



Between Popular Demand for Education and Budgetary Constraints: The Example of the Organisation of Hamlet Schools in Savoy (1860–1880)

Jean-Yves Julliard

Abstract • In the early nineteenth century, the populations of the former Duchy of Savoy increased the number of hamlet schools. These schools were integrated into the mountain socio-economic system and mainly financed by private funds, but were considered by the Sardinian monarchy as public establishments. This was not the case in France where hamlet schools were mostly established as private schools. After 1860, their integration into the French school system posed difficulties for the French government which intended to develop schooling but to contain public expenditure. Several statutes were granted to them before the law of 1867, inspired by the Savoyard example, legalised these schools. Although the government planned to rationalise their establishment, financial logic and popular demand for education led to the maintenance of this local, public school service. However, the way in which the schools were taken into account in ministerial statistics, invites us to question the evolution of their numbers and more generally that of primary education expenditure at the end of the Second Empire.

Keywords • Elementary schools, hamlets, foundations, school consortiums, Savoy

Introduction

On 8 March 1867, before the legislature, the Minister of Public Instruction Victor Duruy (1863–1869) declared that the future law on primary education¹ would be applied “in the most liberal sense, I might say in the most Savoyard sense, since it was the example of Savoie (Savoy) that inspired the provision [...]”² concerning hamlet schools (*écoles de hameau*). These hamlet schools were presented as a ‘local’ schooling offer, with a lower level of requirements in terms of teacher qualifications and remuneration. Established in villages more or less distant from the main town, they were most frequently located in departments where mountains dominated.³ Victor Duruy’s statement testifies to the specific role played by the department of Savoie in the organisation of these hamlet schools during the Second Empire.

This role was due to the political change this region had experienced seven years earlier, in a context marked by the affirmation of nation-states and the questioning

1 It was promulgated on the following 10 April. Octave Gréard, *La législation de l’instruction primaire en France de 1789 à nos jours*, t. 4 (Paris: Delalain Frères, 1896), 133–36.

2 *Corps législatif. Session 1867. Séances des 8 mars, 9 avril et 13 juillet 1867. Discours de M. Bérard* (Paris: Imprimerie L. Poupart-Davy, 1867), 9–10. All translations from French into English are by the author of this chapter.

3 Ministère de l’Instruction publique et des Beaux-Arts, *Statistique de l’enseignement primaire 1876–1877* (Paris, Imprimerie nationale, 1878), 18–21.

of the map of European states resulting from the Treaty of Vienna of 1815.⁴ In 1860, the King of Piedmont-Sardinia and future King of Italy, Victor-Emmanuel II (1849–1878), consented to the “reunion”⁵ of the former Duchy of Savoy, the cradle of the reigning dynasty, with France, administered by Emperor Napoleon III (1852–1870). This transfer of sovereignty was primarily the price of France’s support for Italian unification. It also met the wishes of the Savoyard ruling class, which was Catholic, hostile to Italian politics and opposed to the secularisation of their Piedmontese state.⁶ Finally, it reflected the “Frenchness of Savoie” based on “geographical contiguity, the age and intensity of relations and exchanges, materialized by seasonal or permanent emigration, and belonging to the same linguistic and cultural area.”⁷ The former duchy, with a surface area of about 10,400 square kilometres, was then divided into two French administrative entities, the departments of Haute-Savoie, to the north, and Savoie, to the south (see map).

Until 1860, the development of primary schooling in Savoie thus conformed to the organisational framework set by the Sardinian monarchy, which was more favourable to hamlet schools than French legislation. In France, following the 1833 legislation on primary education the State favoured the financing of local schools by the *communes* (lowest administrative division in France) and prescribed minimum requirements in terms of the pedagogical qualifications of teachers. Conversely, the Kingdom of Piedmont-Sardinia encouraged the communes to seek private funding—including donations and legacies from families—and, consequently, reduced the administrative and pedagogical requirements for low-cost schools. The methods of financing and the structure of operating costs are therefore at the heart of the specific nature of these hamlet schools, which proliferated in Savoie in the first half of the nineteenth century. Their integration into the French legislative framework from 1860 onwards raised the question for the French government of the structure of their financing and their role in the schooling process. Because of the differences in the educational situation between the two Savoie departments at the time of the Annexation (Haute-Savoie was characterised by a smaller number of hamlet schools and a greater presence of ecclesiastical⁸ and congregational schools), this question was only particularly acute in the department of Savoie, which is the focus of this study.

This study is part of the history of elementary schooling in the nineteenth century and focuses on the following aspects: literacy and schooling in the mountains in France and Italy, the specificity of hamlet schools, and the development of primary education in Savoie. French and Italian historiography have long given priority to the

4 Paul Guichonnet, *Histoire de l’annexion de la Savoie à la France: les véritables dossiers secrets de l’annexion* (Montmélian: La Fontaine de Siloé, 3^{ème} éd., 2003).

5 First Article of the Treaty of Turin of 24 March 1860 in Paul Guichonnet and Christian Sorrel (eds.), *La Savoie et l’Europe 1860–2010. Dictionnaire historique de l’Annexion* (Montmélian: La Fontaine de Siloé, 2009), 6.

6 Sylvain Milbach, *Entre Piémont et France: la Savoie déroutée, 1848–1858* (Chambéry: Université de Savoie, 2008).

7 Paul Guichonnet, “De la mémoire à l’histoire,” in Guichonnet and Sorrel (2009), 10, 16.

8 Jean-Yves Julliard, “Les régences vicariales en Savoie dans la première moitié du XIX^e siècle: une institution scolaire ecclésiastique originale?” in *États de Savoie, Églises et institutions religieuses des réformes au Risorgimento*, ed. Marc Ortolani, Christian Sorrel and Olivier Vernier, PRIDAES (Nice: Serre éditeur, 2017), 275–88.

