is not anything special, they just ask: will they pay you for that?”

*Naši muži toj ne mare, još od kraj, pa posle si dobro posle, kad vidoše. Toj ništa neje, to nikako naročito neje, će li plate li vele?*  
(Ilinka Despotović, Trupale village)

Which are possible reasons why the stage performances were proclaimed “shameful” and “dangerous”? I would presume that the attitudes toward of professional musicians in the traditional village values in Serbia around the middle of the last century, and particularly the status of female professional musicians were one of the main causes of that attitude. The relationship between professional and stage performance seems to me very important in searching for a potential explanation as to why the female singers stage performances were judged as inappropriate and immoral.

First of all, the musical vocation in general was strongly connected with the Roma population who were the main musical tradesman in Serbia. The historical record on the Balkan Roma confirms that as early as the Ottoman times they were registered within “city garrisons” not only as ironmongers, but also as musicians (*mehter*). In his article about Roma music in Serbia (Đorđević 1984), Tihomir Đorđević claims that the Roma differed from the rest of the population by their trade. They were predominantly

ironmongers, potters, horse dealers, bear tamers, and musicians (Gojković 1994:87, Zirojević 1976:73). Taking into account the low social position of the Roma, and the fact that the music vocation was typically their domain, professional music-making was considered degrading and inherent to lower social subjects.

After the end of World War II women who performed in public were mainly Roma women who usually danced or sung in urban environments. They were much freer in expressing their musical activities, but were often seen as dangerous because of their imputed sexuality and freedom (Silverman 2003:120, Doubleday 1999:121). The female Roma professional musicians were regarded as women of a lower moral character – “loose” women, sometimes even as prostitutes. That attitude was associated with the public display of female sexuality and its connection with the market: the tips female singers were getting when performing in pubs or taverns were seen as a “selling of the body” and some way of prostitution (ibid. 132). Another element which appeared important was the place of the performance: the usual places for performing, taverns (*kafane*) were considered in public discourse as exclusively male spaces and centers for men’s entertainment. Women had no right to visit such haunts, and the ones who were visiting it were considered improper. Professional Roma singers, by displaying their body in this predominantly male space, were seen as having low morals and being socially incapable.

Such a practice of stigmatizing professional female musicians was also visible in the attitude toward the first professional Serbian female singers who showed up after World War II. These women were identified with the Roma and characterized as immoral and shameless. The only way for a woman to start up a professional career was to have a strong male figure as a support. For this reason, professional singers usually married musicians or managers who made public exposure “legitimate.”<sup>72</sup> A good illustration of this strategy is a statement given by Lepa Lukić, now a famous

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<sup>72</sup> The same was in the case of the female instrumentalists. Radojka Živković, one of the first and the most highly regarded female accordion players, performed together with her husband Tihomir.

female star singer who mainly performs newly-composed folk songs, on her singing beginnings (the statement is taken from her interview in the weekly magazine “Story”):

“We participated at local village competitions and almost always won the first prize. I remember the manager of Hotel “Jugoslavija” personally approaching my mother and asking her to let me sing at the Hotel Lounge. At that time, it was a shame to sing in restaurants. The female singers’ image was shaped by public opinion, as they were compared with homeless and immoral persons.” (Lepa Lukić started her career in the 1960s)

In some villages I heard stories about extremely talented female singers who could not embark on a professional singing career. They told me that it was not possible for them to start singing professionally since their husbands and family would not approve that. In response to my question on why they decided not to try given the fact they were gifted, one of the organizers told me:

“I do not know. People were afraid of that, as they say here, not to go astray, not to get into trouble. Yes. We were introverted people; we were not in the habit of being outspoken with others. We were placed here and there was no chance of moving, that was strong patriarchy.”

*Ne znam. Ljudi su se plasili toga, što kažu ovde, da ne zakasamo, da ne zapadnemo u neku nepraviliku. Jeste. Mi smo bili ljudi zatvorenog tipa, nismo mi toliko bili komunikativni sa ostalim ljudima, da smo bili otvoreni. Bili smo ovde locirani samo i nema nikakvnog proširenja, to je stroga patrijahalnost bila. (Dragan Todorović, Vukmanovo village)*

Given the above discussion, the female singers’ stage performances at the Village Gatherings was obviously compared with a professional musicians’ activity within the rural society, since women exposed themselves in public and often traveled to other villages to perform, taking away from home and domestic duties.<sup>73</sup> Considering that

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<sup>73</sup> The Carol Silverman’s research of state-ensable female singers in Bulgarian show same practice: women who sang professionally were considered with a lack of morality and lack of respect. For that

professional singing was seen as an activity of “immoral women” who transgressed social boundaries, rural women, who performed on stage as a center of public activities, challenged the existing norms in the same way. They became active in a domain predominantly reserved for men, and for that reason their behavior was perceived as shameful and “inappropriate.”

### **5.3. Stage Performances as Performative Acts of Negotiation**

Public discourse is, according to authors such as Abu-Lughod and Goffman, the arena in which self-presentation is judged and where a self-image in the eyes of others is constructed (Abu-Lughod 1986:235, Goffman 1971:185). Therefore, public performances represent an optimal space for the production and representation of meaning, social legitimization and power re-negotiation. Manifestations and festivals are instruments of both social and cultural control and change, since they “transmit and

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reasons, many families did not allow to their daughters joint the state ensables in the 1950s (Silverman 2004:220).

transfer knowledge, technology, mediate between individuals, groups and culture” (Ronström 2001:62).

As I have already mentioned, the representation of the “new woman” and the proclaimed gender equality was present in all official representations in socialist Yugoslavia. As the main goal, the policy makers emphasized the establishment of cultural and entertainment forms suitable to women, since their cultural activity was still strongly connected with “old,” “primitive” types of entertainment such as religious customs, weddings, and internal informal gatherings (*prela, slave*) (ibid.). In their opinion, the active participation of women in all aspects of social life represented an important aspect of their emancipation and the recognition of a newly established “freedom” (*oslobodjenje žena*):

“Girl’s participation at theatre or folklore group represents her entrance into social life, liberation from conservative family restraints, and significant widening of her personal horizons.” (AJ-142, Materials of committee for ideological-educational work, 1956, 47-164)

The stage, as a center of public activities provided an opportunity for women to transmit their activity from the periphery to the center of social happenings. Through performing on stage, female singers got an opportunity to challenge their position on the margins of social relations and to become visible as individuals for the first time.

In examining of the female singers’ stage performances I founded my approach on the paradigm of the ethnography of musical performance, in combination with the main postulates of performance theory. The stage performances are analyzed in their entire performance context, as a wider social field which includes “not only the physical sounds, but also the actions, thoughts, and feelings of those involved in the conception, performance, and reception of music in a particular context” (McLeod and Herndon 1980:6).

As already mentioned, women had been preparing for the stage performances practicing songs and “adjusting voices,” but the final decision about the repertoire selection was made by local organizers. Since the jury insisted on a “pure, traditional style,” female singers were perceived as the “main bearers and preservers” of the “traditional music” and thus sang mainly ritual songs, the repertoire they had performed during their youth. A few days before their performance at the Village Gatherings women would go to the local Cultural-Educational Association or other local administrative office to give a presentation of the prepared repertoire and get the opinion of the organizers. Usually, organizers chose one or two songs that would be performed:

“We went down to the Center and started. They told us to get on stage, but without microphones; they just listened to us. And we started to sing one song, and after that another song, and then the third. After that they said: you will sing this song.”

*Odemo dole u Dom i počnemo. Oni ni kažu popnete se na binu, al nema mikrofoni, nema ništa, oni ni slušaju ljudi. I mi počnemo – jednu pesmu ispevamo, pa ispevamo drugu, pa ispevamo treću i oni kažu: e ta će pesma da bude. (Sevljija Stanković, Trupale village)*

The most significant change at the level of repertoire were visible in the joint performances of women and men. Women started performing alongside their husbands and other male relatives, especially in situations in which the women with whom they had previously sung were no longer living or when, for the purpose of a stage performance, they needed a substitute:

“This practice emerged at the beginning of the 1980s. I do not know if that was some kind of fashion, or what. Something like – we are married so why not start singing together.”

*To se pojavilo tu početkom 80-tih godina, ne znam zbog čega da li je to neko pomodarstvo, bilo. Ajde sada ja i moja žena Radmila pa ćemo zajedno pa pevamo i muški i ženski glas. (Dragan Todorović, Vukmanovo village)*





Photograph 9: Joint performance of Svetlana Makarić and Miodrag Tasić, Jelašnica village

This practice further destabilized the boundaries between gender segregated performances. Even though categories of male and female songs still existed, the boundaries between them became less restrictive. In a few villages I have heard stories of male singers who performed the women's songs at the Village Gatherings:

“One man sang them, but he moved to Aleksinac. Milan is his name. The same *sedenjka* song, something like that, as a woman he sang. Not in a man's way, but slowly, as women do.”

*Muškar je jedan peval on se odseli u Aleksinac Milan. Isto sedenjarsku, ovčarsku, nešto takvo, kako žena peva. Ne onako muški nego oteza ga malo kako žena. (Sevljija Stanković, Trupale village)*

In that way, men like as women got the opportunity to expand their music activities and perform genres which were usually reserved for women:

“No woman can sing that song, because it is very difficult and specific. It is a very old song. It was sung by my grandmother to my mother, and she taught me that song. I have learned it perfectly. I sang that song at Bemus (Belgrade Musical Festival).”

*Tu pesmu ni dan danas ne može da otpeva ni jedna žena, veoma je teška, veoma je specifična. To je jako stara pesma tu je pesmu pevala mojoj majci majka, znači moja baka i ona je mene naučila tu pesmu, baš me naučila sto posto. Ja sam tu pesmu pevao na Bemusu.* (Dragan Todorović, Vukmanovo village)

It is interesting to note that Dragan Todorović avoided performing the specific refrain *I* at the end of the verse (*da rucne*). He claimed that he was ashamed to perform it, since that refrain was considered “female.” His act illustrates that even though the boundaries between the two categories were transgressed, some musical attributes were still strongly connected with gender.

In the same way, some women were presented to me as experts on male songs, particularly on epic songs and ballads:<sup>74</sup>

“Aunt Ljubinka sings these men’s songs, epic songs. Usually men sing these songs, but you see, women also have a knack”

*Tetka Ljubinka peva te muške pesme, epske pesme. Muškarci pevaju al vidiš i žena savladala,* Dragan Todorović, Vukmanovo village).

Desanka Petrović from the village of Gornja Vrežina spoke about the songs she learned from her father. She usually performed them it at *slavas*. People were so delighted by her performing that she sang at all private parties and celebrations she went to.

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<sup>74</sup> Epic songs belong to the narrative type of songs, sometimes having over a hundred verses in ten syllable line, usually accompanied on the *gusle*. *Ballads* are considered “borderline” songs between epic and lyric songs, also with a large number of verses (Dević 1970:35, 36).

This practice of appropriating the “other’s” genres influenced negotiation at the level of repertoire.<sup>75</sup> The female singers got more freedom in performing different genres without shame or hesitation. They started to perform not only men’s songs and genres associated with male, but also “newer,” “widespread” or “urban” musical genres, songs which they heard from other amateur groups or on the radio. They transgressed social taboos connected to certain songs’ genres, performing them regardless of the ritual prohibitions that had existed when these songs were performed within everyday practice. Through stage performing the female singers destabilized cultural categories of women in rural society, such as girls-viragos, married women, widows or older postmenopausal women. For example, formerly described cultural practices, which were forbidden to some categories of women (e.g. the performing of the *Durđevdan* custom excluding married women or old women) were challenged.

These stage performances also caused changes at the level of terminology. As Jane Sugarman emphasizes, scholars usually try to canonize the terminology used by performers, neglecting “individual agency” in the formulation of musical practices (Sugarman 1997:25). I found that the female singers used special terminology in the classification of songs. They divided songs into four groups regarding the season – spring, summer, autumn and winter songs instead of the usual terminology regarding genres – *lazarica*, *kraljica* or *Durđevdan* songs. To them, the main parameter of the song’s classification was its textual content (if the theme of the song was dealing with winter, cold weather or fire, they considered the song to be a winter song). That common terminology is obviously a result of the unique experience they shared as members of amateur groups.

Bearing in mind that musical performance is bodily manifested – “to hear a voice, a musical sound, is to ‘have knowledge’ of the corporal and somatic state which produce it” (Shepherd and Wicke 1997:180) – the visual element of the stage performance

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<sup>75</sup> Women’s appropriation of repertoire which previously belonged to men and vice versa is noticeable in various societies in the second half of the twentieth century such as Kosovo (Pettan 2003), Corsica (Bithell 2003), and Greece (Holst-Warhaft 2003).

appears to be extremely important. The visual appearance of the female singers on stage included new elements, seen as a specific kind of “visual narrative” or “body discourse.” The behavior of female singers on stage was controlled by the organizers and the local cultural workers. In order to adjust to the requirements of the stage performance, the activities of the program participants were planned in advance, following the already defined scenario. Female singers were expected to present an already prepared show, following the prescribed norms of behavior, thus having no possibility of improvisation or any kind of spontaneous behavior.

On the other hand, taking into account the above-mentioned specific kind of restriction concerning the embodiment of women that was typical of a patriarchal rural society,<sup>76</sup> the very possibility for women to be presented as individuals in the public sphere and their engagement as important protagonists in the manifestation’s program opened a possibility for them to challenge their current social position. The public performances particularly associated with their embodiment in public can be considered not only the arena for representation, but also for the re-establishment of power relations:

“Particular discursive practices as well as relations of power, even before they intervene on ideology and individuals, are visible in a very apparent way, in body and through body.” (Ivanović 2003:407)

A visual concept of performances included the adopting and upgrading of certain elements that were largely neglected during performances in internal occasions. The new context – the stage required a different presentation and female singers were specially dressed for performances (on stage they usually wore folk costumes – *nošnja*). Some of the leaders of the female singers’ groups, wanting to make performances more attractive for the jury and audience, persuaded the performers to take off their scarves, which had been an integral part of the rural women’s clothing:

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<sup>76</sup> Jane Sugarman provides a concrete examples of restriction of female body activity from neighboring areas: in Prespa (north-west part of Macedonia), it was allowed for men to include body in the performance, but for women it was considered as “shameful” to move hands or other parts of body (Sugarman 1997:285).

