

DISPUT



Mirko Blagojević, Jelena Jablanov Maksimović, Tijana Bajović

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RELIGIOUS, MORAL AND SOCIO-POLITICAL  
VALUES OF THE STUDENT POPULATION IN SERBIA

Edited by dr Mirko Blagojević,  
mr Jelena Jablanov Maksimović  
mr Tijana Bajović



University of Belgrade  
Institute for Philosophy and Social Theory

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OF THE STUDENT POPULATION IN SERBIA

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# Preface

The proceedings that you are about to read are a result of the work of a team of researchers who took part in the project *Post-Secular turn: religious, moral and socio-political values of the student population in Serbia*, conducted by the Centre for Religious Studies of the Institute for Philosophy and Social Theory in collaboration with the Belgrade office of Konrad Adenauer Stiftung and the Centre for European Studies from Brussels.

Since young intellectuals are the cornerstone of further political and social development of every country, it is vital to understand the problems they are facing, their views on the current political system of the state, their interest in politics, as well as their system of general values. Center for religious studies developed this research with the aim to investigate religious, moral, social and political values of university student population in Serbia and gain insight into the complex network of their inter-relations. To begin with, this research has shown the kind of impact religiousness has on the common system of values in Serbia. To be more precise, in religious studies there are two theoretical perspectives which deal with the role of religion in modern society. In the first school of thought it is considered that the modern world is going through the process of increased secularization of culture and society, which is disenchanting the world in a way, and it began with the 18th century deism of the European Enlightenment. According to the other school, we are currently witnessing something totally different: a process of desecularization, which means that the importance of religion in modern world is increasing. Bearing in mind that science is becoming more interested in the processes of desecularization and retraditionalization in post-socialist societies of

South-Eastern Europe, the aim of this research is to consider the role of religion and religious values in the development and dissemination of democratic attitudes and values among university students. This study was supposed to provide an interpretation of empirical results and thus provides a better insight into the processes of (de)secularization, modernization and democratization in Serbia.

The research team included sociologists, philosophers, anthropologists and politologists of religion. The proceedings consist of three thematic wholes. The first one concerns contemporary religiousness among university students and the process of (de)secularization of Serbian society. The second one deals with the relationship between religious values, on the one hand, and financial status, national identity and socio-political values on the other. Finally, the third part comprises papers focused on socio-political values, attitudes toward democracy and capitalism, nationalism and ethnocentrism of young Serbian intellectuals.

The results of this research should open discussions and encourage future research into whether the trends of desecularization and alleged retraditionalization in Serbia can be viewed in terms of *post-secularity*. Specifically, increased religiousness does not necessarily hinder the processes of modernization and democratization. As Jürgen Habermas noted, we are now witnessing the development of post-secular societies, societies in which the importance of religion is growing, and it happens in an environment which is, paradoxically, becoming increasingly secularized. In his theory, Habermas envisages the possibility for bridging the gap between religious values and the processes of modernization and democratization. Religious values and attitudes do not necessarily imply the retraditionalization of political and social institutions and organizations. There is a

question which is still open for discussion: *Is Serbian society one of those in which religion serves/can serve as a kind of moral compass, which does not conservatize or hinder, but rather encourages democratization?*

| Mirko Blagojević, Tijana Bajović, Jelena Jablanov Maksimović



# On Methodology

## Sample

Research into religious, moral and socio-political values of the student population in Serbia was conducted on a proportional quota sample of 1056 third-year students. The sample included third-year students from Serbia. The sampling plan was based on the data provided by the Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia. In the first stage we picked a number of both state and private universities. In the second stage we singled out colleges/faculties in accordance with their orientation (humanities vs. science), and which were later divided into the following categories: humanities and social sciences, science, technology and engineering, medicine and arts. In the third stage we defined the number of students of each college in accordance with their share in the total number of students at the university. The research covered the following universities: University of Novi Sad, University of Belgrade, University of Priština temporarily seated in Kosovska Mitrovica, University of Niš, University of Kragujevac, State University of Novi Pazar, Megatrend University, Union University, Alfa University, European University, Singidunum University and Business Academy University. Students who were present at lectures took part in the survey.

### Sample structure according to universities

University	Number of students
University of Novi Sad	186
University of Belgrade	427
University of Niš	97
University of Kragujevac	73

State University of Novi Pazar	32
University of Priština (Kosovska Mitrovica)	39
<b>State universities</b>	<b>854</b>
Union University	20
Megatrend University	49
Alfa University	20
European University	31
Singidunum University	62
Business Academy University	20
<b>Private universities</b>	<b>202</b>
Total	1056

The sample consisted of 48.1% men and 51.9% women.

## Questionnaire

The questionnaire was designed to encompass widest possible set of values expressed by the students. Our goal was to check the results of previous research of both general population and students/young people in general. The questionnaire was mainly based on revised questions from the European Values Study (EVS). At this point we would like to thank Mr. Slobodan Mrđa and the Center for Study in Cultural Development for the 2010 questionnaire, which was used to examine cultural life and needs of Serbian students. Apart from these two questionnaires, we also used materials from the questionnaire developed by the Center for Empirical Cultural Studies of South-East Europe (part of the project entitled Attitude toward socio-economic changes in societies of the Western Balkans) and the questionnaire developed by the Faculty of Philosophy in Niš (part of the project Cultural orientation of participants/students, interethnic relations, national identity and peace culture in the Balkans).

The questionnaire comprised 68 questions divided into different areas. The first set of questions covered general socio-demographic data (e.g. gender, age, faculty/college, place of residence/abode, ethnic affiliation). The second set involved personal aims/values, such as leisure time or things important in respondents' lives. The third set was to examine the level of general social security the respondent felt (confidence in institutions, confidence in other people, control over one's life in the respondent's opinion etc.). The next set of questions involved general values of society, and the fifth set examined moral values and/or opinions about important issues (euthanasia, abortion, genetic engineering). One part of the questionnaire examined religious values (faith in God, going to church and the like), and was followed by questions which examined students' attitudes toward the relationship of religion and society, or religion and politics. The aim of the last set was to examine political values, attitudes toward democracy and some liberal values, as well as attitudes toward the process of the EU integration.

### **Data analysis**

Data was processed using SPSS software. The database contains 394 variables, 170 nominal measurement scale. There was a total of 211 variables, which is 54% of all variables, ordinal measurement scale, mostly Likert (62%) with 5 categories such as: very important, important, undecided, unimportant, absolutely unimportant (124); there was also a small number of variables (7) which included four categories: very important, mostly important, mostly unimportant, absolutely unimportant. The rest of 33% ordinal scale variables are diverse, they have three categories, and there is a total of 5% of thematic variables, such as the level of education. There are only 13 interval measurement scale variables. Information about the sample was presented by way of percentage, central tendency measurements and charts in

case of all questions. It was followed by non-parametric analyses in accordance with particular requirements: Mann-Whitney U Test, Kruskal-Wallis Test, Kendall's tau\_b correlation coefficient of ranks and Chi-square test. This decision was made primarily due to asymmetric distributions of answers, which is typical when social, religious, religious or moral attitudes are expressed. Most people have attitudes toward these issues, either negative or positive, and there are very few cases when people are undecided. Regarding the number of variables and deviations from normal distribution, transforming the data was not the best possible solution, particularly after being informed about researchers' requirements and consideration whether other conditions for making parametric tests are fulfilled.

Data processing and mapping was mostly done by the Center for Empirical Research of religion (CEIR), while some subsequent mapping was carried out by IAC Argument.

Radule Perović (Argument)  
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### Contemporary Religiousness of University Students and Desecularization of Serbian Society

**Abstract:** *In the first part of this paper the author is trying to place contemporary religiousness of Serbian university students both into the wider context of the religious situation in Europe and the world and into the context of the sociological theory of (de)secularization of the world and of the post-socialist Serbian society. In the second part of the paper the author states and analyzes the data about Serbian students' commitment to religion and church.*

**Key words:** *atheization, counter-secularization, university students, religiousness, Serbia.*

#### **Secularization paradigm, desecularization of the world and of Serbian society**

In the 1960s and 1970s sociology of religion used to have ample experience-based corpus of evidence to prove that the process of secularization was a current trend, primarily in Western societies, and it utilized numerous religious indicators, and at the same time developing adequate research methods.

i.e. in quantifying religiousness and/or commitment of people to religion and church in a particular religious and denominational area. These developments had an impact on sociology, particularly in the field of sociology of religion, because it raised awareness of some major deficiencies not only in quantitative expression of the process of desecularization, but also in the conceptualization of the secularization paradigm, which had to have an impact on its theoretical rethinking. However, we cannot say that every *challenge* of the secularization process was free from ideological admixtures and meta-scientific assumptions, although they attributed the same features to the secularist stance. All these instances illustrate the complexity and multidimensionality of the secularization problem and the incompleteness of this very concept and of certain challenges of the secularization paradigm in sociology of religion.

There are several models which dispute the process of secularization: let us first mention the model which disputes it by way of viewing religion as a necessary, universal and irremovable ingredient of human life. There are no such quantitative or any other kind of data which can challenge religion, for everybody is religious just as nearly everyone speaks a language (Yinger). That is why this way of disputing secularization is closely linked to the model of calling its paradigm into question through viewing man as *homo religiosus*, i.e. a being religious by nature. Religiousness is not associated with man's social life; it is therefore not necessarily a social phenomenon, but comes from his biological being (Luckmann). In the end, this means that parents pass on to their children an inborn disposition for religiousness.<sup>1</sup>

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1 It could rather be said that the only thing that parents pass on their children is the disposition to adopt certain values, to think, believe, feel, learn etc. When we put it that way, we cannot neglect the impact of socialization on religiousness, which is something all churches bear in mind when they organize denominational religious instruction in houses of

Closely related to this challenge of secularization is the view that there are three crucial and irremovable transhistorical constants of human life: the above-mentioned transhistorical constant of human which seeks fulfillment of true and unique religious need, the transhistorical constant of human situation in general, i.e. certain borderline questions of human existence (primarily death) and existential problems.<sup>2</sup> Regardless of how these problems are presented to the individual or a social group, one can always cope with them with the aid of the transcendent. Finally there is the transhistorical constant of existence and functioning of human society itself, which, in order to survive, must seek its fundament out of itself, out of the political, in fact in the pre-political, absolute and transcendent, since permanent critical relation to oneself, permanent questioning of oneself and society in which one lives, or centering itself and placing its fundaments in what is relative causes one's own downfall (Vrcan, 1997: 68).

Secularization is also disputed in the field of defining the concept of religion. The conclusion about the process of secularization depends on the meaning in which the concept of religion is used in empirical research of this field (Blagojević,

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worship or public schools. It is difficult to neglect individual's psyche, his/her experience of living with other people, historical period, the totality of social space etc. when explaining the phenomenon of religiousness.

2 Daniel Bell, who launched the idea of the 'return of the sacred' in the 1970s and thus launched a fruitful discussion, is a good example of how culture and religion can be viewed as a response to the predicament of human life. According to him, neither human nature nor human history are starting points to understand culture. Culture is a set of different, coherent or contradictory and troubled answers to essential questions of human existence (death, duty, love, tragedy etc.). In the context of this view on culture, religion is a set of coherent answers to essential existential questions which implies the codification of these answers, a certain ritual form which provides emotional bonds among people within the framework of institutionalized organization as a form of human association, which, in turn, provides continuity and permanence of these rituals. (Bell, 1986:14-15).

2005). There is another model that challenges the concept of secularization through ideological focus and characterizations which insist on its fictitious or mythological meanings, ostensible relevance or, at best, on the meaning of a great historical story (Luckmann). We will also mention the model which challenges secularization by reducing the scope of empirical evidence to the so-called conventional religiousness, which is actually subject to this process, but it does not hold true for the so-called non-doctrinal religion, which is invisible, diffuse, not institutionalized and is supposedly not affected by the process of secularization. This is an important distinction, which secularists do not perceive, although one should distinguish between religion and religious, between the conventional, i.e. church religiousness and religiousness in general (church-going is just one form of religiousness), and between religion and secular religion. Secularization simply a make-believe, since religiousness lies in the domains which are still not clearly distinguishable, beyond the public and political, because “there is abundance of what is sacred, but we do not recognize it because it is wrapped in religious attire” (Hammond).