The departments of Savoie and Haute-Savoie

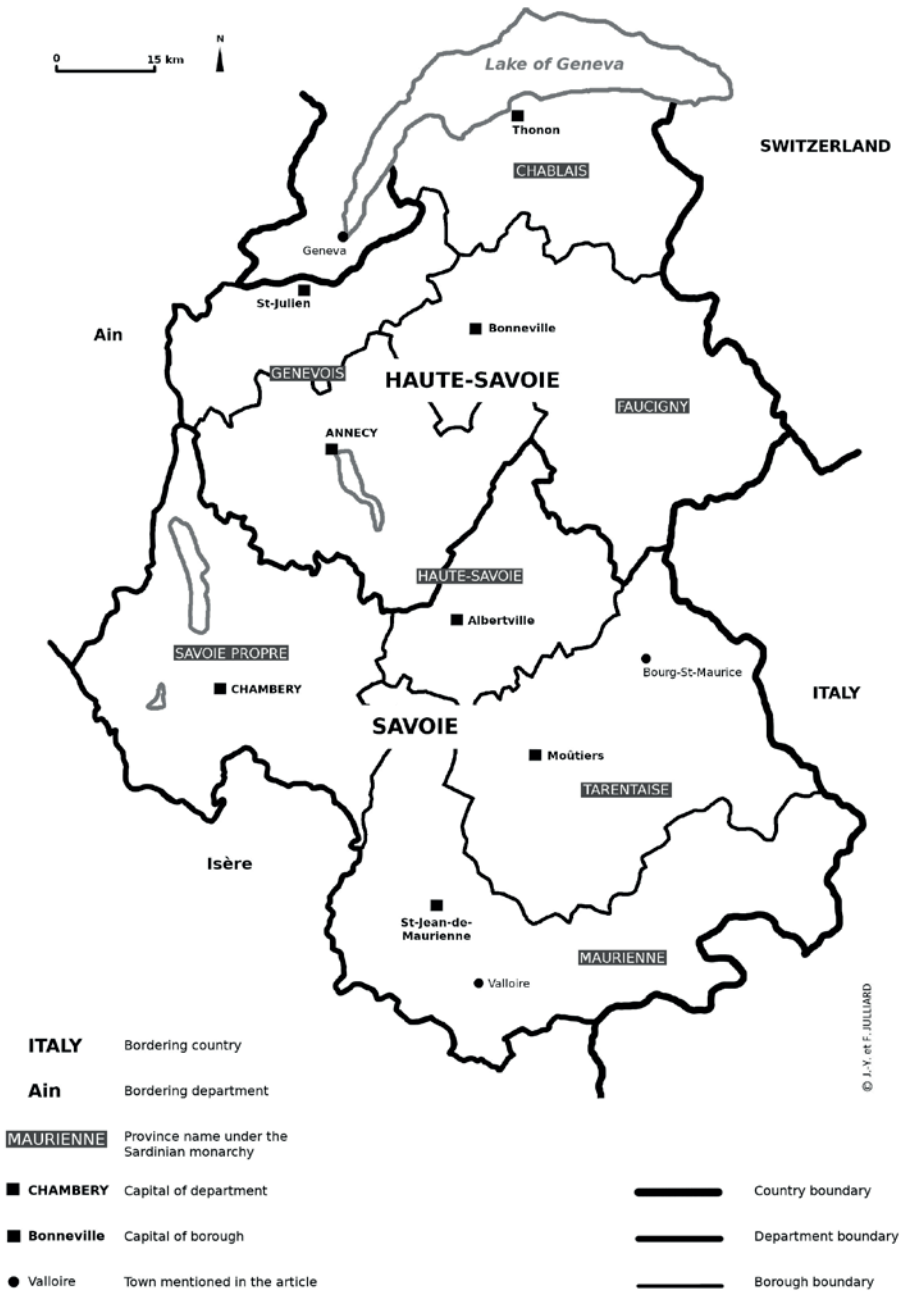


Figure 1. Map over Haute-Savoie and Savoie.

study of schooling in the countryside and industrial regions.⁹ For mountain areas, Italian historiography, which is more developed, reveals an apparent paradox, that of a more developed schooling in the mountains than in the countryside.¹⁰ In comparison, French historiography is still incomplete, studies being limited mainly to five departments: Doubs, marked by an early development of education,¹¹ Creuse, Basses-Pyrénées and Alpes-Maritimes, which are characterised by late development.¹² notably, for these last two departments, because of weak use of the French language, and Hautes-Alpes, more particularly the Briançonnais region.¹³ The latter had similarities with the Italian Alps, namely the early development of literacy through the joint action of families and village schools.¹⁴ This study on the Savoie department therefore fills a gap.

Regarding hamlet schools, like informal schooling, little is known about their history and their role in the schooling process in France. There is no specific study on the subject. The reason for their low visibility lies in their status, which was mostly private, as this type of school organisation often does not allow historians to have access to sources. An exception is the emblematic case of the Béates in the Haute-Loire department, these “pious girls” who, at the request of the inhabitants who supported them, taught catechism and the rudiments of reading, as well as lace-making.¹⁵

The development of primary education in Savoie has been dealt with mainly in two works: Jacques Lovie’s thesis on *La Savoie dans la vie française de 1860 à 1875* (*Savoie in French life from 1860 to 1875*)¹⁶ and our study on Les écoles élémentaires

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- 9 Notably François Furet and Jacques Ozouf, *Lire et écrire. L’alphabétisation des Français de Calvin à Jules Ferry*, vol. 1 (Paris: Éditions de minuit, 1977); René Grevet, *École, pouvoirs et société (fin XVII^e–1815)*, Artois, *Boulonnais/Pas-de-Calais* (Villeneuve d’Ascq: Université de Lille 3, 1991); Marc Loison, *École, alphabétisation et société rurale dans la France du Nord au XIX^e siècle* (Paris: L’Harmattan, 2003).
- 10 Pier Paolo Viazzo, *Upland Communities. Environment, Population and Social Structure in the Alps since the Sixteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989); “Le paradoxe alpin”, *L’Alpe*, no 1 (1998), 28–33; Xenio Toscani, *Scuole e alfabetismo nello Stato di Milano da Carlo Borromeo alla Rivoluzione* (Brescia: La Scuola, 1993); Maurizio Piseri (a cura di), *L’alfabeto in montagna. Scuole e alfabetismo nell’area alpina tre età moderna e XIX secolo* (Milano: Franco Angeli, 2012).
- 11 Jacques Gavoille, *L’école publique dans le département du Doubs (1870–1914)* (Paris: Les Belles lettres, 1981).
- 12 Daniel Dayen, *L’enseignement primaire dans la Creuse 1833–1914* (Clermont-Ferrand: Institut d’études du Massif Central, 1984); Pierre Hourmat, *L’enseignement primaire dans les Basses-Pyrénées au temps de la Monarchie Constitutionnelle (1815–1848)* (Anglet: IPSO, 1973); Hervé Barelli, “L’école primaire comme instrument d’intégration du Comté de Nice dans la France 1860–1914,” (Thèse, Science politique, Nice, 1991).
- 13 Nadine Vivier, *Le Briançonnais rural aux XVII^e et XIX^e siècles* (Paris: L’Harmattan, 1992). Schooling has only been studied in detail in four of the nine French Alpine departments (Haute-Savoie, Savoie, Hautes-Alpes and Alpes-Maritimes).
- 14 Anne-Marie Granet-Abisset, “Entre autodidaxie et scolarisation: les Alpes briançonnaises,” *Histoire de l’éducation*, no. 70 (1996), 111–41.
- 15 Auguste Rivet, “Des ‘ministres’ laïques au XIX^e siècle? Les Béates de la Haute-Loire,” *Revue d’histoire de l’Église de France*, t. 64, no. 172 (1978), 27–38; Robert Lagier, “Une institution vellave: Les Béates,” *Cahiers de la Haute-Loire* (1979), 131–67; Jean-François Chanet, *L’école républicaine et les petites patries. Enseignement primaire et sentiment d’appartenance en France sous la Troisième République (1879–1940)*, (Thèse de doctorat, histoire, Université Paris I Panthéon-Sorbonne, vol. 1, 1994), 71–76.
- 16 Jacques Lovie, *La Savoie dans la vie française de 1860 à 1875* (Paris/Chambéry: Presses universitaires de France/Imprimeries réunies, 1963).

en Savoie de l'Ancien Régime à la Première Guerre mondiale (*Elementary schools in Savoie from the Ancien Régime to the First World War*).¹⁷ We have recently returned to and developed the analysis of the hamlet schools in our thesis by underlining the specificity of their financing (in particular with regard to the importance of the contributions of the village populations) and of their functioning (recruitment of peasant school teachers, subjects taught, sometimes adapted to the local context).¹⁸

The historian of hamlet schools in Savoie is able to draw on relatively numerous administrative sources, whereas these are lacking for the rest of French territory. This is due to the fact that these schools were considered by the Piedmontese State, and then by the Second French Empire between 1860 and 1867, as belonging to the public sphere.¹⁹ In particular, other sources have been used such as administrative surveys of hamlet schools before 1860, censuses of elementary schools and the minutes of meetings of provincial (before 1860) or departmental (after 1860) school authorities, the archives of territorial State administrations, both general and academic), as well as the registers of the deliberations of certain mountain municipalities under the Sardinian and French regimes.

Based on these sources, studying the particular moment of the integration of the hamlet schools of Savoie into the French legislative framework and the financial choices made on that occasion, provides an opportunity to examine lesser-known aspects of the development of elementary schooling. Firstly, our study highlights the motives and the specificity of schooling in the mountains, particularly with regard to its financing methods. In the Alps, in particular, where societies have long been regarded as archaic and closed, through their practices and way of life, they have nonetheless shown an unusual openness towards the outside world.²⁰ This has been reflected in the scale of migration and the spread of a relatively high level of education, thanks to a fairly dense school network. While these characteristics have already been highlighted, French and Italian historiography have paid less attention to the differences between these mountain territories regarding education. These differences are most often related to the cost structure, i.e. the respective shares of private and public funding, and, for each of them, of the different contributors and their forms of intervention. For example, families may have contributed through donations and bequests. There may have been voluntary, annual or capitalized contributions, school fees set by municipalities, or even in-kind donations, particularly in the form of food. This case study shows how the funding structure of hamlet schools may have affected the development of schooling in Alpine territories.

17 Jean-Yves Julliard, "Les écoles élémentaires en Savoie de l'Ancien Régime à la Première Guerre mondiale," *L'Histoire en Savoie*, no. 22 (2011).