“It was at the regional competition in Kamenica. In Kamenica Vule Vukašin Vojinović, the secretary of the Cultural-Artistic Association was also present and he saw our women wearing *ručnici* (special hat). He did not know what that was. Yet, they wore yellow scarves (*šamije*) over them, because I had to behave in accordance with women’s wishes. They did not want to reveal their hair as they were ashamed, and they always wore scarves over the *ručnik*. First, they wore the *ručnik* (hat) and on top a scarf and underneath one additional scarf (*vrzoglavka*). They came to Kamenica fully dressed in the old way, as Turks, really. I said to them that this way of wearing reminded one the Ottoman influence, the XVII century period. And than, I told them: Women, take off the scarves! “Which scarves? Go to hell, you rascal” – they tell me. And I said: “If you do not do that, you will not dance and sing and we are going home”. They tell me: “Maybe you want us to take off our skirts also. If we should have bare heads, why not go undressed too.” And I tell them: “Please, if you want us to develop, let’s make a boom.” And then, I took the scarf off my aunt first. She said: “Velibor (her husband) will be at me.” I said: “Let him be mad. He will not be at me, he is my uncle.” When I took off the scarf I asked the women: “Is it pretty?” And they answered: “Yes, it is. If Grozdana can do it, why can’t we.” And all of them took off the scarves and I put them in my bag. When we appeared on the stage with red hats, that was a sensation. Immediately, the jury, that team which evaluated started to comment: who are they, what is this.”

*Bila je regionalna smorta ali u Kamenici. Da, Da. U Kamenici je bio i Vule Vukašin Vojinović, sekretar KPZ-a u tom vremenu videvši naše žene sa ručnicima. On nije znao šta je to. Ali su žute šamije bile preko jer sam morao da se vladam kako su mi žene naređivale onda. Nisu smele, nisu mogle iz stida da se razgolite, da razotkriju glavu, nego su vazda morale preko ručnika. Pazite, stave ručnik-kapu, pa preko šamiju, aman, troduplo, a ispod ručnika vrzoglavku. Ja reko ženama, a do tad su sve nosile šamije i to u Kamenicu, one došle sa šamije pa se zabradile, zabalile se baš ono starinski, tutmat Turkinje, ama dibidus. I ja kažem, da to je ostatak turcizma, da se razumemo, to je predstavnik perioda XVII veka. I onda ja kažem: “Žene, skidajte šamije.” “Koje bre, šamije?, Mrš, bitango jedan” - meni. Ja kažem: “Nema da se igra. Ne mora da idemo, sad će si idemo doma.” “Očeš i vutarke da skinemo, pa da budemo golodupaste, ako treba da budemo gologlave.” Zamisli, i ja kažem što jeste. I ja kažem: “Ovako vas molim, ako hoćete da napredujemo, ajde da napravimo bum.” Onda ova moja strinka, ne sad ova žena, nego strina što treba da dođe, prvo njoj ja skinem šamiju. Ona: “Lele, Velibor (njen muž) će se ljuti.” Ja: “Nek se ljuti. Nema da se naljuti na mene, a to je stric moj rođeni.” I ja skinem strini šamiju. Pa stavim onu kirku ono kovilje, stavim ovamo*

*pozadi, tako su se nekad kitile žene. Ja kažem: "El ubavo?" A one žene: "Pa ubavačko. Kad može Grozdana, što pa mi da ne možemo. Ajde, kaže i mi da skinemo." I skinu žene. Kude će šamije, ja stavim sve to u torbu. I najavljuju Vukmanovo, lele, kad smo mi izlegli, crvene kape, žene, to je senzacija bila. Odma onaj žiri ocenjivački, onaj tim koji je bio, odma su počeli ono da komentarišu, koji su to, šta je ovo. (Dragan Todorović, Vukmanovo)*

At the same time, this act signified not only the real, but also the symbolic visibility of women as social subjects; what had until recently been strongly taboo became accepted behavior in the new settings.

Changes in the visibility and representation of the female body were particularly realized by women participating in the amateur theatre shows. Women were included in the stage adaptation of certain customs or short comedy shows. These performances enabled them to be visible in a different way, not-typical for everyday life. Women confirmed that it had been a unique opportunity for them to change ordinary dress style and express their talents in public.



Photograph 10: Stage performance of the Đurđevdan custom, Trupale village in 1990

According to Foucault, “relations are often mediated through body, as one of the primary media in which sociopolitical relations of power are inculcated and reproduced” (Foucault 1977:25). With respect to that, the appearance changes represented not only the new role of woman brought about by socialism, but also the transformation of the cultural meaning of the female body. The above-mentioned practice of changing the female singers’ outfit especially for the stage performance illustrates how the existent cultural categories became more flexible.

The interactive and meditative nature of the relation between performers and audience (Rose Shield 1980:121) shaped the structure of the performances and behavior on stage. Performing at the state organized manifestations provided a specific context, since there was a strong division between the audience and performers. In the case of the Village Gatherings that division became even more complex with the strict separation of the

audience itself into the local audience<sup>77</sup> (“ordinary” audience) on one hand, and the jury, organizers and politicians positioned in the special places (usually the first row) on the other. As opposed to informal gatherings and celebrations where people who watched the performance were active (they were talking, drinking, eating), the audience of the Village Gatherings usually was silent and passive.

Performance theory is directed toward the social aspects of performance, which is crucial for understanding the female singers’ performance as a litmus for the new identity politics and political changes. Performance studies understand performing as a part of everyday life, at home, in the workplace, in sports and games, in the arts, and in sacred and secular rituals (Bial 2004:183), defining it as “cultural performance:”

“To perform is to carry into effect – whether it be a story, an identity, an artistic artifact, a historical memory, or an ethnography” (Kapchan 1995:479).

Drawing on Stanley Tambiah’s claims about performative aspects of ritual (Tambiah 1979), one of the main tasks of performance theory is to examine the social conditions under which performance is “a mode of social action” (Bell 2004:90). Trying to employ such a concept in connection with Judith Butler’s theoretical concept of performativity, I create a theoretical base for my assumption that the stage performance of the female singers can be analyzed as a performative act. Butler claims that regulatory practices not only represent gender relations, but constitute it; that representation has two functions – representative and productive. Through the constant repetition of discursive practices (sets of meaning already socially established), the cultural role of woman is constituted over again. Within the frame of the *public manifestation* as a representative of official discourse, the performances of female singers’ became one of the important elements in the construction of the socialist female subject in the rural cultural environment. The identity politics influenced the shift in the **representational discourse** of gender, at the same time producing new discourses on women’s

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<sup>77</sup> The local organizers confirmed that at the regional gathering in the city of Niš, the audience was predominantly from rural areas, while the urban population was not interested in this type of manifestations.

subjectivity. With regard to the concept of social temporality, where every identity is played (Butler 1999:33), the one played female role (woman as a subordinate social subject in patriarchal society) is substituted with another (socialist woman who is equal to man, the new driving force of the socialist society). Through stage performances, by appropriating activities normally reserved for men, female singers gained power in an officially recognized way. In interaction with the audience, the representation of the “new femininity” imported new elements to the usual social behavior. From that viewpoint, the changes in gender relations in Niško Polje were performatively produced by regulatory practices.

Did the female singers import that “new role” into their personal lives? Did the reality which they staged become legitimate in their communities? Had the imaginary line drawn between performance and everyday life been transgressed?

#### 5.4. New Concepts of Identity, Subjectivity and Self-Representation

Their involvement in amateur musical activities was an extremely important factor in the personal identification of women I have spoken to. Performing at the Village Gatherings opened possibilities for reinterpretation, reconsideration and “resignification” of the position of the female singers as subjects. Since they destabilized the strong boundaries between male/female musical activities, their status inside the family and society changed. Many of the interviewed women were characterized by their families and wider society as peculiar persons, whose activity was often recognized as inappropriate at different levels. The consequence of such a public expression of individuality was its recognition as a subversive act of breaking moral norms: “For social inappropriate behavior, with community disapproval and something which could be judged as dishonorable” (Sugarman 1997:188).

Because of the state-imposed pattern of the event, community members seemingly accepted that “new” mode of women’s behavior on stage, but on the other hand, were gossiping and labeling female singers as “shameless” and “immoral.” The phenomenon that especially attracted my attention during the fieldwork was the reaction of families and the wider community to female singers’ performances, equally to their activities within amateur vocal groups as well as the purpose of my research. As a rule, many of them recognized their activity as frivolous and retrograde:<sup>78</sup>

A.H.: Are there some old women who sung?  
“Well, yes, but they are very old...only Jela, she is still wasting her time.”

A.H.: Da li ima ovde starijih žena koje pevaju?  
*Pa, dobro, dosta su matore, jedino Jela, ona se zamlaćuje.* (Velibor Stanković, Prosek village)

Furthermore, in some villages, women hesitated to talk to me, as music and performing was not an “appropriate” subject of conversation:

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<sup>78</sup> Many people involved in the research or neighbors who were attracted by the presence of a research team, mainly reacted by laughing when they heard the subject of our interest.

“That was a joke, we were just having fun and I went to all that, but...”

*To je bilo danas zajebancija, ja sam bila na zajebancije sve, ali...(Jevica Bogdanović, Prosek village)*

As principal reasons for their reluctance to sing, women stated mourning or the fear of being gossiped about “what people might say.” Many older women in Niško Polje mourned their closer or distant relatives and were very apprehensive about being overheard singing by their neighbors. They drew the curtains and closed all the doors and windows to make sure no one could hear them sing:

“Not me, I can not. I am in mourning for my brother-in-law’s son who died in Sweden, so they could see me and say: Nuna sang.”

*Nemoj mene, ja ne mogu. Ja žalim sestrića što je poginuo u Švedsku. Oni će me vide i će kažu: Pevala Nuna (Rusanda Arsić, Donja Vrežina village)*

The female singers’ stories confirm that villagers viewed their performances as frivolous and shameful:

“They tell us: where are you going, they will make fun of you. Oh, we suffered me and her. They were gossiping and saying all kinds of things. Our neighbors did not understand that.”

*Kažu nam kude će idete, će vam se smeju. Lele, mi smo muke patile, ja i ženava. Lele, te toj, te ovoj. Naši si u komšilak ovi ovde. Pa naplitamo se, što idete, pa ovoj, pa kakvoj. Oni ne razumeju. (Ilinka Despotović and Sevljija Stanković, Trupale village)*

As women in rural societies often shared a collective social identity with their family and kin (Abu-Lughod 1986:156), their activities were supervised particularly closely by family members, whose reactions toward the female singers’ performances varied. In

some families they were accepted well, but many women had problems, not only with their husbands but also with their sons and sons-in-law:

“He [my son] did not allow me to sing, he was ashamed, he said: What will you do there, you just open your mouths like fools. He threatened me: “Just show up on stage, you’ll see what will happen!”

*Moj sin mi ne dozvoli da idem, pa sramota ga, vika šta ćeš tamo, zevate vika, ko budale. Pretil mi, nemoj slučajno da si otišla će vidiš šta će bude.* (Sevljija Stanković, Trupale village)

As already stated, when a woman had activities which could disturb the given norms and rules, she was proclaimed anomalous (unacceptable for society). Patrilinear ideologies through which men create social ties and norms could exclude “dangerous” women from any social role. With respect to that, it was particularly important not to disgrace a family by performing in public (“They were afraid I would shame myself” – *Oni su mislili ću se obrukam ja tam*, Sevljija Stanković, Trupale village). That attitude related to conceptions of the traditional female role and forbiddance of public expression, as discussed in the previous paragraphs. The story I heard from Ilinka’s husband Milorad (Ilinka Despotović from Trupale village) illustrates that community’s attitude toward stage performing. Ilinka was invited to perform at an event in Macedonia together with her vocal group, and the local cultural workers asked them to prepare a suitable program. Yet, influenced by the neighbors’ commentaries about the immorality of women who sing publicly, her husband did not allow her to perform. Telling this story, Milorad (Ilinka’s husband) admitted that he had made a big mistake and that today he regretted paying too much attention to other people’s opinion. He told me that he had ruined the opportunity for his wife to develop her career further and perhaps go abroad to perform.

As a result of that subversive nature of stage performing, many of the female singers did not feel comfortable to accept the organizers’ invitation to participate. On the other hand, their stories confirm that they were very proud when the local authorities

sometimes came even a few times to ask them to perform. Mirka Jovanović precisely describes that ambiguous attitude concerning stage performing: when a local organizer from the Cultural Center in her village of Malča sent her a note to come to the local office, Milka was very concerned: “I was thinking, why me, why is he asking me?” The local authority liked to know from whom she had learned the old songs and then he asked her to participate at the Village Gatherings. When she went back home, her husband was curious about why the local authority was interested in his wife, and Milka told me that she was worried. She had a big house and many obligations, and to her it was not a good idea to accept to participate at the *public manifestation*. She told me very proudly that sometimes even four or five men came to ask her to sing. She finally agreed to participate but nevertheless they had to ask her to participate every following year. At some point Milka wanted to quit, but they were very uncompromising and she kept performing. At the end of the story, she told me that singing at the Village Gatherings was a very pleasant experience for her. Now she remembers great times spent on travels, and often talks about that to her grandchildren.

The above-mentioned double-voiced talk in the narratives of women showed how they started to change their attitudes not only about performing, but also about their own individuality. In that way, the examination of this phenomenon revealed a new self-awareness and self-recognition of female singers, which caused a shift in their understanding about their own social environment. Gradually, women who were ashamed to sing, as organizers confirmed, started joining them by themselves:

“I went to the village fountain and women asked me: “Dragane, can I sing, I see that it is very beautiful.” And I said: “Yes, but would your husband allow it?” And she answered: “I will ask him to let me, but if he doesn’t, you come and ask him.” There were women whose husbands agreed when they talked to them and everything was ok.”

*I ja otidem tamo na češmu i one žene: “Dragane, ako li i ja da idem da pojem, vidim mnogo ubavo onoj.” Ja kažem: “Pa ako, će li te pušti muž.” “Ali ću ga pitam pa ako me pušti, pušti, ako me ne pušti, ja ću da ti reknem, pa ti dojadi pa ga zamoli.” I ima recimo*

*slučajeva, gde žena porazgovara s mužem i onda ok. (Dragan Todorović, Vukmanovo village)*

From women's stories, it is evident that they were personally very proud of their stage performances and travels. Bearing in mind the restrictions on the women's mobility, which was characteristic of the rural society, travels with the amateur groups marked one big step in gaining their social freedom. They were undoubtedly delighted by the achieved geographical and social mobility, and the important parts of their stories were travels and contacts with people who were delighted by their singing:

“I do not want to brag with you here, but I can sing every song. When I went to Zagreb and started to recite some songs, both love and tragic ones, one man gave me 50 dinars to write it to him and send him.”