The model which disputes secularization directly in the domain of empirical evidence might be the one with the strongest power of evidence. It is based on the evidence used by secularist paradigm itself; since the mid-1970s and particularly 1980s, and in post-communist societies since late 1980s and during 1990s, the revival of religion is becoming more evident, not only by “the return of the sacred” and different kinds of the so-called post-modern religiousness, but also in its traditional, institutionalized and even in conservative forms. This kind of argumentation is supplemented with qualitative analysis of the contemporary social and spiritual situation in modern, secularized societies with widest framework for spiritual movements which head in the direction opposite from the one set by the

strong dominance of the secularization process. That is what brought us to the concept of *deseccularization*, which is indispensable for an analysis of religious changes both in modern post-industrial and post-socialist 'transition' societies, including university students who live in them, who are a special indicator of religious changes that lead to deseccularization.

However, not all authors use the term deseccularization to denote the process of religious changes which came to the spiritual scene of many societies in the late 1970s. Still, even when we talk about the revival of conventional religion or its resurgence, about the return or awakening of the sacred, about new religious movements or cults or the appearance of Charismatic Christianity, about return to mysticism, about esoteric or occult religiousness etc., we actually refer to the same process which now questions the more or less accepted theory of secularization as the dominant trend in religious changes took place the then modern industrial societies. Of course, in the 1980s there were still texts about secularization and its concept, but from a particular viewpoint, which questioned its validity and heuristic fertility. There was also a viewpoint which questioned argument-based reliance on facticity, particularly in terms of facts which referred to social and religious situation in the world of the 1970s. Against the backdrop of this social and religious flux, there was a turn in sociology of religion, an attempt to change the ruling paradigm (disputed in the 'defense' of this paradigm by consistent secularists, such as Wilson), which could conceptually be expressed as a movement of society from secularization to deseccularization, or even religious *reconquista*. Consequently, religion regains its own domain of the religious, but it also regains the public and social domains, areas which gradually became suppressed in previous centuries due to the influx of secular order and mentality, especially in the domain of moral (religious) values. This turn was also seen as a standstill

in secularization or a crisis. Naturally, now it was not a crisis of religion, but crisis of secularity; it has also been viewed as movement from desacralization of the sacred to its return and renewal, especially since 1980s, when sociology of religion started to focus sects and modern cults or religious groups which termed themselves as religious movements or groups which belong to new youth religions (*Neue Jugendreligionen*).

Deterministic framework of this turn is complex due to a number of major changes in society which are seen by most sociologists as events which paradigmatically confirmed that both the positions of religion and religious institutions in society and spiritual atmosphere in culture had changed. On the one hand, religious traditions are gaining political importance, while on the other, these traditions are announcing their return by deprivatizing the adopted syncretic beliefs and behaviors, which are important elements of the process of desecularization of religious life. These occurrences show that religion has not lost, and that it regained potential to inspire great collective efforts of people to introduce changes which concern the essence of their political and religious lives. In particular, these occurrences include the following: 1. Growth of fundamentalism in Islamic states in the 1970s, first through the Islamic revolution in Iran, and then in a series of Islamic political movements in other countries 2. Changes in religious situations in many Western countries, such as the rise of Christian conservatism in the US, growth of radical Christianity in Latin America, or changes in the strategy of Catholicism in Europe, starting with adaptation to the modern world to re-evangelization of the same world, particularly with incentives that were supposed to come from Catholicism in the East, primarily from Polish Catholicism as the most efficient role-model. In that sense, next important deterministic framework is the following item 3. Active, or at least supportive role of religion and church in toppling communism

in Central and Eastern Europe in the late 1980s, which laid foundations for the religious situation which can be described as radical deatheization of these societies when large sections of the populace approached or returned to religion and church, which had been suppressed or stigmatized for decades. Consequently, religion started to assume a more important role in the public in communist countries, first in Poland, where the opposition movement named *Solidarity*, headed by Lech Wałęsa, expressed its political rebellion against communist totalitarianism through traditional religious imagery, then in East Germany, in the USSR, where traditional Christian Orthodoxy started to wake after more than fifty years of persecution and being completely marginalized by the socialist society. Finally, in the former socialist Yugoslavia and in present-day Serbia, there was a huge growth of public, or to be more precise, political (mis)use of religion during the 1980s, and particularly in the 1990s during wars, regardless of denomination. However, stabilization of religion calmed down in the first decade of this century after the identity crisis that dominated the previous period of crises, which still cannot be called a memory from the past.

At the turn of this century, authors faced problems and ambiguities of religious changes toward desecularization, just like those who wrote between the 1950s and 1970s faced problems concerning the concept and process of secularization. Paradoxically as it may seem, there are some authors who meanwhile “dismantled” their own theoretical foundations. An obvious example would be that of Peter Berger, who was once a strong proponent of the secularization theory (Berger, 1969). At the end of the 20th century, in his famous and often-quoted text (Berger, 1999; 2008), he wrote about the process of desecularization of many societies or even the entire world and the assumption that we are now living in a secularized world is false. “The world today [...] is as furiously religious as it ever was, and in some places

more so than ever. This means that the whole body of literature by historians and social scientist loosely labeled ‘secularization theory’ is essentially mistaken” (Berger, 2008:12).<sup>3</sup> The most erroneous assumption comes from the Enlightenment, i.e. that modernization leads directly to the decline of religion and religiousness, although it can hold true in cases of some societies, for example Western, and that is what brought certain geographical and civilizational blending of the secularization paradigm, which is what David Martin did (Martin, 1994:123-128; Berger, 2001:23-24). However, it is clear that the relationship between modernity and religion is neither simple nor unilateral even in the aforementioned Western societies, let alone other societies, which do not belong to this group. Bearing all that in mind, social groups and individuals who do not adapt to the modern secularized world, but fight against secularism and oppose it, are of special importance. At this point we can neglect the individuals and social groups that are not active in this opposition, and cannot tolerate the relativity of social values, individuality, uncertainty and uncertainty in the modern secularized world. Conservative, orthodox and traditional religious organizations and movements, not only in Christianity, but also in other world religions, writes Berger, which are active at the international scene in rejection or fighting against the effects of secularization, are growing everywhere, unlike the movements or organizations that had invested much energy during many decades to adapt to the modern world. All of this is important, because the current process of desecularization is primarily defined and understood through the concept of *counter-secularization*, and it is supposed to denote a social process opposite to secularization (Karpov, 2010; Карпов, 2013). On the other hand, it tells about

3 “Let me, then, repeat, what I said a while back. The world today is massively religious, is *anything but* the secularized world that had been predicted (whether joyfully or despondently) by so many analysts of modernity.” (Berger, 2008: 20).

the complexity of religious and social situation throughout the world: in many modern societies there is a co-existence of secularization and counter-secularization tendencies, protagonists and force, and studying them as non-opposite processes is still an important task of modern sociology of religion.

Therefore, if desecularization of the modern world is always interpreted as some kind of response to earlier or current secularization or atheization, it means that every religious expansion or increase of religiousness or connection of individuals and social groups with religion/church is not desecularization, but a special case of growth of religion and expansion of its social impact within the context of responses to previous or current trends of secularization. In his text about desecularization of the world, Berger is imprecise, since while mentioning examples of numerous manifestations of desecularization in the world he mentions the examples of viability, survival and adaptation of religion to the conditions of the modern world, which cannot be interpreted as reactions to the process of secularization or the corresponding trends. Karpov clearly emphasized this imprecision in his text, a successful and pioneering attempt to systematically conceptualize the concept and process desecularization as counter-secularization, a multifaceted transformation of religion which encompasses society as a whole (Карпов, 2012: 114–164). Growth in religiousness in America, between the 18th century, when it was low (17%), and the 20th century, when it was very high (62%), can hardly be termed as desecularization, since the once low percentage of religious people was not connected with secularization of the country, whereas the growth of Orthodoxy and other religions (e.g. Islam and Protestantism) that took place in modern Russia, can be directly linked with the response to the previous process of coercive desecularization or atheization of the Soviet society. This confusion is further exacerbated by the absence of conceptualization

of desecularization and unambiguous use of this concept in comparative research throughout the world, which are desirable. Now there are many terms which sometimes denote tendencies that are quite opposite to secularization (secularism), and sometimes they are not connected with the response to the secularization of society: flourish and renaissance of religion, its renewal and revival, fundamentalism, growth of religion, religious movements – these are just some of these terms.

Viewing religious changes in the context of reaction to atheization and secularization of society is appropriate due to the process of religious changes within Serbian society since the late 1980s until today. However, this period is not homogenous and there are certain stages one can identify within it, such as the initial turbulent stage of abrupt desecularization, when these religious changes were associated with both the once-present dominance of atheism in culture in deconstruction of social values and to ethno-religious mobilization, or homogenization of nations and cultures in conflicts which occurred in huge parts of the former Yugoslavia (1991–1995); there was also a less tumultuous stage of steady religious/denominational identity and social visibility of religions and churches (1996–2013). Furthermore, while explaining the specific features of how these changes in desecularization had occurred both in Serbia and other post-Yugoslav societies, one should not ignore general, local, social and political situation during the breakup of the Yugoslav socialist community and the creation of independent nation states on its foundations or the ensuing conflicts which involved three denominations. Not because of their merits, until mid 1990s, religions, denominations and churches of these communities had been given social roles that could not be even imagined just a little while ago in the previous system. Of course, in this sense, we are not negating the intrinsic, autonomous religious rationale of desecularizing trends, but we are simply trying to point

to the visible and efficient activists and protagonists of counter-secularization of society after the collapse of the socialist order. Turbulent social circumstances of armed conflicts in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, the 1999 conflict with NATO in Kosovo and bombing of Serbia, political flux at the beginning of the 21st century, a grave economic crisis, unemployment, brain-drain from Serbia, difficult financial circumstances of many people and collapsing economy are the circumstances in which Serbian population and young people live. In this situation, public opinion polls show that the population trusts the most in religious organizations, i.e. the Serbian Orthodox Church, out of all institutions. Young people, university students included, have lived in these circumstances for twenty years, but they have ceased to be discouraging, disapproving or stigmatizing toward religion and religious organizations. Nowadays young people do not live in an environment in which atheist culture is forced upon. In the 1990s they were the social group which declared in favor of religious/denominational affiliation and trust in God, apart from the oldest members of the population. This piece of information is symptomatic for the desecularization trend of the time, because it was young people and active population who were the most atheistic part of the socialist society of the time.

### **Some religious changes among youth during 1980s and 1990s**

The generally discouraging socio-political pattern of existence of religion and church in socialism was very detrimental to church and people's commitment to church and religion in the long run. It was visible in numerous domains of religious-ecclesiastical complex, in most general terms, including its past importance in society, up to religious beliefs and ritual practices of churches. Even though the process of atheization, which had started right after the Second World War, had not had such radical impact on people's religiousness until 1950s, it became such

in the decades to come, and the consequences remained until the 1980s.<sup>4</sup> Although one of the rare sociological surveys of the time was territorially limited, since Dragoljub B. Đorđević carried it out in 1982 in the region of Niš, where Orthodoxy is predominant, the results which pointed to fully developed process of secularization can cautiously be generalized and applied to Serbian society as a whole, since it is difficult to presume that the religious situation was essentially different in that region when compared to the rest of the country due to the predominant spiritual climate in the socialist society and culture. Of course, this kind of spiritual and socio-political climate is what leads to the assumption that a great number of subjects displayed a high level of conformity, but this element is also indicative of the process of coercive religious changes toward atheization of society. Therefore, even though it is certain that until 1980s there were more religious people than reported by Đorđević, these dire conclusions are not far from the indisputable fact that religion and church were socially stigmatized, primarily Orthodoxy and Serbian Orthodox Church. Đorđević thus concludes: the process of secularization was deeply rooted in the area which is homogenously Orthodox and was strongest when compared to other denominational areas. In Orthodox areas, regardless of whether this religion was dominant, like in Montenegro or Serbia proper, or multid denominational, like in Vojvodina or Croatia, the most conspicuous was the distancing from religion and Serbian Orthodox Church; Orthodoxy lost its huge impact as moral ground or motivator for action, and also, the participation of people in church rites and church life in general was in steep

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4 Several years after the Second World War the percentage of students who attended religious instruction classes was up to 80%, like in Belgrade, and in some places it could go as high as 90%, as shown by the 1951 data, one year before religious instruction in state schools was forbidden. This kind of practice was less frequent in the country, because priests were indolent. (Radić, 1995: 159; 161).

decline. According to Đorđević, Orthodox religiousness faced a deep crisis. The region of Niš, in which Orthodoxy is dominant, was extremely secularized and atheized in the early 1980s, and according to his data about structural elements of religiousness, the process of secularization reached a high level in this area when compared to areas where Catholicism was dominant. This conclusion comes from the results of his survey, regardless of whether they refer to religious identification, incidence of religious beliefs or ritual practices among the respondents. The author concludes that not only some forms of religious consciousness and practice are facing problems, but also that some other forms are in steep decline and are virtually extinct, particularly in case of certain forms of religious practice which are of crucial importance to every institutionalized religious organization, Serbian Orthodox Church included (Đorđević, 1984).