18 Jean-Yves Julliard, *Ecoles, pouvoirs et sociétés. Les écoles élémentaires en Savoie au XIX^e siècle (1815–1880)*, (Thèse de doctorat, histoire, Université Grenoble Alpes, 2019). In Italy, especially for the Piedmontese Alps, the issue of hamlet schools has been mainly addressed from the perspective of funding sources: Elio Reinotti, "L'istruzione elementare in valle d'Aosta dal 1678 al 1822" (Tesi di Laurea, Università degli studi di Torino, corso di laurea in pedagogia, anno accademico 1973–1974); Monica Dufour, "Alfabetismo, scuole e maestri nella comunità Montana Evançon tra 1770 e 1859," in Piseri (2012), 159–81.

19 After 1867, the archives of the territorial administrations of the State bear little trace of the sources of funding for primary schools.

20 Anne-Marie Granet-Abisset, "'Retardation et enfermement': Érudits et historiens face aux sociétés alpines (XIX^e-XX^e siècles)," *Le Monde alpin et rhodanien*, no. 3 (2001), 55–76.

Secondly, by observing the sources of funding for hamlet elementary schools, our study once again questions the concept of the social demand for education.²¹ This paradigm, which is still under discussion,²² has been renewed and deepened by the observation of educational investment, particularly that of families.²³ “There is no social demand for education,” writes Pierre Caspard, “there is only evidence of this demand: it is advisable to identify its different forms precisely, as close as possible to what parents think, say and do.”²⁴ Seeking to evaluate “the private contribution to educational expenditure, which is often underestimated or difficult to evaluate,”²⁵ seems to us to be one of the means of observing this demand for education, a demand which, in the example of Savoie, seems to be more “communal” than familial.

Finally, the French authorities’ respect for the Savoyard forms of social demand for hamlet schools, to the point of inspiring national school legislation, bears witness to the complexity of the relations between the various actors and their reciprocal transformations in the context of the co-construction of public policies,²⁶ particularly school policies,²⁷ between the local and national levels. In this way, a question that is the subject of debate among economists, namely the respective effects of centralised and decentralised organisations of the education system on the growth and qualitative evolution of elementary schooling,²⁸ is taken up again with different tools (an approach conducted on a reduced spatial scale, and attentive to the complexity of local arrangements).

This article begins with a presentation of the organisation of hamlet schools and their legal foundations in the first half of the nineteenth century in Savoie, then still part of the kingdom of Piedmont-Sardinia (1815–1860), and in France, at the time of the Guizot (1833) and Falloux (1860) school laws. The legal status, in fact, determines the structure of funding. The second part of the paper analyses the ways in which they were incorporated, legally and financially, into the French school system following the Annexation of 1860. This leads to the question of re-reading the evolu-

21 Furet and Ozouf, vol. 1 (1977).

22 Jean-Michel Chapoulie, *L'école d'État conquiert la France. Deux siècles de politique scolaire* (Rennes, Presses universitaires de Rennes, 2010), 18.

23 Pierre Caspard, “*Homo oeconomicus* et ses enfants. Raisons et modalités de l’investissement éducatif dans les milieux populaires (1700–1870),” in *Le coût des études. Modalités, acteurs et implications sociales XVI^e–XX^e siècle*, ed. Jean-François Condette (Rennes, Presses universitaires de Rennes, 2012), 171–87; Granet-Abisset (1996).

24 Pierre Caspard, “Tenir les maîtres en bride: Les parents, la famille et l’école. France et Suisse (1700–1850),” in *Les personnels d’inspection. Contrôler, évaluer, conseiller les enseignants. Retour sur une histoire, France-Europe (XVII^e–XX^e siècle)*, ed. Jean-François Condette (Rennes, Presses universitaires de Rennes, 2017), 250.

25 Jean-François Condette, “Introduction. On ne badine pas avec l’argent de l’École. Le coût des études, nœud gordien de l’éducation?” in Condette (2012), 16.

26 Lutz Raphael, “L’État dans les villages: administration et politique dans les sociétés rurales allemandes, françaises et italiennes de l’époque napoléonienne à la Deuxième Guerre mondiale,” in *Histoire de l’Europe rurale contemporaine. Du village à l’État*, ed. Jean-Luc Mayaud and Lutz Raphael (Paris: A. Colin, 2006), 249–81.

27 Jean-Noël Luc, Jean-François Condette, Yves Verneuil, *Histoire de l’enseignement en France, XIX^e–XXI^e siècle* (Paris: Armand Colin, 2020), “La scolarisation au XIX^e siècle: une coproduction,” 20–22.

28 Mark Bray, “Centralisation Versus Decentralisation in Educational Administration: Regional Issues,” *Educational Policy* 5, no. 4 (1991), 371–85; Gabrielle Capelli, Michelangelo Vasta, “Can School Centralisation Foster Human Capital Accumulation? A Quasi-Experiment from Early XXth Century Italy,” *The Economic History Review* 73, no. 1 (2020), 159–84.

tion in their numbers and that of primary education expenditure on a national scale at the end of the Second Empire.

Hamlet schools in Savoie and France in the mid-nineteenth century

In France, from 1833 onwards, for economic and pedagogical reasons, i.e. to contain public expenditure and to ensure the provision of primary education by qualified teachers, the government gave priority to the development of elementary schools in the main towns. Thus, depending on the few facilities granted, hamlet schools were most often able to develop only in the form of “private” schools, in the terminology of the Guizot law of 1833, and then “free,” according to the expression used by the Falloux law of 1850. Conversely, also motivated by budgetary reasons, the Kingdom of Piedmont-Sardinia had encouraged local initiatives in favour of the creation of hamlet schools. To this end, it relaxed the rules applicable to lower public elementary schools, which differed from higher public elementary schools in that they had a more limited curriculum, comparable to that of the compulsory subjects determined in France by the Falloux law.²⁹ These exemption measures supported the creation of these schools in the Piedmont and Savoie Alps in the first half of the nineteenth century. During this period, school systems were set up in France, as in the kingdom of Piedmont-Sardinia, within the framework of a decentralised organisation, delegated in the first case, devolved in the second, according to the terminology proposed by Mark Bray:³⁰ on the one hand, the State supervised the action of the local authorities, on the other, the State being virtually absent, school organisation was the result of local initiatives taken by local administrations or communities of individuals at the sub-municipal level.

In Savoie: Public schools

Inherited from the end of the *Ancien Régime*, hamlet schools multiplied in the high Alpine valleys during the first half of the nineteenth century. They were the product of societies organised on the basis of a rural economy completed by the “migration industry”,³¹ as illustrated by the case of the territory of the former duchy of Savoie. Located in the south of the former duchy, the department of Savoie, with an area of over 6,000 square kilometres, is characterised by an average altitude of nearly 1,500 meters. In 1861, it had 275,000 inhabitants, partly grouped in the valleys, but mostly scattered in the mountains where they lived in many villages or hamlets. Their economic activities were however mainly based on travelling merchants and trade. In the mountains, the agro-sylvo-pastoral economy dominated, favoured by the family or else the collective exploitation of communal properties, the latter covering more than 70per cent of the territory in the upper valleys. Smallholdings were more predominant than in the lower slopes. Multi-activity was also an essential component of this rurality. This was organised in particular within the framework of migrations, mostly temporary or seasonal: in 1858, the average rate of migration compared to the population was about 10per cent for the Maurienne and Tarentaise regions. The resources which were drawn from this migration, added to those procured by the

²⁹ Section 23 of the Act distinguishes between mandatory and optional matters.

³⁰ Mark Bray (1991).

³¹ Paul Guichonnet, *La Savoie dans le royaume de Piémont-Sardaigne* (Grenoble: Imp. Allier, 1957), 28.

trade in cattle and cheeses, were of value to the populations of the Alpine communes who could be considered as relatively well-off compared to those of the low country, although the social homogeneity was however very relative.³²

The hamlet schools were born of the population's desire to compensate for the general weakness of the public school system in rural areas and the constraints represented by the terrain, climate, slopes and natural risks inherent in the combination of these elements, which made travel conditions difficult, particularly in winter. They were able to raise the necessary funding, mainly in the form of foundations or "œuvres-pies" (pious works), the term used at the time, or from group subscriptions. These sources of financing were essential to the schools established in the mountain communes, and particularly in the hamlets.