*Da si ti kod mene ovde, na primer, da se ne hvalim, svaku bih ja opevala pesmu. Kad sam ja išla isto za Zagreb, pa svi, svi kad počeše. Kad ja poče da pričam neke pesme, i ljubavne i žalosne, jedan mi je dal pedeset dinara da mu samo napišem i da pošaljem. (Jagodinka Mitrović, Rujnik village)*

“I have pictures from the Village Gatherings, when I went to *Bubanj* and three days in *Aleksandrovac*. There was a banquet, the wine...you just pour it and drink. I have pictures, I will show you later. I have traveled, I have seen things, so, if I die now, I would not be sorry.”

*Imam i slike sa Susreti sela, pa kako sam i u Bubanj bila, pa tri dana u Aleksandrovac, bijemo li, bijemo. Ono gozba, ono vince točiš, piješ. Imam slike, imam slike, posle ce da vidimo. Putovala sam..sad da umrem neće mi bude žao. (Grozdana Đokić, Leskovik village)*



Photograph 11: Vocal group of the Trupale village before the trip to Macedonia

Women mostly talked about the most memorable performances, describing the reaction of the audiences and jurists. At the beginning of our conversation, Velika Jovanović from Gornji Komren told me that she had won the first prize in three villages. She stressed that she had only one worthy opponent and that was her neighbor, Vera. As the Village Gatherings were structured as a form of competition, some aspects of rivalry were visible in female singers' stories:

“There were lots of people, me and Miltana and Nastasija, Majonka and Radmila and some woman also, six of us. But she, she was unique, no one could match her. She sang articulately, every word clear, but Marijonka didn't. But as she sang every word was understandable.”

*Ono narod puno i ja i Miltana i Nastasija, Majonka i Radmila i još jedna neka, šest bejomo, ma presenitelj kaže, Žiko i tvoja majka peva. Ali ova, ovoj ne može da zameni niki. Njoj se sve razume šta*

*izrica, a Marijonki se ne razume. A ovoj se sve, kako reč izreče, sve se razume.* (Ilinka Despotović, Trupale village)

That competitive nature of the manifestation was very important in the creation of the “discourse of competency” that I presented in the Introduction (“We in *Gornja Studena* sang best and our songs were the best” – *Mi u Gornjoj Studeni smo najbolje pevale i najbolje su nam pesme*, Rada Zlatanović, Petrija Vučković). Stage performances gave a specific position of musical authority to the women who publicly performed: “Performing at manifestations, particularly at big ones, the members of the group became important persons, and the first known experts, artists and tourists from their environments.” (Ceribašić 2003:20).

All of the female singers pointed out that the individual performance was a difficult, but at the same time an extraordinary experience. The solo performance was atypical in two ways: the women’s songs were usually performed by two or three singers, thus performing without accompaniment was a big change. Consequently, full attention was directed toward the individual on stage, which was a completely new situation for women who usually did not express their own individualities in public. Solo performing was thus a very stressful experience, but in that way women gained self-confidence both as performers and as individuals:

“When I remember my performance at the Village Gatherings in *Pasjača*, I went without friends they could not come, so I went on my own. Now, that I remember I behaved very freely. When I started to sing, all auditoriums were open-eyed. After my performance one man said: “This is the woman who sang.”

*A to se seti još u Pasjaču kad sam bila u Susreti sela, a sama sam bila, nesam imala drugarice, nekako ne moguće, pa ja sama. Kad se setim kad sam si tad bila nešto slobodna. Kad sam si ošuštala neki glas, ama čini mi se cela sala je se čudila. Pa kad iskoči jedan: “Ta je žena, ta je žena pevala.”* (Miroslava Jovanović, Malča village)

The media also played an important role in the construction of the new self-identification of the female singers. Their performances were shown on local and national television, broadcast on radio, or presented in newspapers. All of them showed me the clippings from newspapers, particularly the ones with their pictures. TV shows were a particularly significant experience as a source of personal gratification. That public acknowledgment of their talents on the highest level brought them very close to the professionals:

“In Belgrade we barely danced one dance (*kolo*). You had to turn over to the audience and cameras, so we hardly persisted. They pursued us very much; we danced according to the clock, because they had already prepared the program. First went the News (*Devin*), and then the rest. But we performed first.”

*U Beograd java smog kernel kilo judo, zany, ad se Okeene u mash I u camera, java smog izdržali. Tamo su ni mnogo mučili, sve smo pod sat igrali. Jer to ima program, prvo je Dnevnik, pa onda jedno. Al mi smo prvi imali.* (Despotović Ilinka, Trupale village)

Transformation of the rural society proceeded slowly and, as I emphasized, many traditional attitudes remained. The stage performances of the female singers, as a way of expressing their individualities, appeared to be very important to them, but hardly acceptable to the patriarchal community. Through performances they expressed their personal attitude and challenged the patterns of “propriety” and “impropriety” in the patriarchal environment of Niško Polje. This performative act enabled subversive re-signification of the existing gender hierarchies and proliferation of the visibility and legitimacy of women as social subjects.

Regarding the representation of women, the public setting of the Village Gatherings has kept the construction of gender relations which were based on a traditional matrix: women stayed in the field of vocal practice, performing the ritual women’s songs, only transmitting them from the private to the public space. That kind of dualism, the imbalance between an identity politics imposed by the authorities (equality brought by socialism) and the actual practices, was represented through the structure of

performance and repertoire. There were no drastic changes in the field of musical activities: for women, the predominantly male domain, such as playing instruments, still remained a non-legitimate sphere of activity.

Data from the mid 1980s on female instrumentalists exists, but they refer to school children who learned to play at music classes or went to the music school. They usually performed as part of school orchestras in the part of the program reserved for “children folklore.”



Photograph 12: The performance of two school-girl instrumentalists, Trupale village in 1983

In the Jelašnica village, I found one specific example of female instrumentalists included in a male orchestra.<sup>79</sup> Miodrag Tasić, a local instrumentalist who plays several

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<sup>79</sup> Anna Czekanowska writes about a new practice in Poland, where even old women become instrumentalists and organizers of festival activity (Czekanowska 1996a:93). Helmi Järviluoma also states that in the rural area in central Finland, although it was unthinkable for women to play in an the early twentieth century, today it is common for them to play brass instruments. She adds that the two-row

instruments such as different types of flute (*frula, duduk*), harmonika (*accordion*) and *lejka*,<sup>80</sup> made an ensemble of eleven *lejkas*, whose performances represented a specific kind of attraction. The repertoire mainly consisted of folk dances (*kola*), but also included some original compositions (such as the *Jelašnički merak* dance). The performance usually started with a short story about the orchestra and the village of Jelašnica. Another attraction characteristic of that orchestra was two female *lejka* players – Miodrag’s neighbors, who were included not as performers, but as an entertainment since they did not actually play *lejkas*, but pretended to do that, just by holding it. He told me that the audience was thrilled by their appearance, especially the way they pretended to play (see the video example num. 3 on the CD).



Photograph 13: The performance of lejkas’ orchestra

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accordion has become particularly popular among young and middle-aged women (Järviluoma 2000:56). Ingrid Rüütel, researching the feminization of Kihnu culture in Estonia, reveals that in the latter decades of the twentieth century, girls and women became instrumentalists, and also occupied other roles and functions that traditionally belonged to men (Rüütel 2000:276).

<sup>80</sup> *Lejka* is a simple aerophone instrument, made of a pumpkin. This type of instrument was spread all over Serbia, but it is usually not considered a “real” instrument. Miodrag made *lejkas* by himself, in different sizes, shapes and tonal structure.

This case illustrates the general presumption that the older women in rural environments remained in the traditional domain of music-making. Although women were displayed in the public sphere in the new role, their appearance essentially did not transgress existing norms. For them it was not possible to enter into the world of “real” instrumentalists and they were represented as “fake” players.<sup>81</sup> This was reinforced by the fact that the leaders of amateur groups as well as the main organizers of the Village Gatherings were men. Women were still dismissed and marginalized as “just” performers, rather than authors or organizers. In such a way, the socially constructed matrix was transmitted on stage, and the representation of women still retained the same framework without changing the gender hierarchies. In that way, the female singers’ stage performances crossed the boundaries but did not dissolve them, whereby the relations of power were not transgressed, but only challenged.

Given the above discussion, we can conclude that even though the female singers stage performances proved to be ineffective in fully establishing new gender relations and overcoming exclusions, it opened possibilities for the future (or further) political reconsideration of the position of new generations of women in rural environments. The female singers’ stage performances in Niško Polje represented a milestone in the process of putting these new possibilities into practice.

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<sup>81</sup> Naila Ceribašić reveals the same practice among Croatian female instrumentalists, who were not considered “serious” performers until the middle of the twentieth century. They were included in orchestras just as a “fanny” replacement for the absent male musician, or played children’s and other “non-real” instruments (Ceribašić 2004:159). Veronica Doubleday writes about similar phenomenon in Afghanistan, where the frame drum as an instrument played exclusively by women was considered a “non-instrument” (Doubleday 1999:125). Sean Williams, in his research of *gamelan degung* performances, points out that for the Sudanese, the quality of the music is diminished when women are included into ensembles (Williams 1998:79).

## CONCLUDING REMARKS

The present study's aim has been to illuminate the changes that the performance of gender underwent in Niško Polje, by exploring the personal narratives of the women involved in the villages' amateur activities from the beginning of the 1970s to the middle of the 1990s. Drawing on both the concept of experience in feminist epistemology and the ethnomusicological one of narrative musical ethnography, this study has shown the ways in which personal experience and individual discourses can be used as an insightful approach in the research of music-making. In using the oral history method during the field research, my intention was to present women as individuals differentiated by age, attitudes and backgrounds. I discussed the "authority discourse" as a part of the women's "alternative discourse," examining the processes of re-creation of the female singers' subjectivities, as well as the concepts of propriety and subversion as products of power relations and gender hierarchies.

I took up stage performances as optimal places for the production and representation of meaning, social legitimization and power re-negotiation. Musical performances were examined as cultural practices which produced a new pattern in the representation of gender in the light of socialist identity politics. Through the Village Gatherings, the policy makers constructed socialist "femininity" through official discourse, influencing the new dynamics of the social relations and new ways of self-recognition of an older generation of women in Niško Polje. The stage performances were analyzed in the entire performative context, including visual representations and the role of the audience.

In the central part of the work, I stated the hypothesis that through stage performances the female singers had an opportunity to transmit their activity from the periphery to the center of social happenings. The theoretical work of Judith Butler and other poststructuralist theorists such as Luce Irigaray and Michel Foucault were a basis for

the examination of the role of stage performances in the construction of the women's identity. Drawing on the concept of identity as a category constantly open to re-signification, I examined the female singers' stage performances as performative acts of negotiation the gender hierarchy in Niško Polje, analyzing their constitutive role in the creation of the women's subjectivity, social identity and performance of gender.

In the concluding part of the dissertation, my intention is to raise certain issues which I see as significant for further studying and as potential guidelines for further research. First, I will return to the basic issues raised in Chapter One, to the important questions of the examination of people's personal understandings and the interpretation of their musical activities. The female singers' stories confirmed the significance of stage performance as a strategy in the construction of their subjectivity, but also showed that women's subjectivity was articulated through the very process of narration. Namely, "narration would be strongly connected to the live reality of social relations, but sometimes it is very practice, since by it and through the dialogue with others, people actualized their subjectivity" (Herzfeld 1985:16). An additional aspect of the applied methodological approach that particularly appealed to me was the way female singers created their memories of the past. This approach indirectly unveiled the strategies of remembering and re-constructing the past, which appeared to be a crucial issue in researching the narratives about musical practice, particularly the repertoire. The female singers' stories, although they speak about the past, also acknowledge the present post-socialist reality, which shaped them in a certain way. For that reason, I see this as being particularly significant research for the post-socialist context.

The discourses of my interlocutors expressed significant ambivalence. The discourses about the "foregone times" and a current moment defined as "new times" were particularly present in their narratives. The "foregone time" is remembered as a period of suffering because of the difficult lifestyle, but at the same time as a period of harmony, cooperation and unity. In Chris M. Hann's words, "anger, resignation and selective nostalgia for the socialist era seem more significant in defining the new subjectivities" (Hann 2002:93). People glorified the idyllic village life as a time marked

by friendship, togetherness and generally good relations among people. “We lived differently at that time. Lots of things happened, my son, lots of things, it was wonderful.” (Drukčije se živelo tag. Bilo svašta, sine, to je bilo svašta, divota je bilo, Olga Stanković, Donja Studena village). They particularly emphasized good social relations, seeing the strong relations between relatives, neighbors and among the peasant community in general as the most important benefits of the foregone days. In their stories, the past was portrayed as a period marked by joint singing and dancing, which involved all community members in common social activities:

“We are walking down the road, walking and signing. People sang. Now there is no love, children, no sorrow, there is nothing now, no help, nothing. Now there is only spite.”

Bre, idemo si od put, idemo si, pevamo. Pesa je bila, pesma. Sad nema ljubav, deca, nema žal, nema ništa sad, nema pomoć, nema ništa. Sad samo na inat. (Životka Stanković, Brzi Brod village)

The Village Gatherings have a crucial position in their vision of the past as a joint activity of all community members. People remembered how some close contacts and even love relationships and marriages were conceived at this manifestation. Organizers stated that they often mediated among people who were not in good relations, but during the joint work on the program creation, they gradually overcame conflicts and became friends again.

In remembering the Gatherings, my interlocutors particularly emphasized that people involved in the organization were enthusiasts who worked without being paid. Someone offered a room for practicing, others assisted in setting up the stage or cleaning up the village. That was a significant feature in creating the image of the sociable past, where everyone tried to help and contribute to the development of the community. To quote people I conversed with, the main life qualities of those times were socializing (druženje), helpfulness (pomaganje) and togetherness (zajedništvo). Even though in many villages of Niško Polje the cultural centers' halls had been damaged, or sometimes did not even have windows and heating, they were always

crammed with an audience during the program of performances. All members of the village community were delighted by the opportunity to welcome people from other villages, and promote their village in the best possible way:

“We prepared everything, there are the tables, we served lunch, and people ate and drank. Everyone brought what they had. And there people do not bring just anything. From food, drinks, roasting. And also barrels of beer, these big schooners.”

Tu se sprema, tamo je bilo zvalo se ćelije, tamo odeljenje, tu su stolovi nameste ni i onda ručak, jede se pije se. Ali je svako doneo šta je imao. A tu se ne donosi tek tako. Od piluci, meze, pečenja, pa onda roštilj nije bio. A onda su bili burići pivo, krigle one velike. (Velibor Stanković, Prosek village)

The collected stories disaffirm the attitude that all socialist state-sponsored manifestations represented artificial and imposed forms of the communities' activities. On the contrary, the stories illuminate a significant role of these events in the everyday life of the villagers, as a specific revitalization of the former communal ritual activities. While working on the organization of the Village Gatherings community members shared common duties, interests and goals, which provided for cohesion within the rural community. At this point, I have found Gerald W. Creed's study on the erosion of ritual practice in post-socialist Bulgaria particularly useful in demonstrating how public activities bring people together and the role of cooperative activities as an important forum for sociability during socialist times. Creed points out that the village social networks in socialism were not 'family-atomized' as it was usually interpreted (Creed 2002:64). The case of Niško Polje shows a similar practice whereby the social relations during socialism were strengthened not only by the informal family festivals and gatherings, but also by the local state-supervised manifestations as well.

