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Master thesis:

**Analysis of Value System in Serbia as a Basic Assumption
of Promotion of National Cultural Identity.**

Case Study: Project "Back to the Future"

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Abstract

In this paper I argue that Serbian national identity is not a virtual category but something substantial that exists in practice and thus carries with it the possibility for renewal from within. The research question I posed was: Given Serbia's socialist past, what kind of values are present now in a transitioning secular, democratic society?¹

Through a review of many value analyses conducted in Serbia, I conclude that traditionalism is classified as a strictly negative and undesirable value in Serbia.. When we talk about traditionalism in Serbia, it is mainly in reference to patriarchy² and other related values including authoritarianism, anti-Semitism, ethnocentrism, militarism, dogmatism, "anti-Europeanism", nationalism and conservatism. As values, they relate to particular characteristics, personality traits and social attitudes, and are, therefore, considered the main impediment to social change in Serbia. The opposite system of values to traditionalism and the one Serbian society is supposedly moving towards is what may be called a democratic value system which includes liberalism, cosmopolitanism, individualism, a belief in the equality of all people, independence, liberty and attitudes.³

The research on the value systems held by Serbian youth suggests that young people in Serbia can be divided roughly into the two opposing systems discussed above. Although, characteristics of both sets of values (traditional and democratic) can be found in each and every person, there are still those who are more inclined to one or the other. A significant proportion of young people demonstrated self-actualization and hedonistic-utilitarian values whose presence indicates a tendency toward "the culture of narcissism". The fact that their value systems are a mixture of pragmatism and hedonism tells us about some kind of conflict

¹ "WVS Cultural Map of the World", *World Value Survey*.

http://www.worldvaluessurvey.org/wvs/articles/folder_published/article_base_54 (accessed 21.8.2013)

² Traditional value orientations are including patriarchy as a result of social and family organization in which the father of the family or senior group has absolute power, and the society is governed by the principle of man's domination over woman and the older's over younger ones, which is considered to be completely natural.

³ Srećko Mihailović, *Ima li budućnosti „generacija budućnosti“*. U *ovakvoj Srbiji ne stanuje budućnost*. U: Promene vrednosti i tranzicija u Srbiji: pogled u budućnost, okrugli sto (Belgrade: Institut društvenih nauka, 2003), 203-211.

between individual and collective values, meaning, the reflection of the value system existing in global society. Specifically, adolescents on an individual level are accepting intrinsic values⁴, while on the other hand, in today's time and space they are overwhelmed with quasi-values⁵ which can now be found in every sphere of social life and culture.

Values came under severe pressure in post communist countries. As many have argued, the pre-determined set of cultural values, modes of expression and cultural products offered by the newly democratic states was an inadequate response to the pressure of transition. It was seen to reflect a "top-down" dispensation of elitist cultural values developed in the context of time and which neglected or dismissed many forms of cultural expression and identity. It was argued that cultural policy should go beyond educating people into the appreciation of an approved culture and, recognising that the everyday expressions of people is culture, should involve them in the expression and articulation of cultural values and identity.⁶

Cultural policy represents a plan for the distribution of cultural resources, and while doing so, it deals with two important aspects: the preservation of cultural heritage and stimulating cultural creativity in the present. The goal of cultural policy through provisions for each of the two aspects mentioned previously is to satisfy current and future cultural needs within a given country. Cultural needs depend upon the values of a certain nation, and nation, in this sense is considered a field in which a certain cultural policy has effect. Therefore, the cultural policy of one nation is roughly the promotion of the values of that nation. Unfortunately, the current cultural policy in Serbia does not properly deal with what may be called Serbian national values. Serbian cultural policy goals mention nothing about the preservation of cultural heritage or national identity, while the cultural policies of other countries, such as in France, clearly make cultural heritage and national identity a priority. Due to globalization, the emphasis has been placed on tolerance for minority identities, which although it is a noble effort has nonetheless led to a neglect of Serbian national identity. This neglect of identity has also contributed to a crisis of values in Serbia.

⁵ "Culture of narcissism"

⁶ Francois Matarasso and Charles Landry, *Balancing act: twenty-one strategic dilemmas in cultural policy* (Belgium: Council of Europe, 1999), 13

Every nation carries within it a certain set of values, beliefs and priorities. Being a democratic secular society in transition, traditional values are becoming more and more secondary to the dominating secular-rational values. Most of the remains of traditionalism are situated within nationalistic movements that are currently seen as strictly negative.

Considering that progress is impossible without reflecting on the past and that cultural heritage does not serve the nation by being displayed in a museum but by being used to teach future generations, my research suggests that some degree of identity renewal is needed.

At present, there is one major project underway that has identity renewal as one of its central aims. Back to the Future, a project led by Deacon Nenad Ilic, provides a new approach to national identity and an alternative approach to culture in general. The main goal of the project is the production of a feature length motion picture about the life of Saint Sava that promotes the myth of Saint Sava as the central myth around which the nation was created. In addition to the film, a series of different actions aimed at raising awareness about the project and its goal – the reviving of Serbian national traditions and the promotion of more traditional values - have been planned.

It is a project in the making, therefore, this thesis deals only with the pre production phase of the project. Back to the Future is a long term project that culminates with the release of the movie "Father" in 2015.

Through my work as an intern with Back to the Future and my interviews with Deacon Ilic and others associated with the project, it has become clear that a significant number of people both in Serbia and the diaspora believe projects such as this are necessary. There is widespread concern that the transition into a secular, liberal democracy has precipitated a conflict of values within Serbia. Rather than suggesting a "return to our roots" sort of approach, Back to the Future aims to re-inject the traditional values found in the myth of St. Sava into Serbian public discourse in an effort to mitigate the effects of this value crisis especially on the youth of Serbia. At the time of writing the project was not yet complete making subsequent research necessary to determine its impact within Serbian society.

Résumé

Dans ce travail, la position défendue est celle d'une identité nationale serbe qui soit non pas une catégorie virtuelle mais plutôt un élément concret, existant dans la pratique et qui, de fait, porte en lui la possibilité d'un renouveau. Dans le cadre de la recherche, nous poserons la question suivante : Considérant le passé socialiste de la Serbie, quels types de valeurs existent actuellement dans une société séculaire et démocratique en période de transition ?⁷

Il est important d'être clair sur ce que nous considérons comme être des valeurs. Tout le monde parle de valeurs : valeurs démocratiques, valeurs de la classe ouvrière, valeurs nationales, valeurs dominantes, etc. Il existe de nombreuses définitions, telles que « La croyance en ce que quelque chose est bon et désirable. Cela définit ce qui est important, ce qui en vaut la peine »⁸ ; « Les motivateurs invisibles qui portent le cœur des gens vers des entreprises sensées »⁹.

La consultation de nombreuses études menées en Serbie sur le sujet conduit à penser que le traditionalisme est considéré comme une valeur strictement négative et indésirable en Serbie. Lorsque l'on parle de traditionalisme en Serbie, on fait souvent référence au patriarcat¹⁰ et à d'autres valeurs qui y sont liées, à l'instar de l'autoritarisme, de l'antisémitisme, de l'ethnocentrisme, du militarisme, du dogmatisme, de l'« anti-européanisme », du nationalisme et du conservatisme. En tant que valeurs, ces notions sont reliées à certaines caractéristiques, traits de personnalité et comportements sociaux : de ce fait, elles représentent le principal obstacle au changement social en Serbie. Le système de valeurs à l'antithèse du traditionalisme, système vers lequel la société serbe serait en train d'évoluer, est ce que l'on

⁷"WVS Cultural Map of the World", *World Value Survey*.

http://www.worldvaluessurvey.org/wvs/articles/folder_published/article_base_54 (accessed 21.8.2013)

⁸ Dr. Greg Waddell. "How to instill higher values." *Slide Share*.

<http://www.slideshare.net/Gregwad/how-to-instill-higher-values> (accessed 23.8.2013)

⁹ *How to instill Higher Values*, <http://www.slideshare.net/Gregwad/how-to-instill-higher-values>

¹⁰ Les valeurs traditionnelles comprennent le patriarcat comme le résultat d'une organisation sociale et familiale dans laquelle le père de famille ou le groupe le plus âgé dispose d'un pouvoir absolu, et où la société est gouvernée par le principe de la domination de l'homme sur la femme et des plus âgés sur les moins âgés, ce qui est considéré comme tout à fait naturel.

peut appeler un système de valeurs démocratique qui inclut le libéralisme, le cosmopolitisme, l'individualisme, la croyance en l'égalité de tous, l'indépendance, la liberté.¹¹

La recherche sur les systèmes de valeurs menée auprès de la jeunesse serbe suggère que les jeunes gens en Serbie peuvent être répartis entre les deux systèmes opposés mentionnés précédemment, à savoir les systèmes traditionnel et démocratique. Bien que les caractéristiques de ces deux systèmes de valeurs puissent être trouvées chez chacun, il existe tout de même une certaine inclinaison vers l'un ou l'autre de ces systèmes. On retrouve chez une part importante de jeunes gens des valeurs liées au développement personnel, à l'hédonisme et à l'utilitarisme, traduisant une certaine tendance à la « culture du narcissisme ». Le fait que leurs valeurs soit un mélange de pragmatisme et d'hédonisme nous indique qu'il existe une sorte de conflit entre les valeurs individuelles et collectives, c'est-à-dire une réflexion du système de valeurs existant dans la société à l'heure de la mondialisation. Les adolescents en particulier acceptent les valeurs intrinsèques au niveau individuel, alors que de nos jours ils se trouvent submergés de « quasi-valeurs »¹² que l'on peut trouver dans toutes les sphères de la vie sociale et de la culture.

En plus d'un constat général selon lequel le traditionalisme n'est pas un concept populaire chez la jeunesse, des conclusions ont été tirées de chaque étude de valeur. Il est intéressant de constater que dans les milieux ruraux, où les gens ont des ambitions et une éducation moins élevées, la valeur du « **travail honnête** » est souvent mentionnée comme le premier critère d'une vie satisfaisante. Dans les milieux urbains et particulièrement dans la ville de Belgrade, il semblerait que les gens aient oublié cette valeur et aient remplacé « travail honnête » par « **argent** ». De plus, l'Eglise est souvent liée aux personnes ayant un niveau moins élevé d'éducation et vivant dans des villes de tailles moins importantes.¹³

D'après l'Enquête mondiale sur les valeurs (ang. : *World Value survey*), la Serbie n'est pas une société traditionnelle, elle en serait presque l'opposé. On observe un degré de sécularisme plus important dans les pays marqués par une culture héritée du confucianisme et dans les pays

¹¹ Srećko Mihailović, *Ima li budućnosti „generacija budućnosti“*. U *ovakvoj Srbiji ne stanuje budućnost*, 203-211

¹² "Culture of narcissism"

¹³ Zagorka Golubović, Isidora Jarić, *Kultura i preobražaj Srbije* (Belgrade: Službeni glasnik, 2012)

protestants européens. Parmi les pays communistes, seule la Roumanie a maintenu des valeurs traditionnelles.

Une autre recherche conclut que les origines de cette situation peuvent être trouvées dans la rencontre des conditions et styles de vie des jeunes, mais aussi dans un patrimoine culturel et un héritage de valeurs spécifiques. Le fait que leurs valeurs soit un mélange de pragmatisme et d'hédonisme nous indique qu'il existe une sorte de conflit entre les valeurs individuelles et collectives, c'est-à-dire une réflexion du système de valeurs existant dans la société à l'heure de la mondialisation. Les adolescents en particulier acceptent les valeurs intrinsèques au niveau individuel, alors que de nos jours ils se trouvent submergés de « quasi-valeurs » que l'on peut trouver dans toutes les sphères de la vie sociale et de la culture. L'absence d'un système développé et un sentiment général d'insécurité ne sont pas des éléments qui encouragent la planification sur le long terme, mais plutôt une philosophie socialement destructrice d'une vie de loisirs où l'on profite de plaisirs immédiats (« la philosophie du présent »).¹⁴

L'un des objectifs principaux de la politique culturelle est de promouvoir la redécouverte et le rétablissement des identités. Bien que l'identité soit l'idéologie de la différence, il doit y avoir une limite et elle ne devrait pas être réduite à l'ethnicité ou au tribalisme et ainsi fermer les communautés les unes aux autres. Il doit y avoir un équilibre entre l'identité nationale d'un pays et son attitude d'acceptation et de tolérance envers les autres identités, nationales ou autres.

La politique culturelle est une planification de la distribution des ressources culturelles, et par le fait, elle s'occupe de deux aspects primordiaux : la préservation du patrimoine culturel et la stimulation de la créativité culturelle dans le présent. Par le biais de ces deux dimensions, la politique culturelle doit satisfaire les besoins culturels présents et futurs dans un pays donné. Les besoins culturels dépendent des valeurs d'une certaine nation, considérée comme un domaine où la politique culturelle a un effet. Ainsi, la politique culturelle d'une nation peut être décrite comme la promotion des valeurs de cette nation. Malheureusement, l'état actuel de

¹⁴ Jelica Petrović, Marija Zotović, *Adolescenti u Srbiji, u traganju za novim vrednostima*, part of the project: Family as a value in the society in transtition (Novi Sad: Filozofski fakultet, 2009)

la politique culturelle en Serbie ne se consacre pas de manière adaptée à ce que l'on pourrait appeler les valeurs nationales serbes. Les objectifs de la politique culturelle serbe ne font pas mention de la préservation du patrimoine culturel ou de l'identité nationale, alors que les politiques culturelles d'autres pays, comme la France, en font clairement une priorité. En raison de la mondialisation, l'accent est mis sur la tolérance pour les identités des minorités, ce qui, bien que ce soit un noble effort, a néanmoins conduit à une certaine négligence de l'identité nationale serbe. Celle-ci a également contribué à l'émergence d'une crise de valeurs en Serbie.

Chaque nation porte en elle un certain système de valeurs, de croyances et de priorités. En Serbie, société séculaire démocratique dans une période de transition, les valeurs traditionnelles deviennent de plus en plus secondaires par rapport aux valeurs séculaires et rationnelles, dominantes. En ce qu'ils sont visibles surtout au sein de mouvements nationalistes, les éléments du traditionalisme sont considérés actuellement comme strictement négatifs.

Considérant qu'il est impossible d'aller de l'avant sans mener une réflexion sur le passé et que le patrimoine culturel ne sert pas la Nation en étant présenté dans un musée mais en étant utilisé pour enseigner aux générations futures, ce travail suggère qu'à un certain degré, un renouveau de l'identité est nécessaire.

La particularité de la situation actuelle de la Serbie peut être décrite par le phénomène que la raison (appelée par certains auteurs « *logos* », ou encore comme un certain positivisme) occupe à présent la place du mythe et le ramène au statut de conte, d'histoire. Toute la culture moderne est caractérisée par un processus constant de rationalisation, avec un objectif d'efficacité rationnelle. Ce n'est pas une coïncidence si la science et l'industrie sont les forces les plus puissantes de notre existence¹⁵.

Comme l'a dit Nietzsche, suivi par beaucoup d'autres, l'horizon de chaque culture est circonscrit par le mythe. Le langage et le mythe sont étroitement liés. Aux balbutiements de la société humaine, langage et mythe étaient indissociables. Où que soit l'Homme, il aura la

¹⁵ Mihailo Đurić *Mit, nauka, ideologija*, (Belgrade: Bigz, 1989), 8

capacité de parler et de maîtriser certaines idées et images mythiques. L'Homme fait partie de ce « monde » qui emporte avec lui ses propres valeurs. Cela signifie que le langage et le mythe sont notre vraie patrie, dont nous venons tous, et ainsi jouer le rôle de nos plus grandes institutions en termes d'éducation.¹⁶

Les deux mythes nationaux serbes les plus importants sont étroitement liés avec la foi chrétienne. Les Serbes se voyaient et se voient toujours comme vivant à la frontière entre la chrétienté et l'islam, l'Europe et l'Asie, entre les civilisations occidentale et orientale. La première expérience d'une identité commune est liée à l'histoire du mythe nationale serbe le plus important : celui du Kosovo. A chaque période l'Histoire, les Serbes semblent s'attendre à confronter la plus grande puissance mondiale au moment où une victoire terrestre est absolument impossible dans une volonté d'obtenir une victoire céleste (comme le mythe décrit le choix du roi Lazar donné par Dieu juste avant la bataille du Kosovo en 1389), ce qui consiste d'abord à un refus de la position de la puissance mondiale et une tentative de combattre l'injustice. Certains disent que le mythe du Kosovo commence à être dépassé, en particulier parce qu'il est sur-utilisé dans diverses manipulations politiques tout au long des années.