The foundations were the work of village notables, clergymen or expatriates who, beyond school philanthropy, showed their concern to maintain influential relations with their country of origin. Contrary to the Aosta Valley, where ecclesiastical foundations were in the majority,³³ in Savoie private bequests predominated. The group subscriptions for the maintenance of schools, which I call school consortiums, were established on the model of community institutions which had existed since the Middle Ages. These economic associations, or groups of consortiums, were intended to manage the collective properties of a group of families (notably woods, mountain pastures, irrigation systems).³⁴ The school consortiums were numerous in Tarentaise, and were made up of the residents of the hamlets alone, but also sometimes in association with the expatriate "villagers." In Bourg-Saint-Maurice, in the hamlet of Villaret-sur-la-Rosière, the farmers joined forces in 1807 to recruit a schoolmaster. The capital collected from subscribed sums of between 36 and 120 francs, amounted to 1,044 francs, providing an annual revenue of 52 francs,³⁵ i.e. 80 per cent of the sum that the sale of a cow would fetch.

Donations and bequests, of which mountain schools were the main beneficiaries,³⁶ represented a significant proportion of the funds contributing to the remuneration of public school teachers in the Savoie departments at the time of the Annexation: about 25 per cent in Haute-Savoie and 22 per cent in Savoie.³⁷ Nowhere else in France were the proceeds of school donations and bequests so generous: nearly 75,000 and 74,000 francs respectively in 1878.³⁸ This method of financing, often supplemented by modest communal subsidies, made it possible to make hamlet schools

32 Laurence Fontaine, *Pouvoir, identités et migrations dans les hautes vallées des Alpes occidentales (XVII^e–XVIII^e siècle)* (Grenoble: Presses universitaires de Grenoble, 2003).

33 Reinotti (1973–1974).

34 Fabrice Mouthon, "La naissance des communs. Eaux, forêts, alpages dans les montagnes de Savoie (XII^e–XVI^e siècles)," *L'Histoire en Savoie*, no. 30 (2016).

35 Archives départementales de la Savoie [now ADS], 4 O 20.

36 Donations and legacies contributed to the financing of about 56% of the public schools in Maurienne in 1858, compared to only 26% in Savoie-Propre (ADS, Tac 19: Notizie statistiche intorno alle scuole pubbliche élémentaires de garçons—de filles—esistenti nella provincia di Maurienne—di Savoie-Propre, anno scholastico 1858–1859).

37 *Haute-Savoie. Conseil général du département*, rapport du préfet et procès-verbal des séances [now CGHS], 1861, 109–11; *Savoie. Conseil général du département*, rapport du préfet et procès-verbal des séances [now CGS], 1863, 125.

38 "Dons et legs," in Ferdinand Buisson (ed.), *Dictionnaire de pédagogie et d'instruction primaire*, Part 1, vol. 1 (Paris: Hachette & Cie, 1887), 729.

virtually free of charge (79 per cent of all pupils in mountain districts in 1871).³⁹ However, regardless of the way they were financed, whether partially public or totally private, including through school fees alone, hamlet schools had been considered by the Sardinian state to be public schools. This rule was due to the fact that the foundations, to which all private school financing was assimilated, existed under the control of the State through the Senate of Savoie.

This financial system was able to thrive because of the small amount of money spent on education, seeing the primacy given to seasonal winter education (three to five months). The scattered nature of the hamlets explains the scattered nature of the school settlements. At their peak in the middle of the century, the hamlet schools constituted a significant part of the school system. In 1845, in Tarentaise, they represented 70 per cent of the existing public elementary schools. Ten years later, the proportion was 55 per cent, 48 per cent in Maurienne and 43 per cent in the province of Haute-Savoie, centred on Albertville. Most of these schools were single sex before 1860, and pupils were admitted from the age of six to about eighteen; thus those over thirteen, the age limit set by the 1853–1855 regulations,⁴⁰ could account for up to 30 per cent of the pupils, compared with 25 per cent in the communal schools of the rural lowlands. The teachers, most of whom were unlicensed, were peasants from the village community who had done this job for a few years. The income they earned was modest, often between ten and twenty Piedmont pounds per month, an amount that was reduced by almost half for the female teachers; remuneration in kind or as a supplement was rare. Before 1850, as in all rural schools, in addition to religious instruction, the teaching provided included reading and, secondarily, writing and arithmetic. In the following decade, the teaching of the latter two subjects was almost universal. In the small number of hamlet schools run by licensed teachers, the education provided was similar to that of the rural schools of the low country, with the learning of the French language through the study of grammar and written exercises being frequently practised. These programmes corresponded successively to those prescribed for the lower elementary schools by the regulations of 1822 and 1853–1855. The scope of this teaching was, however, most often limited by the mediocrity of the premises and the poor school materials.

These hamlet schools were the result of local initiatives and were favoured by the Sardinian monarchy as part of its territorial policy. As early as the 1840s, it agreed to suspend the application of the rules for the benefit of communes in mountainous areas with a low financial capacity. The scope of this dispensation was further extended by the 1853–1855 regulation: in communes where the teacher's salary was less than 300 pounds, the school administration was allowed to authorise persons without regular certificates or those who had not passed a special examination to teach. In the mountains, the same communes could also organise temporary schools, limited to the winter season, and the "Alpine communes" could modify the day's timetable, even reducing it to a two-and-a-half-hour lesson. Although these regulations only took into consideration the communal level, they favoured the opening of public schools in the hamlets at lower cost. From 1856 onwards, the Sardinian administra-

³⁹ CGS, 1872, 148–49.

⁴⁰ Regulation of 23 August 1853 published in Savoy by the decree of 11 November 1855, articles 41 and 42 (*Recueil des actes du gouvernement de sa majesté, le roi de Sardaigne*, 1855).

tion counted the hamlet schools under the name of “*scuole delle borgate*” in order to know the distribution of lower elementary schools according to the type of locality.⁴¹ France made a different choice.

In France: Private schools

Since the Revolution, the State sought to promote the spread of primary education. However, in the first half of the nineteenth century, the weak financial capacity of the communes with regard to the standards imposed on them concerning on the one hand, firstly the salary of the communal teachers (minimum annual 200 francs supplemented by the product of the school fee as from 1833, then 600 francs since 1851) and secondly the school and housing premises and on the other hand⁴² the State’s wish to limit its financial interventions on a subsidiary basis like those of the communes and the departments led it to prefer the creation of primary education establishments in the communal chief towns. Not only did this encourage communes to join with others in maintaining these schools,⁴³ but it only authorised them to finance schools in hamlets when they were able to ensure the functioning of at least one boys’ school and one girls’ school.⁴⁴ Also, within the framework of the freedom of primary education, most of the hamlet schools were opened as free establishments, financed by private funds and run by qualified teachers declared to the administrative authorities,⁴⁵ though sometimes they were clandestine “establishments.” At the end of the Revolution, these school openings were part of a defensive attitude by rural communities against administrative centralisation;⁴⁶ they were also the very expression of the social organisation of these communities, inherited from the *Ancien Régime*.⁴⁷ While the State intended to develop primary education by ensuring the quality of the recruitment of public teachers by controlling their aptitude to teach and offering a guaranteed remuneration that was relatively high in relation to the income derived from agriculture, on the contrary,⁴⁸ families expected education to be provided as close as possible to where they lived and at the least cost. In order to

41 ADS, 11 FS 58: Circolare, ministero delle public istruzione, scuole elementari nelle borgate, 14 December 1855.

42 Articles 13 of the law of 28 June 1833 and 40 of the law of 15 March 1850.

43 Articles 15 of the Order of 29 February 1816, 9 of the Act of 28 June 1833 and 36 of the Act of 15 March 1850.

44 Instruction ministérielle relative aux obligations imposées aux communes en ce qui concerne l’instruction primaire, 27 avril 1834 (Gréard, vol. 2, 1891), 128–40.

45 Articles 3 and 4 of the law of 28 June 1833 and 25 and 27 of the law of 15 March 1850.

46 Furet and Ozouf, t. 1 (1977), 111; Côme Simien, “Entre centralisation et décentralisation des questions scolaires: relire l’échec de l’école de la République (1789-1802),” in *Centralisation et fédéralisme. Les modèles et leur circulation dans l’espace européen francophone, germanophone et italo-phonie*, ed. Michel Biard, Jean-Numa Ducange, and Jean-Yves Frégné (Mont-Saint-Aignan: Presses universitaires de Rouen et du Havre, 2018), 17.