As already mentioned, during the 1990s the Village Gatherings lost institutional support and gradually ceased to exist. People in Niško Polje expressed disappointment at the erosion of these events which had provided social networking, exchange and solidarity. In Creed's words, "Ritual decline is not simply a barometer of economic and

political difficulties, but itself contributes to rural dissatisfaction and disappointment.” (ibid., 70)

In the opinion of my interlocutors, although people today have a much better quality of life, their social relations have seriously deteriorated. “Young people have everything but know nothing” (Sg se deca najela, napila pa ništa ne znaju, Ilinka Despotović, Trupale village). In contrast to the “foregone times” when people sang and danced at internal and communal gatherings (oro svaku nedelju), people today spend most of their time watching TV, “locked” in their houses. Villagers stated that they do not visit their neighbors and relatives as often as they did in earlier times. In their discourses, the “new age” is marked by anxieties, constant rush and stress. Local organizers stated that villages are empty, abandoned by young people, and that only primary school children are interested in the cultural activities of the villages, but after they taste city life for the first time, they become embarrassed by those kinds of festivities, seeing them as “rustic” (seljački). All of the people felt abandoned by both the local administrators in Niš as well as the state authorities who let the cultural life in their villages die out. They explained to me that individual ideas and energy do exist, but that without the municipality or state support it is not possible to materialize the projects. Seeing my interest for the Village Gatherings and village culture life, many of the ex-local organizers asked me to perhaps help them in reviving this manifestation.

Overall, the narratives of my interlocutors are certainly influenced by the post-Yugoslav nostalgia for socialist times, which were marked by unity, cooperation and economic stability. Although just few of them mentioned Tito or “the socialist past,” I noticed an implicit referring to the socialist period as a time of better, more peaceful and safer life. In addition, nostalgia is largely connected to the time of their lives marked by active musical performing and traveling. For all of the women, the period after 1996 represented the first big point of discontinuity, when the old pattern of life, together with the old singing style and repertoire, which also lost continuity in being performed on the stage, ceased to exist. “Now there is no *lazarica*, no *kraljica*, there is nothing.” (Sag nema ni kraljice, ni lazarice ni ništa, Verica Mitić, Kamenica village). In

general, the personal discourses of my interlocutors show various contradictions and paradoxes characteristic for societies in transformation (Berdahl 1999:10).

In my opinion, more extensive research into the post-socialist period could contribute to a further defining of the correlation between stage performances and the representation of gender in official discourse. The impact of political and social changes on the post-socialist state and current processes of “democratization and European integration” have had significant consequences on the performing of gender:

„Gender is a critical issue in the period of 'transition', not only because it penetrates and affects almost every aspect and level of social and cultural process and practice, but also because the move from socialism to the market economy and new political forms has particular consequences both for gender construction and gender inequality“ (Pine 2002:96).

As discussed earlier, the politics of representation in the post-socialist context has been shaped by nationalist, male-oriented discourses that propagate a return to the “traditional” gender roles. It is particularly useful to shed light on the way that female amateur vocal groups, previously marked as an important element in the socialist ideology of modernization, were used in “reviving” the national identity and popularization of traditional rural values in the post-socialist context. A focus on changes in the social and cultural landscape will be crucial in examining changes in the cultural practices of gender, particularly an investigation in which patterns of “appropriate” and “subversive” social behavior are interpreted in the new context. To deconstruct gender appropriation, the applied methodology of research which included only women of an older generation should be broadened by focusing on women of different ages. Expanding the research to encompass different generations of women will offer a clearer picture about changes in the representation and performance of gender in rural areas. In addition, extending the research to other areas of Serbia will enable an exploration of the phenomenon of the female singers in a larger context, and will therefore show to what extent that practice is limited to the geographical region of Niško Polje or is a part of a wider spread phenomenon.

Another aspect which calls for more research is the issue of the music of minorities and in particular of the Roma community's participation in and contribution to the Village Gatherings. It will be important to rethink the mainstream approach in Serbian ethnomusicology, where national identity is taken for granted as the most important criteria in identification, while other aspects as well as the dynamic character of identity construction (such as gender, age, class, geographical origin), are given less attention. The approach, which emphasizes dominant culture, needs to be broadened to include all communities and social groups existent in the research area. Expanding research to women in minority communities will thus be particularly important.

New projects realized by Serbian ethnomusicologists in the last few years show new tendencies in the scholarly work. Researchers have introduced new paradigms and undertook various approaches such as semiotics (Mirjana Zakić, doctoral dissertation, 2007) and the politics of the ethnomusicological research in connection with an analysis of Serbian vocal forms (Sanja Radinović, doctoral dissertation, 2007). The present study also offers a contribution to these new approaches by highlighting issues that have largely been neglected within the mainstream ethnomusicological discourse in Serbia. I have offered an approach based on personal discourses and interpretations, suggesting its methodological applicability in researching the complex relations between identity construction and music-making. Contacts with colleagues from various ethnomusicological schools in Europe and the United States largely influenced my methodology and stimulated the rethinking of many paradigms that were part of my scholarly background. I hope that I have achieved the main goal of this study – to open a space for researching “alternative discourses” and the voices of social subjects, individuals and groups alike, who were subject to social and scholarly marginalization in Serbian mainstream scholarly discourse.

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## SUMMARY

**Key words:** *the female singers, stage performances, socialism, negotiation, performative act.*

Study focuses on the negotiation of the performance of gender during socialism in rural areas of Niško Polje. During the 1970s and 1980s, as a result of the new identity politics introduced by socialism, new practices emerged enabling women to start performing at public gatherings organized by the state. Since these women destabilized the strong boundaries between gender-segregated fields of musical activity, transmitting their activities from periphery to the center of the social happenings, their status inside family and society had changed. Many of them were characterized by their families and wider society as being “irregular” persons, whose activity was often recognized as inappropriate. Through the female singers’ stage performances at the state-sponsored event called the Village Gatherings, the socialist “femininity” was represented in official discourse, affecting re-negotiation of the power relations.

Applying the oral history method during the field research and both the concept of experience in feminist epistemology and the ethnomusicological concept of narrative musical ethnography, my intention was to present women as individuals, differentiated by age, attitude and backgrounds. I discussed the “authority discourse” as a part of the women’s “alternative discourse,” examining the processes of re-creation of the female singers’ subjectivities, as well as the concepts of “propriety” and “subversion” as products of power relations and gender hierarchies. Musical performances were

examined as cultural practices which produced a new pattern in the representation of gender in the light of the socialist identity politics. The stage performances were analyzed in the entire performative context, including visual representations and the role of the audience. Drawing on the concept of identity as a category constantly open to re-signification, the female singers' stage performances are examined as performative acts of negotiation the gender hierarchy in Niško Polje, exploring the changes in the construction of the female singers' subjectivities and self-representations.

## SUMMARY IN SLOVENIAN

### POVZETEK DOKTORSKE DISERTACIJE

#### **“Politika identitete in javni nastopi žensk v zadnji tretjini dvajsetega stoletja na Niškem Polju”**

Disertacija je zasnovana na rezultatih projekta “Raziskave in predstavitev tradicijske glasbene in plesne dediščine okolice Niša,” ki je bila leta 2004 izvedena pod okriljem Centra za raziskave balkanske glasbe iz Beograda. Projekt je podprlo Ministrstvo Republike Srbije za kulturo in medije ter mesto Niš, sama pa sem bila v projekt vključena kot koordinatorka raziskovalne skupine etnomuzikologov in študentov etnomuzikologije. Raziskava je omogočila pridobitev informacij o položaju tradicijske glasbe med populacijo vnaprej določene družbene skupine (podeželsko prebivalstvo na področju Niškega Polja), kasneje pa sem se v samostojni raziskavi osredotočila predvsem na ženske in opravila šestinpetdeset intervjujev v enaindvajsetih vaseh.

Že med terenskim delom sem v okviru omenjenega projekta opazila zanimiv pojav: glavne informatorke so bile ženske, ki so pričale o glasbeni dejavnosti opazovanega področja (72% žensk je bilo rojenih med leti 1914 in 1951). V očeh družbene skupnosti so namreč prav ženske veljale za najbolj kompetentne pripovedovalke o ‘starih’ pesmih in glasbeni dejavnosti v lokalni skupnosti na splošno. Nadalje sem odkrila, da so bile ženske navadno postavljene v ozadje tradicionalnega družbenega okolja, saj so lahko izvajale glasbo le v zasebnem okolju (v hiši, med poljedelskim delom, v okviru šeg ipd.), medtem ko so bili odrski nastopi zanje neformalno prepovedani. Med leti 1970 in

1980 se je kot rezultat nove politike identitete, uvedene s socialističnim režimom, pojavila nova praksa: ženske so začele nastopati na javnih manifestacijah, ki so bile pod okriljem državne organizacije. Pripovedi, ki jih je zajelo terensko raziskovanje, so razkrile, da so skoraj vse intervjuvane ženske nastopale na odru na manifestaciji, imenovani *Vaška srečanja*. To so bile torej prve ženske, ki so sodelovale v organiziranih amaterskih skupinah.

Pričujoče delo je zasnovano na podlagi novih antropoloških pristopov redefiniranja odnosa med znanstveno skupnostjo in zunanjim svetom – “mejo med znanostjo in kulturo, ki jo upravlja znanost sama” (Senčar 2004:71). Delo obsega rekonstrukcijo podatkov, ki sem jih zbrala na terenu, ter lastno, oziroma “družbeno utemeljeno interpretacijo” (Stanley 1992:7) pripovedi pevk in njihovih glasbenih udeleževanj. V nalogi ne zavzemam pozicije feministične raziskovalke (kot se pogosto dogaja pri obravnavi ženskih tematik), hkrati pa nikakor ne morem negirati ideologij in stališč, ki sem jih prevzela ob pisanju disertacije. V času terenskih raziskav sem preoblikovala številne svoje prejšnje koncepte o srbski podeželski kulturi, ki so mi odprli prostor za mnoga ponovna razmišljanja, preučevanja, preverjanja in nove ugotovitve.

### **Prvo poglavje: Metodologija in teoretična izhodišča**

V tem poglavju predstavljam teoretični okvir, ki je bil osnova za raziskavo odarskih nastopa žensk na področju Niškega Polja. Kritično obravnavam vodilne metodologije, ki ne raziskujejo glasbene dejavnosti v povezavi z izvajalčevim osebnim diskurzom, in ugotavljam, da je z vidika koncepta kvalitativne raziskave in biografske metode nujna premestitev raziskovalčeve osrednje pozornosti z *izvajalca* na *osebo* (njeno starost, spol in politično držo), *ki izvaja*.

Moj pristop temelji na kvalitativni raziskovalni metodologiji, ki upošteva subjektivno interpretacijo raziskovalne realnosti. Pri raziskovanju generacij družbeno marginaliziranih žensk se je izkazala za zelo ustrezno tudi biografska metoda. Zaupnost

je bila pri tem, upoštevajoč lastni interes, da bi osvetlila 'glas' žensk in njihove osebne zgodbe, največjega pomena. Biografska metoda, kot "metoda z najmočnejšo interakcijo in družbeno relacijo med raziskovalcem in informatorjem" (Thompson 1987:117), mi je omogočila obdržati njihov osebni odnos do glasbe in izvedbe. Osnovni namen disertacije je, ob upoštevanju avtorjev, kot so Paul Thompson, Donald A. Ritchie in Liz Stanley, osvetliti osebni ženski diskurz s poudarkom na njihovih stališčih. Pri tem sledim etnomuzikološki epistemologiji, v kateri je terensko delo definirano kot interaktiven, dialoški način raziskovanja glasbe, oziroma kot "poznavanje ljudi, ki ustvarjajo glasbo" (Titon 1997:91). Moj namen je prikazati pevke kot posameznice z različnimi življenjskimi zgodbami ter osebnimi pogledi in ne kot ločeno družbeno kategorijo ali kot zastopnice podeželskih žensk Niškega Polja.

Čeprav je bil v raziskavi poudarek na ženskah kot posameznicah, se je s terenskim delom razkrilo, da jih družijo tudi skupna izkušnja – tj. sodelovanje v vaških amaterskih skupinah, ki je oblikovalo njihov diskurz na podoben način. Pripovedi pevk o nastopanju so namreč razkrile delitev v njihovih pogledih: pri pogovorih so aktivno sodelovale – celo pri bolj kočljivih temah – vendar pa o svojih javnih nastopih v okviru *Vaških srečanj* niso bile vedno pripravljene govoriti. Sprva so se sramovale govoriti o petju, ko pa je pogovor postal bolj živahen, so postopno prešle iz obrobne v osrednji subjekt pripovedi. Tak način 'dvojne pripovedi' priča o njihovem od zunaj posredovanem razumevanju nastopanja, ki je bil v skladu z družbenimi pričakovanji in normami. 'Primernost' ali 'pravilnost' ženskih izjav sta bili očitno diskurz večine (ali 'diskurz avtoritete'), ki so ga predstavljali njihovi soprogi in organizatorji *Vaških srečanj*. V tem pogledu ženska dvojna pripoved predstavlja vsiljen diskurz hierarhije spolov, ki deluje na podlagi večnega in ustaljenega ponavljanja kulturnih praks in omogoča ohranitev obstoječih razmerij moči.

V naslednjih poglavjih podajam kratek pregled relevantnih teorij, ki osvetljujejo načine oblikovanja koncepta spola v okviru etnomuzikološkega polja tako v 'zahodni etnomuzikologiji' kot tudi v srbski etnomuzikološki šoli. V delo vključujem tudi metodo 'narativne glasbene etnografije' (Titon 1997:96) in kategorijo izkustva (kot del

*Standpoint theory*) ki je nov, vendar zelo uporaben koncept v etnomuzikoloških raziskavah. Ob kratkem pregledu treh smeri znanosti, ki jih je kot pozicije med feminističnimi glasbenimi študijami predstavila Ellen Koskoff (Koskoff 1989), pa se osredotočam predvsem na t. i. tretji val feminističnih poststrukturalističnih teoretikov. Pomemben delež v tem pregledu predstavlja analiza dominantnih diskurzov o glasbi in spolu v srbski etnomuzikologiji, ki jih opazujem v publikacijah vodilnih raziskovalcev. Posebna pozornost velja problemom dostojnosti in subverzije v srbski etnomuzikološki znanosti. Če povzamem, je bil diskurz o spolu v veliki meri oblikovan na podlagi vodilne ideologije in uradne politike – v socializmu torej na podlagi ideologije napredka in izrazitega kolektivizma, v postjugoslovanski znanosti pa na podlagi nacionalističnih tendenc. Sama sem še posebno pozorna na paradigmo o ženski kot glavni ohranjevalki najbolj ‘avtentične’ glasbene dediščine in spodbijam osnovni pristop vodilnih raziskovalcev, ki temelji na predpostavki o ženski kolektivni identiteti in poudarja biološke razlike med spoloma. Ti naturalistični pristopi raziskav spolov temeljijo na paradigmi opozicije spolov in dihotomiji med kulturo in naravo. Opozarjam na potrebnost rekonceptualizacije obrednih praks, ki ne smejo biti obravnavane kot vnaprej določene prakse, ampak kot delujoče, aktivne sile v kulturnih procesih.