Actuellement, il existe un projet majeur en cours dont le renouveau de l'identité est un objectif central. « Retour vers le futur », un projet mené par le diacre Nenad Ilic, propose une nouvelle approche de l'identité nationale et une approche alternative à la culture en général. Le but de ce projet est la production d'un long-métrage sur la vie de Saint Sava qui soutienne l'idée que le mythe de Saint Sava est le mythe central autour duquel la nation a été créée. En plus du film ont été organisées un série de différentes actions visant à sensibiliser l'opinion publique au projet et à ses objectifs - faire revivre les traditions nationales serbes et promouvoir davantage de valeurs traditionnelles. L'organisation du projet est soutenue par la fondation Heritage of the Fathers, la compagnie de production Opet&Opet et le Young Editorial.

L'équipe éditoriale est d'avis que le peuple serbe a besoin de se tourner vers un mythe « alternatif » ou plus original, plus vieux que le Kosovo mais historiquement mis dans son ombre. Ce mythe est basé sur le symbole du pont reliant les civilisations, terrestre et céleste,

¹⁶ *Ibid*, 38

pratique et spirituelle, nationale et cosmopolite, traditionnelle et moderne. Ce mythe est celui de Saint Sava créé autour du personnage, des actes et des conséquences de la plus grande figure historique des Serbes, les pères de la nation, Saint Sava, son père Nemanja et Saint Syméon de Myroblite. Ce mythe est fondamentalement lié à l'identité nationale serbe.

Un stage pratique au cœur du projet « Retour vers le futur » et plusieurs entretiens avec le diacre Ilic et d'autres personnes associées au projet m'ont permis de voir qu'un nombre important de gens en Serbie et de la diaspora pensent qu'un projet tel que celui-ci est nécessaire. Il existe une inquiétude générale qu'une transition vers une démocratie séculaire et libérale ait précipité un conflit de valeurs en Serbie. Plutôt que de suggérer une approche de « retour aux racines », le projet « Retour vers le futur » souhaite transmettre les valeurs traditionnelles du mythe de Saint-Sava dans le discours public serbe pour atténuer les effets de cette crise de valeurs, notamment chez la jeunesse serbe. Au moment de l'écriture du présent travail, le projet n'était pas terminé, rendant une recherche conséquente nécessaire pour déterminer son impact au sein de la société serbe.

1. Introduction

*Globalization is weakening, or at least testing, national identities.*¹⁷

In the last fifty years governments focused their attention first and foremost to the preservation and conservation of their national heritage; Italy led the field in this respect. This basic motive, the development of a national identity can be traced back to the pre-history of European cultural policy. Sweden passed its first cultural law as long ago as 1666 with a view on protecting cultural heritage¹⁸. The promotion of cultural identity has an international as well as domestic dimension and many countries have encouraged international exchange. Many states have devoted large percentages of their cultural budgets to the promotion of identity, especially with regards to heritage, supporting literature and aspects of theater and music production. Many states have passed legislation to protect their unique cultural environment and heritage, to provide direct financial assistance and establish or develop such institutions as archives and museums.¹⁹

Former communist states have made impressive efforts to replace what had been destroyed in the Second World War. They have also made an effort to establish institutions and cultural centers throughout their territories.²⁰

The stated aims of cultural policy of most European countries are: the promotion of cultural identity, cultural diversity, creativity and participation. In this paper cultural identity is my focus. It is a fluid, volatile concept. The definition of cultural identity takes into account local or regional cultures as well as linguistic or religious groupings. In exceptional cases it also covers long-established, non-territorial social groups – for instance, the gender, sexual liberation and disability movements. In essence our cultural identity is what makes us feel we

¹⁷ European Task Force, *In From The Margins* (Strasbourg, Council of Europe, 1996), 36.

¹⁸ Law with a view to protecting graves, stone circles, fortresses and buildings, which were felt to represent the country's cultural identity

¹⁹ European Task Force, *In From The Margins*, 37.

²⁰ *Ibid*, 39.

belong in a deep and permanent way, to a group, a community – or even a project, an ideal or an aspiration.²¹

Identity is plural, not singular, as everyone has a wide variety of allegiances, actual or potential. They include: the individual and his or her immediate environment of friends and family; the local community of neighbors where the first ethnic, social or local loyalties are forged and the national homeland (there are also supranational categories of identity under creation such as a European identity). It is precisely because identity operates on so many levels that, so many people feel ill at ease with themselves thus they engage in a desperate search for new points of reference and new systems of values. In Eastern and Central Europe, the transition to democracy has been far more painful than expected and nationalist fervor has often replaced the old utopian certainties of Communism.²²

More than ever the question of identity is bound up with that of development. Development used to be something that was done to other people, to under-privileged minorities, but it is now agreed to be relevant to every sector of society. Even if seen from a strictly quantitative point of view, development simply will not succeed without leading to serious crises and violent tensions if change is imposed rather than “owned”, if established reference points and patterns of living are doomed to disappear and if traditional cultures are repudiated, repressed and driven out of existence.²³

Therefore one of the main purposes of cultural policy is to promote the rediscovery and reestablishment of identities. Even though identity is the ideology of difference there must be a line and it should not be reduced to ethnicity and tribalism, and along with those, shutting one community from the other. There has to be an established balance between the national identity of a country and its acceptance and tolerance toward other national and different types of identities.

²¹ *Ibid*, 42.

²² *Ibid*, 42.

²³ *Ibid*, 42.

Managing cultural heritage properly means balancing the old and the new. The opposition between ancient and modern is intrinsic in art. The past should be forced into a dialogue with the present, which then matures and itself becomes the established order of things.²⁴

In this period of massive globalization in a country like Serbia which has been and still is experiencing turbulent times, national identity has been neglected. Even though our recent cultural policy goals are fighting against globalization, western influences and antipatriotic feelings in culture, we are still not capable of distinguishing the national from the nationalistic, which being taboo, national is unwillingly pushed away from our cultural sphere.

If we start from the theory that culture is providing spiritual fulfillment for its “consumers”, then it needs to be made to answer to their spiritual needs making it first necessary to know what those needs are. A major aspect of every individual is one’s social “ME” that cannot and should not be separated from its context. The social “ME” comes from one's national identity and is derived from the nation. The nation is a named human population, with a common historical territory, common myths and historical memories, common public culture, common economics and common legal rights and duties of all of its members.²⁵ Such a definition reveals the abstract nature of national identity. Each nation is constituted by elements of different variations of collective identities, which explains the possibility of combining national identity with other types of identities, such as ethnic, class or religious identity demonstrating its true multidimensional nature.

When a garden is not taken care of it grows weeds and becomes wild. This analogy can also be applied to social phenomena. Therefore, if not cultivated national identity develops out of control into pure nationalism that is able to base itself on real, true values but in the process those values become so wild and warped that they can no longer be recognized anymore. This phenomenon is evident in Serbia today and is causing national identity to become a taboo subject.

²⁴ *Ibid*, 50.

²⁵ Anthoni D. Smith, *Nacionalni identitet* (Belgrade: XX vek, 1990), 30.

What are values? I will come back to that matter later in this paper but for the sake of clarification there is one definition that should be pointed out now: “Values are ideal that attract us and give our life meaning”.²⁶

Cultural policy represents a plan for distribution of cultural resources, and while doing so it deals with two fields, cultural heritage and current cultural creativity, with the goal of satisfying current and future cultural needs. Cultural needs depend on the values of a certain nation, and nation, in this sense is considered to be a field where certain cultural policy has effect. Therefore, the cultural policy of a nation is roughly the promotion of the values of that nation.

If cultural policy is not based on a countries history, it immediately turns toward the future, which is Europe, and with Europe, complete globalization. Culture is becoming elitist and oriented only towards a minority that shares a certain set of “global” values, while at the same time failing to offer an alternative to “average citizens” that make up the majority of our population. By “throwing away” our past and rushing toward our future, the true Serbian values are being lost along the way and soon they will be only known as a part of historical folklore.

*Myth: usually a traditional story of ostensibly historical events that serves to unfold part of the world view of a people or explain a practice, belief, or natural phenomenon*²⁷

The word *mythos* comes from Greek and it means the understanding of the world and life. This mythical comprehension of the world and life old Greeks shared with many other nations, their contemporaries, predecessors and descendants, even though they gave it their own stamp. Generally understood under the term “myth” are stories that deal with the latest

²⁶ Dr. Greg Waddell. "How to instill higher values" *Slide Share*, <http://www.slideshare.net/Gregwad/how-to-instill-higher-values>, (accessed: 23.8.2013)

²⁷ Merriam Webster Dictionary Online. Definition of Myth, <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/myth> (accessed: 5.6.2013)

occurrences through the use of awe inspiring and supernatural themes taken out of the historical time and order of things.²⁸

Every nation is based on certain national myths that are impregnated in the lives of its people regardless of those people's wishes. National myth is never a completely true story; it is usually based on a national epic and thus, represents an important national symbol. It is needed in a society to unite people around an idea and to fulfill the need of the individual to belong to some larger group. Due to the fact that myth can be overly used and "worn out", societies tend to throw away old myths and turn toward creating new ones, which has happened in Serbia. Once people became overly saturated with the old Serbian "Kosovo myth"²⁹, they turned toward creating a new myth, one based on progress and individualism, which is what, finally, led to the polarization of the nation. This means that the new myth of individualism has a diametrically opposed set of values to those that came into being when the nation was created, and together they cannot coexist. There will be more detailed explanation of myths and their sets of values later in this paper.

We are living in a country that is divided within it and this division can be due to the myths and sets of values people are adopting. According to my opinion there is a traditional, national group of people, oriented toward the past, and the individualist, modern group, oriented toward future. As previously mentioned, the best solution is finding unity in moving toward future by making national identity stronger and by enlarging our assets in the shape of heritage.

The myth of individualism can be considered a guiding myth of the intellectual layer of Serbian society and as such appears very appealing for the younger generations. Contemporary researchers call today's youth the „Me" generation, and this historical period the „age of narcissism". The characteristics of this era is the worshiping of the self and the *totemization* of the self. As soon as there is a philosophy "I am the center of the world", the traditional paradigm of society is being propulsioned.³⁰ In the climate where one has as the

²⁸ Mihailo Đuric, *Mit, nauka, ideologija*, 27.

²⁹ The essence of this myth is *struggle for freedom*, and it is shown in two ways - defense of Christianity and need for the creation of a free state.

³⁰ Issue 137, Vesna Đukić, "Ziveti bez kulture - mediji i kulturna politika u Srbiji", *Kultura*, 2012, 14.

highest goal pleasing his or her own needs, an individualistic philosophy appears as the only correct option. This individualistic philosophy entails getting rid of past myths and, along with them, past values as well.

Project “Back to the Future” will provide a new approach to national identity and a different approach to culture in general, offering an optimal and, at the same time, a mostly neutral option. It is a project in the making under the patronage of Deacon Nenad Ilic, and is oriented toward the production of a big-budget motion picture entitled “Father”. The film “Father” will be a feature length film about the life of Saint Sava and his father Saint Simeon, and it slated to be finished in three years time. Before the beginning of production, a series of different actions have been planned in order to raise awareness of the project's goal – the reviving of Serbian national traditions in an attempt to bring about a return to a more traditional system of values.

It is a project in the making, therefore, this thesis deals only with the pre production phase of the project. Back to the Future is a long term project that culminates with the release of the movie "Father" in 2015.

The main idea of this project is exchanging the old, worn out, Kosovo myth, with an also old but in a sense modernized myth surrounding the life of Saint Sava. Considering Saint Sava as someone who modernized Serbian society in his time, it is comparable to the goal of the current youth modernization, but with the added value of old Christian and national values.

Key words of this paper are: **cultural policy, values, nation, identity, myth**

1.1 Research plan

This thesis will be based on several resources:

- Comparative research **analysis of the value system in Serbia** and the region that has been done up to this point, taking into account different sources
- Research of current **Serbian cultural policy** in theory and how is it being conducted in praxis
- New **research on the project**, “Back to the Future”, and an analysis of the effects of the various stages of the project, especially with regards to the tools of cultural policy being used

My hypothesis is the following:

Even though systematically razed, Serbian national identity is not a virtual category, but has something real and existing that brings with it the opportunity for self renewal in which the citizens of Serbia can either help or hinder.

While exploring this hypothesis my thesis will try to answer following question:

Serbian national culture is challenged by the fact that it is an ex-communist a society which refers to the past – but what kind of values do we have now as a democratic secular society in transition?³¹

My argument will proceed as follows:

- **A presentation of evidence of existing values** within the Serbian nation that are not dependant on the financial system
- **A presentation of evidence of potentially harmful values** that should be controlled (Such as the valuing of cursing)

³¹ "WVS Cultural Map of the World", *World Value Survey*.
http://www.worldvaluessurvey.org/wvs/articles/folder_published/article_base_54 (accessed 21.8.2013)

- An analysis of how each of the actions of the project conducted during my research can promote and cultivate the old values, as well as predictions for the outcomes of future actions.

Research methodology and data analysis

For the purposes of this thesis, I will conduct primarily qualitative research.

The first part of the thesis is an overview of research that has been conducted on the subject of value systems. For this section, the primary methodology used is **desk research** of all available materials demonstrating how far Serbia is from establishing the perfect balance of its values, and, in the same vein, how far we are from unity.

The main source in this analysis is the book *Kultura I Preobrazaj Srbije* by Zagorka Golubovic and Isidora Jaric, that analyses the value orientations of Serbian citizens following the year 2000. Apart from this book, other sources include:

- *Adolescenti u Srbiji: u traganju za novim vrednostima* which has been conducted by Jelica Petrovic and Marija Zotovic from Psychology faculty in Novi Sad
- *Protivrecnosti nasledjenog kulturnog obrasca I savremene intelektualne elite u Srbiji* by Milos Nemanjic from the Institute for criminological and sociological research in Belgrade
- World Values Survey which is an online database of investigations of political and sociocultural change, and it contains research about the connection of values with religious background of the countries.

My case study is based on a project that is still in progress, therefore there is not much empirical material on that matter and the main method used for this research is **participation with observation and recording**. I am one of the participants of “Back to the Future”, and, full disclosure, I am conducting an internship with the project. I am present at every meeting and have had my personal input incorporated into the project, though, at the same time, I have tried to be as objective as possible in the researching and writing of this paper.

Another method used in the research for my thesis is a number of **in-depth interviews**. These interviews were conducted with professionals associated with the project and also with the founder of the project, Deacon Nenad Ilic. The questions that posed to them were mainly focused on their motives for participating in such an initiative, on their own, personal value system and the ways in which it differs from the current, popular one, and their predictions for the success of this project.

The third method that I used is a **focus group** made up of the students involved in the making and execution of the project (between 10 and 15 of them). The focus group was designed to determine the participant's perceptions, opinions, beliefs, attitudes and goals toward the project, as well as their satisfaction with the outcome (at least one that is evident while my thesis research was ongoing).

Therefore, my research was concentrated on those elements of identity that can be renewed by minimal interventions and coordination. Cultural policy cannot invent new values, only cultivate and “juggle” old ones. What communism did to Serbian national identity was it tried to erase old values and replace them with new ones (St. Sava icons in schools were suddenly replaced by Tito's picture, etc.). That resulted in a complete confusion of identities and values which has so far not returned to its previous state. Still, there are some values that have been kept through time, such as Serbian hospitality, that if supported even a small bit will revive and stick with our people much longer. The movie, *Father*, will promote some of those values and make people at least think about old archaic values have been lost along the way.