47 Furet and Ozouf, t. 1 (1977), 112; Côme Simien, “Culture des humbles et culture de l’écrit. De quelle intermédiation(s) culturelle(s) les maîtres d’école villageois du siècle des Lumières furent-ils les agents?” (*La Révolution française*, no. 18, 2020), <https://doi.org/10.4000/lrf.4161> (accessed 23 August 2021).

48 Around 1870, in Haute-Savoie, the annual income from an average farm was 100 to 140 francs per person, with five people per family; the best paid farm worker, the master-valet, received 150 to 250 francs (Lovie (1963), 285, 288).

provide education to as many people as possible, the State was nevertheless forced to reduce its requirements.

However, adapting the regulations allowed the multiplication of hamlet schools in areas of scattered settlement and relative poverty. Under the July Monarchy, travelling teachers were authorised to bring children from several families together in the same house. They were assimilated to free teachers and were placed under the control of the rectors (head of the local education authority, the *académie*).⁴⁹ Moreover, the rule applicable to public schools was relaxed for mountain areas. The obligation of communal financing remained, but, in the absence of a qualified teacher, and subject to the presentation of a certificate of good character, the educational administration authorised the rectors to “entrust primary education to a temporary delegate”.⁵⁰ The application of these provisions, which were similar to those relating to the “ambulatory” minor schools organised in Scandinavian countries,⁵¹ are known to us in particular regarding the former province of Dauphiné, in the territory of Briançonnais: in 1844, this arrondissement of the department of Hautes-Alpes had a dozen public hamlet schools for 148 private⁵² schools. In the hamlets of the department of Haute-Loire, numerous “private” schools run by the Béates⁵³ continued to exist outside this regulatory framework.

The figures in the *Statistique de l’instruction primaire en 1863*, (*Statistics of Primary Education for the year 1863*), which only counted public hamlet schools for boys or mixed establishments, reflect the specific role of these schools in the schooling of the Savoyard population: the 284 schools counted in the department represent 36 per cent of the 788 that were counted nationwide. The departments of Vosges (117), Hautes-Alpes (82) and Cantal (61) follow.⁵⁴ Aveyron, Lozère and Haute-Loire did not have any of these public establishments, the hamlets being provided only with free schools.⁵⁵

Based on different legal principles, which were however subject to similar regulatory adaptations, these decentralized school organisations produced the same effect in the French and the Piedmontese Alps, namely mass elementary schooling. In the Savoyard Alps, on the eve of the Annexation, school enrolment rates for six- to fifteen-year-olds reached 81 per cent in Maurienne and 92 per cent in Tarentaise. In

49 Avis du conseil royal de l’instruction publique du 26 février 1836 relatif aux formalités imposées aux instituteurs ambulants (Gréard (1891), 223–224).

50 Arrêté du conseil royal de l’Instruction publique du 26 août 1836 relatif aux instituteurs primaires ambulants dans l’académie de Grenoble (Gréard (1891), 273–74).

51 Johannes Westberg, “Were There National School Systems in the Nineteenth Century? The Construction of a Regionalised Primary School System in Sweden,” *History of Education* (accepted for publication); Sofia Kotilainen, “From Religious Instruction to School Education: Elementary Education and the Significance of Ambulatory Schools in rural Finland at the End of the Nineteenth Century,” in *Education, State and Citizenship*, ed. Mette Buchardt, Pirjo Markkola, and Heli Valtonen (Helsinki: Nordic Centre of Excellence NordWel, 2013), 114–37. This material was kindly provided to me by Johannes Westberg.

52 Vivier (1992), 137–38.

53 Conseil général de la Haute-Loire, rapport du préfet et annexes, session 1855, 172. These schools are not counted among the free schools.

54 *Statistique de l’instruction primaire en 1863. Situation au 1^{er} janvier 1864*, Paris, Imprimerie impériale, 1865, table no. 2, 7–8.

55 *État de l’instruction primaire en 1864 d’après les rapports officiels des inspecteurs d’académie*, Paris, Imprimerie impériale, t. 2, 1866—reports for Lozère (65–78) and Aveyron (909–916).

the Piedmontese provinces of Susa, Pignerol and Aosta, these rates ranged from 63 per cent to 88 per cent.⁵⁶ In 1833, in the French Alps, in the Briançonnais, the schooling rates in relation to the total population already reached 16 to 18 per cent, i.e. values equivalent to those of the mountainous provinces of southern Savoie.⁵⁷

Considered by the Sardinian monarchy as public establishments, the hamlet schools did not match the characteristics of those in France. How could they be integrated into the French school system after the Annexation of 1860? The place left to the communes in the management of the primary school, the importance given to the local recruitment of teachers, as well as the dissemination of the hamlet schools constituted the main criteria of distinction between the “Savoyard” and the French school systems. Thus, the challenge for the new government lay in the reorganisation of the school network. As far as hamlet schools were concerned, the question of their status led to the question of their financing.

The integration of Savoyard hamlet schools into the French school system

The conditions for the integration of hamlet schools into the French school system were not the same in the two Savoie departments. Haute-Savoie had four times fewer hamlet schools than Savoie (93 and around 365 respectively). Moreover, in the former, they were mostly permanent, whereas in the latter, they were mostly temporary. The former accounted for 6 per cent of public school enrolments, while the latter accounted for about 40 per cent. Thus, although they were easily integrated into the school system in Haute-Savoie, their number and operation raised legal and budgetary questions in Savoie. In the space of four years, three regulations were applied to them, before the law of 1867 legalised a third of them for the whole of France. In all cases, the new authorities intended to facilitate schooling for as many people as possible while containing public expenditure.

The State, between the wish to assimilate and temperament (1860–1867)

At the time of the Annexation, the French government was aware of the impossibility of abolishing the hamlet schools in Savoie. It adopted the arguments developed by the populations and their elected representatives: their existence was justified by the topography and the communication difficulties that this created, particularly in winter. But the authorities did not intend to consider them as public schools. Recognising them as such when the municipalities in which they were located did not have the financial resources required to meet the standards set by the law would expose the State to having to bear the corresponding costs from its budget. Therefore, strictly applying the law, the imperial administration, intended to leave these schools to their own devices by assimilating them to free schools, financed exclusively by foundations or subscriptions. However, the radicalism of bringing them into immediate conformity with French legislation had to be tempered very quickly in the face of the multitude of complaints. In his circular of 20 November 1860, the prefect changed his mind and informed the mayors that the communes could continue to subsidise the hamlet schools, the teachers being proposed by the munic-

⁵⁶ Ministero dell'istruzione pubblica, *Notizie statistiche dell'istruzione elementare del regno per l'anno scolastico 1856–1857*, Torino, Stamperia reale, 1858.

⁵⁷ Vivier (1992), 139.

pal councils and authorised by him.⁵⁸ With this prescription, the prefect of Savoie was adapting French legislation which, since 1850, had authorised private schools to receive subsidies from the communes, and even concessions of buildings, without losing their character as free schools.⁵⁹ Thus, in a prefectural circular, the administration established a hybrid “status” for schools that were both free and public, in which school fees could be collected.

By monitoring the regularity of municipal subsidies paid to free schools for the remuneration of male and female teachers, the government sought to combat the traditional personal relations between elected officials and teachers. In addition, it rejected requests to create schools that it deemed inappropriate, while working to regularise those that were deemed useful. To this end, the government decided in 1862 to help many of them. An extraordinary credit of 10,000 francs was allocated in each of the Savoie departments. In Savoie, about a hundred establishments benefited from this. Never before had so many hamlet schools been subsidised in the former Duchy.