Za teoretično osnovo sem uporabila delo Judith Bulter ter dela drugih poststrukturalistov in *Queer* teoretikov, ki so postavili pod vprašaj kanon tradicionalnih definicij o seksualnosti in spolu. Izzvali so dihotomični okvir razmišljanja in binarnost odnosov med moško in žensko kategorijo. Trdijo, da se identiteta potrjuje z nikoli dokončanim procesom ponovnega osmišljanja in, četudi je že bila določena, še vedno kroži v območju različnih medsebojno povezanih diskurzih. Ker prakse, ki oblikujejo subjekt, delujejo prek procesa ponavljanja (Butler 1995:134), Judith Butler predlaga obravnavo subjekta ne kot osnovo ali produkt, temveč kot kategorijo, ki je venomer odprta za izzive in ponovna osmišljanja. Moj namen je raziskati, kako je ta koncept spremenljive in porodne identitete mogoče vključiti v etnomuzikološko raziskavo. Pri preučevanju konstrukcije subjektivnosti žensk in reprezentacije njihovih osebnosti uporabljala teorijo performativnosti. Po teoriji performativnosti Judith Butlerjeve spol

ni stanje, ki ga nekdo že *ima*, ampak je družbena vloga, ki jo nekdo *igra* – spolne vloge niso utrjene kategorije, temveč se vedno znova vzpostavljajo z družbeno prakso (termin *performativnost* v tem pomenu prevzeman od Judith Butler, slovenski prevod Butler 2001). Preverila bom hipotezo, da so odrski nastopi vplivali na spremembe v oblikovanju osebnosti in samopodobe žensk ter na performativno izpogajanje spolnih vlog na Niškem Polju.

### **Drugo poglavje: Reprezentacija spolnih vlog na primeru glasbenih praks na Niškem Polju**

S predstavitvijo življenjskih zgodb pevk, vključenih v raziskavo, osvetlujem v drugem poglavju njihov položaj znotraj družine in podeželske družbe. Pozicijo ženske v družbi sem analizirala na podlagi šeg in navad, ki s pravili vedenja ohranjajo stanovitnost spolne hierarhije. Skoraj vse poroke intervjuvanih žensk so vnaprej določili starši. Pevke so poudarile, da so pred poroko komajda spregovorile z bodočimi ženini. Po poroki se je njihov položaj v okviru podeželske skupnosti popolnoma spremenil in številne družbene dejavnosti so bile zanje prepovedane. Vloga 'gospodarja svoje žene,' ki jo je mož dobil s poroko, je bila že pred poroko uveljavljena s kupčijo med nevestino in ženinovo družino. Način življenja v zakonski skupnosti je bil urejen in je vseboval nekatere omejitve: prepovedano je bilo na primer, da bi se zakonca klicala po imenih in se naslavljala neposredno, prepoved je še posebno veljala za žensko (od nje se je pričakovala raba izrazov kot moj mož, moj človek). Na mnogih območjih Srbije se je nevesta izogibala ne samo izrekanju moževega imena, temveč tudi izrekanju imen vseh članov njegove družine (Bandić 1980:326).

Pomen ženske seksualnosti v ruralni skupnosti je v disertaciji še posebej obravnavan. Kot zagovarja Svetlana Slapšak, je žensko telo v večini nam poznanih kulturah zagotovo glavno simbolično področje za izvrševanje različnih konceptov in potemtakem tudi za ustvarjanje zgodb in podob (Slapšak 2002:152). V srbskih vaseh je večina strogih pravil, ki se nanašajo na vizualnost, povezanih s predkrščanskimi

verovanji in starimi poganskimi obredji. Ti tabuji potrjujejo, da je ženska predstavljala imetnico posebnih, magičnih kvalit. Ženske naj bi komunicirale z 'nezemeljskim svetom' in so bile zato 'nečiste' ter nevarne za može, ki so predstavljali nasprotno – 'čistost' tuzemskega življenja (Vasić 1998:42). 'Nečistost' je bil znak kulturne motnje in nestabilnosti, zaradi česar so se razvile različne, tako praktične kot ideološke, strategije za podreditev ženske. Za mlado dekle je bilo sramotno, da bi se pogovarjala, plesala ali sedela ob mladem moškem, kadar ni bila v spremstvu odraslih. Skromnost je bila namreč podedovana ženska lastnost, pomembna tako za ženske, ki so bile godne za zakon, kot tudi za poročene žene. Status poročene ženske se je z zunanjim izgledom javno izražal, zlasti na lokalnih srečanjih (v okviru vaških praznikov) kot so *kola*, *vašari*, *sabori*.

Družbeni položaj žensk z Niškega Polja je bil močno povezan z njihovimi obrednimi vlogami in prenesen iz sakralnega v območje družbene in pravne rabe. Hkrati je bil v skladu s starostno hierarhijo: "na različnih stopnjah svojega življenja so ženske zavzele ('primerne') določene položaje socialnega statusa v okviru družine in družbene skupnosti" (Petrović A. 1990:72). Spolni normativi so bili konstituirani v skladu z moškim dominantnim družbenim položajem, ženske pa so bile v poziciji manjvrednega družbenega subjekta. Večina njihovih dejavnosti se je odvijala v privatnem okolju hišnega gospodinjstva, medtem ko je bilo javno okolje pod okriljem moškega nadzora. V patriarhalni družbi so imeli moški tako javno kot simbolično dominantni položaj nad ženskami. Ženske na primer niso imele nobene možnosti dedovanja nepremičnin ali sodelovanja pri odločanju o vaških problemih in zelo pogosto celo nobene besede pri odločanju o družinskih zadevah. Njihovo gibanje je bilo omejeno na obiskovanje širše družine ali na krajše izlete v mesto. Vzdrževanje nasprotja med spolnimi kategorijami je ena od številnih strategij ohranitve moške superiornosti in hierarhičnega binarnega spolnega sistema (Butler 2001:25).

Za ilustracijo teh strategij predstavljam glasbene dejavnosti, ki so vključene v proces ustvarjanja spolnih vlog s pomočjo mehanizmov izključevanja in dominacije. Kot sem že poudarila, so bila nekatera področja družbenega življenja v patriarhalni družbi

ženskam popolnoma nedostopna. Te omejitve so bile vidne predvsem v inštrumentalni glasbeni dejavnosti. Dekleta so v otroštvu sodelovala s fanti pri izdelavi glasbil in nastopanju, vendar po končanem obdobju otroštva niso imele več dostopa do inštrumentalne dejavnosti, saj je prevladalo močno ločevanje med moško in žensko domeno. Na Niškem Polju nisem naletela na nobeno inštrumentalistko ('godko') ali bila opozorjena nanjo, saj skupnost ženskih glasbenih dejavnosti navadno ni razumela kot 'pravih glasbenih nastopov.' Diskurzi prepoznavanja ženskega nastopanja so bili močno povezani z razlikovanjem med javnim in privatnim, pri čemer naj bi bile ženske v privatnem, neplačanem okolju (doma), medtem ko so delo v javnosti (stran od doma) s prejemanjem plače opravljali moški. Zato so bili tudi na področju dejavnosti, ki je veljala za 'glasbo' v pravem pomenu besede, moški absolutni gospodarji. Pevske sposobnosti so za žensko v zaprti skupnosti veljale kot zaželeno nadarjenost, vendar njihovega izražanja zunaj domačega okolja niso odobraval. Z razkazovanjem svojega telesa bi izgubila najpomembnejšo vrednoto v podeželskem okolju – spolno sramežljivost. Profesionalno glasbeno izvajanje (v lokalnih gostilnah in na različnih slavnih) je bilo ženskam torej prepovedano.

V letnih šegah (*lazarice, kraljice, Durđevdan* in *sedanjke*) se predstavlja podoba ženskosti, hkrati pa se tudi kreira ženska družbena vloga v podeželski skupnosti. Vse te šege so pomembni elementi v samopotrjevanju njihove ženske identitete in označujejo vsa vidnejša obdobja, skozi katera je šla ženska v patriarhalni družbi. Med njihovem izvajanjem so bile ženske v 'svojem' prostoru, izven 'predpisanega' časa in osvobojene nadzora moških, kar je odprlo možnost uživanja svobode, ki je niso imele v resničnem družbenem življenju. Upoštevajoč, da so te šege del širšega sistema kulturnih dejavnosti patriarhalne družbe, predstavljajo obenem tudi prostor za izraz ženske obredne moči.

**Tretje poglavje: *Vaška srečanja* in politike reprezentacije**

To poglavje predstavlja analizo razmerja med javnim in privatnim na področju glasbenih dejavnosti, pri čemer ga ne uporabljam kot prostorsko, temveč kot etnografsko kategorijo. Pojem javnega in privatnega se uporablja za razmejevanje pomembnih ločnic na področju glasbenih dejavnosti in še posebno pri razlagah 'vidno/nevidnih' medsebojnih odnosov. Ljudje, s katerimi sem govorila, so odrske nastope pevk na *Vaških srečanjih* sprejeli popolnoma drugače, kot druge nastope. Ženske na Niškem Polju so z nastopom izven domačih praznovanj in zabav v okviru letnega in življenjskega kroga šeg in navad ter praznikov lokalne skupnosti takorekoč kršile pravilo, to pa zaradi tega, ker so člani skupnosti odrsko nastopanje videli kot javno dejavnost *par excellence*. Odrski nastopi so imeli torej v primerjavi z drugimi nastopi, ki jih skupnost ni priznavala kot 'prave glasbene nastope,' drugačen pomen: bili so podprti s strani države in so potekali v različnih kulturnih kontekstih. Čeprav so bili tako nastopajoči kot občinstvo pretežno iz istega družbenega okolja, je prisotnost ocenjevalcev in regionalnih organizatorjev, ki niso bili del vaše skupnosti, dodala nove elemente k lokalnom razumevanju glasbenih dejavnosti na Niškem Polju.

Za razumevanje večplastnosti *Vaških srečanj*, je nujno potreben pregled političnega ozadja in uradne kulturne politike v socialistični Srbiji ter njen vpliv na omenjene dejavnosti. Namen uradne kulturne politike je bil doseči homogenost etnične in regionalne raznolikosti v jugoslovanski družbi. Javne manifestacije so bile kot del simboličnega predstavljanja nove multinacionalne družbe na državni ravni ustanovljene z namenom, da bi prikazale enotno jugoslovansko kulturno dediščino. Glavni protagonisti kulturne politike so bile amaterske kulturno-umetniške skupine (ki so se ustanavljale v vseh šestih nekdanjih jugoslovanskih republikah). Te so z repertoarjem ljudske glasbene dediščine vseh narodov in narodnosti Jugoslavije propagirale ideologijo 'bratstva in enotnosti.' V začetku petdesetih let je bil opuščen model močne državopartijske kulturne politike. Državni upravniki so začeli podpirati umetniško svobodo ter domačo in mednarodno kulturno sodelovanje. Od šestdesetih let dalje, ko so bili ustanovljeni 'trubački' festivali in druge podobne manifestacije, se je začelo obdobje preporoda lokalne kulturne dediščine, prav tako pa se je povečalo sodelovanje z zahodnim svetom. Turistična industrija, ki je prodrla v jugoslovanski trg, je

spodbudila potrebo po ustanovitvi številnih regionalnih folklornih festivalov (Ceribašić 1998:25).

S povečanim zanimanjem za vaško kulturo v okviru narodopisnega znanstvenega dela so se uveljavljali različni postopki ohranjanja glasbene tradicije, in sicer ne samo na državni ravni, temveč tudi v lokalnih okoljih (Petrović 1981:283). V zgodnjih 1970-ih je politična in gospodarska transformacija postala bolj kompleksna. Politični odnos Titovega režima z zahodom se je postopno okrepil, kar je vplivalo na nadaljnjo liberalizacijo posameznih segmentov političnih, javnih in gospodarskih področij življenja v Jugoslaviji (Naumović 2006:17). Glavni organizatorji so bile takoimenovane *Samoupravne interesne zajednice – SIZ* (Samoupravne interesne skupnosti) in *Kulturno-prosvetne zajednice – KPZ* (Kulturno-prosvetne skupnosti). V 1980-tih letih je centralni sistem nadzora nadomestila angažiranost lokalnih skupnosti, društev in kulturnih centrov (*Domovi kulture*). V nasprotju z državnimi manifestacijami, ki so jih nadzorovali partijski upravniki, so ostale lokalne glasbene dejavnosti onstran zanimanja državne politike.

*Vaška srečanja* je leta 1973 ustanovila Vlada republike Srbije. Manifestacije so se, in se še vedno, odvijajo izključno v Srbiji in njenih pokrajinah: v Vojvodini in na Kosovu. Formalni organizator srečanj je bila Kulturno-prosvetna skupnost Srbije (*Kulturno-prosvetna zajednica Srbije*) s središčem v Beogradu in lokalne podružnice, ki so delovale v vseh regionalnih centrih. Kljub temu pa so bili vaški kulturni centri glavni organizatorji in zadnji člen birokratske verige. Uradno ime manifestacije je bilo 'Tekmovanje srbskih vasi,' vendar se je lokalna različica na Niškem Polju imenovala *Vaška srečanja*. Tekmovanja so organizirali na štirih ravneh teritorialnega nadzora: lokalni, občinski, regionalni in državni. Vse aktivnosti je ocenjevala žirija, ki jo je določil regionalni svet manifestacije in jo je sestavljalo od pet do sedem kvalificiranih kulturnih in pedagoških delavcev, zdravnikov, kmetijskih strokovnjakov, arhitektov, etnologov, glasbenih učiteljev in novinarjev. V skladu s pravilnikom so bili osnovni cilji manifestacije ocenjevanje stanja in spodbujanje razvoja vasi, izboljšanje življenjskih pogojev in kulturnega življenja kot tudi delovne produktivnosti, zdravja,

občinskih in drugih služb, ki so bile povezane z vaško populacijo. Stališče do manifestacij se je z leti spreminjalo glede na politične in ekonomske spremembe v Srbiji. *Vaška srečanja* so začela izgubljati zagon z razpadom Jugoslavije, vendar so tudi pod vladavino Slobodana Miloševića ohranila svoj obstoj. Po koncu njegove vladavine (v občini Niš že prej ko je takoimenovana 'Demokratska opozicija' zmagala na lokalnih volitvah leta 1996), je Kulturno-prosvetna skupnost prenehala delovati in manifestacije so postale nepomembne.