This image of the general situation with religion, but in a more radical way, was typical of young people, and primarily of university students until the late 1980s. There are two authors whose writings are important for comparison of recent research and data about religiousness of young people and university students with the data gathered thirty years ago. They are Dragoljub B. Đorđević, a sociologist of religion, and Dragomir Pantić, whose retrospective papers from the late 1980s and early 1990s (Pantić, 1988; 1993) are important for the explanation of the trends in religious situation of the then Serbian society. He had been investigating this phenomenon by means of public opinion polls and socio-psychological surveys since the 1970s. Socio-psychological surveys of religiousness among young people in the 1970s clearly indicated a low level of common religiousness both on the entire territory of Yugoslavia (Pantić, 1974) and in the City of Belgrade (high-school graduates, data from 1972 and 1975). Pantić identified a low level of religiousness of young people using the indicator of self-assessment of

religiousness: in the first instance there were 11% religious people, and in case of high-school graduates from Belgrade there were only 9% of those who are religious. In the second half of the 1970s there were visible changes of attitude toward religion and church revival in the Catholic areas of Slovenia and Croatia both among general population and high-school students (Rotter, 1984; Vušković 1987; Pojatina, 1988).

However, while empirical evidence show that there were concrete changes in religiousness toward desecularization of society in the aforementioned areas, at the same time, surveys conducted in Serbia and Montenegro which included both general population and some of its segments, say, young people, recorded a very low level of religiousness. In the late 1970s only 3% of young people were interested in religion (Pantić et al. 1981). The result was the same in 1985 among the students of the University of Niš (Đorđević, 1987), while in 1987 there were 10% of religious university students in Belgrade.<sup>5</sup>

In the period between the early 1980s and early 1990s, the general social crisis, crises in economy, politics and widely-accepted values were deepening in the former Yugoslavia. In this socio-political context sociological research and public opinion

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5 The 1984 research into classic and secular religiousness of both urban and metropolitan areas of Belgrade yielded results similar to those from the research we mentioned, although it is possible to notice certain hints of certain religious changes. At the beginning, the 10% of conventionally religious respondents did not indicate these changes, but rather confirmed that there was a tendency to maintain the low level of religiousness in Orthodox areas. However, an increasingly lower percentage of irreligious respondents and a comparison of the percentage of atheists with the previous decade indicates certain changes in attitude toward religion, which was certainly an omen of religious changes toward the renewal of traditional religiousness. Unlike 1974, when the percentage of convinced atheists was highest (58%), the number of atheists significantly fell in 1984, and there were 38%, whereas the percentage of respondents who belonged to the 'mixed type' increased. (Pantić, 1988:67 and ff.).

polls identified an obvious change in people's religiousness, including the dominantly Orthodox areas. These changes among the Orthodox and other populations are significant for sociologists in terms of their theory: they imply wider changes, starting with an increased level of religiousness and stronger bonds with traditional religious organizations; it leads us to the conclusion that these changes were going toward re-evaluation of the entire social significance of traditional religious systems in the former Yugoslavia and their importance for the increasingly popular national corpus; another trend was the desecularization (or deatheization) process in the eve of conflicts and breakup of the country. These surveys provided several important conclusions about religiousness in general, regardless of the denomination, including those pertaining to religiousness among the Orthodox, including both young and general population.

The fact that the changes in religiousness in the late 1980s were obvious was confirmed through a representative sample of young population in the former Yugoslavia (aged between 15 and 27) in a survey conducted in 1989 by the Institute of Social Sciences and the Center for Political Studies and Public Opinion Research from Belgrade (Mihajlović et al., 1990). An average of 34% religious respondents was sufficient to prove that the level of religiousness among Yugoslav youth had changed. Like many other surveys, this one also determined that there were differences in religiousness depending on the republic or province where the respondents lived. There were some significant differences in religiousness among the young population in Serbia, depending on the area and ethnicity. The level of religiousness of young people in Serbia proper (provinces not included) was 26% (compare: in 1974 there were 11% of religious young people in central Serbia, and one year later this number amounted to 17%); there were 34% of religious among youth in Vojvodina, whereas in Kosovo there were as many as 48%. This survey also determined

that the number of atheists among non-religious youth had declined both in Serbia and other parts of the former Yugoslavia and in 1989 there were only 12% of atheists. The fact that this was a serious religious shift is further corroborated if the data are compared with the data from the past, e.g. with 1974, when the number of atheists (33%) was almost the same as of those who stated they were not religious (31% – see Pantić, 1990: 213). Changes that took place between 1985 and 1989 in the ‘mixed type’ are also evident. This type included subjects who are hesitant, ambivalent and indifferent to religion. In this period this number dramatically fell from 24% (in 1985) to merely 9% in 1989, and it is reasonable to assume that most young people who belonged to this ‘mixed type’ opted for religiousness in the latter period. According to Pantić, this preference of the young population for religion, or to be more precise, quick revival of religiousness among the young population in the second half of the 1980s is a result of the deepened social crisis which had a serious impact on younger generations, causing widespread unemployment, loss of perspective and mass anomy. Furthermore, the author points out another important conclusion: two years before the breakup of Yugoslavia, young people had become territorially and nationally homogenized, when religious-ecclesiastical complex assumed the role of compensator and national protector. This role was soon to become more prominent among all social strata in the bloodshed of wars in the Balkans. Thus in 1989 the number of religious young Albanians who lived outside Kosovo was significantly higher (72%) than among those who lived in Kosovo (50%). It was the same with young Bosniaks in Bosnia and Herzegovina (34%) and those who lived in other parts of the country (51%), and with young Serbs in central Serbia (26%) when compared to those living in Kosovo (43%).

In the summary of the main findings of other surveys carried out in the 1990s which comprised the adult population

of the socialist Yugoslavia and a series of findings of opinion polls conducted until 1993 reported by Dragomir Pantić (Pantić, 1993), one can conclude that significant religious changes are reflected in growth religiousness among the young generation, particularly those who belong to Orthodox civilization. Young people became noticeably more religious than before, and it is new that they were now more religious than those who are ten years their seniors, which certainly contributes to the growth and maintenance of general religiousness in an area, since it is reasonable to assume that basic values, which are accepted during primary and secondary socialization are difficult to abandon later in life. Another conclusion that comes from these surveys points to a steady trend of religious restructuring.<sup>6</sup> Just as in the mid-eighties atheism declined among irreligious population, in the same manner, in the late 1980s and early 1990s there was a dramatic fall in the number of people who were ready to identify themselves as atheists, whereas the so-called militant atheists were reduced to a handful. This was a firm evidence of the depth of religious changes toward desecularization of social communities which emerged after the disintegration of Yugoslavia, Serbia and

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6 The emphasis on the fact that religious changes in the late 1980s and 1990s were taking place by way of reducing the difference in levels of religiousness between the young and adults, particularly the oldest members of the population, increased levels of religiousness among the young generation, reducing the gap between levels of religiousness between men and women, increased religiousness of urban population, particularly in big cities which have a huge share of that renewal, significant decrease in differences between the so-called typical believer and other people of 20 years ago – all these are the most important results if the research conducted in 1993 and of some other sociological research on fundamental religious changes in post-socialist societies (Blagojević, 1995). The fact that gender, age, place of abode etc. ceased to play a significant role in religiousness, or that the impact of these factors weakened, simply prove that religion has become far more universal and more acceptable than it used to be during socialism.

Montenegro included, where this process can be better substantiated with regard to the fact that the numbers of religious people in the entire population had been low for almost thirty years.

### **Current religiousness among university students in Serbia**

In the period from 2000 until now, commitment of people to religion and church has not declined, but is steadily kept at the level detected through empirical research conducted in the 1990s. Therefore, indicators of religious self-identification are high, indicators of conventional religious beliefs are lower than the previous ones, but the most important belief, belief in God, is always above 50%, as well as belief that Christ is Son of God. Other core dogmatic beliefs are not widespread among the population in this way, but their revival is noticeable if we take into account the situation we had about thirty years ago. Fewest people believe in eschatological dogmas. Indicators of conventional religious behavior point to an ambivalent situation: indicators of traditional commitment to religion and church, such as baptism, church wedding, burial service and celebrating major feasts are high and are close to those of denominational identity, whereas indicators of current religious practice are least present when compared to other indicators of religiousness and commitment to religion and church, but even this domain of attitude toward religion and church displays changes toward desecularization of Serbian society (Blagojević, 2009).

In this perspective we should also analyze the present commitment of university students to religion and church. In investigating religious, moral and socio-political values of Serbian students we used more than twenty indicators of their commitment to religion and church. An analysis of these findings is the first stage in gaining insight into students' religiousness. The second step refers to mapping results from previous surveys,

primarily with the results from the 1985 systematic research into students' religiousness conducted by Dragoljub Đorđević at the University of Niš, but we will also compare them with results of recent research into religiousness of the general population in Serbia, primarily with findings provided by the Christian Cultural Centre, Center for European Studies and Konrad Adenauer Stiftung in 2010. As we have already mentioned, different levels of commitment of students to religion and church can be illustrated with a table containing 16 indicators divided into three groups: A) indicators of religious identification; B) indicators of conventional and non-conventional beliefs of students, and C) indicators of conventional religious practices.

**Table 1.** Indicators of students' commitment to religion and church in Serbia 2013 (in %)

<b>A</b>	Percentage
Positive denominational self-identification	85.8
Self-declared religiousness	69.2
<b>B</b>	
Belief in God or some power	87.1
Belief that Jesus Christ is Son of God	67.6
Belief in resurrection	47.9
Belief in heaven and Hell	43.5
Belief in transition of soul	34.6
<b>C</b>	
Baptism	79.5
Celebrating major feasts (regular)	76.8
Memorial service common in the family	50.0
Going to church at least once a month	31.3
Attending liturgy (mass, jumu'ah) – regular	9.2

Prayer (regular)	23.3
Holy Communion (regular)	11.6
Fasting before major feasts	26.3
Confession to priest (regular)	6.2

### *A) Indicators of students' religious identification*

Denominational and religious self-declaration are integral parts of every conventional form of religiousness and obligatory indicators which are analyzed in every sociological research on religiousness and commitment to religion and church. However, as introspective and independent indicators, they are not reliable in the assessment of conventional religiousness, since extended denominational and religious self-identification do not guarantee that some other integral parts of conventional religiousness will also be extended, such as attending liturgies, fasting, Holy Communion, frequent visits to a house of worship, or belief in life after death. Even in imposed atheism, the percentage of people who declared their denomination or considered themselves religious was much higher than the percentage of the people who believed in dogmatic foundations of the declared denomination, and was even higher when compared to the findings pertaining to religious/ritual practices. However, even though these two indicators of religiousness were almost always used together in empirical research, the results show that personal religious self-declaration was always below denominational self-declaration, but this discrepancy eventually declined, which was considered to be another indicator of religious changes toward desecularization. Denominational identity is a “soft” indicator of religiousness, because it is used to estimate the number of people who are actually religious in a conventional way when we take into account other indicators in estimating

religiousness of people in a certain religious or denominational area, or, what is more desirable, adequate scales or index of religiousness, for example. Thus a great number of respondents in sociological surveys and public opinion polls who are undecided, irreligious or inclined to atheism have denominational identity, although, according to their own statement and other data they do not fall among believers. Denominational identity is therefore not merely an expression of exclusively religious, but also of a wider socio-historical context in which the traditional religion and church had a prominent place and strong influence in society, on social groups and individuals. That is how denominational identity actually expresses attitudes toward tradition, nation, cultural background and the religion of one's forefathers. That is why denominational identity does not always mean being a believer, but rather being a member of a wider national community. On the other hand, it certainly does not mean that such an indicator is not valid in estimating commitment to religion and church, but rather that its independent use in an analysis of religiousness and of religious situation is not adequate in terms of methodology. It is an indicator which has its own social relevance because it points to historical and traditional commitment of the population to religion and church, and which certainly provides a significant initial insight into religious situation in a denominational area, or simply useful, but still just an initial insight into religious changes.