The conclusion of this paper is the argument that the project is oriented towards a balance between national, hereditary, and inner reality (traditional) on one side, and international, secular and external image (contemporary) on the other. The method used for the conclusion was desk research of the different cultural policy models for both sides, as well as different actions being conducted with a goal of propaganda of both sides. This method is supplemented by the author's **personal insights**.

While doing this research, I have come to the conclusion that the literature explaining the connection between values and myths and cultural policy is relatively poor especially in the

Serbian language, so I have used a few internet sources as inspiration for my continued work on the subject.

2 What is the current situation?

2.1 Analysis of value system in Serbia

There has been much research done regarding the value system in Serbia. This is mainly due to the fact that Serbia is a society in transition. Values are changing and adapting, therefore there is a big difference now from what values were twenty years ago. For the sake of this paper, there has been conducted analysis of the research done by Zagorka Golubovic and Isidora Jaric in their book, *Culture and Transformation of Serbia; value directions of citizens in the changes after year 2000*. The results of this research were that traditionalism was treated as a bad set of values and it always had a negative indicator in different contexts. Therefore, reviving something that is dead is not possible, but there is a chance to revive tradition by having a synthesis of modern and traditional culture.

The second research analysis that has been done is from the website, the World Value Survey, and is called the Cultural World Map. This map reflects the fact that a large number of basic values are closely correlated; they can be depicted in just two major dimensions of cross-cultural variation.³²

Over the interview that was conducted with Anastasija Ilic, the founder of the production company Opet&Opet that is producing movie "Father", there is one more analysis of value research done, based on many different sources since Anastasija researched for the sake of the project.

³² "WVS Cultural Map of the World", *World Value Survey*.
http://www.worldvaluessurvey.org/wvs/articles/folder_published/article_base_54 (accessed 21.8.2013)

2.1.1 Couple of words about values in general

Everybody talks about values; democratic values, working-class values, national values, mainstream values etc. But what are values? There are many definitions, such as: “A belief that something is good and desirable. It defines what is important, worthwhile and worth striving for”³³; “The invisible motivators that move people's hearts toward meaningful ministry”³⁴; etc.

Values have to do both with what and how. There are two kinds of values: terminal and operational. Examples of terminal values could be: a comfortable life, an exciting life, accomplishment, world peace, equality, freedom, happiness etc.³⁵

Examples of operational values, on the other hand, are: hard working, honest, broadminded, capable, cheerful, clean, forgiving etc.³⁶

There are references to values also in the Bible:

“The kingdom of heaven is like a treasure hidden in the field, which a man found and hid again; and from joy over it he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field. Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant seeking fine pearls, and upon finding one pearl of great value, he went and sold all that he had and bought it.”³⁷

Values are beliefs that lie behind, support and energize the things we do and the goals we set out to achieve.³⁸

Values are transmitted through our social context, through the presence of a trusted and beloved mentor and at the workplace context that encourages dialogue.³⁹

³³ Dr. Greg Waddell. "How to instill higher values" *Slide Share*, <http://www.slideshare.net/Gregwad/how-to-instill-higher-values>, (accessed: 23.8.2013)

³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ M. Rokeach.. *The Nature of Human Values* (New York:The Free Press, 1973), 217-233.

³⁶ Dr. Greg Waddell. "How to instill higher values" *Slide Share*, <http://www.slideshare.net/Gregwad/how-to-instill-higher-values>, (accessed: 23.8.2013)

³⁷ Mathew 13:44-46, NASB

³⁸ Dr. Greg Waddell. "How to instill higher values" *Slide Share*, <http://www.slideshare.net/Gregwad/how-to-instill-higher-values>, (accessed: 23.8.2013)

There is often a mistake made by considering ethics and values to be the same topic, which they are not. Ethics are standards for judging whether something is right or wrong, while values rely on a personal sense of right and wrong fashioned from experience. Ethics are the right, knowledge, restrictive and what ought to be, while values are the good, experience, attractive and what something is.⁴⁰

In the first half of the 20th century the subject of socio- psychological considerations and research became the concept of authoritarianism, and the question of whether authoritarianism is a deeply ingrained trait, a system of learned beliefs and attitudes or traditional value orientation.⁴¹ Authoritarianism is a social relationship that exaggerates respect for social and spiritual authority, and establishes inequality among participants rendering them unable to defend their own interests. The attribute "authoritarian" means "blind submission to authority, i.e. Power" and is attributed to the individual and social groups, meaning a non-democratic regime, an absolute monarchy, a one-party system, in which the power is applied and absolute obedience is required by the leading ones. On the other hand, the attribute "authoritarian" means willingness to submission to authority. This duality leads to the same individual exhibiting both authoritarian subjection (toward the higher and stronger), and authoritarian dominance (aggressiveness) towards the lower and weaker, from which it can be concluded that authoritarianism means stabilized and relatively permanent readiness for this type of behavior with the belief that this behavior is natural, proper and desirable, as well as general worship of power and authority.⁴²

The opposite of the attribute "authoritarian" is the attribute of "authoritative", which means someone of justified reputation and importance⁴³, or a person who is respected, authoritative, which has authority.

Traditional value orientations include patriarchy as a result of social and family organization in which the father of the family or senior group has absolute power, and the society is

³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴¹ Bora Kuzmanović, *Autoritarnost – vapaj za jakim i pouzdanim vodama i disciplinom*, in Srećko Mihailović, *Kako građani Srbije vide tranziciju: Istraživanje javnog mnjenja tranzicije* (Belgrade: Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, 2010), 87-105.

⁴² *Ibid.*

⁴³ Todor Kuljić, *Autoritarnost: Sociološki rečnik* (Belgrade: Zavod za udžbenike, 2007), 37.

governed by the principle of man's domination over woman and the elders over the younger ones, which is considered to be completely natural.

From the earliest times the kinship system is the foundation of social structure and the social integration process, according to which work assignments have been classified, the performance of economic processes and the continuity of cultural traditions. Patriarchy is based on tradition and ancestors, and is rooted in a strong oral tradition and family as carrier of a society.

According to traditional, patriarchal beliefs, the aim of family and marriage is an extension of family line, and loyalty is only required from women. In the Serbian patriarchal society in a family a broad and firm kinship connection can be observed, specific collective property and division of labor, the special economic and social functioning, the power of family's authority and the disadvantage of women.⁴⁴

Values such as authoritarianism, anti-Semitism, ethnocentrism, militarism, dogmatism, "anti-Europeanism", nationalism, conservatism and traditionalism are closely connected. They have characteristics and personality traits of a person and social attitudes, and are, therefore, considered the main impediment of social change. On the other hand, totally different from the traditionalist value orientations are democratic value systems to which belong liberalism, cosmopolitanism, individualism, equality of all people, independence, liberty and attitudes.⁴⁵

⁴⁴ Milan Tripković, *Patrijarhat. U: Sociološki rečnik* (Beograd: Zavod za udžbenike, 2007), 389 – 391.

⁴⁵ Srećko Mihailović, *Ima li budućnosti "generacija budućnosti"*

2.1.2 Culture and metamorphosis of Serbia

The Center for Study in Cultural Development of Republic of Serbia has recently conducted research on the value systems of Serbian youth. The results showed that **traditionalism was treated as a bad value and it always had negative indicator in different contexts.** Therefore, reviving something that is dead is not possible, but there is a chance if we try to revive tradition by having a synthesis of modern and traditional culture.

In today's Serbian society, culture is massively becoming populist. This can be gathered from: a) the dominant effect of tabloids, as shown by sensational stories which are influencing the perception of "postoctober's"⁴⁶ Serbia, b) TV programs have begun to have increasingly similar content in a tendency to lift up the ratings by pandering to the low taste of the audience, c) concerts that are kind of happening, and estrada, are remarkably more popular than those of classical music, or traditional folk music, d) in literature there is an excessive number of books of dubious language and quality e) the current trend in theater is towards the production of adaptations of classic works that depart from the ideas contained in the original, f) education is underestimated and pushed to the margins of the social system.⁴⁷

What should cultural policy be and what it is in Serbia in 2000's? From analysis of (non) existent strategy of cultural development, done by Zagorka Golubovic, it is evident that culture is officially understood only in an institutional aspect (determining its relation with the state); and when the culture is understood in the narrowed meaning, it is reduced only to the art, and it is not about enhancing the art creativity and achieving more quality results, but about institutional organization of art associations and regulating rights in the field of art.⁴⁸

To make a slight digression from the previous subject, in the year 2009 a new law on culture was adopted. It addresses the issue of cultural heritage poorly as evidenced in the bullet points on the future goals for Serbia's cultural policy, specifically point number nine. The cultural

⁴⁶ A series of events occurred in 2000 in Yugoslavia, following the presidential elections and culminating in the **downfall of Slobodan Milošević's government** on 5 October 2000.

⁴⁷ Zagorka Golubović and Isidora Jarić, *Kultura i preobražaj Srbije*, 41.

⁴⁸ *Ibid*, 43.

heritage goal in this law is expressed along with the incitement of cultural and artistic creativity. With regards to values, on the other hand, in article twenty which deals with future strategies for Serbia's development, the preservation of Serbian cultural values outside of the boundaries of Serbia is stated to be a goal, while the preservation of values within the country is not mentioned at all. Interestingly, values are mentioned only in one additional context, that of respect and acceptance of European democratic values and its national tradition. That would be one of the main goals of cultural policy of Serbia according to this law, while Serbian national values are being completely neglected and not even mentioned.⁴⁹

This research on values demonstrates how citizens understand culture in their everyday life in the current period of transition in Serbia.

It has been concluded that there are three types of people in Serbia according to their interest in culture, and those are: "Awakened life", "Consumers of culture" and "Naked life". The first group is small, and is often referred to as "elite" since those are the people who consume culture (including non-populist culture) on a regular basis, consider satisfaction of cultural needs to be of vital importance and consider education as an indispensable part of their lives. The second group is significantly larger than the previous and it consists of people who are keener to consume populist culture, including TV (often "Pink"), read popular novels, listen to current "main stream" music etc. After eleven years of transition, the Serbian people are indeed using culture more than it was the case before, and by being part of populist culture they consider themselves to be "going forward". What is overlooked here is that this particular type of culture does not serve the development of the capacities of individuals or of society, but rather the asphyxiation of the moral and critical judgment of citizens preventing resistance to the leading model of pop-culture and encouraging people to take part in cheap fun in order to "run-away" from their problems. The third group is a group of people who do not consider culture to be part of their lives in any way. Sometimes they listen to the music or watch TV only as a means of entertainment.

The people being interviewed for the sake of this research were themselves warning about the total confusion of values and developing criteria, on different influences of traditional and

⁴⁹ *The law on culture*, http://www.paragraf.rs/propisi/zakon_o_kulturi.html, (accessed: 1.8.2013)

nationalistic political parties, but also on un-articulated programs of pro-democratic ones, because of which they are still faced with continuity and discontinuity in postoctobar's transition.⁵⁰

My conclusion after reading this research is that traditional values are kept best in conditions where other things are untouched as well. This means, in smaller villages, where people have less ambitions and education where the value of **“honest work”** is often mentioned as the primary measurement of a satisfactory life. While in cities, especially Belgrade, people seem to have forgotten this value and have replaced "honest work" with **"money"**. In addition, the Church is often connected with people of lesser education and those living in smaller towns. Interviewees state as a big problem the concentration of culture in Belgrade, even though that is not completely true. But also the important fact is that people are in large number not interested in culture at all, since they consider it to be a secondary need that comes after earning money and in a transitional society going through an economic crisis good salary conditions are rare.

What is interesting to note is that, when interviewed, citizens of Serbia manifested almost no effect of the dominant “postmodern” neoliberal model that became the new, ruling ideology in Serbian society after the year 2000. It could be said that in that sense, there is still a strong impact made by tradition (in a sense of humanistic values) which could play a positive role in shaping a more acceptable way of living. Therefore, references to the positive values present in tradition could help in the liberation of newly assembled, extreme, ideologies, which catastrophic impacts are clearly visible. It is important to mention that, regarding the negative impacts of the prevailing political model, the greatest number of interviewees has expressed depreciation of it. However, a visible revival of the national contents of tradition is a double-edged sword: first, it causes an involitional type of transition by going back to the past, and secondly it deters citizens from serious thoughts about the future which to most of interviewees appears distant and unreachable.⁵¹

⁵⁰ Zagorka Golubović and Isidora Jarić, *Kultura i preobražaj Srbije*, 77.

⁵¹ *Ibid*, 105.

The conclusion of this research is that Serbian society has been in a state of intensive and continued social transformation over the last twenty years. At the beginning of the nineties, parallel with the change of political system, the hegemonic cultural model, the model according to which the majority of population was shaping its lives and daily routines was overthrown. Even though, at first, this “cultural change” didn’t call for as much attention as the dramatic social-political reversals embodied in the disturbing scenes of war damage, the redrawing of previous and creating of new geographical borders, of pain and suffering of the people caught up in the whirlwind of civil wars; from today’s perspective its character has been revealed as a profoundly disturbing, and the effects are considered to have even more serious consequences for the future than those assumed, at first glance, to be most important.⁵²

⁵² *Ibid*, 163.

2.1.3 Cultural Map of the World

As mentioned before, the World Value Survey map shows that a large number of basic values in certain countries are closely correlated based on the religion that is a majority in the country. Therefore, on the map, the countries shown are not grouped by their geographical position but according to its people's values, showing cultural proximity. Wanting to admit it or not, Serbia is represented as an orthodox country and in many ways orthodoxy plays a determining role in Serbia's culture.

According to the map, Serbia is culturally similar to countries such as Bulgaria, Macedonia, the Ukraine, Russia etc, based on religion. When based on the ex communist regime, Serbia is also very close to China and Lithuania, while being very far from the United States for example.

In the nineties a split in values occurred between the traditional and the modern, that is, the fall of communism coincided with a degradation of values in Serbian society. This process is not only characteristic of Serbian society but is common to all post-communist countries.⁵³

Sociologists of Religion and Christian sociologists have their own explanations of this phenomenon. According to the Croatian sociologist Zeljko Mardesic, "October took place before the Bastille", which means that the exit from communism marked the transition from feudalism (communist society is not a modern society, it has characteristics of a feudal society - the ruler, the cult) to modernity. Therefore the renewal of religiousness and degradation in ex-communist societies has characteristics of religiosity of early modernism - the coupling of nation and religion and the cult of the nation as a form of secularized religion.⁵⁴

This is clearly seen in the results of the most comprehensive research on values - the World Value Survey, which has been conducted from 1981 through 2010 in four series, which includes (not in all segments and in all periods) Serbia as part of Yugoslavia, the State Union of Serbia and Montenegro, and as an independent country.⁵⁵

⁵³ "WVS Cultural Map of the World", *World Value Survey*.

http://www.worldvaluessurvey.org/wvs/articles/folder_published/article_base_54 (accessed 21.8.2013)

⁵⁴ From the Interview with Anastasija Ilić

⁵⁵ "WVS Cultural Map of the World", *World Value Survey*.

http://www.worldvaluessurvey.org/wvs/articles/folder_published/article_base_54 (accessed 21.8.2013)

The results of the analysis carried out on a representative sample of 65 companies, and which covered 85% of the world's population, have been used for the cultural mapping of the world (global culture map) using the Inglehart model.⁵⁶ The model plots the variations of cultural values on two bipolar value dimensions:

- 1) Traditional values versus Secular-rational values, and
- 2) Survival values versus Self expression values.