Table 1. Hamlet public schools in the arrondissements of the department of Savoie between 1863 and 1879.

| Boroughs | 1863 | 1864 | 1867 | 1879 | | | |
|----------------------|------------|------------|------------|-----------|-----------|------------|------------|
| | | | | boys | girls | mixed | total |
| Chambéry | 19 | 10 | 16 | 4 | 4 | 14 | 22 |
| Albertville | 64 | 63 | 56 | 10 | 10 | 43 | 63 |
| St Jean de Maurienne | 104 | 97 | 106 | 10 | 9 | 94 | 113 |
| Moutiers | 169 | 146 | 128 | 26 | 26 | 92 | 144 |
| Total | 356 | 316 | 306 | 50 | 49 | 243 | 342 |

Sources: CGS, 1865, 101; ADS, Tac20, status of primary schools, 1863; 5T4, status of hamlet schools maintained or to be created by virtue of ministerial approval, 1868; Tac2, register of deliberations of the departmental council of public instruction, 29 December 1879.

As a result of a benevolent policy towards subsidised free schools, in 1863 there were almost as many hamlet schools as at the time of the Annexation (see Table 1). The rules that were applied to them and the financial assistance provided confirmed the existence of these schools and recognised their contribution to schooling. However, this was at the cost of devitalising the communal schools, which the administration considered to be superior in terms of their organisation and the education provided. Since this situation ran counter to its strategy, it sought to reduce the number of these schools by organising them into a network within the municipality.

The desire to assimilate: the prefectural decree of 8 July, 1864

Following the report of the inspector of the Chambéry academy, adopted by the academic council at its meeting of 1 December 1863, the prefect of Savoie, by order of 8 July 1864, reorganised the hamlet schools and the temporary girls' schools in the chief towns, which were henceforth considered as public schools. In order to contain

⁵⁸ Recueil des actes administratifs [now RAA], prefecture of Savoie, no. 35, 1860.

⁵⁹ Article 36, paragraph 4 of the law of 15 March 1850.

the resulting expenses, they were subject to lower organisational and financial standards than the chief town schools.

From 1 October 1864, hamlet schools that could not be opened as free schools were considered as annexes to the schools in the main towns. They could only be reconstituted or created by decision of the departmental council of public education, a body bringing together representatives of the school administration, local elected representatives and the clergy. The decision had to be taken at the request of the communal administrators and after an administrative inquiry. This investigation had to ensure that the school was necessary in view of the school-age population, the distance of the hamlet from the main town, any communication difficulties and any other reason of public interest. The teachers were considered as the assistants—but not the subordinates—of the principal teacher in the chief town. The latter appointed them after they had been proposed by the academy inspector and approved by the prefect. They had to hold a certificate of competence or the Sardinian “*patente*” or, as was the case on the eve of the Annexation, a special diploma, the certificate of aptitude for teaching in hamlet schools. The schools were open for four months, from 1 December to 31 March. For this school time, the teachers were paid 150 francs, i.e. 37.50 francs per month, financed by the income from the foundations which had to be paid into the municipal fund as well as by the school fees according to the rates fixed in the communal schools if necessary, and also ultimately by a municipal subsidy. Finally, the hamlets had to be able to provide suitable premises for the classroom as well as for the teacher’s accommodation.⁶⁰ Thus, the hamlet schools were linked to the communal schools in the chief towns, not so much by their teachers as by their funding. This is evidenced by the authorities’ plan to encourage pupils from the hamlets to attend the schools in the chief towns and thus to attach the related funding foundations to the communal schools, a recommendation that often contradicted that of the legacies that had established the foundations. In order to facilitate the attendance at the communal schools, the pupils of the hamlets who were admitted free of charge as well as those subscribing to the school fee, had the right to attend the communal schools during the time when the temporary schools were closed.

This regulation confirmed the authorities’ desire to “communalise” the school territory. But the questioning of the traditional functioning of these schools provoked strong reactions. Invited to formalise their requests to open hamlet schools as early as September 1864, many municipal councils were slow to deliberate or expressed their disapproval of the planned reorganisation; for their part, male and female teachers refused to provide the information requested by the administration. By the following October, only 160 of the 428 subsidised free schools in 1863 had provided regularly for the salaries of their teachers.⁶¹ In view of the importance of “private” contributions to the financing of these public schools (about two-thirds), the Tarentaise region was the area where there was the strongest resistance: eight out of ten communes did not obey. Thus, in its meeting of 25 November 1864, the departmental council of public education gave them formal notice to comply with the regulations within a year.

60 RAA, no. 20, 1862, prefectural order of 8 July 1864, 161–65.

61 ADS, Tac 1: délibération du Conseil départemental de l’instruction publique [now CDIP], 25 November 1864.

The resistible rationalisation of school locations in the hamlets

Faced with this imposition, some communes continue to resist, forcing the educational administration to tolerate an irregular situation in some schools for several years. The populations of the hamlets and their representatives, who managed the school funds, supported by the commune administrators, intended to maintain their school system at a lower cost in line with their economic and social organisation. They refuse the introduction or increase of school fees and wanted to be able to continue recruiting teachers by mutual agreement.

The rejection of the reform was justified on economic grounds, which were underpinned by the administration free of charge provided by local associations and institutions. In Valloire, a commune in Haute-Maurienne, the inhabitants of the hamlet of Les Verneys clearly expressed this opinion: they asked the territorial representatives of the State for “just one favour, the freedom to choose for 6 to 7 months of the year [...] a schoolmaster who would give the first principles of instruction” and to pay him or her freely from the funds managed by the hamlet.⁶²

In Bourg-Saint-Maurice, a commune in Haute-Tarentaise, the municipal councillors rejected the authorities’ proposal to reduce the number of schools from twenty to twelve because of the extent of the territory and also because the dispersion of the habitat in forty-two hamlets, with communication difficulties between them, meant there was an interest in having a decentralised organisation for education. The refusal to obey the orders of the prefectural decree of July 1864 was motivated in particular by financial considerations, as the commune did not intend to set up payment in its schools, nor to increase taxes to compensate for the additional cost which would result from the increase in the salaries of the teachers.⁶³

Faced with this resistance, the State administration acted by force, but also by accommodation. In Valloire, it automatically organised the hamlet schools in the commune while maintaining the existing school network. By order of 31 March 1865, the prefect decided, on a provisional basis, to keep the schools open in ten hamlets, while noting the separation between boys and girls in two of them. He determined their opening period at between four and five months. He fixed the salaries of the teachers at between 100 and 187.50 francs, in other words he made an adjustment to the provisions of his decree of 1864 for only four schools.⁶⁴ In other places, in order to guarantee salaries, he automatically entered them in the communal budgets. In Tarentaise, this procedure was applied to two communes out of five for all or some of their schools. Thus, most of the communal administrations were progressively joining the “standardisation” desired by the State administration, albeit tempered in part according to their wishes. The reorganisation nevertheless led to the abolition of some forty public schools in hamlets, mainly in the Tarentaise region, by closing or transforming special schools for each sex into mixed schools. At the beginning of the school year in 1865, the administration authorised 316 public hamlet schools. In addition, there were some schools authorised as free establishments and others that continued to operate irregularly.

62 ADS, 2 O 2982: petition of the inhabitants of the hamlet of Verneys addressed to the mayor of Valloire, 1866.

63 ADS, T 982: letter from the primary inspector to the academy inspector, 2 November 1865.

64 ADS, 2 O 2982: Valloire, prefectural decree of 31 March 1865.

Thus, the integration of Savoyard hamlet schools into the French school system did not correspond to complete assimilation. The new territorial authority had to adapt its rules and establish new ones, which were not mandatory. These adaptations were nevertheless to inspire the Minister of Public Instruction Victor Duruy who, considering the inadequacies of the school system, intended to make primary education a great public service “by ensuring, at the expense of the entire community, the proper distribution of education for all.”⁶⁵ To this end, although he did not succeed in establishing compulsory and free education, he did intend to encourage the latter, to extend the obligation to provide education for girls to municipalities with more than 500 inhabitants, as opposed to the 1850 threshold of 800 inhabitants and to increase the number of assistant teachers, even in the hamlets. Thus, he legalised the hamlet schools in all the departments on the model of the last regulation applied in Savoie.