The indicator which shows self-assessment of one's (ir)religiousness is the most frequently used one in empirical research of religiousness. Self-assessment of religiousness is a more reliable indicator of religiousness than denominational identity, although it has certain limitations which we cannot further explain in this text. Generally, this indicator of religiousness in empirical research conducted since the late 1980s until today shows that respondents are much more prone to see

themselves as religious or believers. University students are by no means an exception, but rather the best example of desecularization of society. We can see that in the following tables and the chart when we compare the values:

**Table 2.** Denominational identity of university students in 2013 and 1985 and of general population in 2010 (in %)

Denomination/Year of research	2013 students CRoS	1985 students Đorđević	2010 general population CCC, Konrad Adenauer
Christian Orthodox	79.1	65.6	78.6
Roman Catholic	1.7	1.1	6.7
Islam	3.4	0.5	6.3
Protestant	0.8	0.3	0.7
Other	0.8	0.8	0.4
None	4.4	31.7	7.1
<b>TOTAL sample of religiously affiliated</b>	<b>85.8</b>	<b>68.3</b>	<b>92.4</b>

Sources: students of the University of Niš 1985: Đorđević, 1987; religiousness of Serbian citizens in 2010: Blagojević, 2011.

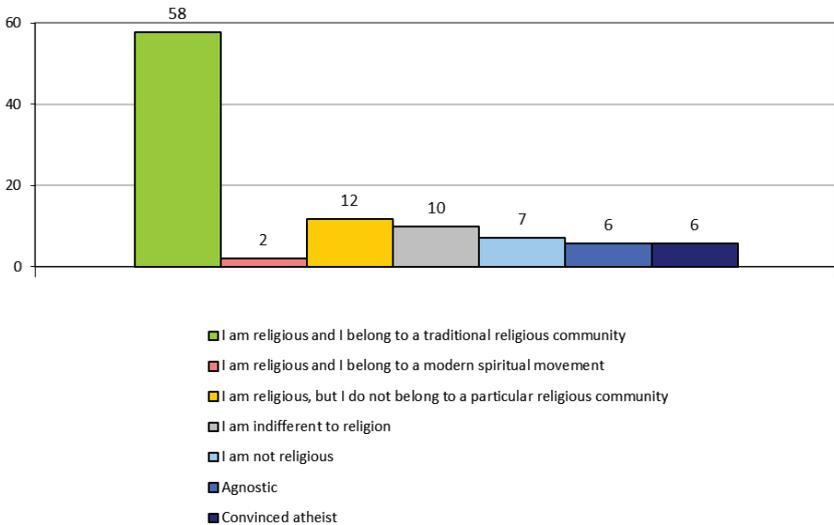
**Table 3.** Personal religious self-declaration of students in 2013 and 1985; general population in 2010 (in %)

Religious self-declaration / Year of research	2013; students CRoS	1985; students Đorđević	2010; general population CCC, Konrad Adenauer
Religious, member of a traditional religious organization/believer	55.8	2.9	77.9
Religious, belongs to a modern spiritual movement	2.0	–	–

Religious self-declaration / Year of research	2013; students CReS	1985; students Đorđević	2010; general population CCC, Konrad Adenauer
Religious, but does not belong to a religious community	11.4	–	–
Indifferent to religion/ambivalent	9.5	16.2	3.9
Not religious/not a believer	6.9	51.2	10.7
Agnostic	5.5	–	–
Convinced atheist	5.6	29.7	3.1
<b>TOTAL religious</b>	<b>69.2</b>	<b>2.9</b>	<b>77.9</b>
<b>TOTAL non-religious</b>	<b>18.0</b>	<b>80.9</b>	<b>13.8</b>

**Chart 1.** Students' responses, 2013. Question: "What is your attitude to religion?"

#### Attitude towards religion



Data from the tables offer some basic conclusions: denominational identity of Serbian university students is now widespread and is more pronounced than denominational identity of the University of Niš students about thirty years ago, although more than half of students of this university used to be willing to declare their denominational origin even then, which is an indicator of traditional commitment to religion and church. The information that even 10% of students in the 2013 survey did not answer the question is indicative, and the percentage of denominational identity might be higher if we disregarded those who did not respond. All in all, students primarily identify themselves with the dominant denomination in Serbia, i.e. Orthodoxy, and prevalence of this identity almost absolutely corresponds with the percentage of those who declare themselves Orthodox from the 2013 general population survey. According to this indicator, we could not conclude as we did before that students are one of the most atheized social groups, although we might mention that in order to explain this phenomenon, both in the period of socialism and today, one should not disregard students' conformity, acceptance of dominant ways of thinking, the stigma it used to carry and the currently positive status of religions and churches as public institutions. Of course, the same goes for the second indicator, which is given in the tables: religious self-declaration of students is rapidly growing today when compared to the data from mid-1980s, when there were less than 3% of respondents who declared themselves believers. Today there are almost 56% of students in Serbia who are religious in a conventional way and who belong to traditional religious communities, another 2% are religious and belong to other spiritual movements, and more than 11% are subjectively religious. Therefore, the total population of conventionally and unconventionally religious students is almost 70%. On the other hand, almost one fifth of the students are not religious: they

are agnostics, irreligious or convinced atheists. The number of irreligious people in general population is somewhat smaller (about 14%), and it is reasonable to suppose that students accordingly have an important part in the irreligious population of Serbia. The conclusion is not problematic, although it is quite expected, that according to denominational self-identification standard, students are generally very religious in a conventional way and that there is no significant difference between them, as a specific social group, and the rest of the Serbian population. This simply shows that denominational affiliation is widely accepted as a significant and strong indicator of group (religious or national) identity<sup>7</sup>, but also as a soft indicator of personal religiousness. Among Orthodox students there are about 10% of those who are indifferent to religion, almost 6% who claim not to be religious, almost 4% of those who claim to be agnostics, and there are even convinced atheists among the Orthodox, 1.3% of them. Of course, there are 65% of Orthodox students who identify their personal religiousness with membership in a traditional (Orthodox) religious community. Muslim students are much more consistent: 94% declare themselves religious and that they belong to a traditional (Islamic) religious community. We cannot say anything about students of other denominations because their population is negligible.

Subjects' gender used to determine the professed religious affiliation. According to available data, this could not be said of general or student population today. If we take into account religious affiliation and gender, we will see that although female students are more likely to declare themselves religious (38.4% to 32.9% of religious male students), that difference is much smaller when compared to results of previous surveys, particularly in the case of general population. There are

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7 Only 3% of the respondents of the survey (N=1058) did not state their ethnic affiliation. 88.2% of the respondents declared themselves as Serbian.

no differences between male and female students in cases of indifference to religion, because about 5% of both sexes share this attitude, while, unexpectedly, there is 1% more irreligious female students than males. In this population there is a small difference in percentage of female students who are subjectively religious without belonging to a particular denomination, whereas male students declare themselves as convinced atheists slightly more than female students, but the difference is too small to say that it is a typically male view. Anyway, according to this indicator of religiousness, we cannot say that there is a single position which is typical of a particular gender. It used to be possible in the case of general population: a typical religious person was a woman, and a typical convinced atheist was a man.

Information about student's religiousness at each university are also important. They can be seen in the following table:

**Table 4.** Self-assessment of students' religiousness (in %)

Universities/Self-assessment of religiousness	Religious	Undecided	Not religious
University of Belgrade	68.7	10.9	20.4
University of Novi Sad	77.1	9.7	13.1
University of Priština seated in Kosovska Mitrovica	97.1	0.0	2.6
University of Novi Pazar	96.9	0.0	3.1
University of Niš	59.8	14.4	25.8
University of Kragujevac	86.3	6.8	6.8
Private universities	63.2	10.3	26.5

Just as the surveys conducted in the late 1980s, this one also shows that religiousness is higher in geographical and neoromantic religious/denominational areas in which the entire religious-ecclesiastical complex appears as a resource for homogenizing collective identity, a resource of resistance or guarantor of preservation of the real or merely perceived danger to culture and national community: thus, students who live and study in Kosovska Mitrovica (primarily Christians) and in Novi Pazar (Muslims) express their religiousness far above the average, and it is just a few percent short of a 100% religious self-declaration. The number of students who declare themselves as not religious is highest at private universities and at the universities of Niš and Belgrade.

*B) Indicators of (un)conventional beliefs of students*

In terms of denominations, religious beliefs can be dogmatic or non-dogmatic. Christian religious beliefs are diffuse, codified and expected in this group. Dogmatic core of Christianity (Orthodoxy) involves many beliefs, such as the core belief in God as Holy Trinity, in Jesus Christ as Son of God, in resurrection, in afterlife, in Heaven and Hell, in rewards and punishments on the other world. However, people also believe in certain truths as integral parts of other, non-Christian, pagan or post-modern movements and religions (e.g. in transmigration of the soul), they can be superstitious or act in that way: e.g. they believe in magic, in astrology, that 13 is an unlucky number etc. In case of religious dogmatics, acceptance of some dogmas and rejecting others from a unique code of dogmatic beliefs is called dissolution of dogmatic content of faith, and it is common among believers in modern secular societies and culture. Accepting beliefs from other religious traditions along with the core beliefs of one's denomination is called religious eclecticism. This phenomenon is typical of both traditional religious beliefs

and post-modern religiousness. In Christianity, dogmatic belief in God presumes belief in triune God: the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. However, some respondents, although declared Christians (Orthodox), imagine God as some kind of energy, life-force or spirit, contrary to the dogma (“There is something, there is a power”). This belief was a tough competitor to the dogmatic idea of God. The situation has changed in recent surveys in the sense that now more than half of the respondents think of God in dogmatic terms, whereas about one fifth of them see him as some kind of energy or force. Even this survey of religiousness among student population confirms this trend.

**Table 5.** Belief in God at three points in time: students and general population (in %)

Belief in God/Year of survey	2013 students CReS	1985 students Đorđević	2010 general population CCC, Konrad Adenauer
I believe that God exists	53.1	1.8	63.2
There is some kind of spirit or life force, but I don't know if it is God.	24.0	–	22.2
I am not sure whether God exists	10.4	–	5.8
I don't think there is God, spirit, or life-force	9.0	–	5.9

**Table 6.** Dissolution of content of students' dogmatic beliefs and religious eclecticism (in%)

Belief.../Year of survey	2013. students CReS	2010. general population, CCC, Konrad Adenauer
in God	53.1	63.2
in Jesus Christ, Son of God (or Muhammad, Messenger of God)	67.6	–
in resurrection	47.9	46.6
in Heaven and Hell	43.5	41.6
in transmigration of the soul	34.6	–
in astrology	19.0	
in magic	14.1	16.0

Unlike general population, students express more doubts about the existence of God, and are open-minded so as not to believe in the existence of God or some power which is above man. This survey, and the one conducted in 2010 among general population, also document that more than half of the students believe in the existence of some force or energy which created the world, which is virtually equal to the number of respondents from general population who view God in this way. Both among general population and among students there is a strictly defined core which views God undogmatically, but this view is noticeably less represented than before when compared to dogmatic views of God. This is the second survey that shows a trend of prevailing viewing of God in a dogmatic way. Reasons for this are interesting, since we already know that in previous surveys there were more subjects who thought of God as some kind of diffused, powerful and undefined force which manages the world and which man depends on (God as absolute and mystical power, as defined by Đuro Šušnjić). There have been no

special investigations into this question, but it is reasonable to assume that it is a result of presence of religion in everyday life, in the media and in public, and people find it easier to get information about theological truths than before. In case of a number of young people, we must not disregard the fact that they had religious instruction at school, in which the central place belongs to “correct” views of God in the framework of Christian dogmata. For easy reference, students who declared themselves as religious followers of traditional religions, modern spiritual movements and unconventionally religious, we placed them among religious students, whereas those who are indifferent to religion and church will be taken as undecided, and agnostics, irreligious students and convinced atheists will be placed among irreligious respondents. When we cross these respondents with the variable of belief in God, we will get the following findings: substantial majority of religious students (74.2%) believe in God in dogmatic way, about 20% of religious students see God as a life force, whereas a negligible number of religious students denies the existence of God or some life force. It is interesting to note that as many as 40% of students who are indifferent to religion and church (undecided) believe in God as some kind of life force, and the number of students who declared as not religious is the same. Therefore, this non-dogmatic belief in God is primarily present among irreligious and undecided students.