From religion and politics to economics and social life, those two dimensions dominate the picture. These dimensions explain more than 70 percent of the cross-national variance in a factor analysis of ten indicators-and each of these dimensions is strongly correlated with scores of other important orientations.⁵⁷

Therefore, on the map, the traditional/secular-rational values dimension shows the contrast between nations that consider religion as very important and those that do not. It is understood that the wide range of other orientation is closely linked to this dimension. This means that societies closer to the traditional, religious pole emphasize the importance of parent-child ties and deference to authority, along with other family values such as the rejection of divorce, abortion, euthanasia and suicide. These nations have high levels of national pride and a nationalistic outlook. On the other side, those nations that belong to the pole of secular-rational values have the opposite preferences on all of these topics.⁵⁸

The second major dimension of cross cultural variation is linked with the transition from industrial society to post industrial societies – which brings about a polarization between Survival and Self-expression values.⁵⁹ This means, wealth that has accumulated in the more developed countries led their inhabitants to begin taking survival for granted. Self-expression values, contrary to survival ones, give higher priority to things such as environmental protection, tolerance of diversity, human rights, participation in decision making in economics and politics etc. These values also have an impact on child-rearing in that parental emphasis is

⁵⁶ Volume 26, Issue 17, Valeria Braithwaite and Toni Makkai, "Inglehart's Materialism-Postmaterialism Concept: Clarifying the Dimensionality Debate Through Rokeach's Model of Social Values", *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, September 1996, 1536-1555.

⁵⁷ "WVS Cultural Map of the World", *World Value Survey*.

http://www.worldvaluessurvey.org/wvs/articles/folder_published/article_base_54 (accessed 21.8.2013)

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

on the importance of imagination rather than hard work, as well as tolerance as one of the top values for the child.⁶⁰

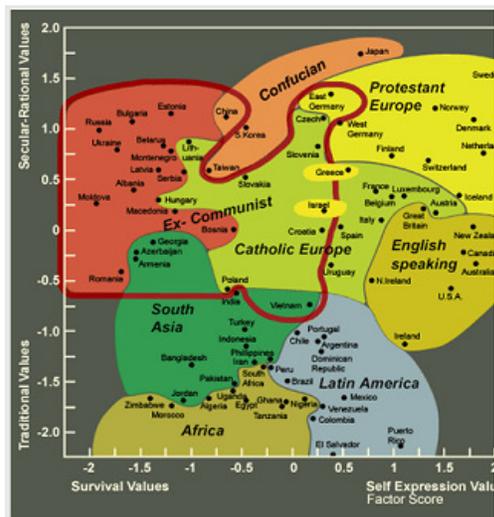


Illustration 1: World Value Survey (1999-2004)

In the first version of the cultural map (1999-2004), Serbia, along with other ex-communist countries, including China, is located in the upper left quadrant in the upper pole of the secular-rational scale and lower half of the scale of values of scarcity, meaning that on the basis of attitudes that indicate the values of its citizens, Serbia is identified as a **poor secular society**.

Contrary to expectations, Serbia, in this study, is not a traditional society, but almost the complete opposite. A higher degree of secularism is present only in Confucian and European Protestant countries. From all the communist countries, only Romania maintained traditional values.

In the second variant of the map (2008), the position of secularism and deprivation remain the same, only the specified groups, and post-communist countries are divided according to religion – Orthodox, Catholic, Protestant, Confucian and others. Therefore, Serbia remains in a group of poor, non-religious Orthodox countries, while Croatia and Slovenia are included in a group of “Catholic Europe” which includes low values of secularism and self-expression.⁶¹

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

⁶¹ From the interview with Anastasija Ilić

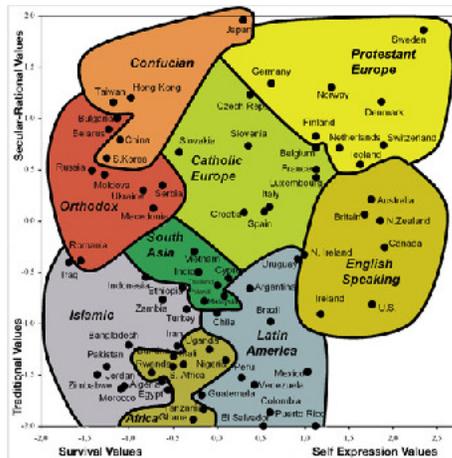


Illustration 2: World Value Survey - 2008

Hence, once again it is shown that **Serbian nation is not traditionalist**, from where derives the logic of traditionalism being characterized as something bad. Previously analyzed research of Mrs Zagorka Golubovic is colliding with the one of the World Value Survey.

2.2 Serbian cultural policy regarding national identity

The law on cultural policy that should set the tone for those in charge of cultural institutions and for crafting cultural praxis and improving cultural creativity, represents only one bare, administrative outline that determines the relation of the state and cultural institutions, and in so doing it misses its goal. This law in particular demonstrates how culture is considered in today's Serbia. Culture is submissive to politics and understood only as a sector of the political authority that determines with the jurisdiction of cultural institutions.⁶²

Serbian cultural policy has gone through many different periods and changes, especially in the last ten years. Beginning with the Stagnation period (2004-2007) during which cultural policy debate was completely terminated, protecting Serbian national cultural heritage was only mentioned as a goal and no actions were organized towards achieving that goal. Next came the period of *attempted systemic changes* (May 2007- July 2008). During this period, the new government was appointed and the Ministry of Culture began to work on new priorities and

⁶² Zagorka Golubović i Isidora Jarić, *Kultura i preobražaj Srbije*, 115.

strategies. The Ministry created working groups to establish new laws (such as the General Law on Culture, heritage protection, etc.), to define new concrete programs and strategies (digitization, decentralization, cultural research development, etc.) and to introduce certain topics for public debate (politics of memory and remembrance, culture for children, intercultural dialogue...). Public debates were held on draft legislation. These debates took place in the first six months of the new government and involved the Minister, representatives of the Ministry and experts (mostly cultural professionals). However, after one year, another government was formed and a new Minister for Culture was appointed in July 2008. Initially, the new government continued to realize the priorities set by the previous government but, again, heritage and cultural identity preservation were not treated as real priorities.⁶³

Beginning in July 2008, Serbian cultural policy has entered a new phase – *Turbulence from Economic Crisis*. The plans put forth by the Minister for Culture were very ambitious, but as soon as the economic crisis hit Serbia, some goals had to be re-defined. This period's cultural policy was based on key words – transformation, rationalization, concentration and innovation and it aimed toward creating the potential for an entrepreneurial approach to culture. The Ministry of Culture insisted on implementing its long term and strategic goals. It has managed to adopt a new *Law on Culture* and to ratify a few important international conventions, prepared a set of laws regarding book publishing and language protection (publishing, librarianship, rare bibliophile material and obligatory deposits, etc.) and the role of foundations and legacies. Unfortunately, after the severe cuts in the budget, the development of the new institutions stopped. Finally in March 2011, during the reconstruction of the government, a new Minister was appointed and once again the Ministry of Culture changed its name and its internal structure. The new Ministry for Culture, Information and Information Society includes many domains which were previously within other governmental structures. However, as this was a "transitional government", which lasted only one year, the Ministry did not start any important new initiatives.⁶⁴

⁶³ Serbian cultural policy profile, *Compendium*, <http://www.culturalpolicies.net/web/serbia.php#> (accessed: 26.8.2013)

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

The final stage of Serbian cultural policy, the one in which Serbia is now, is called the *New "Patriotic" Phase* (from May 2012). A new Minister of Culture has been appointed, for the first time from the Serbian Progressive Party, and once more the Ministry has changed its name, to the Ministry of Culture and Information. It is too early to assess the current administration's policies – but regarding statements expressed by the Minister and the new nominations put forth within the spectrum of national cultural institutions, it can be said that the focus will be on "renationalisation" of Serbian institutions and on material and immaterial heritage preservation and presentation.⁶⁵

One of the latest actions taken during this, so called, patriotic phase, was the opening of the gallery space in the National Museum in Belgrade, with the exhibition about St Simeon, with the main artifact being Miroslav Gospel which has been inscribed on UNESCO's Memory of the World Register in recognition of its historical value. The question being imposed is if the world remembers parts of Serbian cultural heritage, why Serbia does not? Is it the lack of traditionalism or just the balance between the present and the past long forgotten in the time of communism?

Serbia has its own national definition of culture:

In the widest sense, the word culture is used to refer to life-styles, values and visions of a Serbian multi-ethnic society. Very often, the notion of culture is used in this widest sense: the public discourse of government officials, stressing the importance of value changes within the cultural system including the norms, opinions and life-styles such as the "decontamination" of culture, de-commercialisation, fighting consumerism and chauvinism, on one side, or, more recently, fighting globalization, western influences, anti patriotic feelings in culture, on the other.⁶⁶ Therefore, values and value changes are stated to be of utmost importance, but it all goes back to the issue of the usage of Serbian cultural policy as a guideline, rather than a law or actual goals.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

2.2.1 Organizational structure of the cultural system in Serbia

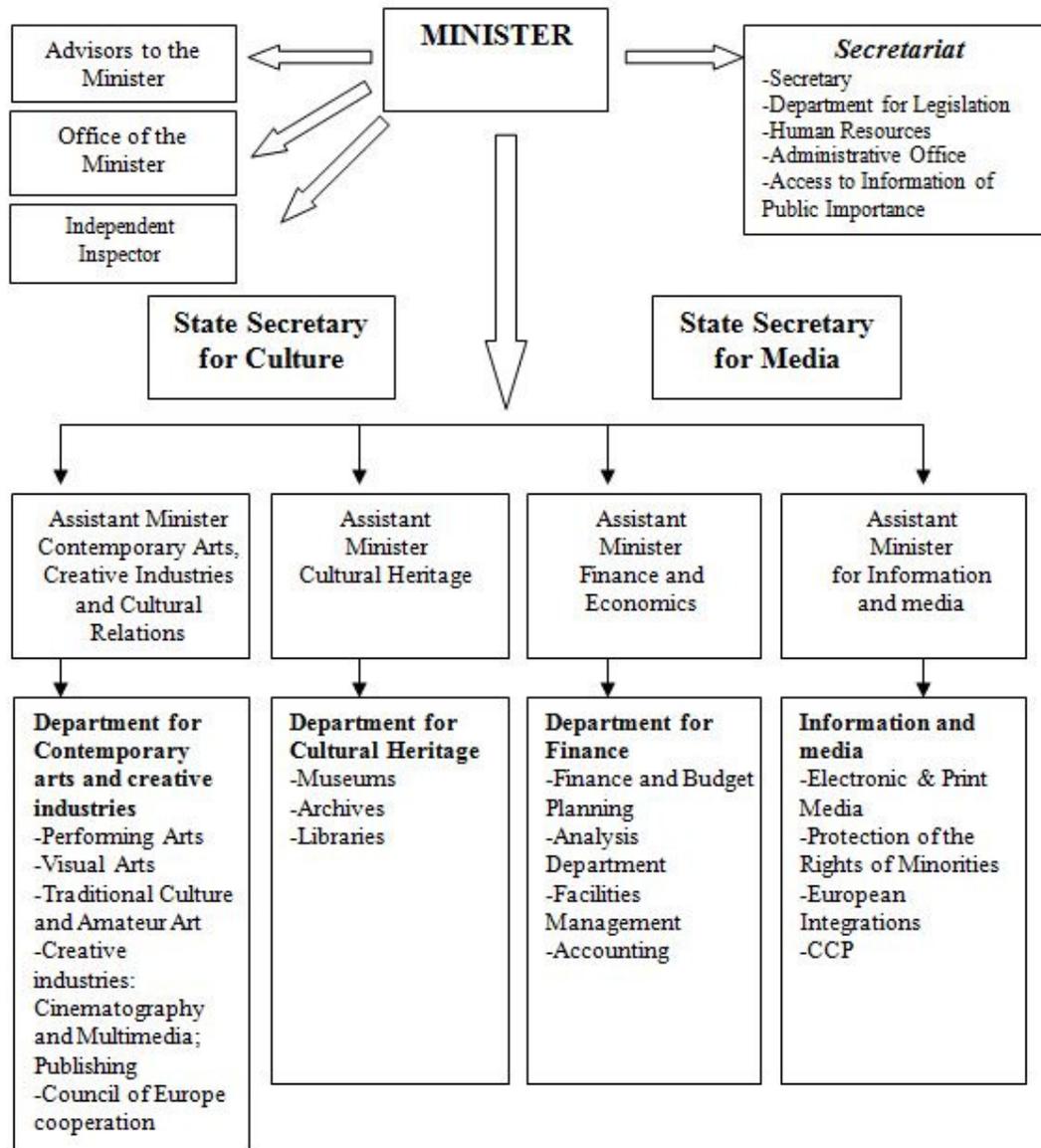


Illustration 3: Organigram from the website of Compendium

The Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Serbia has overall responsibility for culture, which it partly shares with the Secretary for Culture in the autonomous province of Vojvodina. This sharing of responsibility was carried out on the basis of the "Omnibus Law" passed in February 2002 and is in line with the general policy of decentralization. The Ministry of

Culture, Information and Information Society⁶⁷ is the main body responsible for: policies and strategies for cultural development, support for 40 cultural institutions of national importance, legal issues in the field of culture, protection of cultural heritage, and the regulation and preparation of laws relevant to the media sphere. National Council for Culture members are selected from respected artists and cultural managers for a five year period. The Council has 19 members, confirmed by the National Assembly: 4 are suggested by government, 4 from public cultural institutions covering dominant areas: heritage, performing arts, librarianship and cultural development; 4 members representing art associations (literature and translation; visual arts; music; drama); 1 member representing other cultural associations; 2 members from the Serbian Academy of Arts and Sciences, 2 members from the University of Arts and 2 members suggested by councils of national minorities. City Councils, created according to the *Law of 2007*, which gave the status of "city" to municipalities with more than 100 000 inhabitants, represent the economic, geographic and cultural centers of their wider regions. Municipalities (local self-governments) are developing local cultural policies , amateur activities and local cultural institutions and civil initiatives to stimulate participation in cultural life.⁶⁸

What can be concluded is that Serbian cultural policy is under the complete domination of the state. Therefore, it depends on the political system and the ruling party. All goals set are subject to change with each new set of ministers or a change in government. This makes policy extremely unstable and goals less achievable due to frequent changes. Even though the preservation of national cultural identity is now stated to be one of the main issues of cultural policy, it does not mean that it will be worked towards soon as one month from the time of writing a new minister of culture will be appointed.

One of the main problems in Serbia, regarding cultural heritage, is the relation of the Serbian population towards its own heritage. While growing up, children are not taught to what is the purpose of their heritage and why is it's preservation of such great importance. Based on a short survey I have conducted among people aged eighteen to twenty five, not educated in the field of culture, I have come to the conclusion that heritage is mostly considered to be

⁶⁷ Later in the text Ministry of Culture

⁶⁸ Serbian cultural policy profile, *Compendium*, <http://www.culturalpolicies.net/web/serbia.php#> (accessed: 26.8.2013)

“something” in a museum, rather than teaching material for the future of the country. I could not say who is to blame for this situation, but the one thing is certain – even if national cultural heritage is for the museum, the main museum in Serbia (National Museum in Belgrade) has not been open for ten years now.⁶⁹

On the subject of heritage, some things have been done in the last years in Serbia, but almost all actions carried out dealt with tangible heritage. Only in 2010 and 2011 was special attention given to immaterial heritage. Several seminars of regional and national importance had been organized to promote knowledge and introduce the skills necessary for the implementation of the Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage.⁷⁰

Language is an important, if not the most important characteristic of national identity. Considering all of the changes that have occurred in the Balkan countries, they do not have as stabilized a language as, for example, England. From 1918 to 1991, the official language of the former Yugoslavia was Serbo-Croat, or Croato-Serbian, depending on which part of the country one lived. Both alphabets were recognized. Currently, there is also a third recognized language, derived from the same root, the so-called Bosnian language, which is spoken in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, but claimed as the language spoken by Muslims living in Serbia and Montenegro.⁷¹ In the republic of Serbia, the Serbian language and Cyrillic alphabet are in official use. The Latin alphabet is used in municipalities where there are larger populations of people whose primary script is Latin. Cultural practices are equalizing the use of both the Cyrillic and Latin alphabet; Cyrillic is predominant in official communication, while Latin is predominant in the marketplace and in business communication (billboards, shop windows, etc.).⁷²

One of the interesting government activities that has started recently is “Branding Serbia”. There has been created a committee for actively working on the re-creation of Serbia's global image away from the negative stereotype that has been made over the years.⁷³ The vision of the Re-branding Serbia project is to change the status of the branding of Serbia – from the

⁶⁹ I have interviewed 20 people with the question: what does world cultural heritage represents for them.