The application of the 1867 law in Savoie: Financial assimilation

The French law of 10 April 1867 considered as a hamlet public school any school established outside the main town on the decision taken by the departmental council of public instruction on the advice of the municipal council. The legal framework for these schools was identical to that prescribed in Savoie three years earlier, the only distinction being that the administrative procedure was concluded by approval not by the prefect but by the minister. However, because of the public status granted to them by the law, these schools could now be subsidised on an ordinary basis by the State. Furthermore, the attitude of the State administration towards the Savoyard populations differed from the previous period. While its implementation of the prefectural decree was abrupt with the aim of reducing the number of hamlet schools, in applying the law it sought to rationalise the network of hamlet schools while seeking to obtain a consensus with the populations on the choice of locations. Thus, the organisation of hamlet schools after 1867 was mainly a matter of the co-construction of a local school service between the State and the population. On the other hand, the State was firm on the issue of integrating the people’s private funds into municipal coffers.

The construction of a local public school service by the State and the population

The organisation of the hamlet schools according to the 1867 law was still marked by the spirit of rationalisation. The State administration was still seeking to reduce the existing network in order to optimise both attendance and the budgetary management of the communes and, subsequently of the State. In its debate on 22 December 1867, the departmental council of public education ratified the existence of 305 hamlet schools (269 existing schools and 35 new ones) spread over 113 communes. Their financing was essentially provided by the communes, with the State contributing 17 per cent of the 43,304 francs needed to finance salaries and rents. As a sign of the savings it made, this proportion was almost seven points lower than its contribution to the ordinary expenditure on primary education in the department.⁶⁶

At the end of the Second Empire, the academic inspectorate considered the

⁶⁵ Report to His Majesty the Emperor on the situation of primary education during the year 1863, *Bulletin administratif de l’instruction publique* 3, no. 57 (1865), 199.

⁶⁶ ADS, 5 T 4: state of the hamlet schools maintained or to be created by virtue of ministerial approval, 1868; CGS, 1869.

organisation of hamlet schools in Savoie to be complete. However, in order to encourage the schooling of the greatest number of children, it was led, on the one hand, to reduce the number of closures, and on the other hand, to reopen a number of public schools closed before 1868 or else to open new ones in hamlets which had not had any school until then. In the Tarentaise and Maurienne areas, the number of communes affected by a decrease in the number of hamlet schools was half that of before 1867. The Tarentaise was the valley most affected by the rationalisation of hamlet schools before 1867 and was the one which had the greatest number of these openings after this date and until 1879: twenty-two in thirteen communes compared to eleven in nine communes in the Maurienne.⁶⁷

The State authorised the opening of these schools all the more easily as their financing was taken care of by the commune and, if necessary, with the help of the population in the framework of foundations or subscriptions. The population did not hesitate to make their contribution, including sometimes in the form of school fees, so decried in the early years of the Annexation. Their financial commitments testify to their desire to obtain a temporary school near their homes at all costs. In addition to the traditional method of foundations, their contributions most often took the form of a subscription to pay the rent for the school building and the teacher's accommodation. In some cases, the inhabitants also undertook the financing of the initial installation costs, including school furniture. Finally, for the school to be authorised by the education authorities, the latter needed to be able to ascertain the agreement between the inhabitants of the hamlets concerned and the local administrators. The consistency was evident in most cases as the administrators' requests were often supported by petitions from the local population. Symbolic of this favourable evolution is the case of Bourg-Saint-Maurice where, by legalising fifteen of the twenty schools and authorising the opening of two free schools, the academic administration largely satisfied the demands of the town council and authorised it to pay the teachers slightly less than the norm. Also, in January 1869, the commune, which had not complied with the 1864 regulations, agreed to apply the 1867 law.

The State administration organised schools on a municipal level. To this end, it took into account the number of pupils in existing schools and the potential number of schools to be created, as well as the costs associated with each of them. It also ensured that the local schools were not disrupted in favour of an overly decentralised school structure. However, rather than creating posts for assistants in the schools of the chief towns, it often preferred to maintain or create temporary hamlet schools which, in addition to improving winter attendance, made it possible to reduce municipal expenses, particularly in view of the less restrictive salary levels affecting teaching assistants (150 francs for four months compared with 400 to 500 francs a year for an assistant in a school in the chief town in accordance with the 1867 law).

These developments illustrate the pragmatism of the government and its constant concern to adapt to the topographical, demographic, and economic configurations of the communal territories in order to facilitate the schooling of the greatest number of children, even if this was only partial, both in terms of attendance and teaching. In 1878, the number of hamlet schools reached a maximum of 343. Compared

⁶⁷ ADS, Tac 20: status of primary schools, 1863; 5 T 4, extract from the minutes of the deliberations, CDIP, 12 December 1867; Tac 2, register of deliberations, CDIP, 29 December 1879.

to 1860, the decrease was relatively modest, about 6 per cent. In 1880, despite the general prohibition on pupils over the age of thirteen attending a mixed school, their attendance at school was more or less the same as twenty years earlier: hamlet schools accounted for 43 to 60 per cent of public schools in the mountains and 26 to 44 per cent of their pupils.⁶⁸ In spite of the exhortations of the school administration to attend them in the summer season mobility towards the schools of the main towns remained limited to about 10 per cent of the pupils, according to the primary education inspector of the Tarentaise.⁶⁹ Given the short duration of school time, the low level of the teachers, without a diploma or holding the modest certificate of aptitude for heading the hamlet schools, and the poor material conditions, the teaching provided in these schools was of a lower quality than in the communal schools. It was most often limited to the rudiments of the basic compulsory subjects of the primary school curriculum: religious instruction, reading and writing, arithmetic and the metric system, and needlework for girls.

The relative success of the enrolment in hamlet schools was however, achieved at the cost of the loss of control over the management of their funds by the populations.

Financial assimilation of hamlet schools

With the Annexation, the hamlet schools were forced to join the French school system, not only in the administratively but also in the financial organisation. In this matter, the State administration did not compromise. Private funds contributing to the financing of public schools were gradually integrated into municipal coffers.

In 1860, in the department of Savoie, more than half of the revenues of the foundations were still managed by local lawyers, the proportion being 80 per cent in Tarentaise.⁷⁰ Following the Sardinian monarchy, the new prefectural administration undertook an administrative and financial assimilation. Applying the theory of de facto management which stipulates that without legal authorisation no one can handle public money,⁷¹ it intended to obtain from the representatives in the hamlets that the capital relating to the foundations and school subscriptions be paid into the municipal funds. It tried to put an end to the previous practice, qualified as secretive, while trying to reassure the local administrators and the populations about the use of the funds, which it was not always able to guarantee. Despite repeated reminders, the agents resisted the injunctions and were slow to comply. At the end of the administrative procedure for the submission of accounts, which lasted about two years, some of them, in particular in Tarentaise, supported by their constituents, still continued to claim the private nature of their association and the management of its funds.⁷²

The evolution of the inclusion of income from donations and bequests in the departmental primary education budget, as shown in the table below (table 2), confirms the relatively slow pace at which this submission of accounts took place. They

68 Julliard (2019), 631.

69 *Rapports d'inspection générale sur la situation de l'instruction primaire, année scolaire 1879–1880, Savoie*, Paris, Imprimerie nationale, 1881, 6.

70 Ministero dell'istruzione pubblica, *Notizie statistiche dell'istruzione elementare del regno per l'anno scolastico 1856–1857*, Torino, Stamperia reale, 1858.

71 Article 64 of the law of 18 July 1837 on municipal administration.

72 Julliard (2019), 561.

were not integrated into the public finance system until after the law of 10 April 1867. In 1868, their amount was almost equivalent to that estimated at the end of the Sardinian period (65,000 francs). The last foundations and subscriptions allocated to public schools in the hamlets were integrated into the communal budgets at the turn of the 1880s. In Tarentaise, this success of the administration sounded the death knell of the school consortiums.

Table 2. Ordinary expenditure on public primary education in Savoie in 1865, 1868 and 1871.

| Origin of resources | Departmental statistics | | | Ministerial statistics | | |
|----------------------|-------------------------|----------------|----------------|------------------------|----------------|----------------|
| | 1865 | 1868 | 1871 | 1865 | 1868 | 1871 |
| Gifts and bequests | 31 206 | 67 044 | 67 516 | 19 952 | 67 046 | 67 516 |
| Communes | 205 260 | 172 346 | 190 617 | 116 402 | 174 458 | 190 617 |
| School payments | 78 423 | 74 889 | 63 586 | 49 171 | 74 891 | 63 586 |
| Department and State | 47 345 | 103 050 | 150 855 | 63 391 | 118 680 | 150 729 |
| Total | 362 234 | 417 329 | 472 574 | 248 916 | 435 075 | 472 448 |

Department of Savoie: CGS, reports on the situation of primary education, 1866, 1869 and 1872; Ministerial statistics: *Statistique comparée de l'enseignement primaire 1829–1877*, 1880, 236–291.