The difference between sexes in dogmatic belief in God is just one percent in favor of female students (55.3% to 54.3); seeing God as a life force is also more popular among female students (27.4% to 22.2%), and denial of existence of God or some life force is more represented among male students (11.5% to 7.4%). When it comes to this dogma, the situation at each university in Serbia is similar to religious self-identity:

**Table 7.** (Not)believing in God (in %)

Universities/Self-assessment of religiousness	I believe that God exists	I believe there is some kind of spirit or life force	I don't believe that God or some force exist
University of Belgrade	51.6	25.3	10.3
University of Novi Sad	59.3	22.0	7.3
University of Priština seated in Kosovska Mitrovica	92.3	7.7	0.0
University of Novi Pazar	93.8	6.3	0.0
University of Niš	43.3	32.0	8.2
University of Kragujevac	67.1	17.0	6.8
Private universities	45.7	32.6	14.1

There is not a single student at the universities of Kosovska Mitrovica and Novi Pazar who does not believe in God or some power above man. Of course, at these universities, most students believe in God in a dogmatic way, and the fewest of them can be found at the University of Niš and private universities, i.e. less than a half. University of Belgrade is a borderline case concerning this belief. Belief in some sort of power or spirit is most often found among students of private universities and at the universities of Niš and Belgrade. Not believing in God or some kind of life force is most frequent at private universities.

The distribution of students' answers about their beliefs in other religious dogmas was similar to answers given by the general population, which was slightly less than half, which further confirms that there is a trend of maintaining these beliefs at a high level, twice as much than shown in the surveys from the

first decade of this century. This is the second important finding of this survey in the section about religious beliefs, apart from the increasingly widespread dogmatic view of God. Apart from the fact that almost 95% of religious students believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God (or that Muhammad is the Messenger of God), even 45% of undecided students believe in this dogma. A smaller number of religious students believe in resurrection (about 75%), just about 18% of those who are undecided and finally, slightly more than 6% of irreligious students, which makes their self-declared irreligiousness doubtful, since resurrection is the essence of Christian faith. It is similar with the belief in Heaven and Hell, which can be seen from the following table:

**Table 8.** Incidence of religious beliefs and personal self-declared religiousness among Serbian students

Beliefs from the dogmatic core of faith		Personal religious self-declaration					
		Religious		Undecided		Not religious	
		N	%	N	%	N	%
In Jesus Christ as the Son of God (or Muhammad as the Messenger of God)	Yes	651	<b>94.2</b>	38	<b>48.1</b>	23	<b>16.2</b>
	No	40	<b>5.8</b>	41	<b>51.9</b>	119	<b>83.8</b>
In resurrection	Yes	481	<b>75.2</b>	14	<b>18.4</b>	9	<b>6.3</b>
	No	159	<b>24.8</b>	62	<b>81.6</b>	133	<b>93.7</b>
In Heaven and Hell	Yes	431	<b>67.7</b>	16	<b>21.3</b>	10	<b>7.0</b>
	No	206	<b>32.3</b>	59	<b>78.7</b>	132	<b>93.0</b>
In transmigration of the soul	Yes	310	<b>49.4</b>	14	<b>18.2</b>	39	<b>26.9</b>
	No	317	<b>50.6</b>	63	<b>81.8</b>	106	<b>73.1</b>
In magic	Yes	116	<b>18.7</b>	13	<b>16.5</b>	19	<b>13.3</b>
	No	505	<b>81.3</b>	66	<b>83.5</b>	124	<b>86.7</b>
In astrology	Yes	147	<b>23.6</b>	16	<b>20.8</b>	36	<b>24.8</b>

It is interesting to note that almost half of the religious students believe in the non-dogmatic truth of transmigration of the soul (reincarnation), which is far more than those who are undecided or irreligious. There are two assumptions that might explain this phenomenon: students either perfectly know this religious truth which does not belong to the denomination they proclaim and believe in it in a conscious and eclectic way, or they are not well aware of its origin and meaning and take it as part of the core of the dogmata the of self-proclaimed religion. It is our opinion that part of the problem is also the imprecise formulation of the question, which has to be less ambiguous in future surveys. There are no such dilemmas about the question concerning their belief in astrology, since students are well-aware of what it is: more than one fifth of religious students, one fifth of undecided and one quarter of irreligious students believe in astrology. While there is not a single convinced atheist who believes in conventional religious truths (primarily those from Christianity), there are ‘incidental’ cases of self-declared atheists who believe in transmigration of the soul, in magic or astrology. This is more prominent among agnostics: almost half of them believe in transmigration of the soul and in astrology.

About 80% of female students and approximately 75% of male students believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God; 60% of students of both sexes believe in resurrection, whereas more than 50% of all students believe in Heaven and Hell. In case of non-dogmatic beliefs, there is no significant difference between sexes, with the exception of astrology: there are almost twice as many female students who believe in astrology (29.8% to 16.7%). The situation with dogmatic beliefs at each university can be seen in the table:

**Table 9.** Students' religious beliefs (in %)

Universities/beliefs	In Jesus Christ, Muhammad	In resurrection	In Heaven and Hell	In transmigration of the soul	In magic	In astrology
University of Belgrade	74.7	61.6	55.0	45.2	16.1	22.6
University of Novi Sad	73.8	64.6	52.8	38.8	19.0	21.3
University of Priština seated in Kosovska Mitrovica	100.0	83.9	73.3	40.7	28.6	14.3
University of Novi Pazar	96.6	21.1	90.0	90.5	0.0	0.0
University of Niš	79.3	44.9	46.0	27.6	11.4	22.7
University of Kragujevac	89.9	63.1	50.0	38.1	19.0	31.7
Private universities	66.9	53.2	48.7	45.5	23.2	30.5

The incidence of these beliefs is most similarly distributed among students of Belgrade and Novi Sad universities, and in case of certain beliefs the same can be said about students of universities in Priština (Kosovska Mitrovica) and Novi Sad. For example, 100% of students in Kosovska Mitrovica believe in Jesus Christ, and the number of students of Novi Pazar University who believe in Muhammad is almost the same. Smallest percentage of students who believe in Jesus Christ is among students attending private universities. In case of belief in the core Christian dogma of resurrection, highest percentage of students who believe in it can be found at Kosovska Mitrovica University and lowest can be found at Niš University. Highest percentage of students who believe in Heaven and Hell can be found in

Novi Pazar, and lowest in Niš. It is the same with the belief in transmigration of the soul. Highest percentage of students who believe in magic can be found at Kosovska Mitrovica University, whereas there was not a single student in Novi Pazar who believed in magic. Most students who believe in astrology are from Kragujevac university and private universities.

*C) Students' conventional religious and ritual practice*

Religious and ritual practices are an integral part of conventional religiousness. At the same time, until the late 1980s they used to be the most neglected forms of commitment to institutionalized religion and church in Serbia. That was the case with the general population, and regular attendance at church rituals was purely incidental among university students. Although religiousness was in deep crisis in the territory of the present-day Serbia and it had some impact on all structural elements of religiousness, the crisis was obvious in the evident drop in total religious ritual practice, demise of some important religious rituals and atrophy of some other rituals in a way which was unseen in experiential research on religiousness and commitment to religion and church. With regard to this situation in dominantly Orthodox areas, arguments in favor of religious change, or in a narrow perspective, of change in religiousness of the population, would be strongest possible if they could be expressed through indicators of revived religious behavior and association in the past twenty years, particularly among what used to be the most atheistic part of society – young people and students.

Ritual church practice is a narrower and core form of believers' ecclesiasticism and it shows the intensity and the degree of their commitment to a number of church rituals, their adherence and fulfillment of religious duties and acts of devotion, which is crucial for salvation in Christianity. The phenomenon of religion can be approached structurally when we break

the unique phenomenon of religiousness into constituent parts, while some indicators which are often used to illustrate general religiousness will become prominent. Their factor saturation is such that they belong to “hard” indicators of religiousness, like attending liturgies or personal prayer to God. Of course, apart from these, there are also other indicators of religious behavior, which can be further classified into several ways: e.g. into indicators (rituals) of traditional and contemporary character. However, there is no deep chasm between these two types of indicators. Contemporary religious rituals are focused on what is essentially religious the performance of rituals, while traditional rituals, apart from being used to express the evidently religious character, assumed special social connotations in the course of history and it is thus more difficult to discern between what is authentically religious in the sense of motivation and social aspects: for example, in celebrating major feasts, apart from the reminiscence of some personalities, like a certain saint, martyrs of faith, ascetics, social elements are also integral parts of a particular religious ritual, and can be seen in meetings of relatives, friends, laying foundations and expressions of togetherness, unity, solidarity among believers, identity of a particular denomination etc. In these circumstances it is far more difficult to determine the evident religious motivation in maintaining religious rituals than, say, fulfilling non-religious needs, conformity, religious mimicry and the like. Still, one has to be objective: not only religious rituals are torn between sincerity and conformity. Human behavior taken as a whole can be placed within these limits. That is why traditional ritual conduct must take into account the revival of religion and church, since religious-ecclesiastical complex is not merely transcendence or mystical/absolute power, but also a worldly phenomenon led by the church, which contains and is surrounded by social political power and weakness; it is a community of believers with everything that is typical of

believers both in social and psychological terms. That is why indicators of participation in traditional rituals (baptism, church wedding, church burial, blessing of feasts and family saint's day (Slava), celebration of major feasts and saint's day, possession of religious symbols, refraining from work during major feasts, religious instruction), are equally relevant as evidence about religious changes like the indicators of current attitude toward religion and church (attending the liturgy, going to church, taking Holy Communion, confession, attendance of religious classes, prayer, fasting, reading religious books and magazines, giving contributions to the church, activity in church life). When it comes to rituals and religious behavior, these rituals are not an emphatically custom norm of society like traditional ones, and conformity of society has a much weaker impact on their practice. They are un-profane religious actions, and changes in attitude of modern believers toward these rituals is a firm evidence of a certain degree of revival of authentic religious needs, which are satisfied in ways more or less sanctioned by the church and at a larger scale than before.

However, relatively modest fulfillment of religious duties, not only in Serbia, but also in some other (post-socialist) countries, can be substantiated primarily by the rare occurrence that declared believers adhere to the sanctioned, regular attendance of liturgy, frequency of church attendance, regular fasting and prayers, confessions and taking Holy Communion. From the point of view of conventional religion and the institution of church, regular fulfillment of religious duties is a matter of course, but in reality, religious activities of people, declared believers included, are not regular. According to some authors, without this regularity there is no real revitalization, but merely an eclectic mixture of religion and ideas, superficiality and sheer traditionalism (Каарийнен, Фурман, 1997; Đorđević, 2009).

Let us provide some data about the current religious practice and church attendance among students and general population:

**Table 10.** Frequency of church attendance and prayers in Serbia in 1985, 2010 and 2013

Frequency of church attendance (%)	1985	2010	2013	Prayer (%)	1985	2010	2013
More than once a week	0.1	4.1	2.8	Every day	–	27.4	Regularly 23.3
Once a week	–	8.7	9.7	More than once a week	0.5	11.9	Sometimes 39.4
At least once a month	–	16.2	18.8	Once a week		5.9	
Several times a year	–	50.9	41.9	At least once a month		9.1	
Almost never	–	14.3	–	Several times a year		12.2	
Never	–	5.7	22.4	Less than once a year		12.6	
				Never		16.1	Never 33.2

These data are not interpreted unambiguously in the context of desecularization of Serbian society. Ambivalence about the interpretation of data refers to religiousness (ecclesiasticity) criterion: how high should we set the standards for

subjects (believers) to fulfill? If churches themselves say that a believer must regularly frequent a place of worship, then there are few real believers, according to previous surveys and to this survey, if we take into account that a high percentage of subjects claim to be religious, that they belong to religious communities or that they believe in God. This could be another proof of inconsistent behavior of conventional believers. Only 2.8% of all students claim they go to church every day. However, if this piece of information is interpreted within the framework of time depth, the perspective of interpretation is somewhat different: we can see that there is no trace of regular church attendance among the students. This can be generalized and raised to the level of incidentally regular church attendance. According to the 2013 survey almost one third of today's students go to church at least once a month, which is evidence of the fact that this religious duty is revived. Of course, this percentage is much smaller than the percentage of those who stated a particular denomination or are pro-religious, but it is also one of the indicators of a different religious situation in Serbia. Students who go to church at least once a month, according to their own assessment, do it a bit more frequently than the general population. More than one fifth of Serbian students pray regularly.