⁷⁰ Serbian cultural policy profile, *Compendium*, <http://www.culturalpolicies.net/web/serbia.php#> (accessed: 26.8.2013)

⁷¹ *Ibid.*

⁷² *Ibid.*

⁷³ *Ibid.*

passive, spectator phase and a “victim” into an active contributor and a creator of its own, positive image along with long-term, systematic, institutionalized work.⁷⁴

It is important to mention Saint Sava, who is celebrated on the 27th of June with a school holiday as he is considered the protector of schools. For this occasion, the Serbian Ministry of Education organizes the Saint Sava Academy for Educational Workers (Educators maybe?) and the cultural public in Serbia. However, there is no formal cooperation between the two Ministries therefore the Ministry of Culture is not included in this event.

2.3 What is myth and why is it important

The singularity of Serbia's situation nowadays can be described by the phenomena that reason (called by some authors “logos”, or it can also be referred to as a type of positivism) took over the place that was previously held by myth, and subjected the myth to itself. The whole of modern culture is characterized by constant processes of rationalization, with an ongoing aim of rational expediency. It is not a coincidence that the science and industry are the most powerful forces of present existence. There is no doubt that today’s social-historical situation is the final consequence of the Enlightenment spirit that launched and defined all of modern Western culture. We are today being enlightened to the extent that we only believe that which has an estimable monetary value and we acknowledge as real only that which can be confirmed in front of the court of reasoning that measures and calculates.⁷⁵ Therefore it should be considered that today’s man is deeply disturbed in his relation toward myth since this rooted orientation toward the rational is causing a number of contradictions. For today’s man, myth is just a bundle of stories that are separated from reasoning and are contrary to reality, and putting it like that, those stories do not interfere with him on any deeper level. According to him it is an old way of understanding things that is no longer necessary now that there is reason as the highest value.

⁷⁴ Rebranding Serbia, http://www.rebrand.rs/index_en.html, (accessed: 28.8.2013)

⁷⁵ Mihailo Đurić *Mit, nauka, ideologija*, 8.

If there is anything not understandable to the modern man, toward which he is insensitive, and from which he cannot be further away, than it is religion. Not only that religion is on the border of his horizon, but, from his point of view religion is the deepest cause of all wanderings and falters up until now. In short, modern man takes for granted that myth as itself is false, that myth's characters and events are invented and have no connection to the reality and that all together it is just a plain fabrication.⁷⁶ On the other hand modern man is very interested in the mythical heritage of the past. By the same force that myth makes itself repulsive to modern society, it also attracts with its rawness and naivety. It "plays" with the child in every man.

Over time, philosophers came to the conclusion that not only are myth and reason completely different things, but also that myth has some characteristics that make it deeper and more important than plain reasoning. They thought that reason does not answer many important questions and that myth might be a very important impetus in one's life.

According to Nietzsche:

"Every great culture has a horizon circled by myth".⁷⁷

Language and myth are tightly connected to one another. On the oldest level of human society those two were inseparable. Wherever there would be a man, he would have the capability to speak and be in the power of certain mythical pictures and ideas. Man belongs to that "world" which carries its own values with it. This means that language and myth are the true, genuine homeland of people from where we all came and thus act as our biggest educational institutions.⁷⁸

During the Enlightenment, all historical development of the mankind, had as its goal the release of the individual from the slavery of the myth and, in so doing, guide him toward critical thinking. In this sense, the Enlightenment could be considered a request for the radical cancellation of myth. This is a process that gradually brings about the dissemblance of the mythical substance of human life, process in which myth, little by little loses its power over

⁷⁶ *Ibid*, 10.

⁷⁷ *Ibid*, 18.

⁷⁸ *Ibid*, 38.

men and finally falls as a victim of men's critical thinking. The Enlightenment had a goal and over and over used all the tools of critique to shake the “all-knowing power” of the myth, to deny myth the right to be seen as absolute truth, and to dissemble the mythical message of the human imagination.⁷⁹

Schelling and philosophy of methodology. Schelling came to the conclusion that the mythology of one nation could only form within the given nation itself and that it is its main characteristic. It gives to certain people everything that makes them a nation. Mythology gives to the nation its vision of the world, which, along with language, distinguishes it from other nations. One nation is united with its spiritual connection along with collective consciousness that is articulated and manifested in the unity of their own language. Differences between people are not those based on physical appearance, such as race, but, primarily those of a spiritual nature.⁸⁰

Mythical ideas are not freely invented, neither voluntarily accepted. Those ideas are the product of a process that is independent from opinion and will. Nations and individuals serve those ideas not understandable to them. Schelling says that “it is not theirs to accept it or not. Since they are not coming from the outside, they are all within people even if they are not aware of it”.⁸¹

Current social political experience proves that myth is not some historically conditioned phenomenon of one culture, but the powerful spiritual force that has kept itself until today and that will stay alive and efficient for a long time.⁸²

Considering the contradiction myth causes in theory as well as in praxis, the subject of this type of social consciousness should be dealt with extreme caution. Myth definitely is something of great value to one nation. It is a part of its foundation, but it is also in a way imposed and usually only is a reflection of reality thus providing an opportunity for doubt.

⁷⁹ *Ibid*, 55.

⁸⁰ *Ibid*, 80.

⁸¹ *Ibid*, 85.

⁸² *Ibid*, 115.

The questions rising from this are “How important is myth?” and “Could the nation survive without its own myths?”. Maybe there is a need for a new, modern approach to old ideas. This is the idea behind the project “Back to the Future”.

3 Project “Back to the Future”

3.1 Different Analysis for the Purposes of the Project

For the national cultural identity project, “Back to the Future”, research on values has been conducted by Anastasija Ilić, the founder of the production company Opet&Opet. The following conclusions were drawn by the author following an interview with Ms. Ilić.

Sensational headlines in Serbian newspapers, regarding values mainly give the impression that there is a lack of modern values – intolerance, racism, homophobia, within Serbia and suggest that traditionalism is a problem in Serbian society because it brings with it all of the above mentioned issues, especially among the younger generations. However, following more in depth research, one may draw very different conclusions.⁸³

Are values a social construct or a realistic, existing consequence of a symbolic way of thinking deeply rooted in every culture? Regardless of the answer to that question, values are criteria that guide our behavior in one way or another. They have meaning on both the personal and the social plane. Values play a similar role to that of a goal as they act in the role of an instrument leading to the achievement of a given goal. Connected to values are value orientations, along with packets of values that determine an individual's personality as well as that of the community.

In the domestic public there are two contexts for value research: the scientific and the daily-political one. Daily political research, even though they mostly concentrate on the population's attitudes toward current political questions (for or against EU, party one is supporting...), often points towards deeper value orientations such as the relation between traditionalism and modernism. Scientific research and studies, that treat values from a social–psycho–cultural perspective, usually rely on western social science and use theories of values by the following authors: Milton Rokeach, Shalom Schwartz and Ronald Inglehart.

Rokeach’s theory is based on the division of values into goals (personal and social) and instruments (moral values and competences). Furthermore, he identifies a number of what he

⁸³ Agencija Tanjung. "Dačić: Ovo je prelomni trenutak za Srbiju." *Kurir* <http://www.kurir-info.rs/dacicovo-je-prelomni-trenutak-za-srbiju-clanak-797661>, (accessed: 9.8.2013)

refers to as terminal values which includes mature love, self respect, happiness, inner harmony, equality, freedom, pleasure, social acceptance, wisdom, family and national security, feeling of fulfillment, world of beauty, comfortable life etc. The means for achieving these goals are argued to be: jolliness, love, purity, self-control, capability, bravery, honesty, creativity, independence, intellect, logic, obedience, usefulness, responsibility, forgiveness.⁸⁴

3.1.1 Shalom Schwartz

A more useful theory for our purposes here is that put forth by Shalom Schwartz which is based on ten basic value orientations: independence, stimulation, hedonism, achievement, power, security, conformism, tradition, benevolence and universalism. These values he puts into a dynamic two dimensional system which demonstrates the coexistence of certain value orientations on the one side, and conflict of orientations on the other. Confrontation takes place on the line:

- values of self-transcendence (universalism and benevolence, reflecting concern for the welfare of others) – self-improvement (achievement and power, the desire for personal success and dominance over others)
- openness for change (stimulation and independence, includes freedom of thought, activity and propensity to change) – the values of conservation, preservation (values that emphasize order, self-denial, the preservation of the past, reluctance to change – security, conformity, tradition). Hedonism shares elements of openness to change and self-improvement.

All personal values have a universal character, and are present in varying degrees in all cultures. In a later stage, cultural values are formed. Cultural values shape, outline and justify individual and collective beliefs, actions and goals. Institutional actions and policies, norms and everyday practices express the existence of deeper cultural values in society. As for cultural values, they are also the subject of different scientific theories.⁸⁵

The values are therefore studied on the basis of a universal concept, valid in scientific forms. There is no specificity, no particular angle from which the domestic researchers could have

⁸⁴ Valeria Braithwaite and Toni Makkai , *Rokeach's Model of Social Values*, 1536-1555.

⁸⁵ S. H Schwartz. " An Overview of the Schwartz Theory of Basic Values." *Online Readings in Psychology and Culture*, 2(1). <http://dx.doi.org/10.9707/2307-0919.1116> (accessed: 22.8.2013)

looked at this problem in local conditions . There is only a thematic extension of research on the local level, filling the cubes in an already existing and pre-set mosaic.⁸⁶

The below model used for mapping cultural values comes from Schwartz. His model operates on seven cultural value orientations. The theory specifies three bipolar dimensions of culture that represent alternative decisions for each of the three problems that all societies face:

1. embeddedness versus autonomy (intellectual and affective)
2. hierarchy versus egalitarianism; and
3. skills (behavior, knowledge) as opposed to harmony.

Co-Plot Map of 76 National Groups on Seven Cultural Orientations (coefficient alienation .11)

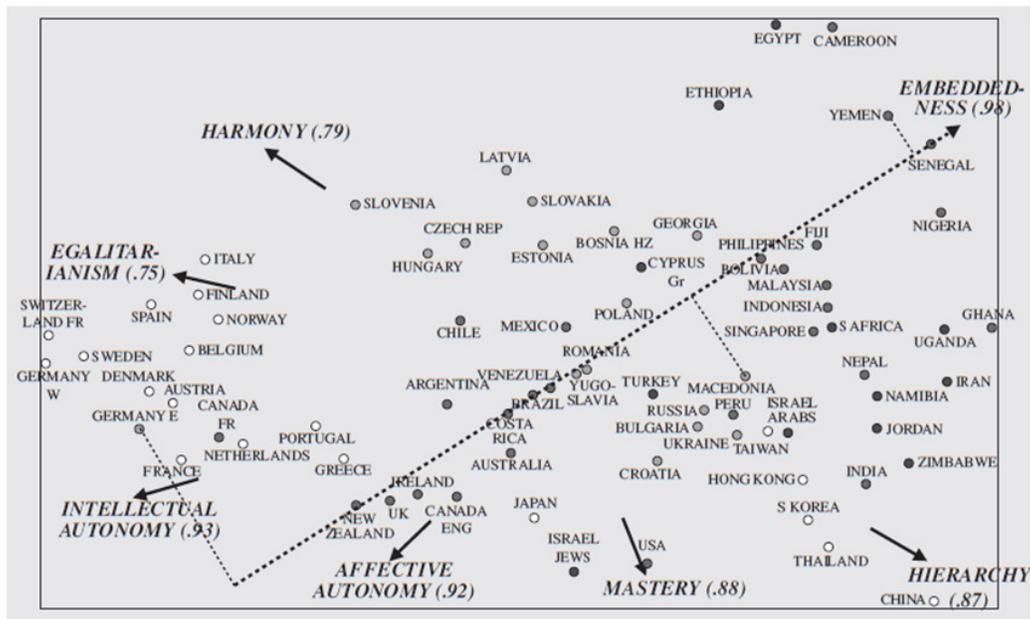


Figure 1 - countries grouped into 7 cultural areas

On the map, 76 countries are shown grouped into 7 cultural areas. Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro), together with the other ex-Yugoslav republics, is located in the Eastern European group of countries, which occupy the top and bottom center. Thus, Eastern European countries have a low level of embeddedness and hierarchy compared to those in Africa, Asia and Middle East, but a higher cultural orientation than in Western Europe and

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

America. Even though Eastern Europe is forming a region in the spatial projection, cultures in that region vary substantially in the degree of hierarchy, skills and harmony. A closer look at the map reveals that Baltic and Central European countries (with the addition of Slovenia) form a sub-region in the upper center, while the Balkan and Eastern countries are forming another sub-region situated to the lower right of the map. The Balkans and the Eastern countries are higher in mastery and harmony, but lower in intellectual autonomy, harmony and egalitarianism.⁸⁷

In this constellation, Yugoslavia is in the center, next to the Romania. Bosnia and Herzegovina (top-right) has a higher degree of embeddedness, Slovenia high harmonics and Croatia (bottom-right) has the highest level of skill and hierarchy.⁸⁸

When comparing Inglehart and Schwartz's models, we notice a considerable degree of correlation in the positioning of the Balkan states – Serbia on the Inglehart map is positioned closer to the center, meaning in the lower segment of the quadrant of secularism and in the low score of the value of scarcity. In the other words, Serbia has a moderately reflected orientation toward the values of survival, and a medium orientation toward secular-rational authority.

What is striking is that on both maps Serbia is positioned (not geographically, but according to values), along with other Eastern European, meaning ex-communist countries, which would mean that the values situation in this country is much less specific than what Serbians tend to think; which is reasonable in a region that had similar social-historical circumstances.

What are those specific values shared between Serbia and other ex-communist countries?

- The citizens of Eastern Europe, including Serbs) feel the least happy (even less than the poorer countries inhabitants),
- they have low basic trust in people,
- high proportions of materialism (Serbia is one of the few countries in Europe where materialistically oriented are an absolute majority),

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

- they feel less free (even less than the inhabitants of developing countries),
- have a clear desire toward a strong leader,
- low tolerance for deviance (Serbia has a slightly better situation than other ex-communist countries on this matter),
- Serbia has the lowest confidence into the Parliament and the institutions,
- Serbia, in a relation to the surrounding countries, has the biggest number (fifth in Europe) of those who feel they have no control over their own life.⁸⁹

3.1.2 Adolescents in Serbia

Interesting results can be found in the research done by the Faculty of the Philosophy in Novi Sad in 2009. The interviewees were 1000 adolescents, all 16 years of age, from Vojvodina, a region in northern Serbia. Results of this research showed the greatest popularity among young people have self-actualization and hedonistic-utilitarian values whose presence tells about the fact that young people demonstrate a tendency toward “the culture of narcissism”. The results further indicate that respondents from the city consider relational values to be more important, while those from villages estimate religion and maintaining traditions to be of greater importance. Children of lower educated parents and in worse financial situations highly value popularity and reputation in society as well as both hedonistic-utilitarian and traditional-religious values.⁹⁰

The research concluded that the roots of this situation can be found in the junction of the conditions and lifestyles of young people, but also in specific cultural and values heritage. The fact that the value system is a mixture of pragmatism and hedonism tells us about some kind of conflict between individual and collective values, meaning, the reflection of the value system existing in the global society. Specifically, adolescents on an individual level are accepting intrinsic values; while on the other hand, in today's time and space they are overwhelmed with quasi-values which are now in every sphere of social life and culture. Non existence of developed system and lack of feeling of security certainly does not encourage

⁸⁹ Issue 118-119, Dr Dragomir Pantić. "Da li su vrednosti građana bivših komunističkih zemalja slične", *Zbornik Matice srpske za društvene nauke*, 2005, 49-69.