Modernizacija je bila v začetnih letih organizacije *Vaška srečanja* ena osnovnih nalog socialističnega režima in je bila vidna tudi v programu manifestacije. Le-ta je poleg nastopov lokalnih folklornih, vokalnih in instrumentalnih skupin vključeval tudi nastope šolskih zborov, učencev glasbenih šol in sodobnega plesa. Ideja *Vaških srečanj* je bila predstavljanje tako podeželskega družbenega okolja kot tudi urbane kulture. Prizadevanja za uskladitev 'starega' s 'sodobnim' so bila namreč značilnost socialističnega življenjskega sloga na splošno. Ta koncept ni nameraval vključiti le nove ideologije modernizacije v novoustanovljeno državo, temveč tudi doseči zeleno harmonijo med ruralno in urbano kulturo kot integrirani proces vseh družbenih subjektov v ustvarjanju brezrazredne socialistične družbe. Prebivalci Niškega Polja so *Vaška srečanja* predstavili v zelo pozitivni luči in so se strinjali, da je bila manifestacija koristna za razvoj vasi. Vsi so menili, da je manifestacija izvrstna priložnost, da se mladi naučijo starih pesmi, plesov in navad, saj je vključevala udeležence vseh generacij vaščanov. Poudarili so, da so mladi ljudje zelo zadovoljni, da se lahko vključujejo v dodatne aktivnosti in se pri tem srečujejo s svojimi vrstniki iz sosednjih vasi. Starejšim ljudem pa je to pomenilo dober način obujanja spominov hkrati z druženjem in zabavo.

V tem poglavju je posebej obravnavana politika selekcije repertoarja. 'Ustvarjalci' repertoarja *Vaških srečanj* so neposredno vplivali na fenomen, ki se je razkril med terenskim delom. Manifestacija je namreč v veliki meri vplivala na selekcijo pesmi, ki so se v spominu ljudi ohranile kot reprezentativne in so bile ponovno interpretirane v okviru terenskih raziskav desetletje kasneje. Te pesmi tudi danes predstavljajo širši

skupnosti 'avtentično' in 'čisto' tradicionalno glasbeno dediščino. Tu pa se odpira pomemben problem selekcije repertoarja ter vloge organizatorjev srečanj in oblasti pri oblikovanju spomina. Sodeč po pripovedovanju na terenu, so regionalni organizatorji v skladu s kriteriji žirije zahtevali čim bolj 'originalen' nastop ter 'čist' in 'avtentični' repertoar. Ob upoštevanju tekmovalne narave manifestacije, je bil glavni cilj lokalnih organizatorjev ustvariti predvsem najbolj atraktiven astop. Kot pomembna sprememba v lokalnem repertoarju se je pojavilo 'izposojanje' repertoarja iz drugih vasi in regij, ter poenotenje obstoječega repertoarja. Ta navada pa je postala osnova za popularizacijo, razširjanje in adaptiranje pesmi, ki so se izvajale na *Vaških srečanjih*. Tudi neposredno poseganje organizatorjev in žirije (npr. časovne omejitve) je v skladu s programskimi pravili vplivalo na potek prireditve in prilagajanje izvedbe. Dvoglasno petje, značilno za ženske nastope na področju Niškega Polja, je pri tem doživelo največje izzive. Namesto običajnih zasedb, sestavljenih iz treh žensk, so voditelji skupin, misleč, da bo nastop tako bolj atraktiven, začeli uvajati zasedbe dveh izvajalk. Vse te prilagoditve in posegi so določali stanje repertoarja, ki sem ga sama odkrila leta kasneje, in neposredno oblikovali tudi glasbeni spomin pevk. Kot posledica tega se je pokazalo, da je bila večina na terenu posnetih pesmi enoglasnih, čeprav so se nekatere ohranile v spominu (ne pa tudi izvajale) v dvoglasnem načinu. *Vaška srečanja* so vplivala ne le na repertoar, temveč tudi na oblikovanje kolektivnega glasbenega spomina. Po drugi strani pa so skoraj vse te pesmi, ki se danes izvajajo na terenu, preživele zaradi nenehnega oživljanja (ali zamrznitve) izvajalčevih spominov z odrskimi nastopi. Oblasti so z organiziranimi glasbenimi nastopi očitno spremenile glasbeno dejavnost na Niškem Polju, vendar tudi ohranile dober del repertoarja v živem spominu.

#### **Četrto poglavje: prekoračitev družbenih meja in žensko glasbeno udejstvovanje**

Zaključno poglavje se ukvarja s predstavitvijo socialističnega ženskega subjekta na *Vaških srečanjih* in z njihovim vplivom na preoblikovanje samozavesti in samopotrditve pevk Niškega Polja. Socialistično družbenopolitično stanje je odprlo prostor ženski aktivni udeležbi v javni sferi ter prvič v zgodovini zagotovilo ženskam

politično, ekonomsko in družbeno enakost z moškimi. Uresničila se je formalna emancipacija žensk, ki so začele dobivati nove priložnosti (na domenah kot sta izobraževanje in zaposlovanje). Te spremembe so ženskam omogočile več možnosti, da so gradile lastno družbeno identiteto izven zakona in družine, vendar so te priložnosti dosegle samo majhno število žensk: “predvsem meščanske ženske srednjega sloja v severnih regijah” (Woodward 1985:240). Posledično so se na podeželskih področjih moške, ki so dobili delo v tovarnah, zaradi industrializacije preselili v mesta, to pa je vplivalo na obstoječo razporeditev delovne sile. Večina poljedelskega dela je bila preložena na ženske – poleg gospodinjskih del in skrbi za otroke, so morale opravljati tudi dela na kmetiji, ki so jih prej opravljali moški. Ženske so imele navkljub ideologiji enakopravnosti pri zaposlovanju in plačilu za delo slabši položaj, opravljale pa so predvsem delo v pisarnah ali v proizvodnji (zlasti v tekstilni industriji, kot bolniške sestre ali učiteljice) (Massey, Hahn, Sekulić 1995:363). S tem je bila njihova prisotnost v družbi v večji meri simbolična in je izpolnjevala predvsem nujni delež udeležbe žensk v vodilnih vlogah (Slapšak 2002:149). Potemtakem so imele le vzorčno, simbolično vlogo v socialističnem sistemu, ali kot se je izrazila Gail Kligman: “Ženska enakopravnost ni bila razumljena ali živa v kulturnem pomenu; bila je preprosto proklamacija politike” (Kligman 1998:28).

Patriarhalni družbeni sistem je na podeželju ostal tog in globoko zakoreninjen. Ženskam še vedno ni bilo dovoljeno izraziti svoje individualnosti v javni sferi, tj. nastopati ob priložnostih izven privatnega okolja. Tiste, s katerimi sem govorila, so morale za vsak nastop zaprositi za dovoljenje svojega moža. Vodja udeleženk *Vaških srečanj* je bil najpogosteje moški, ki je bil hkrati njihovim možem odgovoren za varnost in ustrezno vedenje žena. Po drugi strani pa se je ženskam s samostojno predstavitvijo v javni sferi in delovanjem, v katerem so nastopale kot pomembne protagonistke v programu manifestacije, odprla možnost, da so izzvale svojo trenutno marginalno pozicijo v družbi ter postale vidne in pomembne kot individuumi. Tako lahko javne nastope, še posebno žensko samouresničitev v javnosti, obravnavamo ne le kot prostor za reprezentacijo, temveč tudi kot prostor za izpogajanje odnosov moči.

Spremembe v hierarhiji spolov so še posebej vidne v skupnih nastopih moških in žensk. Ženske so začele nastopati z možmi ali njihovimi moškimi sorodniki, kar je vplivalo tudi na prilagoditev repertoarja. Pevke so s tem, ne da bi se tega sramovale ali se temu izogibale, pridobile pri izvajanju različnih žanrov več svobode. Začele so izvajati moške pesmi in žanre, ki so bili povezani z moškimi vlogami, ter 'nove,' 'popularne' ali 'urbane' glasbene žanre in pesmi drugih amaterskih skupin, ki so jih slišale prek medijev. Vizualni koncept nastopov je vseboval tudi elemente, ki jih v domačem okolju ni bilo. Novi kontekst – oder, je zahteval drugačno predstavljanje, zato so bile pevke za nastope posebno oblečene (na odru so ponavadi nosile svečano nošo). Nekateri vodje skupin so z namenom, da bi bil nastop bolj atraktiven za žirijo in občinstvo, ženske celo prepričali, da so se odrekle nošnji rute, ki je bila integralni del podeželske ženske oblačilne kulture.

Kot sem že omenila, je filozofsko delo Judith Butler teoretična osnova mojega pristopa, s katerim skušam prikazati, da lahko odrsko nastopanje pevk analiziramo tudi kot performativno dejavnost. Butlerjeva trdi, da usmerjene dejavnosti ne samo predstavljajo, temveč tudi vzpostavljajo razmerja med spoli. Dejavnost ima torej dve funkciji – reprezentativno in produktivno. Z ozirom na koncept performativnosti, pri katerem je vsaka identiteta igrana (Butler 1999:33), je tista, ki je igrala prvotno vlogo ženske kot podrejenega družbenega subjekta, sedaj zamenjana z vlogo socialistične ženske, ki je enakopravna moškemu in nova gonilna sila socialistične družbe. Prek nenehnega ponavljanja diskurzivnih praks (že družbeno utrjenih pomenskih sistemov), se kulturna vloga ženske vedno znova konstruira. Uradni diskurz, ki predstavlja simbolne prakse, kot so javne manifestacije, je vzpostavil nova razmerja med spoloma. V okviru javnih manifestacij, ki so bile namenjene propagiranju napredka nove družbe in javne blaginje, so nastopajoče ženske postale eden od elementov v ustroju socialističnega ženskega subjekta. Institucionalizacija spolnih vlog se je izkazala za ključni dejavnik v legalizaciji sprememb hierarhije spolov. Z odrskimi nastopi, posebnim kontekstom nastopanja in s prisvojitvijo dejavnosti, ki so bile sicer namenjene moškemu, so ženske pridobile moč na uradno priznan način. Politika identitete je vplivala na obrat v reprezentativnem diskurzu spolov in ustvarjala nove

diskurze ženske subjektivnosti. V interakciji z občinstvom je prikaz 'nove ženskosti' vpeljal nove elemente v običajne družbene vzorce vedenja. S tega vidika so bila razmerja spolov performativno ustvarjena ali vsiljena s strani sistemov nadzora.

Nastop na *Vaških srečanjih* je odprl možnost za ponovno interpretacijo in premislek o novih pomenih pozicije ženskega subjekta. Ženskam, s katerimi sem govorila, je njihova vključenost v amaterske glasbene aktivnosti predstavljala izjemno pomemben dejavnik v osebni identifikaciji. Ker so pevke omajale močne meje med moškimi in ženskimi glasbenimi dejavnostmi, se je njihov status v družini in družbi spremenil. Sodeč po opravljenih intervjujih, so tako družine kot tudi družba ženske – pevke okarakterizirali kot čudaške osebe, njihova dejavnost pa je veljala za nespodobno na različnih ravneh. Zaradi vzorca, ki ga je posredovala država, so člani skupnosti navidezno sprejeli ta 'novi' način ženskega vedenja na odru, po drugi strani pa so jih opravljali in označevali za predrzne in nemoralne. Njihovo početje je bilo označeno kot lahkomišelnost in sramotno.

Zaradi subverzivne narave odrskega nastopanja, so se mnoge ženske nerade odzvale povabilu organizatorja k sodelovanju. Po drugi strani pa njihove zgodbe potrjujejo, da so bile zelo ponosne, ko so jih predstavniki lokalnih oblasti prišli celo večkrat prositi za nastop. Prav tako je razvidno, da so bile na svoje nastope in gostovanja ponosne. Najpogosteje so se spominjale uspešnih nastopov in opisovale odzive občinstva in žirije. Že omenjena dvopomenskost v pripovedovanju žensk je pokazala, kako so začele spreminjati svoj pogled ne samo na nastope, temveč tudi na svojo lastno individualnost. Na ta način je raziskava fenomena razkrila novo samozavedanje in samopodobo pevk in vplivala na premik v njihovem razumevanju lastnega socialnega okolja. Kot so potrdili organizatorji, so se ženske, ki so se prej sramovale nastopanja, začele same priključevati srečanjem.

Glede na način predstavitve žensk, so *Vaška srečanja* ohranila vzpostavljene konstrukcije razmerij med spoloma, ki so bile osnovane na tradicionalni podlagi: ženske so ostale na področju vokalne glasbene dejavnosti, izvajale so obredne 'ženske'

pesmi, le da so jih sedaj iz zasebne sfere prenesle v javno. Ta način dvojnosti in nesorazmerja med politiko identitete, posredovane s strani oblasti (enakopravnost, ki jo je prinesel socializem), in dejanskimi praksami, je bila vidna tudi v strukturi nastopov in repertoarju, ki se nista močno spremenila: za ženske je sicer prevladujoče moško področje izvajanja (npr. igranje na inštrumente) ostalo nelegitimno področje dejavnosti. Zanje vstop v svet inštrumentalistov ni bil mogoče, saj so bile predstavljene kot 'nepristne' izvajalke. Tudi vodje amaterskih skupin in organizatorji manifestacij so bili vedno moški. Mlajše ženske – članice lokalnih vokalnih skupin, so postale gojenke moških vodij in ostale na ravni učenk. Na tak način je bil družbeno konstruiran vzorec prenesen na oder, ne da bi se spremenilo razmerje med spoli. Ženske so bile še vedno označene kot 'samo' izvajalke, ohranjevalke tradicije in ne kot avtorice. Presegle so meje, vendar jih niso izbrisale. Ženski pevski odrski nastopi niso presegli okvirja kulturne tolerance, temveč razširili njegove meje. Povedano z drugimi besedami: odnosi moči niso bili prekoračeni, bili pa so izzvani. Glede na vse, kar sem omenila v tem poglavju, odrsko nastopanje žensk v javni sferi ni vzpostavilo novih razmerij med spoli ali premagalo izključevanja, vendar je odprlo nove možnosti in strategije za prihodnost ter politično pretehtavanje položaja prihodnjih generacij žensk v podeželskem okolju. Nastopi pevk so predstavljali prvi korak k realizaciji tega postopka na Niškem Polju.