The table presented above reveals a discrepancy in the financial data for the years 1865 and 1868 between, on the one hand, the data from the reports of the education authority inspectors in the department of Savoie and, on the other hand, the data published by the Ministry of Public Instruction. The major discrepancy is the failure to take into account the financial data relating to girls' schools for the year 1865 in the ministerial statistics. However, the importance of donations and legacies in the financing of primary education in Savoie (8.6 per cent in 1865 according to departmental statistics) compared to the very modest proportion on a national scale (0.5 per cent⁷³), raises the question of the visibility, in official statistics, of private funds contributing to the financing of public schools.

An invitation to reassess the evolution of primary education expenditure?

The Savoyard case allows us to discuss the results of the 1867 law on a national scale from two angles: the register of hamlet schools, and the broader perspective of the evolution of primary education expenditure on a national scale at the end of the Second Empire. According to the *State of the Empire (Exposé de la situation de l'Empire)*, presented to both Chambers in Parliament on 29 November 1869, nearly 2,000 hamlet schools were created in the two years following the law coming into force.⁷⁴ However, one must wonder about their number and the way they were created. On the one hand, the *Statistics of Primary Education for 1872*, assuming the figure to be close to reality, establishes their total number at 2,134,⁷⁵ or only 1,346 more than in 1863. On the other hand, and above all, although dozens of hamlet schools may

73 Ministère de l'instruction publique et des Beaux-Arts, *Statistique comparée de l'enseignement primaire 1829–1877 (Comparative Statistics of Primary Education 1829–1877)*, Paris, Imprimerie nationale, 1880, 236–99.

74 Published in the *Bulletin administratif de l'instruction publique*, 12, no. 230 (1869), 389.

75 *Statistique de l'instruction primaire en 1872*, Paris, 1872, 11–12.

have been created, most of those counted, as the example of Savoie suggests, had previously existed as free establishments: their inclusion in the statistics now resulted from their recognition as public schools. The evolution of the number of hamlet schools, as shown in the 1872 statistics, confirms this transformation of status for the departments which subsequently had a large number of hamlet schools, such as Lozère (178) and Hautes-Alpes (145).

In his study on *Les dépenses d'enseignement et d'assistance en France au XIX^e siècle* (*Expenditure on education and assistance in France in the nineteenth century*), Bruno Théret showed the interest in taking into account private funds for the study of the evolution of expenditure according to activities.⁷⁶ This interest is all the more important since part of the funds, in particular donations and bequests, were progressively integrated into communal budgets in conformity with the law of 1867. Thus, in the case of Savoie, the inclusion of income from foundations, estimated at 65,000 francs at the time of the Annexation, in the accounts for public primary education for the year 1865, tended to smooth out the evolution of ordinary departmental expenditure: the increase in the latter between 1865 and 1868 was only about 5 per cent, as opposed to 15 per cent without taking into account the estimated amount of donations and legacies.

In the light of this observation, we believe that the analysis of the evolution of primary education expenditures around 1866–1868 should be re-examined, especially for departments where the proportion of temporary free schools was high before 1867. This re-reading could lead to an adjustment of the evolution of public expenditure on primary education on a national scale and to a reduction in the “brutal increases in the overall amount” of expenditure at the end of the Second Empire and the beginning of the Third Republic (41.5 per cent between 1865 and 1868⁷⁷), as noted by Raymond Grew and Patrick J. Harrigan.⁷⁸

The department of Savoie provides an opportunity to observe the State's school policy towards hamlet schools in a territory where there were many of them. In its desire to make schooling available to all, the State could only take over the schooling practices of mountain societies in the context of the extension of the public primary education service. It gradually decided to organise temporary local schools of lesser quality than the schools in the main towns, thus containing the increase in public expenditure while satisfying families who were anxious to receive education at a lower cost. The law of 1867 enshrined this school policy. In order to facilitate access to education for as many children as possible, the State reconstituted, as it had between 1816 and 1833,⁷⁹ a third category of elementary schools, but from then on they were only temporary and dispensed the rudiments, and they existed alongside the other schools where compulsory subjects, and sometimes also optional subjects were taught.

76 Bruno Théret, “Les dépenses d'enseignement et d'assistance en France au XIX^e siècle: une réévaluation de la rupture républicaine,” *Annales ESC*, no. 6 (1991), 1335–74.

77 *Statistique comparée de l'enseignement primaire 1829–1877* (*Comparative Statistics of Primary Education 1829–1877*), *op. cit.*, 240–43.

78 Raymond Grew, Patrick J. Harrigan, *L'école primaire en France au 19^e siècle* (Paris: Éditions de l'EHESS, 2002), 249.

79 The ordinance of 28 February 1816 on the formation in each canton of a free and charitable committee to supervise and encourage primary education (article 11) introduced three certificates of ability, the third being limited to the ability to “read, write and calculate.”

In contrast to this legislation, the republican government which intended to make the school an instrument of national unification, endeavoured to strengthen the integration of hamlet schools into the network of public elementary schools, in particular by standardising the status of teachers and the curriculum. If, in the mountain departments, it still sought to rationalise the establishment of schools as an economy measure, in others, notably in Brittany, it would show itself to be more generous with the aim of winning their populations over to the Republic.⁸⁰

On the other hand in Italy, the Casati law (1859) for decentralising school organisation called in particular for the freedom to recruit and remunerate unlicensed teachers with fewer than fifty pupils to be maintained. This could not but sustain the traditional operation of most hamlet schools and also lead to an increase in cultural differences with those of the main towns.⁸¹ In the absence of financing through school fees and due to a moderate subsidy policy by the Italian state, the financing of schooling could only be based on the limited budgetary capacity of the communes. The maintaining of a decentralised school system until the beginning of the twentieth century, leaving the hamlet schools to themselves and not allowing ambulatory schools, slowed down the progress of schooling and contributed to perpetuating regional disparities.⁸²

In France, on the other hand, the affirmation of school centralisation under republican governments, including with regard to hamlet schools, partly explains the development of elementary school culture and the reduction of regional disparities at the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the following century.⁸³ But since the second half of the twentieth century, the model of the republican communal school and its cost have been called into question. The issue of schooling in rural and mountain areas has once again been questioned by the State and defended by the population and their elected representatives.⁸⁴ In a different context, marked in particular by an evanescent rurality, the question of the specificity of schooling in rural areas and the new question of the inequalities in education that it can generate⁸⁵ are still being raised.

80 Jean-François Chanet, *L'école républicaine et les petites patries* (Paris: Aubier, 1996), 59–68.

81 Marco Cuaz, *Alle frontiere dello Stato. La scuola elementare in Valle d'Aosta dalla restaurazione al fascismo* (Milano: Franco Angeli, 1988).

82 Gabrielle Capelli, "A Struggling Nation Since Its Founding? Liberal Italy and the Cost of Neglecting Primary Education," in *School Acts and the Rise of Mass Schooling: Education Policy in the Long Nineteenth Century*, ed. Johannes Westberg, Lukas Boser, and Ingrid Brühwiler (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019), 223–51.

83 Claude Diebolt, Magali Jaoul, and Gilles San Martino, "Le mythe de Ferry: une analyse cliométrique," *Revue d'économie politique* 115 (2005), 471–97.

84 Madeleine Lacouture, "Réseau des écoles et nouvelles pratiques du territoire montagnard: l'exemple des Hautes-Terres du Puy-de-Dôme," *Annales de géographie*, t. 109, no. 616 (2000), 613–30.

85 Charles Moracchini, *Système éducatif et espaces fragiles: les collèges dans les montagnes d'Auvergne* (Clermont-Ferrand: Presses universitaires Blaise Pascal, 1992); Yves Alpe et al. (eds.), *L'enseignement scolaire en milieu rural et montagnard*, t. 1 à 6 (Besançon: Presses universitaires de Franche-Comté, 2001–2014).

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