⁹⁰ Jelica Petrović and Marija Zotović, "Adolescenti u Srbiji, u traganju za novim vrednostima," part of the project: Family as a value in the society in transition (Novi Sad: Filozofski fakultet, 2009)

planning in the long run, but rather a socially destructive philosophy of a leisure life that means enjoying direct pleasures (“the philosophy of the present”).⁹¹

The family plays the main role in creating views of the world and the aspirations of young people, a force that bears on itself the burden of future. However, it is exactly the family that is affected by transitional changes that have placed severe requirements in all aspects of life.⁹² Family crisis experts recognize as a reflection of a society in transition, and its effects are most clearly visible on children. One of the most visible changes within family relations is the more and more visible desire for freedom and individualism of its members. Also, according to the results of this study, it appears that these trends include not only the need for affirmation of each individual, but a complete affirmation of individualism.⁹³

Somewhat different results can be found in another research project conducted by the Philosophical Faculty in Belgrade in 2011. The interviewees were 630 high school students age 14 to 18, from six cities in Serbia (Belgrade, Kruševac, Novi Sad, Zrenjanin, Nis and Novi Pazar). The main goal of the research was to detect the dominant attitudes and value orientations of high school students using an integrated scale based on traditionalism, homophobia and ethnic stereotypes. The results showed that 33.9% were traditional subjects, 27.9% were moderates and 25% who considered themselves non-traditional. The remaining 25% could be considered liberal on this matter.⁹⁴

On the one hand, there are radical attitudes of high school students especially regarding Roma and the LGBT population. On the other hand, a number of respondents showed a high affinity and positive interpretation of individual lifestyles of these same groups (such as the issue of the right to marry of the homosexual population). Attitudes about women's rights are also double-sided – high school students have a patriarchal attitude towards marriage, family and abortion, but also show sensitivity to the issue of domestic violence. They are moderate on the

⁹¹ *Ibid.*

⁹² *Ibid.*

⁹³ *Ibid.*

⁹⁴ Helsinške sveske 31, Marija Radoman, "Stavovi I vrednosne orijentacije srednjoskolaca u Srbiji," (Belgrade: Helsinski odbor za ljudska prava, 2011)

issue of traditionalism; women were almost five times less traditional than men and nearly four times more liberal/non-traditional.⁹⁵

In relation to their parents' occupation, the data is striking that a larger number of children from traditional groups have mothers and fathers who are unemployed or workers while in the group of non-traditional there are noticeably more parents involved in politics, but the number of moderate and traditional is somewhat greater in those families where fathers are directors of small and large companies or they are executives. In relation to the education of their parents, there are no significant differences (only that mothers with a university degree are more common in traditional families).⁹⁶

Traditionalism was operationalized through the testimony pertaining to the sphere of public patriarchy (question of women's equality in society) as well as through the attitudes of private patriarchy (questions of child care, domestic violence, the position of women in the household). The reaction to the first attitude that is typical for testing the degree of traditionalism -

“Family and marriage are sacred” - 77% of the interviewees answered positively while only 10% disagreed.

“Starting a family is something we all strive to” also supports high percentage, 78% agreed and disagreed again only 10%.

“A woman is only fulfilled when a mother” supported 30% of respondents - high traditionalism

“In Serbian society women are subordinate in the family” - 38% disagree vs. 22% who confirmed this view.

“In our society, domestic violence is a big problem” - 60% agree with this statement, while 14% are against.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

The following statements, which are mainly related to "private patriarchy" women give far more liberal answers:

“In the family, man should have the final say” - 44% of respondents agree with the statement (70% of which were men), undecided 12.5% and 43.5% disagrees.

“Childcare should be primarily engaged in by the mother, and then the father” - 28% agreed and 48% disagreed with the statement.

“When it comes to parenting, it is important that a man is involved - as a woman would be given time to attend to other matters” - 80.5% agree with this statement, against 9%.

“Women should give birth to more children so that we survive as a nation” - only 28% disagreed while 43% responded in the affirmative.⁹⁷

The general conclusion of this research is that **high school students are prone to stereotypes**. Boys are more traditional than women. The degree of anti-Americanism and anti-West is lower than the one toward neighboring countries and ethnic minorities. On the other hand they seem to be more traditional than the older population of Serbia. The main problems with their value systems are those mentioned earlier in this paper – being a society in transition they are struggling to make peace with traditional, Serbian values, and those that are being infiltrated along with the transition of the country.

3.1.3 Zapokul – Values and Cultural Activism of Serbia's graduates

The period of political, social and cultural changes at the end of the 20th and the beginning of the 21st century, represents a period of growing up and social maturation of the interviewees of the project named *Interaction of value and cultural preferences of high school graduates*, in the year 2011. This is especially true of respondents born in the period of the dissolution of the Social Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, the period of the civil wars. Their childhood and early formative years occurred during the “great war of values”, the “war” between the “traditionalists” and “Europeans”. From this the question has been raised, whether and to what

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

extent life in troubled times has an effect on the value system of high school students, who are representing future leaders of society and on whose value selection depends the future of their society.⁹⁸

The goal of this research was to determine whether students in their last year of high school connect their value orientation to traditionalism and how does this affect their actions in the cultural sphere. These attitudes inevitably determine the behavior of people in different situations, but the question is whether the values they are holding on too also shape habits in the area of cultural activism and production and vice versa. In this regard, the question arises whether the social specimens of certain attitudes may be divided into certain cultural models. To test the association between attitudes and behavior in culture, graduates of Serbia were selected, under the assumption that they are self-aware enough to practice cultural and social patterns independently from the others. They represent the future economic and intellectual elite and are about to choose their professional direction. Therefore, the attitudes and culture were examined from the viewpoint of motivation for further training and from the perspective of existing cultural practices.⁹⁹

Through the analysis of the collected data it has been established how high school graduates in Serbia turned to the value orientation of traditionalism that is built from nationalism, authoritarianism and patriarchy and how these attitudes are related to cultural habits and behavior. One of the objectives was the establishment of cultural models and forms on the basis of preferences and value orientations of these graduates.¹⁰⁰

From the 2100 students surveyed in 65 schools in urban areas that are representing centers of districts, the final number of valid surveys was 1733 or 82.5% of the original sample.

Given that the behavior of the individual is always partly directed by attitudes that one takes on a variety of topics and phenomena, for this research it was necessary first to consider the

⁹⁸ Bojana Subašić and Bogdana Opačić. "Vrednosti i kulturni aktivizam maturanata Srbije", (Belgrade: Zavod za proučavanje kulturnog razvitka, 2013)

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

value profile of a respondent, followed by their relationship with activism in culture. The focus were attitudes whose approval is building value orientation of traditionalism.¹⁰¹

The result indicated that a small portion of graduates expressed in some form values that were tested. In fact, non, and mildly traditional high school graduates were significantly more numerous than those showing moderate or expressed traditionalism - 35.3 % versus 13%, which may confirm the hypothesis of the research that high school graduates in Serbia show low levels of traditionalism. It is important to note that a third of high school seniors showed ambiguous attitude towards traditionalism - even 39.7%, while the largest number of graduates belongs to the category of moderate traditionalism.¹⁰²

Scores on a scale of traditionalism were divided into four groups (undecided, meaning, undefined do not count) and a four-step scale was formed - from non-traditionalist and mild traditionalists, over moderate to strong traditionally oriented. The division can be seen on the diagram.

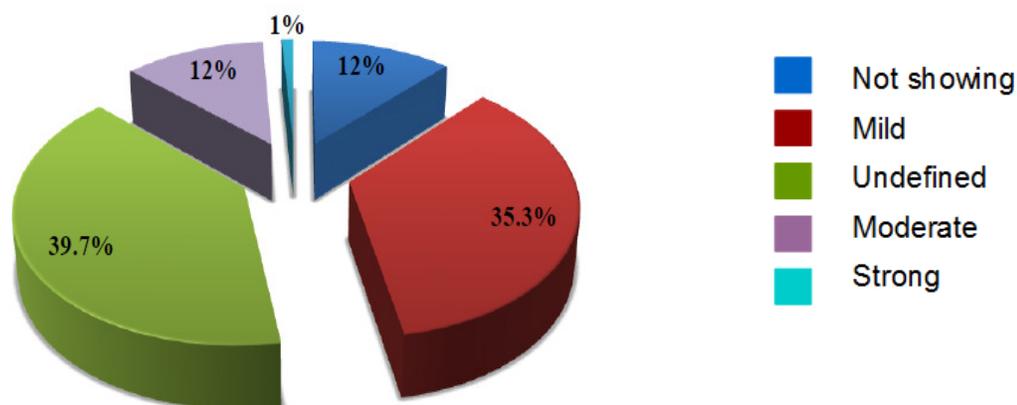


Illustration 4: Graduates according to the level of traditionalism

When, according to the scores those who do not take the position toward the values (undecided) were excluded, to a greater extent traditionalism was shown by boys (59.2 %),

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰² *Ibid.*

compared to their female peers (40.8 %). However, the differences are evident when it is observed from the point of traditionalism's strength – in a group of non, and mild traditionalists females significantly outnumbered the males (74.1 % vs. 25.9%). Also, when it comes to the type of school there are certain differences between graduates in value orientations, which confirmed the hypothesis that regular high school students are to a lesser degree turned toward traditionalism in relation to their peers who are finishing specialized schools.¹⁰³

It has been concluded that in general, graduates with higher scores on a scale of traditionalism show somewhat greater support of local music and singers than those with lower scores on a scale of traditionalism. Regarding television, traditionalists were more likely to follow the political programs than non, and mild traditionalists (39.5 % traditionalists and 25.7% of non, and mild traditionalists).¹⁰⁴

One of the researcher's hypotheses was that graduates with the traditionalist beliefs read less than their peers who hold different value systems, which has proven to be true, as the results showed that almost three times as many traditionalist oriented graduates do not read at all their assigned readings, compared to non traditionalists and mild traditionalists (22.7 % vs. 8.7%). This situation is similar to the one regarding other books.¹⁰⁵

Furthermore the analysis has proved the assumption of researchers that traditionally oriented graduates can more rarely be seen in cultural institutions, the least popular being jazz concerts, theaters and galleries (less than half of the traditionalist visited these cultural institutions in the previous 12 months by the time of the interview). On the other hand, traditionalists are more often to frequent sporting events and concerts of folk music.¹⁰⁶

As it was mentioned earlier, in the early nineties of the 20th century, certain social values have changed, due to the new political situation in the former Yugoslavia, and the most changes have occurred regarding values of the ideological and political character, preference was given

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

to private property, religiosity was heightened, and the attractiveness of social activism was being reduced.¹⁰⁷ According to the survey in 1993. all the generations in Serbia, primarily emphasized national identity and national exclusivity, meaning nationalism in a negative sense - xenophobia, ethnocentrism, patriotism and chauvinism¹⁰⁸, which lead to the rehabilitation of the local fascist heritage, anti-totalitarianism that was justified by the need for protection and purity of the nation¹⁰⁹ and over 80% of young people then considered having a strong leader to be necessary for success, which is equal to the authoritarianism. Furthermore, the research from 1994 showed that students in their final year of high school are demonstrating increased hedonism, egotism and religious orientation, while altruism and activism are decreasing. According to the research on models of high school students conducted in 1994, the favorite celebrities of students were foreign and local celebrities and people from private life (relatives and friends) as well as the local politicians. The respondents were fascinated by the glory of the famous person, their physical appearance, wealth and power, while among their relatives and friends they appreciated humanity and some special traits such as the person's intellect. Based on this study it was concluded that in high school in Serbia during the wars in former Yugoslavia, a self-centered orientation and an orientation towards power were increasing, while the growth of religiosity was not accompanied by an increase in models from a religious sphere. In such retardonational society family became the center of social life. At the time of the bombing of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in the year 1999. young people were very prone to nationalism and xenophobia, and the greatest enemy of Serbia was the United States, which then led political and military action against Yugoslavia.¹¹⁰

After the democratic changes in the year 2000, role models for high school students became Serbian politicians, national heroes and showbiz personalities, family continued to be a pillar of society, altruism and popularity became less acceptable in a relation to personal achievement, and the most valued were individual values and goals that focus on emotions

¹⁰⁷ Snežana Joksimović, "Doprinos škole formiranju vrednosti mladih.", In: *Promene vrednosti i tranzicija u Srbiji: pogled u budućnost, okrugli sto* (Belgrade: Institut društvenih nauka, 2003), 173 – 179.

¹⁰⁸ Jovan Komšić. "Da li je nacionalizam i dalje naša sudbina?" U: *Promene vrednosti i tranzicija u Srbiji: pogled u budućnost, okrugli sto*, (Belgrade: Institut društvenih nauka, 2003), 111 - 123.

¹⁰⁹ Marija Radoman, "Stavovi i vrednosne orijentacije srednjoskolaca u Srbiji."

¹¹⁰ Bojana Subašić and Bogdana Opačić. "Vrednosti i kulturni aktivizam maturanta Srbije."

and personal life. To a greater extent hedonism and utilitarianism were accepted, which are associated with aggression, whose goal is personal gain, even if it includes actions that are threatening to others. On the other hand, religiosity continues to be highly valued, which is recognized even within groups of atheists, who accepted the socially desirable value out of pure comfort. Attachment to the nation was in decline, and in the survey from 2003, young people of 18 years or more considered to be most important the generational affiliation, which was confirmed also by the survey conducted in 2007. This decline in attachment toward the nation Maria Radoman explained as "*nationalism that because of the changed value and social context has changed its content and rhetoric*".¹¹¹ Also, in the period after the democratic changes, responses suggesting an orientation towards authoritarianism in the youth decreased. Therefore in the year 2000, for 46% of young people respect for authority was considered the most important characteristic of a person. However, studies from 2009. and 2011,¹¹² showed that young people in Serbia are still ruled by traditionalist views that include homophobia, patriarchy, and xenophobia. High school students also showed a high level of patriarchy, and in the year 2009, 76% of high school students thought that a woman should only deal with the child, while in 2011 only 28% of high school students agreed. That same year, 77% of high school students considered marriage and the family to be sacred, and 43% agreed with state policy that women should bear more children to ensure the survival of the nation. Secondly, but no less important, was the relationship with other nations, where high school students in Serbia showed the greatest animosity towards Albanians (21%), Croats (15%) and Roma (12%). However, 17.4% of students said they did not evaluate people by nationality.¹¹³

The study of value orientation of graduates conducted in late 2011 showed that traditionalism was not highly regarded.¹¹⁴ The graduates examined in this study showed that the majority does not have idols, although the students oriented towards more traditionalist values are more often to admire someone and have an idol. Specifically, 40.3% of students with traditionalist

¹¹¹ Marija Radoman, "Stavovi i vrednosne orijentacije srednjoškolaca u Srbiji."

¹¹² *Ibid.*

¹¹³ For this research, 629 interviews were conducted in 5 Serbian cities. The researchers found that 33.9% of those surveyed were traditionalists, 27.9% were semi-traditionalist, 25% were non traditionalists and 13.2% were undecided.