It is interesting to mention the frequency of church attendance of each gender. It is surprising that male students go to church regularly, several times a week, more than female students (4.8% to 1.3%), while on a monthly basis, female students are more regular (once or twice a month). A quarter of male and one fifth of female students never go to church. In case of prayers, there are no significant differences between male and female students. It is also interesting to mention the results about the frequency of church attendance at each university:

**Table 11.** Frequency of church attendance at each university (& of students who attend a place of worship)

University/frequency of church attendance	At least once a month	Never
University of Belgrade	33.9	23.6
University of Novi Sad	26.9	23.6
University of Priština seated in Kosovska Mitrovica	78.3	5.4
University of Novi Pazar	51.6	25.8
University of Niš	26.8	24.7
University of Kragujevac	34.7	24.7
Private universities	26.9	27.3

Regarding the duties students have to fulfill, we thought that the frequency of at least once a month is good enough as an indicator of their consequent religious behavior. That is why this information was compared with the number of students who never go to church/place of worship within a year. These results show that the number of students who never go to church and those who do it at least once a month is practically the same at private universities. In cases of all other students who attend other state universities, the number of those who go to a place of worship at least once a month is much bigger than the number of those who never do it, as illustrated by the example of students from Kosovska Mitrovica and Novi Pazar, and it is less obvious at other universities. This is another example which shows that students in ethnically or religiously neuralgic areas confirm their commitment to traditional religion and church by more consequent religious behavior when compared to students at other state universities. Let us look at the situation with other rituals which belong to current church rituals:

**Table 11.** Current religious practice of Serbian students (in %).

<b>Liturgy (mass, jumu'ah)</b>	Students, 2013	Students, 1985	General population, 2010
At least once a month	9.2	0.3	17.1
Several times a year	35.7		40.9
Never	51.2		42.0
<b>Fasting before major feasts</b>			
Often	26.3	0.3	27.4
Rarely	38.5		45.7
Never	31.5		24.2
<b>Confession</b>			
Often	6.2	0.1	7.3
Rarely	16.5		18.0
Never	73.3		64.7
<b>Holy Communion</b>			
Yes	48.7		36.6
No	42.2		56.8

We will notice first that Niš university students of the 1980s regularly attend church rituals. There are similarities in this respect, but there are also differences between current students and general population. Students attend liturgies significantly less frequently when compared to the total population of Serbia, but if they do, and if the information gathered from students themselves are true, then there is a higher percentage of students who take Holy Communion than among general population. There is not much difference in frequency of regular fasting and confession if we compare students and the entire population of Serbia. Therefore, one tenth of Serbian students attend liturgy at least once a month, one quarter of them fast before major feasts, and the information that 11% of students

take Holy Communion regularly comes as a surprise; about half of them have taken Holy Communion at least once in their lives. A small number of students confess to their priest, i.e. about 6%.

In case of current religious rituals we also come across unexpected results concerning male students: for example, they attend liturgy more frequently than female students (11.9% vs. 6.9%). It is similar with regularity of taking Holy Communion and confession, since 7.6% of male students fulfill this duty, whereas the percentage of female students is 5.2%. Concerning the alma mater, crossing the data will produce the following results: most frequent liturgy (or jumu'ah) goers are students from Novi Pazar, over 56% of them, followed by students from Kosovska Mitrovica, with almost 18%, and students of Belgrade University (somewhat less than 12%). This religious duty is most rarely fulfilled by students of private universities and from Kragujevac. Regularity in taking Holy Communion is not so rare as it used to be: students from Kosovska Mitrovica (over 18%) and Belgrade (almost 16%) do it most often. Fasting before major feasts is even more widespread: about 39% students of Kragujevac university, more than one third of Novi Pazar students (36.7%), followed by students from Kosovska Mitrovica and Belgrade. Out of all these rituals, confession is the most rarely practiced form of current religious practice among students: the most regular ones are those who are studying in Kosovska Mitrovica and Belgrade, while there were no students at Niš University who fast, and there was just one student in Kragujevac who did it regularly.

However, religiosity (ecclesiasticity) is not expressed solely through forms of religious behavior that we have mentioned so far. In Christianity (Orthodoxy) there are some rituals which are much more widespread among general population and traditional believers than rituals of traditional religious

practice. These are the rituals which demonstrate traditional commitment to religion and church, such as rites of passage (baptism, church wedding, church burial) or celebration of major feasts or Slava in Serbian Orthodoxy. As we have already mentioned, apart from their obviously religious character, traditional ecclesiastical rituals also assumed some non-religious, specific social connotations during history, although their original purpose was purely religious. That is why it is difficult to generalize traditional religious behavior, i.e. whether believers' motives for adherence to these rituals are purely religious, or participation in them is actually adherence to customs, or believers simply resort to conformity, mimicry, profanation and the like. Still, an act of integration and communication within a particular group/groups through religion or denomination is sociologically one of the most important roles of religion or religious organizations. Let us see what we can deduce from data concerning traditional commitment of students to religion and church in modern Serbia when compared to previous periods:

**Table 12.** Traditional religious practice of Serbian university students

<b>Baptism</b>	Students, 2013	Students, 1985	General population, 2010
Yes	79.5	36.6	82.5
No	12.6	49.3	11.0
<b>Celebrating major feasts</b>			
Regularly	76.8	3.7	91.8
Sometimes	13.8		–
Never	5.7		
<b>Church burial</b>			
Yes	80.6		87.3
No	14.8		8.0

According to available data from various surveys conducted since 1990s until now incidence of these rituals among Serbian population is close to denominational identity, and is above the percentage of personal self-declaration and belief in God (Blagojević, 1995; Radisavljević Ćiparizović, 2002; Religioznost u Srbiji 2010, 2011). Data from the table show that attitudes of students towards traditional religious rituals are very positive, but students claim they participate in them less frequently than general population. Generally, about 80% of students state they were baptized, that church burials are common in their families and that they always celebrate major feasts. If we are to make a general conclusion about the incidence of these rituals among students today, we can say their religious behavior is very similar to that of the general population in the last ten years, and judging by that, we could say that the most frequent and strongest commitment of people with religion and church in Serbian denominational areas lies in their traditional commitment. There are no statistically relevant differences in traditional religious rituals regarding gender: about 80% of students of both sexes state they were baptized, but in the sample there are more male students who will not have their children baptized when they become parents (13.4% to 9.5%); also, there are no major differences about celebrating major feasts and church burials in their families. Concerning particular universities, all students of Kragujevac University state they were baptized, and the results at other universities vary, starting with almost 80%, as in Niš, up to almost 90% in Novi Sad. Understandably, only 19% underwent this crucial Christian ritual in Novi Pazar. Kragujevac university students display highest incidence of celebrating major feasts (97.2%), followed by students from Novi Sad (91.2%) and Kosovska Mitrovica (89.5%). Obligatory church burial is most frequent among students of Kragujevac University (68.1%), followed by those in Novi Sad (66.5%) and Niš (57.3%), less than half of students of Belgrade university,

private universities and the one in Kosovska Mitrovica, and is least incidental among Novi Pazar university students (20.7%).

### **Importance of religion in students' personal and social life**

Regardless of the relatively low incidence of current religious practice rituals, when compared to rituals belonging to traditional commitment to religion and church, the consensus about the importance of religion and God for life in modern Serbian society is not as weak as it used to be thirty years ago. Surveys of public opinion conducted at the beginning of this century and in 2008 show a positive attitude to the importance of God and religion in people's lives, which used to be unthinkable. Here are some statistical data:

**Table 12 .** Importance of religion in subjects' lives among general population and students (in %).

Importance of religion/Year of survey	EVS (2008)	Students (2013)
Very important	7.6	19.8
Important	47.4	30.3
Not important	24.6	10.5
Not important at all	11.6	13.1

Source: *European Values Study, 2008*.

Data from the first column are from European Values Study, which was conducted in Serbia in 2008. These data show that the perception of the importance of religion and church for people and their lives in society goes beyond 50% of respondents, although it is just slightly above one half, and it is the same as the opinion of students involved in this year's survey. Opinions about the importance of God are similar. For example the

2008 survey tells us that vast majority of respondents think that God is important for one's personal and social life (almost 60%, whereas as many as 22.1% think that God is very important). The current survey offers similar results (Chart 2): now there are almost 24% of students who readily state that God is very important in life, whereas 12.2% of them think that God is not at all important. When explaining this phenomenon one should start from a different political and social climate than the one that was present during socialism, but we should take into account the strong conformity on the part of the respondents who now add the confidence in church to the traditionally high level of confidence in the military. Next set of data provides information on Serbian citizens' and students' confidence in key social institutions:

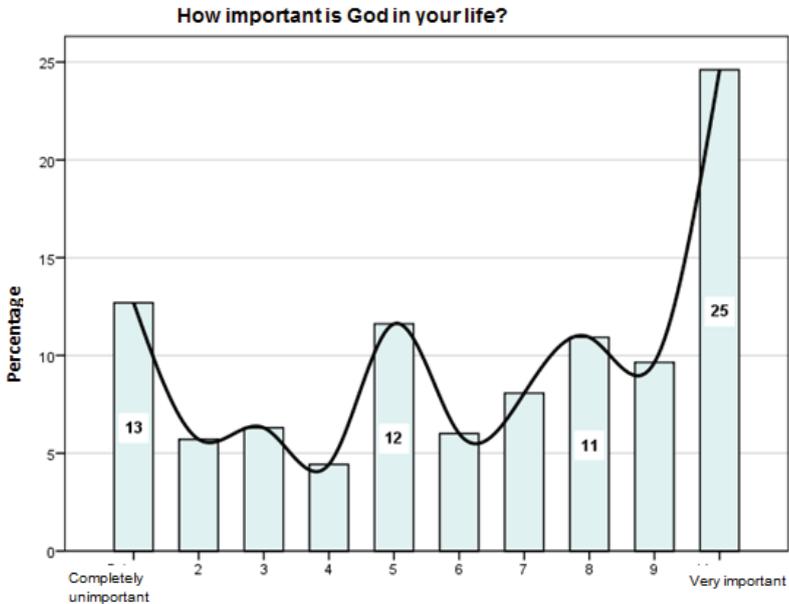
**Table 13.** Public opinion's confidence in some institutions among Serbian general population and students (in %).

Confidence in	Very high and high		Very low and no confidence	
	Serbia, 2008	Serbia, 2013 students	Serbia, 2008	Serbia, 2013 students
Church	58.3	43.8	38.5	32.1
System of education	52.2	57.2	46	16.1
Military	40.2	42.4	57.6	23.8
Police	33.9	24.7	64.4	45.9
Parliament	11.9	8.0	85.1	66.1
Political parties	6.1	5.2	90.1	78.5
Government	13.8	8.9	81.7	60.1
EU	27.3	14.4	67.2	55.9
NATO	8.7	5.7	85.4	70.5
Russia	–	26.6	–	37.6

Source: European Values Study, 2008.

Although both general population and students share similar levels of confidence, there are also certain differences: most students have confidence only in the system of education, which is understandable because of their status within this system. Less than half of students have confidence in all other national and international institutions, starting with the church and the military, which enjoy confidence of almost half of respondents, up to political parties and NATO, with confidence which is barely over 5%.