### **Zaključek**

V zaključku se osredotočam na odrskega nastopanje v strategiji konstrukcije subjektivnosti žensk, prav tako pa poudarjam kako se je njihova subjektivnost oblikovala v procesu pripovedovanja. Pridobljene zgodbe zanikajo splošno mnenje, da so vse socialistične prireditve, ki jih je finančno podpirala država, predstavljale umetne in vsiljene oblike družbenih aktivnosti. Nasprotno, potrjujejo, da so imeli ti dogodki – kot revitalizacija preteklih družbenih ritualnih aktivnosti, pomembno vlogo v vsakodnevnem življenju vaščanov. Na pripovedi mojih sogovornic je vsekakor vplivala postjugoslovanska nostalgija po socialističnih časih, ki so jih določali sloga, solidarnost

in gospodarska stabilnost. Čeprav je samo nekaj žensk omenilo Tita ali 'socialistično preteklost,' sem opazila namige na socialistično obdobje, kot obdobje boljšega, mirnejšega in varnejšega časa.

V zaključku predstavljam nadaljnje korake v raziskovanju te teme in poudarjam pomen okrepanje raziskave za postsocialistični kontekst. Po mojem mnenju bi širša raziskava postsocialističnega obdobja prispevala k nadaljnjim opredelitvam odnosa med odrskimi nastopi in predstavitvijo spola v formalnem diskurzu. Z osredotočanjem na razlike med socialističnim in postsocialističnim diskurzom lahko opazujemo tudi spremembe v reprezentativni dejavnosti spolov in konstrukciji ženskega subjekta v različnih institucionalnih kontekstih.

**APPENDIX 1: List of Villages and Interlocutors**

Brenica:	Ruža Gocić, 1929, Kamenica Vera Đorđević, 1937 Milica Cvetanović, 1941
Brzi Brod:	Životka Stanković, 1926 Zorica Stankovic, 1938
Čukljenik:	Ilinka Mladenović, 1934 Rada Stankovic, 1938
Donja Vrežina:	Rusanda Arsić, 1914 Vukosava Gocić, 1923 Kostadin Gocić, 1923 Javorka Radovanović, 1934, Jasenovik
Donja Studena:	Živadinka Tasić, 1926 Vidosava Stojanović, 1927 Olga Marković, 1934 Savka Milenović, 1938 Olga Stanković, 1939 Dragiša Stojanović, 1953 Miodrag Tasic, 1946
Donji Komren:	Radivoje Petrović, 1913

- Jelica Jovanović, 1936, Čamurlija
- Gornja Studena: Petrija Vučković, 1937  
Radica Zlatanović, 1946
- Gornja Vrežina: Desanka Petrović, 1924, Donja Vrežina  
Mladenka Živković, 1927
- Gornji Komren: Velinka Jovanović, 1943
- Gornji Matejevac: Zagorka Igić, 1926  
Ljiljana Cvetković, 1938
- Hum: Dobrisavka Jankovic, 1935
- Jelašnica: Milunka Đorđević, 1930, Rautovo  
Svetlana Makarić, 1950  
Miodrag Tasić, 1946
- Kamenica: Verica Mitić, 1920  
Emilija Gocić, 1932
- Leskovik: Grozdana Đokić, 1945
- Malča: Miroslava Jovanović, 1933  
Jelena Mitrović, 1948, Knez Selo
- Niška Banja: Bata Belević, 1943, Bijelo Polje (Montenegro)
- Novo Selo: Stojan Stošić, 1921  
Ljubica Andjelkovic, 1939

Nikodije Andjelkovic, 1941

Prosek:

Verica Miljković, 1933, Ostrvica

Ljiljana Radonjić, 1944, Manastir

Sava Radonjić, 1939, Kamenica

Stanković D. Velibor, 1939

Jevica Bogdanović, 1924

Božidar Bogdanović, 1923

Rujnik:

Slavka Petkovic, 1922

Ruža Zdravković, 1924, Hum

Jagodinka Mitrović, 1930, Kravlje

Trupale:

Vukašin Mitić, 1952

Ilinka Despotović, 1939, Jabukovik (Crna Trava)

Sevljija Stanković, 1936, Darkovce (Crna Trava)

Vukmanovo:

Dragan Todorović, 1956

Grozdana Zlatković, 1934

Mladenka Ristić, 1945

## **APPENDIX 2: The Constitution of the *Competition of Serbian Villages***

The Constitution contains general determination about the main goal, mission and vision of the *Competition of Serbian villages*. It is made of two separate documents: the Constitution of the *Competition of Serbian villages* and the Constitution of the assessment commissions' work. First document includes general regulations of realization of the Competition, defining all required fields of competitions such as agricultural production, village landscape organization, cultural-educational work, and protection and development of the environment in villages. The special part of the document is dedicated to organization of finale parades, prizes and admissions, and the financial support and propagation of the Competition. The second document regulates work of assessment commissions (jury) and defines assessment criteria for all competition fields: agricultural production and achieved results – 300 points; education – 200 points; building and organization of settlement – 200 points; cultural activities – 200 points; protection and development of the environment – 200 points.

На основу члана 8, став 1, алинеја 4 Друштвеног договора о Такмичењу села Србије, Координациони одбор Такмичења села Србије, на седници одржаној 8.априла 1991. године, донео је

## П Р А В И Л Н И К ТАКМИЧЕЊА СЕЛА СРБИЈЕ

### I ОПШТЕ ОДРЕДБЕ

#### Члан 1.

Такмичење села Србије организује се са циљем да се оцени стање и омогући бржи развој пољопривреде на селу, створе бољи животни услови, обогати културни живот, производа у непољопривредним делатностима, здравствена, комунална и друга активност пољопривредног и сеоског становништва.

#### Члан 2.

У Такмичењу села могу да учествују сва сеоска насеља са територије Републике Србије.

Акцији доприносе и све организације чија је делатност усмерена на развој села (пољопривредни комбинати, земљорадничке задруге, приватно предузетништво, задружни савези, привредне коморе, производна предузећа пољопривредних машина и пољопривредних производа; научне, културне, образовне, здравствене установе; средства јавног информисања).

### II САДРЖИНА ТАКМИЧЕЊА

#### Члан 3.

У оквиру активности на развијању пољопривредне производње, у унапређивању друштвеног и животног стандарда на селу,

у културно-образовној активности и заштити и унапређивању човекове средине, Такмичење села Србије организује се у општини, регији, односно округу, покрајини и Републици.

Села се такмиче првенствено у делатностима:

1. Организовање пољопривредне производње и остварени резултати
2. Развој образовања и васпитања
3. Изградња и уређивање села
4. Културне делатности
5. Заштита и унапређење човекове средине.

#### Члан 4.

1. У области пољопривредне производње села ће се такмичити у следећем:

1. Коришћење земљишта
  - обрада земљишта (процент обрађеног у односу на ораницне и обрадиве површине)
  - уређеност земљишне територије субјеката (процент комасираног земљишта у односу на ораницне и обрадиве површине)
  - наводњавање и одводњавање земљишта (процент наводњаваних, односно, одводњаваних површина у односу на укупне обрадове површине)
2. Резултати остварене производње
  - степен робности-тржишности најважнијих линија производње у подручју
  - приноси по јединици капацитета
    - пшеница т/х
    - кукуруз т/х
    - шећерна репа т/х
    - шљива кг/по стаблу
    - јабука кг/по стаблу
    - грожђе кг/по чокоту
    - прираст меса по грлу говеда кг.
    - прираст меса по крмачи кг.
    - производња млека по крави литара (и друге производње карактеристичне за село)
  - број такмичара за високе приносе у пољопривреди (процент у односу на укупан број газдинствава земљорадника)
  - остваривање две жетве на подручју села
3. Организовање земљорадника
  - постоји сеоска задруга или у саставу друге задруге
  - број удружених земљорадника (процент удружених

- у односу на укупан број газдинстава земљорадника)
- организованост штедно-кредитне службе као делатност задруге или самостално.

#### Члан 5.

2. У области образовања и васпитања, села ће се такмичити:
  - резултатима у елементарном образовању пољопривредних произвођача
  - резултатима у обухвату деце похађањем и завршавањем основне школе
  - у здравственом образовању и васпитању (број курсева и полазника)
  - резултатима техничког и слободнајног образовања и васпитања (број курсева и полазника)
  - у примању и коришћењу стручних и других одговорачујних листова, књига и сличних публикација
  - резултатима рада на васпитању предшколске деце
  - резултатима рада ученичких задруга и других облика друштвено-корисног рада.

#### Члан 6.

3. У изградњи и уређивању насеља, села ће се такмичити:
  - у планирању и остваривању планова уређивања простора (урбанистички план, одлука која га замењује, одлука о уређивању грађевинског региона или други документ о развоју и уређивању простора);
  - у планирању петогодишњег и годишњег развоја у складу са прописима о планирању и резултатима остваривања тих планова;
  - у изградњи савремених стамбених и економских зграда у селу;
  - у изградњи путева, водовода и електричних водова и осветљења;
  - у изградњи и уређивању школа, школских кухиња и других школских објеката;
  - у изградњи и уређивању домова културе, задружних домова или домова месних заједница;
  - у изградњи и уређивању центра села или сеоских тргова;
  - у изградњи и уређивању сеоских дворишта;

- у изградњи, уређивању и одржавању спортских објеката;
- у пошумљавању, садњи и нези зеленила;
- у изградњи, уређивању и одржавању споменика;
- у изградњи и одржавању здравствених објеката;
- у могућности коришћења јавног саобраћаја;
- у услужним делатностима и снабдевању;
- у пријатности и коришћењу техничких уређаја у домаћинствима;
- у функционалном и естетском уређењу станова.

#### Члан 7.

4. У културним активностима села ће се такмичити:
- у коришћењу и ширењу књиге;
  - у могућностима коришћења штампе, радија и телевизије;
  - у условима и организованости аматерског културног стваралаштва и масовности учествовања деце, омладине и одраслих у раду секција (драмских, музичких, фолклорних, литералних, рецитаторских, ликовних, фото-кино и др.);
  - у прикупљању, обради и заштити покретних културних добара;
  - у упознавању завичајне историје;
  - у сакупљању народних умотворина и података за хронике села;
  - у доступности културних добара и културних вредности (књижевни и музички сусрети, драмске представе, изложбе слика, фотографија, књига, народне радности, биоскопске представе);
  - у спортским активностима.

#### Члан 8.

5. У оквиру заштите и унапређења човскове средине села ће се такмичити:
- у производњи здраве хране (површине на којима се производи здрава храна - без примене хемијских агенаса - у односу на укупне обрадиве површине);
  - у степену заштите земљишта, воде, становништва од

отпадних материја у постојећим производним објектима (фарме, фабрике за прераду хране и други производни погони), као и одређивање места за правилно одрлагање штетних отпада;

- у степену обучености и информисаности пољопривредних произвођача за правилну употребу хемијских средстава у пољопривреди, правилно коришћење пољопривредних производа у исхрани и разноврсност исхране током целе године;

- у организованости и реализацији практичних акција везаних за унапређење хигијенских прилика, посебно кроз акције хигијенизације у селима и акције унапређења школске средине;

- у осмиславању површина око комуналних објеката и голети;

- у осмиславању добровољног давалаштва крви (организација, здравствено-васпитни рад, евиденција давалаца), као и брига о деци и старим и изнемоглим лицима;

- у развоју туризма на селу;

### III ЗАВРШНЕ СМОТРЕ

#### Члан 9.

Завршне смотре су организовани облици исказивања и саопштавања резултата постигнутих у свим областима у једној такмичарској години.

У оквиру смотри могу се организовати разговори и саветовања по појединим темама, разне врсте изложби, драмски програми, литерарне вечери, музичке и фолклорне приредбе, спортске активности.

Завршне смотре организују се у општини, регији односно округу, Покрајини и Републици.

Програм завршне смотре утврђују одбори Такмичења села.

Време и место одржавања завршне смотре Такмичења села Србије утврђује Координациони одбор Такмичења села Србије на основу предлога и услова које понуде региони.

О програму, месту и времену одржавања завршних смотри обавештавају се средства јавног информисања.

#### IV ПРИЗНАЊА И НАГРАДЕ

##### Члан 10.

Села која су освојила I, II и III место у Републици добијају златну, сребрну и бронзану плакету са ликом Вука Стефановића Караџића, рад вајара Небојше Митрића.

Победник Такмичења села Србије стиче право да се кандидује за Вукову награду.

Општински, односно регионални одбори Такмичења села и друге организације додељују одређене врсте признања селима победницима општина и регија.

##### Члан 11.

Првопласирана села на свим нивоима Такмичења добијају награде.

Награде првопласираним селима у општини додељују општински одбори Такмичења села и друге заинтересоване организације.

На нивоу Такмичења села Србије додељује се прва, друга и трећа награда селима за укупне резултате постигнуте у једној такмичарског години. Награде се, такође могу доделити и за резултате постигнуте у појединим такмичарским областима. Награде се додељују у културним добрима.

##### Члан 12.

Одлука о броју и врстама награда и признања за резултате постигнуте у појединим областима доноси Координациони одбор Такмичења села Србије на предлог заинтересованих организација.

О врсти награда и признања као и о условима стицања обавештавају се, благовремено, регионали и општински одбори.

Појединачна признања и награде додељују се на основу одлуке оцењивачке комисије.

#### V ОРГАНИЗАЦИЈА ТАКМИЧЕЊА

##### Члан 13.

Општинско такмичење села је обавеза и услов за учествовање у Такмичењу села Србије.

Члан 14.

Непосредни носилац акције у општини је Одбор општинског такмичења села.

Члан 15.

Мандат чланова Одбора траје четири године.

Члан 16.

Одбор општинског такмичења села именује Оцењивачку комисију која прати и вреднује резултате у једној такмичарског години, на основу правилника о раду оцењивачке комисије.

Члан 17.

Оцењивачка комисија састављена од истакнутих културних, просветних радника, лекара, агронома, архитеката, етнолога, професора музике и јавних радника броји 5 до 7 чланова.

Члан 18.

Непосредни носилац акције Такмичење села у општини је општинска културно-просветна заједница или одговарајућа културна организација.

Члан 19.

Село које постигне најбоље резултате, за свукупну активност, на општинском такмичењу села стиче право учествовања на регионалном такмичењу села.

Члан 20.

Регионално такмичење организује Одбор регионалног такмичења села.

Члан 21.

Оцењивачка комисија регионалног такмичења села, обилази села победнике општинских такмичења, упознаје се са резултатима и доноси одлуку о селу победнику региона и победницима у појединачним областима.