¹¹⁴ Bojana Subašić and Bogdana Opačić. "Vrednosti i kulturni aktivizam maturanta Srbije."

orientation said they had heroes, while 23.8% of students of non and slight traditionalist orientation appointed someone as his/hers idol. When these results are compared with the results of previous studies conducted, it is evident that students are increasingly seeing as role models members of their family and friends, which proves that "being popular and powerful" are no longer the most valued qualities, but the character traits and actions that are done by "normal people".¹¹⁵

Serbia today is caught between a traditional and the modern conception of life. In the culture of Serbia there are elements of modern life with a strong influence still coming from traditional heritage. In this way, villages and cities are being linked. Serbia is being connected with the rest of the world. Dialogue and cooperation are being developed with other cultures and culture is becoming a part of everyday life. However, cultural productions are becoming profitable commodities that are jealously protect given that "Little nations" are afraid of losing their national identity. The sociologist Ratko Božović believes that respect for tradition can be twofold. The Traditionalists often have an uncritical spirit. They are "permissive" toward the past and by praising the ancestors they want to praise themselves. On the other hand, tradition is very important for understanding the existence, identity recognition, and relationships between generations. Therefore, one's "back should definitely not be turned" away from tradition because tradition is the basis of social and cultural progress. But, according to sociologist Nikola Božilovic, "there is no good future for that culture which is petrified and stopped in history and where all "this" today is being valued "by that" from the past", because then there is a traditionalism that stops all the changes and innovations. Today, tradition is used for the realization of national and political goals, which take precedence in religion, history and rural tradition.¹¹⁶

Based on the results of research of *Interactions of cultural values and preferences of graduates* can be concluded that in Serbia a **small number of students in the final high school year show a high degree of traditionalism**. In fact, it might be said that Serbian graduates exhibit a symbiosis of tradition and modernity. On the one hand, because of the political situation in Serbia, they are afraid that by the impact of "western" influences they

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*

could lose their national identity, their past, and therefore continue to show xenophobia and nationalistic attitudes. On the other hand, modern culture has "imposed" on them a new way and style of life.

When the results of this survey are compared with the research on the value orientation of young people conducted in previous years, it can be concluded that high school graduates in Serbia show more liberal attitudes and have begun to gradually accept the "new" values while also accepting the actualization and re-interpretation of tradition. This can be seen in religion, which, for an increasing number of young people, is no longer a primary source of identification with a group, therefore 4.9% of traditionally oriented high school graduates set religion in the first place, and most of them (18.8%), gave this the third place, after the family and sexual status. Also, no respondent has indicated as a role model someone from the religious sphere though it can be assumed that religiosity is still accepted from the comfort of a socially desirable value.¹¹⁷

From all of the above, it can be concluded that among final year students in high school there are relatively few students who show a stronger orientation toward forms of traditionalism that carries nationalism, xenophobia, authoritarianism, patriarchy and egoism. The traditionalism of the graduates in this study is most noticeable within the family, meaning patriarchal, and not in other analyzed values. However, moderate and extreme traditionalists often expressed openness to modern cultural forms, and to a similar extent show artistic creativity as well as high school graduates with mild traditionalist conceptions.¹¹⁸

Traditionalists are often male and exhibit severe intolerance toward other nations, attends vocational school, follows sporting events, goes to betting shops, likes entertainment and fun, listens to popular music, reads a little, and is most rarely to be encountered in cultural institutions. On the other hand, a person of non and mild traditionalist attitudes is often a female, open to meeting and connecting with other people, attending regular high school, spending her free time with her friends, loves to read and attend cultural institutions, although rarely seen in them, prefers to visit the library and theater, attends sporting events and goes to

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*

betting shops. Differences in cultural behavior in accordance with the traditionalist orientation are expressed by gender and by type of school, but not the space in which they live, or regions.¹¹⁹

3.2 Cult of Saint Sava in the Serbian nation

Saint Sava was the greatest traveler in Serbian history, and the most successful in everything he did – diplomacy, archbishopric, literature, law etc. His example remains a guiding force for the Serbian nation and remains a representation of authentic national thought. Science has proved, many times that Saint Sava was the first in many different areas of social life and the founder of many important historical moves for Serbian people, and yet, there is still not much known about him. He was the first autonomous Serbian bishop , the first monk from a royal family who renounced the throne, the first eminent and highly influential Serbian on Mount Athos and all over the world, the first Serbian theologian, the first legislator of the church and civil law, the first major writer and medical practitioner in Serbia etc.¹²⁰

With his given name of Rastko, St. Sava was the third and the youngest son of Stefan Nemanja. While still a child some monks came to his father and told him how beautiful Mount Athos was. Young Rastko overheard, and decided to run away from home to go and see for himself. His parents were extremely worried and sad, so they sent people on different sides of the world to find him. One of the king's guards found him at Mount Athos ready to become a monk. At first, his parents were unhappy with the decision to dedicate his life to serving God, but later on in life, they became aware of how right that path actually was and his father even joined the monastery himself later on in his life. When he became a monk, Rastko was given the name Sava.

However, Sava's brothers, back in Serbia were fighting over the land causing a lot of problems among their people. The newly ordained monk was asked to come home and make peace between his brothers and so decided to return for the first time to his homeland. For this occasion, Sava took the relics of his late father and brought them to the Studenica monastery, where he made peace between his two brothers on their father's grave. As a memorial to this

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*

¹²⁰ Zbornik radova *Tajna Svetosavlja*, (Belgrade: Catena Mundi, 2013) 11.

event Sava built a monastery Zica on the river Ibar and decided to stay for some time in the monastery Studenica.

Not long after, Sava went to Nicaea in the Asia, where the Greek emperor lived along with the patriarch. Sava's mission was to explain to the patriarch that Serbia needed an archbishop and that the archbishop should be a Serbian so they could become even stronger in their faith. Both the emperor and the patriarch agreed and immediately decided that Sava himself should become the archbishop and proclaimed him in the year 1210.

Once he was made archbishop, Sava explained how difficult it is for the Serbs to travel so far every time they need to elect an archbishop, and that it would be much more convenient if Serbs were allowed to elect their own religious leaders. This was also allowed by the patriarch and the emperor, so Sava was free to come back again to his homeland. Soon after his arrival in his country he proclaimed his brother Stefan to be the Crowned King Serbian, which was widely accepted and valued by the people.

After making his brother a king, Sava founded five bishoprics. However, soon after, King Stefan became ill, and decided to become a monk himself. Not long after he died in Sava's arms, and was buried next to his father; which made his son, young Radoslav the new king. Seeing that both the church and the state were settled Sava decided to go on a pilgrimage to visit Christ's Grave. Upon his return home,, he found that problems were awaiting him. People were not satisfied with the rule of Radoslav so Sava made his youngest brother Vladislav the king and found him a wife, the daughter of the Bulgarian king.

Sava went once again to Jerusalem, but on his way back, while in Bulgaria, he fell gravely ill and sent everything expensive he bought on the road home. Sava died on 14January 1237. King Vladislav moved his relics back to their homeland where they were placed in the Milesevo monastery. In the year 1595, on the command of Sinan-pasha, these relics were moved to Belgrade and burned. The exact location where this took place remains unknown today.¹²¹

The character of St Sava was described many times throughout history in a variety of ways. Everyone who wrote about him accented those aspects that he found inspiring and close to the heart. Usually, Sava's contribution to political developments were often emphasized at the

¹²¹ Filip Hristić, "Sveti Sava - prvi arhiepiskop srpski", *Tajna Svetosavlja*. 19-22.

expense of his contributions to religion and his personal moral character. In this interpretation, the ascetic and the saint were being lost, replaced by an image of a wise politician fulfilling the ideas of his father. For the Serbian people, memories of their pagan heritage were deeply engrained resulting in the character of Saint Sava being endowed with some purely mythological characteristics causing him to no longer be seen as a spiritual guide and saint.¹²²

Vladimir Corovic, talking about St Sava said: "Many times in religious debates the question was raised: Should the church should become a state, or should the state become a church. In Serbia, something unusual happened. In Serbia, the church has become the people and the people became the church, not in the theological, moralist sense, but in the national, political one. Serbian orthodoxy became the incarnation of the Serbian national political tradition, and the Serbian national psyche has given the mythological faith the element of real religion. St. Sava became more a national rather than a church saint and in his cult there no doubt prevails more a national feeling than a devout, religious one."¹²³

Of course, there is something true about the focus on the political works of Saint Sava. He was a new kind of patriot, one that through his calm and effective spiritualization has contributed to the advance of his people. This is the patriotism that made Serbia strong and what maintained the unity of the Serbian people.¹²⁴

Saint Sava has been unfairly criticized throughout the centuries for neglecting dogma in his efforts to bring orthodoxy closer to the Slavic peoples by appropriating some of their pagan traditions. But he wanted to make the church active, alive and interesting to enable the people to progress in their faith. That is where his importance lies.¹²⁵ Bishop Nikolai Velimirovic pointed out in one of his writings that when Saint Sava organized the national church, he was not led by the idea of reviving chauvinism among the Serbs, but in reviving their tribal religion. St. Sava wanted to, through a nationally organized church, make his people a worthy member of the universal, orthodox family of Christians.¹²⁶

¹²² Đoko Slijepcević. "Kult Svetoga Save u našem narodu." *Tajna Svetosavlja*. 27-38.

¹²³ *Ibid*, 28.

¹²⁴ *Ibid*, 31.

¹²⁵ *Ibid*, 33.

¹²⁶ *Ibid*, 33.

During the Ottoman occupation of Serbia, the cult of Saint Sava was spread not only throughout the orthodox population but was also widespread among Muslims and Catholics. Saint Sava became an overall South Slav saint who was respected by everyone.

The cult of Saint Sava meant the cult of the old Serbia and the old Serbian state that people, with the help of the church, wanted to renew. Sinan Pasha thought that once the relicts were destroyed the cult would disappear over time and along with it the feeling the cult was creating. But the cult was already so deeply rooted in Serbian people that this even just served as new strike for making the mutual respect stronger.¹²⁷

There is a question being posed in some circles, how can we bring back St. Sava to the Serbs alive and whole. There is only one possible answer: to let people understand Sava the way their ancestors did; through frescos, biographies, songs and stories with a focus on his moral, religious greatness, holy personality, and as the biggest and most accomplished Serbian monk and a saint.

3.3 Heritage of the Fathers Foundation

The Foundation, Heritage of the Fathers, has emerged out of the common desire of its founders who want to bring the Serbian nation closer to the great Orthodox saints that came from the Serbian nation, especially St. Sava and the Serbian St. Nikolai¹²⁸. The Founders believe that any blessing that comes from them can not be limited to personal use.

Current members of the Foundation have joint in an effort to create a feature-length documentary film that was made about St Nikolai in the 2005. - the first movie about life of an Orthodox saint. The beginning of this endeavor was not some abstract idea, but an uncommon appearance of an old footage featuring Bishop Nicholas, in the Church Municipality of Berlin.

The result of this joint work was significant. It was aired on television as an extended form of a documentary television series. Because St. Nicholas has influenced many people throughout the world and not only in Serbia, the film was translated into six languages and released in the

¹²⁷ *Ibid*, 38

¹²⁸ Saint Nikolai Velimirovich (1880-1956) was bishop of Ohrid and of Žiča in the Serbian Orthodox Church, an influential theological writer and a highly gifted orator, therefore also known as The New Chrysostom.

form of a DVD. The film introduced Serbia and this major Serbian saint to thousands of spectators from English, German, Russian, French, Greek and Romanian speaking countries.

Although at first they claimed not to have realized the importance of their actions and claimed to have been guided mainly by intuition and emotion, they realized after the extremely positive reactions to the film in Serbia that it is the responsibility of every generation to preserve its people's history, spirituality and culture, and, with the help of the language of its time, describe it all over again, paint it, and tell it in a way fit for the next generation.

In recent years, the worldwide economic crisis and widespread crisis of values had a great impact on Serbian national identity.

So, in a way referring to St. Nikolai and also in order to respond to the need of Serbs in Serbia and abroad, the founders have again gathered, around a common goal - shooting a film about the life of Saint Sava, the spiritual Father of the Serbian people. They believe that at a time when the Serbian nation is not sure where and how to move, it should look to the example of St. Sava. According to Deacon Nenad Ilić, they hope to ensure the survival of Serbian heritage and to contribute to a re-evaluation of a common Serbian spiritual and cultural identity. It is hard to imagine a spiritual renewal of the Serbian people without a serious reminder of the birth of the nation and the meaning of the deeds done by Saints Simeon (Nemanja) and Sava.

Because this is a demanding project, support for it was received from several sources and established the Heritage of the Fathers Foundation to coordinate and bring in the people necessary to carry out the project. The Foundation enables all who want to take part in a national project and to be part of a Serbian spiritual rebirth to participate. The Founders believe that without a spiritual rebirth Serbia cannot proceed towards economic and cultural revival.

The main objective of the Foundation is to make a film about the holy founders of the Serbian nation. However, this is only one project and given the importance of preserving Serbian cultural and religious identity, the Foundation intends to continue in the future to carry out other projects dealing with Serbian spirituality and culture.

The Foundation aims to improve and promote Christian Orthodox and National Serbian culture by initiating and recording television shows and films, publishing books, publishing magazines and other printed works, music publishing and multimedia digital editions, through lectures, counseling, the organization of conferences, cooperating with related institutions, and taking all other actions that serve to promote the objectives of the Foundation.¹²⁹

3.3.1 The beginning of the project

Work on the film project, *Father*, was begun by the Foundation with the stated intention of improving and expanding Christian Orthodox and Serbian national culture and is now being produced as a joint venture by the Heritage of the Fathers Foundation and a new production house in Belgrade, Opet & Opet. A great deal of interest has been shown both in Serbia and abroad.

While the project was still in its initial stages, it was presented to and subsequently received support from the brotherhood of the monastery Hilandar, His Holiness the Patriarch of the Serbian Orthodox Church and the Minister of Culture of the Republic of Serbia. Interest and support for the film has been shown not only within the national and church circles but also by prominent individuals in the fields of business, sports and culture. It could be argued that a consensus has been established on the invaluable importance of processing these great themes of Serbian history especially at the current moment of crisis in Serbia.¹³⁰

Before the end of this research, the project was still in its pre-production stage; therefore some information could not be obtained. Nevertheless, according to the available information it can be concluded that the project will indeed relate to Serbian national values and, thus will be relevant not only as an artistic accomplishment but also as a contribution to a discussion of Serbian values and national heritage.

In an effort to increase interest and include the public in the project, the Founders created an interesting and interactive website, www.film-otac.com. It allows the public to follow the development of the scenario of the film, to give their comments and suggestions and to find

¹²⁹ Statute of the Heritage of the Fathers Foundation

¹³⁰ "Film Otac." Soba za scenariste, <http://film-otac.com/rscoba-za-scenariste#>, (accessed: 17.9.2013)

interesting materials related to the film such as images, illustrations, historical records, and video and audio recordings from Mountain Athos where the biggest part of the plot of the film will be situated.

Crowd sourcing has been the main technique used to gather funds for this project. The contact information of Serbs living abroad are being found and used to contact and inform them of the existence of the project. On a voluntary basis, they are then able to support the project with as much money as they can and want to donate. All who have made a donation instantly become members of the Club of Admirers of the film and are able to follow the development of the scenario and, when the time comes, are eligible to audition for certain roles, etc. As a symbolic token of appreciation, anyone who donates 20 Euros receives their own cube on the founder's mosaic displayed on the website of the film. Larger donations receive more mosaic space. Each cube is named after its donor and has the ability to connect to the web site of their choosing (personal or business web site, Facebook page, etc.).

3.4 Young Editorial Staff

My participation in this first phase of the project allowed me to observe and collect data regarding the tools of cultural policy being used. Personally, I was more interested in and also more active with the works of the Young Editorial Staff that is in charge of the smaller projects that make up the whole of the effort to promote Serbian identity concluding with the film. Deacon Nenad Ilić gathered students in their final years at the Faculty of Political Sciences, History, Languages and Dramatic Arts and created a small editorial that is designed to deal with questions of Serbian cultural identity. Due to the fact that the project started on May 2013 and was largely put on hold over the summer, there has not been much work done on this front although there is a clear picture of what actions will be used from now on. The following part of this paper consists of the materials the young editorial staff came up with together with Deacon Nenad Ilić, as well as the information I have gathered through the focus

group held with other young members earlier this summer.¹³¹ In addition, there are portions of my personal notes taken during the meetings I attended.