**Chart 2.** Importance of God in students' lives on a ten-level scale.



When asked what they think about whether religious organizations adequately respond to certain personal, moral and social problems of people and the society, the responses were as follows:

**Table 14.** Opinion poll on the adequate response of religious communities to personal, moral and social problems (in %)

They respond adequately to:	Yes		No	
	Serbia, EVS 2008	Serbia, 2013	Serbia, EVS 2008	Serbia, 2013
moral problems and needs of the individuals	43.1	23.3	39.9	39.0
family life problems	33.5	22.2	48.3	39.7
spiritual needs of people	62.0	35.1	24.9	27.5
social problems in the country	21.2	11.1	59.1	48.3

Source: *European Values Study*, 2008.

Students are far more skeptical than the rest of the population in case of adequate responses of religion and church to personal and social challenges of the time. There was not a single question about adequacy favored by the majority, and they are very skeptical about whether religious communities can provide adequate responses to current social problems in Serbia.

### **Conclusion – circles of students committed to religion and church**

According to all these indicators of students' commitment to religion and church, we could sketch a certain number of concentric circles representing their commitment to religion and church, primarily to conventional religion and religious organizations. Of course, these circles are of ideal type character and are difficult to find in real life in this form. With reference to the core of this commitment to religion and church, the most distant circle, but not the biggest one, is the narrow circle of students who openly declare their irreligiousness, regardless of whether they declare themselves agnostics, irreligious or convinced atheists. They total 18% of the respondents, and we could

make a rough generalization and say that about one fifth of the students are irreligious. Somewhat closer to the core of strong and essential commitment to religion and church is a very wide group of self-declared members of denominations and both conventionally and unconventionally religious students, who total about 70% of the respondents. Most of these students attach identity and cultural value to religion and church, and their religiousness is often termed as cultural religiousness. Part of the students who accept the core belief in God, believe other dogmas of their religion, and they total somewhat less than the previous group. The beliefs of this group are divided – more than half of them believe in God or Jesus, whereas somewhat less than 50% believe in other important dogmata of eschatological character. Of course, a small number of these students who stated their denomination and religion and who believe in dogmas of their religion and act in accordance with religious/church norms and maintain regular religious practice, belong to the smallest, i.e. central circle, the core of commitment to religion – they are church-goers, active in their diocese, and whose worldview is most closely linked with the worldview of their religion and religious organization they belong to. This narrowest circle is, naturally, very limited and certainly does not exceed more than a few percent of religious students.

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Translated by Nenad Tomović

## The religiousness of students in Serbia and their attitude toward the EU

**Abstract:** *In this paper we will analyze how religious the students in Serbia are, as well as their attitude toward accession to the European Union. For this purpose we will use research results from 2013. First, we will define the complex notion of religiousness. Then we will explain the social context in which the research was conducted. Next, we will present the research results starting with the participants' religious beliefs, their evaluation of religiousness, the indicators of traditional, modern and dogmatic religiousness, while comparing our results with those of previous research. Finally, students' attitudes will be presented, particularly the attitudes of those students who consider themselves religious. We will present their expectations, their attitude toward life changes and their fears concerning accession to the European Union.*

**Key words:** *religiousness, students, desecularization, the European Union, Serbia.*

In the complex time of globalization and post-modernity, at the beginning of the second decade of the third millennium, it is popular to view religion as a dynamic entity, and its end in secularism and modernism is not accepted. Secularism and religiousness have always been present throughout history, and they represent two different attitudes of people toward the world and life. Nevertheless, despite the fact that the everyday life becomes more secular and dependent on technology, religion has

kept its high position in all societies, even the in the most developed ones. This is especially true in the private domain, in terms of morality, tradition and culture. The transformations that the modern society goes through and the new existential difficulties caused by a deep crisis lead to such social/cultural circumstances in which people find it hard to define the desired type of existence. Religion proves to be a problem for the individual and the society, for the family and the education, for the everyday life and the functioning of the modern civilization. Observing religion as a specific notion in everyday life makes us view the religious needs as important cultural needs of people and religious functions in a society. The problem of meaning is one of the fundamental problems which every religion solves in its own way. It was in fact the social, economic and cultural modernization, which was thought to be the end of religion that resurrected it. People need new sources of identity, new forms of stable community and new rules of morality to give them the feeling of sense and purpose. Huntington tried to give a global explanation for the omnipresent phenomenon of the return of the Holy on a world-wide scale. The revival of religion is an urban phenomenon, and what characterizes it is the fact that young people are more religious than their parents (S. Huntington, 1998).

Religiousness is most often defined as a social and psychological state attributed to a believer, and it has three aspects: *cognition, affect and action*. It is the unity of *believing, feeling and practice*, which accompanies a specific *religious feeling*... (D. B. Đorđević 2007, 491–493). The religious feeling most often comes down to *the holy*, which is an encounter to a radically different order of things which surpasses human power, causes fear, or helps and attracts. Mirko Blagojević also dealt with a sociologically acceptable definition of religion and religiousness (Blagojević 2004, 213–240). Even though he is a sociologist of religion *par excellence*, Blagojević most certainly knows the constraints of when investigating religiousness.

“The extraordinary complexity and stratification of religiousness stems from the fact that it is part of those concepts of human individual life which encompass the deepest and most intimate layers of the mind and the soul, especially when we have the case of deep piety” (Blagojević 2004, 236).

A formal connection to religion and church is a lot easier to detect in sociology, especially when it is a customary norm of a particular environment or an identification of the individual's or group's position in a society. That is why some other concepts in empirical research of the sociology of religion are defined – ecclesiasticism, religious affiliation, as well as the concept of commitment of people to religion and church – with a variety of indicators which can be divided into religious consciousness and religious behavior indicators, although some other categorizations are present: for example the indicators of tradition, current and dogmatic attitude toward religion and church (Blagojević 1995; Radisavljević-Ćiparizović 2006). A multitude of indicators in empirical research into religiousness gives us a more balanced and precise picture of the religious situation in a particular area. In that way an experiential database is formed and conclusions about the religiousness of the people based on these data are much more reliable than those based on research in which one or two indicators are used, which is typical of omnibus surveys. On the other hand, the advantage of such research is longitudinal observation of phenomena, and the use of the same research techniques and samples. The sociologist's main task is to compare numerous research empirical data. Blagojević draws our attention specifically to the methodological problem when it comes to making synthetic conclusions about the religious situation in a specific denominational area. This problem appears at the level of defining and using the basic research concepts, and at the level of interpreting and comparing the acquired data. That is why we should be careful

when using the different indicators, samples and focus groups in research, as well as the time of research, i.e. the specific social and historical circumstances (Blagojević 2004:237). In sociological empirical research, traditional religiousness is most often split into two constituent elements: *religious consciousness*, which comprises belief, feeling and religious experience, regardless of whether it is belonging to a particular religion, believing in God and other dogmatic foundations of religion, and *religious behavior and association*, such as going to church or liturgy, fasting, prayer, contributions to the church, etc. (D. B. Đorđević 2007:492; Blagojević 2004:238).

**The social context of the 2013 research:  
(de)secularization in Serbia**

During the 1990s people in former socialist countries returned to religion, since the downfall of socialism left behind an ideological vacuum. The revival of religiousness in Serbia from the past two decades was marked by religious traditionalism, return to the faith of one's ancestors and the traditional religious institution. From the point of view of the attitude toward the religious-ecclesiastical complex, D. B. Đorđević divided the post-war time into three periods: the socialist regime 1945-1987, the Milošević regime 1987-2000 and the democratic regime period from 2000 (Đorđević 2006: 239–240). After an almost half-a-century long expulsion from social life, the Church stepped out onto the public scene and once again became a significant factor in shaping the religious and national identity. After the October 5<sup>th</sup> changes, the Serbian Orthodox Church – as the majority church in Serbia and the church of the majority – not only kept its social position, but also strengthened it. What was revoked by a political decision imposed by the communist ideology, returned in a similar, maybe less aggressive way. In July 2001, denominational religious instruction

was introduced in elementary and high schools (Radisavljević-Ćiparizović 2006: 95–105). The Faculty of Orthodox Theology once again becomes part of Belgrade University, and priests return to the military. The law on churches and religious communities was adopted after its sixth revision, in 2006. Nationalized church properties are restored or compensated for and churches are being renovated and built. The presence of clergymen at public events and the presence of the political elite at religious gatherings are noticeable and covered by the media. On the other hand, Milan Vukomanović is of the opinion that the more important role of the church, its social role, is neglected. The numerous spheres that legally belong to the domain of church (philanthropy, foundations, charity and welfare work, etc.) were left untouched. Meanwhile, political exploitation of church was carried out with ease and without thinking, not only by conservative politicians, but also by clergy, influential bishops and other high priests who often expressed Church's political views in public (Vukomanović 2008, 135). Peter L. Berger, the famous sociologist of religion, in his article "Orthodoxy and Global Pluralism" considers that understanding Orthodoxy has a significant role in understanding the modern world in general. The author observes the four historical situations that Orthodoxy was in: 1. a state church, 2. a more or less tolerated minority under the Muslim rule, 3. a persecuted community in the time of communism and 4. a community in diaspora, and he concludes that none of these contexts prepared this branch of Christianity to function as a voluntary association. Berger believes that the only way for this church to "survive" the challenges of racial, national and religious pluralism, is for it to change into a voluntaristic association. (Berger 2010: 347–351).

When the return and revival of religion in Serbia are interpreted, two theoretical frameworks are usually mentioned. The first one refers to religion as a public institution, and the

second one refers to the rationale of independent, inner religious renewal which stems from the core of religion itself and the church as God's institution, and from the individual spiritual need of the believer for devotion and terminal faith (Blagojević 2009b: 99). While the first framework is never called into question, the second one causes confrontation of different, sometimes opposing opinions and interpretations of the same empirical pieces of evidence (Blagojević 2009b: 97–117). Serbian sociologists of religion and their Russian colleagues interpret the same experiential evidence in different ways. What makes this case unique in Serbia is the fact that the “conflicting interpretations” of the same research results come from the two leading sociologists of religion who belong to the same school (“Vrcanovci”).<sup>1</sup> The first interpretation was brought forth by Dragoljub B. Đorđević (Đorđević 2009: 57–64). The author of the second interpretation is Mirko Blagojević (Blagojević 2009:65–70). Blagojević's interpretation differs from Đorđević's in the fact that Blagojević puts the focus in the process of revealing the revival of religiousness on the weakest link in integral parts of conventional religiousness and commitment to religion and church. There he detects changes which are far from what the church expects, of course, far from the unproblematic and consequential religious behavior, but which denote an evident strengthening and “recovery” of this link. Blagojević points out that what we have here is a

1 “We can still divide most Serbian sociologists of religion into two schools of thought. Some of them join a specific branch of sociology of religion which was founded in the former Yugoslavia and continued to exist in the newly formed states, and which I am now naming publicly for the second time the Vrcanovska School. Apart from professor Vrcan, who undoubtedly left his mark, Štefica Bahtijarević, Sergej Flere, Ivan Cvitković and, maybe also Dragoljub B. Đorđević, Mirko Blagojević and Dragan Todorović could be said to belong to this school. The followers of the other school, i.e. the Jukić School, are Jakov Jukić, Esad Ćimić, Đuro Šušnjić and Nikola Skledar, maybe also, Zorica Kuburić, Dragana Radisavljević-Ćiparizović and Danijela Gavrilović” (Đorđević 2007: 12).

problem similar to the problems which appear when religion is defined as a phenomenon, when certain aspects of the religious are taken as crucial for determining the core of the function of religion (Blagojević 2009b: 105). Đorđević uses indicators of the traditional attitude toward religion and church, which show that this fundamentally modern Orthodox religiousness is the most widespread. On the other hand, Blagojević puts forward current religious behavior, because with it he proves undisputable but constrained changes in institutionalized religiousness. The newly-formed religious changes in Serbian Orthodoxy have been experimentally recorded in all segments of Orthodoxy and Serbian Orthodox Church, starting with religious identification, the doctrine and ritual behavior and association, although the scope and the intensity of those changes are different in integral dimensions of the so-called conventional religiousness. We agree with Blagojević's view that characterization of the revival process, which is at the core of the dispute, depends on the answer to this question: "How strict the criteria in evaluating the conventional religiousness ought to be?" Since Serbia is not a unique case in Europe, we should have in mind the religious situation in the neighboring countries and in other countries as well, and we should observe how devoted people in those countries are in fulfilling their religious duties and acts of piety (Blagojević, 2008). Although the main markers of conventional religiousness in Catholic religious and secular circle are such that declared religiousness is the most frequent one, compared to the mixed, Protestant and Orthodox circles, as far as Serbia is concerned, that divide has become much smaller, and so religious declaration and believing in God in Serbia are coming closer to the situation in Catholic countries (Italy and Portugal), and are significantly higher not only than those in the Protestant countries (Denmark and Sweden) and the countries which are mixed in terms of denomination (United Kingdom

and the Netherlands), but also when compared to Orthodox Russia. Nevertheless, in case of regular church-ritual behavior of the respondents, i.e. believers, then the split among the Catholic, mixed, Protestant and Orthodox countries is clearly visible. In Catholic countries more than half of the respondents go to church at least once a month. In the countries where more than one religion is present, not more than one quarter of the respondents go to church. In Protestant countries very few religious people fulfill this religious duty. The situation is similar in contemporary Orthodox Russia. The situation in Serbia is becoming like the situation in the countries where more than one religion is present. Based on that, Blagojević concludes that the religious structure which was formed during the 1990s in Serbia is still present, and that it has become stronger in the domain of religious consciousness. As for the ritual dimension, it has made some small steps (Blagojević 2008: 235).