**Члан 22.**

Првопласирана села у регионалним такмичењима стичу право учествовања у Такмичењу села Србије.

**Члан 23.**

На завршној смотри Такмичења села Србије учествују села која су освојила прво место за свеукупну активност на регионалном такмичењу села.

**Члан 24.**

Села која су стекла право учествовања на Такмичењу села Србије обилази Оцењивачка комисија Такмичења села Србије, упознаје се са резултатима и доноси одлуку о победнику Такмичења села Србије, као и одлуке о наградама за поједине области.

**Члан 25.**

Оцењивачка комисија ради на основу Правилника о раду оцењивачких комисија и овог Правилника.

**Члан 26.**

Оцењивачка комисија Такмичења села Србије саопштава одлуке и проглашава победника на завршној смотри.

**VI ФИНАНСИРАЊЕ И ПРОПАГАНДА ТАКМИЧЕЊА**

**Члан 27.**

Материјална средства за организовање Такмичења обезбеђују се посебним уговорима о финансирању Такмичења села који потписују заинтересована предузећа у привреди, установе у области културе, образовања, здравства и фондови.

**Члан 28.**

Укупне резултате акција и завршне смотре у селу, општини, региону и Републици прате и популаришу средства јавног информисања (ТВ, радио, штампа).

**Члан 29.**

Такмичење води и упутства за примену одредаба овог Правилника и Правилника о раду Оцењивачке комисије даје Координациони одбор Такмичења села Србије.

**Члан 30.**

Измене и допуне овог правилника доноси Координациони одбор Такмичења села Србије.

**Члан 31.**

Овај Правилник ступа на снагу наредног дана од доношења на седници Координационог одбора Такмичења села Србије, а примењиваће се од 15. IV 1991. године.

**КООРДИНАЦИОНИ ОДБОР  
ТАКМИЧЕЊА СЕЛА СРБИЈЕ**

**П Р А В И Л Н И К**  
**О РАДУ ОЦЕЊИВАЧКИХ КОМИСИЈА**  
**ТАКМИЧЕЊА СЕЛА СРБИЈЕ**

**I ОПШТЕ ОДРЕДБЕ**

**Члан 1.**

Резултат укупне активности села у једној такмичарској години вреднује оцењивачка комисија Такмичења села Србије, односно регионалног и општинског Такмичења.

**Члан 2.**

Оцењивачку комисију Такмичења села Србије именује Координациони одбор Такмичења села Србије. Оцењивачку комисију регионалног Такмичења села именује одбор регионалног Такмичења, оцењивачку комисију општинског Такмичења села именује одбор општинског Такмичења села.

**Члан 3.**

Чланови комисије (републичког, регионалног и општинског Такмичења села) треба да буду именовани из редова културних и јавних радника, уметника, истакнутих радника из области образовања, пољопривреде, здравства, комуналних делатности и сл. Оцењивачка комисија броји од 5 - 7 чланова. Комисија из својих редова бира председника комисије.

**Члан 4.**

Оцењивачка комисија вреднује резултате сарађеним бројем бодова. Комисија доноси јединствену оцену, а саопштава је председник комисије или за то овлашћено лице на завршној смотри.

**II ЕЛЕМЕНТИ И БРОЈ БОДОВА  
ЗА ПОЈЕДИНЕ САДРЖАЈЕ**

**Члан 5.**

Оцењивачка комисија вреднује резултате које је село постигло, следећим бројем бодова:

**1. Организовање пољопривредне производње и остварени резултати**

**1. Коришћење земљишта**

- обрада земљишта (процент обрађеног у односу на ораницне и обрадиве површине)
- уређеност земљишне територије субјеката (процент комасираног земљишта у односу на ораницне и обрадиве површине)
- наводњавање и одводњавање земљишта (процент наводњаваних, односно, одводњаваних површина у односу на укупне обрадове површине)

**2. Резултати остварене производње**

- степен робности-тржишности најпажнијих линија производње у подручју
- приноси по јединици капацитета  
пшеница т/х  
кукуруз т/х  
шећерна репа т/х  
шљива кг/по стаблу  
јабuka кг/по стаблу  
грожђе кг/по чокоту  
прираст меса по грлу говеда кг.  
прираст меса по крмачи кг.  
производња млека по крави литара  
(и друге производње карактеристичне за село)
- број такмичара за високе приносе у пољопривреди (процент у односу на укупан број газдинстава земљорадника)
- остваривање две жетве на подручју села

**3. Организовање земљорадника**

- постоји сеоска задруга или у саставу друге задруге
- број удружених земљорадника (процент удружених у односу на укупан број газдинстава земљорадника)
- организованост штедно-кредитне службе као делатност задруге или самостално.

**До 300 бодова**

#### Члан 6.

2. У области образовања и васпитања, села ће се такмичити:

- резултатима у елементарном образовању пољопривредних произвођача
- резултатима у обухвату деце похађањем и запошљавањем основне школе
- у здравственом образовању и васпитању (број курсева и пол. лика)
- резултатима техничког и саобраћајног образовања и васпитања (број курсева и полазника)
- у примању и коришћењу стручних и других одговарајућих листова, књига и сличних публикација
- резултатима рада на васпитању предшколске деце
- резултатима рада ученичких задруга и других облика друштвено-корисног рада.

До 200 бодова

#### Члан 7.

3. У изградњи и уређивању насеља, села ће се такмичити:

- у планирању и остваривању планова уређивања простора (урбанистички план, одлука која га замењује, одлука о уређивању грађевинског региона или други документ о развоју и уређивању простора);
- у планирању петогодишњег и годишњег развоја у складу са прописима о планирању и резултатима остваривања тих планова;
- у изградњи савремених стамбених и економских зграда у селу;
- у изградњи путева, водовода и електричних водова и осветљења;
- у изградњи и уређивању школа, школских кухиња и других школских објеката;
- у изградњи и уређивању домова културе, задружних домова или домова месних заједница;
- у изградњи и уређивању центра села или сеоских тргова;
- у изградњи и уређивању сеоских дворишта;

- у изградњи објеката за снабдевање и опслуживање потреба становника;
  - у изградњи, уређивању и одржавању спортских објеката;
  - у пошумљавању, садњи и нези зеленила;
  - у изградњи, уређивању и одржавању споменика;
  - у изградњи и одржавању здравствених објеката;
  - у могућности коришћења јавног саобраћаја;
  - у услужним делатностима и снабдевању;
  - у присутности и коришћењу техничких уређаја у домаћинствима;
  - у функционалном и естетском уређењу станова.
- До 200 бодова

#### Члан 8.

4. У културним активностима села ће се такмичити:
- у коришћењу и ширењу књиге;
  - у могућностима коришћења штампе, радија и телевизије;
  - у условима и организованости аматерског културног стваралаштва и масовности учествовања деце, омладине и одраслих у раду секција (драмских, музичких, фолклорних, литералних, рецитаторских, ликовних, фото-кино и др.);
  - у прикупљању, обради и заштити покретних културних добара;
  - у упознавању завичајне историје;
  - у сакупљању народних умотворина и података за хронике села;
  - у доступности културних добара и културних вредности (књижевни и музички сусрети, драмске представе, изложбе слика, фотографија, књига, народне радности, биоскопске представе);
  - у спортским активностима.
- До 200 бодова

#### Члан 9.

5. У оквиру заштите и унапређења човекове средине села ће се такмичити:
- у производњи здраве хране (површине на којима се производи здрава храна - без примене хемијских агенаса - у односу на укупне обрадиве површине);
  - у степену заштите земљишта, воде, становништва од

отпадних материја у постојећим производним објектима (фарме, фабрике за прераду хране и други производни погони), као и одређивање места за правилно одлагање штетних отпада;

- у степену обучености и информисаности пољопривредних произвођача за правилну употребу хемијских средстава у пољопривреди, правилно коришћење пољопривредних производа у исхрани и разноврсност исхране током целе године;

- у организованости и реализацији практичних акција везаних за унапређење хигијенских прилика, посебно кроз акције хигијенизације у селима и акције унапређења школске средине;

- у озелењавању површина око комуналних објеката и голети;

- у омасовљењу добровољног давалаштва крви (организација, здравствено-васпитни рад, евиденција давалаца), као и брига о деци и старим и изнемоглим лицима;

- у развоју туризма на селу

До 200 бодова

#### Члан 10.

##### 6. Корективни бодови

Селу које је организовало акцију и постигло значајне резултате у такмичарским областима у посебно тешким условима, селу које је удаљено од општинског центра, које има мали број становника и мали доходак, оцењивачка комисија може дати

До 200 бодова

#### Члан 11.

Једногодишњу активност села комисија вреднује на основу документације која се доставља члановима комисије и конкретних увида у резултате.

Оцена комисије је коначна.

#### Члан 12.

Овај Правилник усвојен је 8.априла 1991. године на састанку Координационог одбора Такмичења села Србије, а примењује се од 15.априла 1991. године.

**КООРДИНАЦИОНИ ОДБОР  
ТАКМИЧЕЊА СЕЛА СРБИЈЕ**

## Допуна Правилника Такмичења села Србије

Члан 5. Правилника Такмичења села Србије допуњује се, после последњег пасуса, новим пасусом:

- културна функција школе (школа као центар културног живота у сеоским срединама које немају друге културне установе);
- секције као активност која обогаћује културни живот и подстиче стварлаштво деце и младих (фолклорна, хорска, драмска, ликовна, музичка, рецитаторска и др.);
- утицај просветног радника на културни живот младих;
- повезаност школе и родитеља на програмима културног развоја села.

### APPENDIX 3: Villages –Winners at Republic Level

- 1974. village Konjuh, municipality Kruševac
- 1975. village Vinarce, municipality Lekovac
- 1976. village Bukovče, municipality Negotin
- 1977. village Velika Drenova, municipality Trstenik
- 1978. village Bošnjace, municipality Lebane
- 1979. village Toponica, municipality Knić
- 1980. village Žaočane, municipality Čačak
- 1981. village Valjevska Kamenica, municipality Valjevo
- 1982. village Badnjevac, municipality Batočina
- 1983. village Podunavci, municipality Vrnjačka Banja
- 1984. village Braničevo, municipality Golubac
- 1985. village Zminjak, municipality Šabac
- 1986. village Ratina, municipality Kraljevo
- 1987. village Zlot, municipality Bor
- 1988. village Medveđa, municipality Trstenik
- 1989. village Gornja Dobrinja, municipality Požega
- 1990. village Mihajlovac, municipality Smederevo
- 1991. village Žiča, municipality Kraljevo
- 1992. village Idoš, municipality Kikinda
- 1993. village Mačvanski Prnjavor, municipality Šabac
- 1994. village Glogovac, municipality Jagodina
- 1995. village Vranovo, municipality Smederevo
- 1996. village Mrčajevci, municipality Čačak
- 1997. village Sićevo, municipality Niš
- 1998. village Novo Selo, municipality Vrnjačka Banja
- 1999. village Veliko Laole, municipality Petrovac na Mlavi
- 2000. village Badovinci, municipality Bogatić

2001. village Kaonik, municipality Kruševac
2002. village Vraneši, municipality Vrnjačka Banja  
village Smoljinac, municipality Malo Crnuće
2003. village Neresnica, municipality Kučevo

## APPENDIX 4: The Program of the Villages Donja Studena and Gornja Studena (1994)

### 1. “Entertainment music” part

- Song *Durđevdan*
- Children dance
- Guitar players
- “Entertainment music” orchestra
- Dance group

### 2. Theatre performances part

- “Kalča’s trip to Studena village“
- Recitation – *Desanka Maksimović*
- Song *Selo moje*
- Choir of KUD “Stanko Paunović“ from Niš
- Part from the stage-play *Izbiračica* (students of 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade of the primary school)

### 3 “Genuine music” part

- Custom called *Premlaz*
- Ridle competition
- Toast song
- Folk dance played on *okarina* performed by Ivana Mladenović
- Male singing group, song *Ej, čija frula*
- Female singing group, song *Ej, što se ono na planini beleše*
- Folklore ensemble, dances – *ljubavno* and *pešačko kolo*
- Young Folklore group

### 4. Folk music part

- Player on *okarina*
- Children folklore group, dances from *Šumadija*
- Folk orchestra of accordion
- Children folklore group, dances from *Ponišavlje*
- Singer Radiša Stamenković
- Children folklore group, Vlach dances

## APPENDIX 5: Photo Gallery



The Competition in Rope Pulling, Trupale village (1987)



The Performance of School Choir and Orchestra, Trupale village (1987)



The Village Gatherings, Trupale village (1987)



The Modern Dance Performance, Trupale village (1990)



The Performance of “Old” Folklore Group, Jelašnica village (1980s)



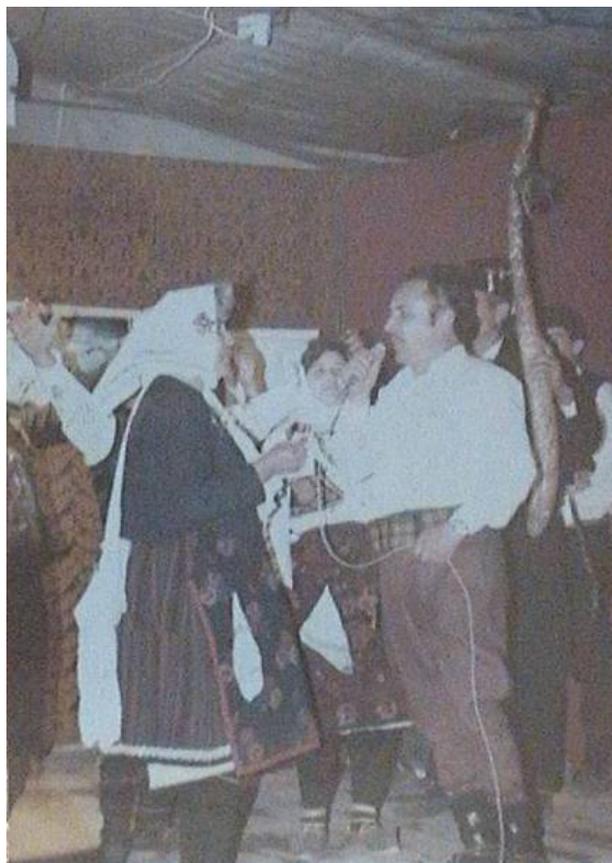
The Performance of “Old” Folklore Group, Donja Vrežina village (1980s)



The Performance of “Old” Folklore Group, Prosek village (1980s)



Sketch, Prosek village (1980s)



The Village Gatherings, Prosek village (1980s)



*Krstonoše* custom, Prosek village (1990s)



Village musicians, Gornja Vrežina village