Serbia is in desperate need of a bridge between people who declare themselves as intellectuals and those who say they are nationalist. "We must prove to people that there are people in between who both love their country and are aiming towards progress," was a statement that came from most of the members of the Young Editorial Staff. Some of the editorial staff are also members of another organization, the Serbian Academic Circle which is a web portal dealing with the renewal of national cultural identity therefore, the goals of the Back to the Future project coincides with their work at the web portal.¹³²

"The thing about national cultural policy is that it should be national, in a sense that if it is not promoting national values than it can be global cultural policy and there is no need for Serbian one"¹³³, was also something everyone agreed on, and a starting point for further engagement in the project.

Shallow populist rationalism tried to give meaning to the word myth as something imaginary or false, while myth is actually based on deeper truths that go beyond the field of the rational. No nation can function without their own common myth (myths). The strongest and most enduring myths are those rooted both in the past and in the future. In the case of Serbia, these are the national myths associated with the Christian faith which have proven to be the most durable over time.

Both major Serbian national myths are firmly associated with the Christian faith. Serbs saw themselves and still see themselves as living at a border between Christianity and Islam, Europe and Asia, and between Western and Eastern civilizations.

¹³¹ In the focus group held on Saturday the 3rd of August 2013, we discussed why the participants joined this type of project on a voluntary basis, their relation towards the Serbian national cultural identity, their view on the current situation of the value systems held by the young in Serbia (according to the research they have done during their studies), and their ideas about which actions should be taken to try to counter negative perceptions of the traditional.

¹³² From the focus group held on Saturday the 3rd of August 2013

¹³³ From the focus group held on Saturday the 3rd of August 2013

The first experience of its own common identity is linked with the history of the strongest Serbian national myth - Kosovo. Serbs seem to be looking in each period of history toward confronting the greatest world power of the period at a point when an earthly victory is absolutely impossible in an effort to achieve a heavenly victory (as the myth describes King Lazar's choice provided by God just prior to the Battle of Kosovo in 1389), one consisting primarily of non-acceptance of the position of the world power and an attempt to fight against injustice. Now the Serbs are tired of this national myth which is seen as having been too costly and having exhausted all of their biological and economic resources.

The young editorial staff does not consider "demythologization" and the recycling of myths of future progress (consumerist happiness, triumph of individualism etc.) to be the right solution for this situation Serbia has found itself in. Since myths are based on deeper psychological categories and historical deposition of common experience, it is not easy to lead the newly created myths to an "operational" state at the core of the community.

Therefore, the editorial staff believes that the Serbian people need to reach out for an "alternative" or more original myth, older than Kosovo, but historically often overshadowed by it. This myth is based on the symbol of the bridge connecting civilization, earthly and heavenly, practical and spiritual, national and cosmopolitan, traditional and modern. That is, the myth of Saint Sava created around the character, acts and consequences of the greatest historical figures of the Serbs, the fathers of the nation, St. Sava, his father Nemanja and St. Simeon the Myrrh. It is the most profoundly connected myth to Serbian national identity.

The campaign for the restoration and preservation of cultural identity with the film *Father* at its core should contribute to the restoration and strengthening of a nationally unifying myth, which in itself contains inseparable Christian values. Dealing with this myth and its dominant position in the "cultural war" that is raging in Serbia where the national and Christian forces are severely suppressed, the organization is drawing a sketch of a broader marketing campaign and planning cultural activities that will situate the film within the current social and political situation and lay the groundwork for additional cultural activities aimed at solidifying the myth of St. Sava and the values contained within it as the main national myth of the Serbian people.

It is very important for the whole project to create and maintain a "youthful image" in order to attract and engage young people in the process. To this end, the correct means and ways of communication need to be applied to engage the generation that has been most impacted by "demythologization" and denationalization.

3.5 First call for the film “The Father”

“...Serbia is on its knees. Defeated on almost all fronts. Now we need faith itself. It is still not too late to join together for its rescue. If we find that track of faith - we find it hard to decide where to start. There is so much that should be done now...”

Those are the words signifying the beginning of the first call for Serbs to join this project.

The name of the project came out of a discussion with the Young Editorial Staff at one of our meetings. We believed that apart from being a "big national cultural identity project" with a focus on producing a movie, it should also have an interesting and catchy name. Back to the Future, although it is the same name as the famous Robert Zemeckis movie, sounded suitable for a project dealing with creating a dialogue between the past and the future. By the end of this research the final name of the project was created and it is "Serbian Back to The Future".¹³⁴

Within the media, the project has so far been presented as a movie making project coupled with additional smaller projects dealing with national identity and culture. The media campaign began in May 2013 and most of the important were held on the 27th of June. These included the announcement of the press conference on the Morning Show of Studio B as well as the press conference held the same day in the Media Center. Apart from these, there were different appearances on television (TV Pink, Radio Television of Serbia, TV Prva etc.). The project was also announced in many daily newspapers (Večernje Novosti, Blic etc.) and on radio stations (such as Beograd 202).¹³⁵

Keeping in mind the limited financial resources, the most effective marketing tool to date was definitely the promotional video of The Heritage of the Fathers. The video for the song, "You and me, we exist," was made by the famous Serbian musician Bora Đorđević and his friends, and the song is a hymn for the Foundation. The video has been uploaded on You Tube and since then has had nothing but positive comments and reactions.

¹³⁴ "Srpski povratak u budućnost"

¹³⁵ Film Otac", Medija Centar, <http://film-otac.com/rs/medijacentar> (accessed: 8.10.2013)

Saint Sava. It is surprising how little Serbia knows about St. Sava given how often he has been referred to, his sometimes inappropriate placement before other Christian saints in the particular Serbian expression of the Christian faith, and that each year for school events historical and literary texts about his life are read. St. Sava is respected and loved by Serbs, but he is not actually close to them, according to Deacon Nenad Ilić. St. Sava is praised, but not taken as a model, which is confirmed by the previously mentioned value analysis where none of the students referred to any religious figure as their idol or role model. The picture of St. Sava eventually, over time, has become sentimental and unnaturally stiff. It is more like a tapestry than an icon. He was a multi-gifted man of deep spirituality and a volcano of active energy and someone who can again become a true role model for young people.¹³⁶

Serbian Cultural Identity. From the point of view of the makers of this project Serbs have two great symbols, two strong roots of their spiritual and cultural identity. Both of those roots are Christian, but one is related to war and one to peace. One is more related to the event and the other more to a person. Over time, one became more attached to the idea of heroic sacrifice, and the other to a life of asceticism.

Certainly, the Battle of Kosovo and the election of Lazar play a significant role in Serbian history and thus should not be debated in too many words here.

An older, "more peaceful" symbol (or myth) of Serbian identity is tied to the work of Saint Sava and his father Nemanja, also known as Saint Simeon. Without it, the Kosovo covenant becomes opaque and vulnerable to abuse of all kinds. It was not dealt with it in the film industry, and in popular culture in general it has not had any significant impact.

The blending of East and West, national and cosmopolitan, spiritual and practical, traditional and modern - this is all the legacy of St. Sava and is thus built into the foundations of Serbian Orthodoxy, a point which today is often misunderstood. Tradition always includes a merging or transferring of the past to the future.¹³⁷

¹³⁶ Interview with Deacon Nenad Ilić, answer to the question: "Why St. Sava and not someone else?"

¹³⁷ Interview with Deacon Nenad Ilić, answer to the question: "What do you consider under Serbian cultural identity?"

The plot of the film

“The Father” screenplay deals with the period of the arrival of the aging ruler Nemanja who travelled as a monk to Mount Athos until the return of Nemanja's miraculous relics by his son Sava in civil war-torn, impoverished and starving Serbia.

Why such a focus on this period, on the life of two great figures of Serbian history, two of its greatest saints?

At the reunion, far away from Serbia, two strong personalities - the father, a successful aging ruler and his son, a young monk of deep spirituality - are on display and it is at this moment that the foundation of the Serbian state, culture and the church was laid. Both of them have done what was necessary to keep what was necessary to serve God and their people. Nemanja sacrificed a well-deserved and comfortable retirement in order to touch the life of heaven through asceticism, and be for his heirs a holy role model. Sava gave up the peace of Athos to introduce the Serbs into a line of serious and spiritually enlightened nations.¹³⁸

The interaction between the two men which sometimes verged on conflict brought the best out of both and thus allowed them to always remain together to serve their faith and humanity. Father and son. As role models for eternity.

The film Father aims to help Serbs leave aside the clichés which are holding captive two great men (those clichés were created in order to make it easier to accept passivity and weaknesses of their own). The film will examine the wonder of the transformation of an old ruler tired of many wars and the burden of ruling into a meek and good natured saint who is literally guided by the quote from the New Testament "who wants to be older, thus be younger than everyone and a servant of all" and the transformation of a young man of great spiritual gifts, entirely dedicated to self-improvement, who returns to the turmoil of his native land to serve his fellow men.

¹³⁸ "Film Otac." Soba za scenariste, <http://film-otac.com/rscoba-za-scenariste#>, (accessed: 17.9.2013)

In order for the film to not become only a well-intentioned but tendentious view of the country's history, a sense of holiness must be maintained alongside the casual conflict and humor necessary for a full understanding of the events and characters .

To make it easier to access the character of the two saints and demonstrate further a particular set of values, the film uses the example of Nemanja's companions, ancient warriors who have sworn allegiance to their master until the end, and who had come with him to Mount Athos to follow him to the death. Like most of the audience they initially do not understand the high spiritual themes, but when they begin trying to convert military skills into spiritual ones their struggles become the source of a series of comical situations. Only in the scene where these warriors go to build the Serbian monastery on Mount Athos is it that they find themselves completely. In the end, love between them and their master together will enable them to win the fight.¹³⁹

It is moving and inspiring to see how the son, regardless of his own desires, accepts and meets with love his father's vow, and it is especially amazing and rare for a son to become a spiritual father to his own father. This is an example that in this general hopelessness pervasive in Serbia could serve to teach younger generations and offer hope to the older ones. Overcoming obstacles through hard work and achieving the fullness of love and holiness is something that has universal significance, potentially interesting for all people and all cultures, according to Deacon Nenad Ilić.

In the selection of events presented in the script, the poor economic situation and the difficulties standing in the way of raising funds for the film become apparent. Large mass scenes are avoided. Cumbersome procedures for set design and the use of expensive historical costumes are also forgone. The film is intended to be a "spectacle in miniature". By carefully choosing events and places and reducing the money spent on costumes and set design, the film is able to depict everything in a maximally realistic manner. The language used in the film is contemporaneous with the effective use of technology and high demands in post-production. The film will be sensorially demanding especially in the creation of the specific

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*

atmosphere of Mount Athos and the shocking historical reconstructions supported by carefully chosen music which will be given special attention.¹⁴⁰

¹⁴⁰ Deacon Nenad Ilić, Press conference introducing Back to the Future

4 Conclusion

As has been shown in this paper, the effects of globalization have caused tension within Serbian national identity especially with regards to societal values.

Every nation carries within it a certain set of values, beliefs and priorities. Being a democratic secular society in transition, traditional values in Serbia are becoming more and more secondary to the dominating secular-rational values. Most of the remains of traditionalism are situated within nationalistic movements that are currently seen as strictly negative.

Traditionalism in Serbia is used mostly in reference to patriarchy and other related values such as authoritarianism, anti-Semitism, ethnocentrism, militarism, dogmatism, "anti-Europeanism", nationalism and conservatism.

After the break-up of the communist regime at the beginning of the nineties a crisis of values occurred in Serbia between the traditional and modern which mostly affected the youth. Not, only in Serbia but in other countries as well, the fall of communism led to the growth of questionable values in the transitioning societies. Generations growing up in these times are extremely divided between the mostly traditional, patriarchal models they learned within their families and the new democratic values that globalized society is promoting. This division leads to general confusion amongst the youth, the very demographic on whom the future of Serbia depends. These are Serbia's future voters, politicians and entrepreneurs, and they are basing their attitudes on split ideologies. Accepting democratic values, according to my opinion, should not be considered as strictly negative, but the basis on which those values are going to exist needs to be firm, knowing where one comes from and knowing one's own heritage is a great foundation.

Adolescents carry certain values learned at home from their parents and family and then encounter an increasingly different set of values as they move into society. From an analysis of various studies on values in Serbia, I have come to the conclusion that even students that declare themselves as traditionalists are more keen on listening to 90's turbo folk music than

actually acknowledging Svetosavlje¹⁴¹ and other values which make up Serbian national identity. The reason for this is the disproportionate number of cultural and educational projects promoting so-called European values as opposed to those projects promoting traditional, national values.

Every nation is based on certain myths. The two most important myths in Serbia are the Kosovo and the St. Sava myth. Over time, the over usage of the Kosovo myth as a tool for propaganda has generated an attitude of near animosity toward it amongst the youth in Serbia. I myself, as a part of this young demographic, do not believe I know enough about our myths and even have a sort of ingrained resistance toward learning more about them. In this sense, making the St. Sava myth the crucial one in Serbian society and setting it as one of the main foundations of Serbian cultural heritages a good way of reviving Serbian national identity without turning to the negativity of virulent nationalism.

Culture is inseparable from identity, and often encapsulates the expression of national, regional or ethnic identity. For this reason it is unsurprising that cultural policy often makes a priority of national culture, end especially of traditional styles. On the other hand, the understandable pride in "national" needs to be tempered by an appreciation of and receptivity towards other cultures. An effective cultural policy will celebrate both established national cultures while remaining open to newer forms and engaging in international exchange.¹⁴²

The main tool of cultural policy that should be used in order to reconcile these two poles is dialogue. Neither democratic nor traditional values should be understood as negative, but should be connected and embraced through constructive dialogue. If they are currently being considered as opposed, the next step is recognition of this by both sides followed by joint efforts to find a bridge to connect them. And that is exactly what a project like Back to the Future is offering - a modern approach to traditional values.

¹⁴¹ A unique sui generis in the history of Christianity, spiritually-social movement, created by the person of St Sava, where the name comes from.

¹⁴² Francois Matarasso and Charles Landry, *Balancing act: twenty-one strategic dilemmas in cultural policy* (Belgium: Council of Europe, 1999), 13

My internship with the project Back to the Future provided me with valuable insights into a real national cultural identity project. During the three months I spent with the project, I was in communication with a number of different people both from within Serbia and the Serbian diaspora who self-identify as Serbs. Through this communication, I came to the conclusion that a significant number of them believe that a project such as this one is necessary. Deacon Nenad Ilić, the leader of the project, considers this to be the last moment in history when an attempt to renew Serbian national identity could have any effect. I would not go that far, but I certainly do agree that attempts at renewal should have been made earlier rather than waiting until the point where heritage is considered to be "old things at the museum".

There are occasional cultural projects featuring Saint Sava and the Nemanjic family in general on the Serbian cultural scene. Unfortunately, these projects do not have a strong concept behind them and do not provide a dialogue between the past and the present. An example of this is the recently opened exhibition in the National Museum in Belgrade, "Vows and Messages: Stefan Nemanja - nine centuries," that was set up to celebrate the anniversary of St Simeon's birth around the year 1113. According to their promotional material, the goal of the exhibition is to encourage the viewer to value the Serbian state's permanent continuity and sovereignty. This is not at all achieved by the end of the tour of the exhibition due to the lack of dialogue with the observer.

In that sense, the action to be taken is the creation of educational PR which has as its task to determine which obstacles exist between art and people uninterested in art and furthermore find a way to lessen or remove them. Art would, in this case, represent national cultural identity. Therefore, creating a new co-operational department between the Ministry of Culture and the Ministry of Education whose task would be changing people's attitudes toward culture in general through the use of schools, television, radio etc., is in this case, a necessity.¹⁴³

Finally, without inter-ministerial communication and serious cultural policy toward the preservation of Serbian identity, it will soon become only a clause in the discussion of a small group of people. I strongly believe Serbia should not let that happen and should be more proud of what it is. When I say Serbia I am referring to decision making bodies who are

¹⁴³ Kit Digi, *Marketing u umetnosti* (Belgrade: Clio, 1998)

creating and dealing with cultural policy as it is. Hopefully this initiative will achieve its goal and at least launch other cultural identity renewal projects in the field of culture.

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