The abovementioned attitudes of eminent sociologists of religion tell us that the everyday question of how religious the citizens of Serbia are is still not easy to answer. One of the reasons for this has long been the lack of empirical sociological longitudinal research carried out on a *representative sample*, the importance and need of which has been pointed out many times. The several decades devoid of empirical research which would be well thought out in Serbian sociology of religion (Đorđević 2007; Radisavljević-Ćiparizović, 2006) are slowly being overcome, but still, all empirical research is valuable, and they contribute to shedding light on the complex phenomenon of (contemporary) religiousness in Serbia.

The Centre for Religious Studies of the Institute for Philosophy and Social Theory in Belgrade in cooperation with Konrad Adenauer Stiftung from Belgrade and the Centre for European Studies in Brussels carried out a research in 2013, about religious, moral and socio-political values of students. It

included 1058 students in six university centers (Belgrade, Novi Sad, Niš, Kragujevac, Novi Pazar and Priština). Part of the results concerning the religiousness of students in Serbia and their attitude toward accession of Serbia to the European Union will be presented in this text.

## **The 2013 research results**

### *1. Denominational and religious self-identification*

Denominational/religious affiliation is not identical to religiousness, and it is the sociological insight that reveals the complexity of this multi-layered phenomenon which usually overestimates the number of truly religious people. When establishing the differences between these two notions, D. Đorđević suggested an original definition of denominational identity<sup>2</sup>. It is well known that denominational affiliation, on its own, represents the very weak and usually only traditional and conventional relationship that people have with religion and church, and it is of little importance to their attitudes and behavior. This form of commitment to religion and church was never called into question, not even in the time of large-scale atheization. According to the latest census from 2011, 93.73% citizens of Serbia stated their denomination<sup>3</sup>, which is similar to the 2002 census results, when 95% stated their denomination.

2 Denominational affiliation, in a sense wider than that of religiousness, may denote: “1) the present commitment to a particular denomination, including current personal religiousness 2) traditional commitment to a particular denomination and the process of equating the religion with the ethnos – without religiousness but with a clear sense of denominational affiliation, and 3) recognition of denominational origin, “religion by birth”, despite the lack of reasonable explanation for this and being personally irreligious. There is also a totally opposite stance: a total absence of denomination, when people refuse to identify themselves in terms of denomination or do not know them in the psycho-cognitive sense” (Đorđević 2000:164).

3 [www.popis2011.stat.rs](http://www.popis2011.stat.rs)

The 2013 research confirms the increase in the trend of stating one's denomination, since 95% of the students stated their denomination. Out of that number, 88% are Orthodox, around 2% are Roman Catholic, 0.8% Protestant, 3.6% Muslim. 5% do not belong to any denomination.

Traditional religiousness was viewed through the following indicators: denominational affiliation (denomination), baptism of children, celebration of religious holidays and church burial. Apart from denominational religiousness, traditional religiousness also stayed at an expectedly high level, and not only that, but it also slightly increased. Data on religious self-identification show that a certain number of people state their denomination, but they do not declare their religious identity. That is why the indicator of the self-assessed religiousness is more reliable, and so it is often used in empirical research. We used the so-called more precise religiousness scale, where the results were the following:

**Table 1.** Religiousness, self-assessed by the students 2013 (in %).

	Students' Attitude Toward Religion 2013	%
1.	Religious and belonging to the traditional religious community	57.7
2.	Religious and belonging to modern spiritual movements	2.1
3.	Religious, but not belonging to any religious community	11.8
4.	Indifferent toward religion	9.9
5.	Not religious	7.1
6.	Agnostic	5.7
7.	A convinced atheist	5.8
	Total	100.0

Research results are often summarized to make their use easier, and so religious people from all categories can be treated as religious, those who are indifferent as undecided, and those who are tolerant or passionate atheists, or agnostic, as irreligious. 71.6% of the interviewed students defined themselves as religious, most of them stated they belong to traditional denominations, only 2% defined themselves as religious and belonging to modern spiritual movements, and almost 12% stated they do not belong to any denomination. One-tenth is indifferent toward religion, and there are 16% of people who are not religious.

If we compare these results with other research where classic, or ecclesiastical religiousness was investigated, we consider only those belonging to traditional religious communities to be ecclesiastically religious. Once more, denominational, ecclesiastical/classic religiousness does not accept subjective religiousness without being a church-goer.

“Classic religiousness encourages worship in designated religious institutions, temples, as well as developing the sense of belonging to a faith or an organization; it presumes personal recognition in religious terms, public practice as specified by religion and the church and adoption of fundamental dogmatic beliefs of a particular religion or denomination. A typical representative of classic religiousness is the so-called church believer – a devoted believer who is ecclesiastically pious – who should belong to church and religion he inherited from his nation and family, with all his body and soul” (Đorđević 2007a:492).

**Table 2.** Incidence and intensity of classic/church religiousness in Serbia (in %).

Intensity of Classic Religiousness	1. 1982	2. 1993	3. 1999	4. 2010	5. 2013
Religious	24	71	<b>59</b>	78	<b>58</b>
Undecided	23	15	<b>21</b>	4	<b>24</b>
Atheist	45	12	<b>18</b>	14	<b>18</b>
Antitheist	8	0.3	1	/	/

Note: The data in all the research were obtained by the self-evaluation of religiousness.

Research:

1. The religiousness of the people in the Niš region 1982 (Đorđević, 1984);
2. Branicevo region, 1993 (Blagojević, 1995);
3. *Srbija krajem milenijuma* (Beograd, Novi Sad i Niš) 1999 (Radisavljević-Ćiparizović 2006);
4. *Religioznost u Srbiji 2010* (HKC, 2011);
5. The Centre of Religious Studies research 2013.

We can observe that the number of people who defined themselves as religious has more than doubled, when compared to the 1980s. When we compare the research on religiousness in Serbia from the end of last century (1999), which encompassed the entire population, with the results from 2013, where the attitudes of students are in focus, we can observe great similarities and that they are almost identical. In both of them 60% are religious, a bit more than 20% undecided and 18% are irreligious.

When we compare the results of the 2010 research, where there are very few of those who are undecided, only 4%, with those from the latest research, where almost a quarter of respondents belong to that category (24%), we can attribute this difference to the specific nature of young people who are still in search for their own (religious) values.

## 1.2. *Taking part in traditional rituals*

### 1.2.1. *Child baptism*

Baptism is one of the fundamental Christian sacraments, which has a deep religious and symbolic meaning. In Orthodoxy and in Catholicism there are seven holy sacraments: baptism, anointment, Holy Communion, confession, marriage, Holy Orders and holy unction. In the old Christian church, when adults, known as candidates or catechumens, were baptized, they were prepared for baptism in classes which lasted from one to three years, as well as by church prayers. Since nowadays, in most cases, it is the children that are being christened, there are no catechetical classes. However, when an adult is to be baptized or being christened, the catechumen should be taught and familiarized with the learning of the church before his name is written in the Book of Life and before they are united with the flock of Christ's descent (*Enciklopedija pravoslavlja*, 2002). We asked the following question: *Have you had your children baptized, or would you like to do it?* to see how ready our respondents are to confirm the commitment to the traditional religion in the next generation, since baptism is usually not an individual decision or choice. Two-thirds of the respondents, i.e. around 70% of the young people, including those who were baptized as well as those who were not, say they had their children baptized, or would like to do it.

### 1.2.2. *Church burial*

Through the burial ritual a community bids a deceased person farewell, while one or more priests perform the burial service. The custom (in Orthodox tradition) is to serve *panaija*, puffed wheat, which the priest blesses and sprinkles with red wine. The wheat represents eternal life, death and resurrection. Forty days after someone's death, half a year or one year after, a

service for the dead is performed. Our expectations that this was a widespread ritual were confirmed, even among young people. It is almost as frequent as denominational identity. The answer to the question: *Is a church burial of the deceased common in your family?* was affirmative for around 85% of the respondents.

### 1.2.3. Celebrating religious holidays and *Slava* (Serbian family patron saint's day)

In ancient cultures time was divided into “sacred” and “profane”, and holidays were the source of “sacred” time. Today, the meaning of religious holidays comes down to the sociological and social nature: “They are moments when friends and relatives meet, moments of mutual help, exchange of best wishes, phone calls” (Bigović 2000: 64). Complaints about the downside of Christian holidays are often heard, i.e. that they are accompanied by drunkenness and disorder. The essence of any phenomenon has to be judged not according to its distortion, but according to its true sense and meaning. Having that in mind, we must speak about religious holidays from the point of view of their original sense: what church holidays really are and how they should be celebrated. Only then, in their positive sense, will we be able to truly criticize the ever possible distortions and deviations from the proper religious celebrations, says Schmemmann<sup>4</sup>.

Research has confirmed, as expected, that it is a case of the absolute majority, since over 90% of the respondents celebrates religious holidays, and 6% says they never celebrate them.

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4 [http://www.verujem.org/teologija/smeman\\_tajne\\_preznika/](http://www.verujem.org/teologija/smeman_tajne_preznika/).

**Table 3.** Indicators of traditional religiousness, ranked, in (%)

Indicators of Traditional Religiousness, Ranked	1. 1999	2. 2013
Confession	93.5	95.0
Celebrating religious holidays	86.6	94.1
Church burial	86.1	84.5
Child baptism	83.9	70.3

1. *Srbija krajem milenijuma* (Beograd, Novi Sad i Niš) 1999 (Radisavljević-Ćiparizović 2006);

2. The Centre of Religious Studies research 2013.

## 2. Current commitment to religion and church

The current or active commitment to religion or church is expressed by practicing the rituals of the so-called non-traditional nature. Conformity of the environment has a much smaller impact on those rituals, so we can consider them to be non-profane religious or church rituals *par excellence*. At the same time, the secularization, especially in Orthodox areas, is mostly visible through the erosion of religious participation in the so-called non-traditional rituals. As indicators of the religious situation in a particular area, empirical sociological research uses indicators which are divided into indicators of *religious behavior as believer's immediate duty*: in our research those are attending liturgy and going to church, and indicators of religious behavior as an *act of piety*, such as prayer to God, fasting before important holidays, Holy Communion and confession, and reading religious books and magazines.

## 2.1. Religious behavior as an immediate of a believer

### 2.1.1. Attending Liturgy

Liturgy means ‘service’ in Greek; in the New Testament it represents the service to God; another name for liturgy is Eucharist, or thanksgiving. “Liturgy, the name of the most important Christian service that exists in various meanings and aspects with all Christian denominations, explains the idea of the Christian outlook on life and the main aspirations of the Christian church. Liturgy was established by Jesus Christ at the Last Supper...” (*Bogoslovska enciklopedija*, 2000). The history of Christianity teaches us that Christians used to take Holy Communion every day, then 4 times a week, then on Sundays and during holidays, then at the time of fasting, i.e. 4 times a year, and at the end barely once a year, or even less often than that. Because of its crucial significance for believers, this ritual is considered by most sociologists to be one of the most important indicators of the current commitment to religion and church. The answer to the question whether they visit the Sunday liturgy (mass), the respondents gave the following answers which we compared to the results from previous research.

**Table 4.** Attending Liturgy in (%)

Liturgy	1. 1993	2. 1999	3. 2010	4. 2013
Regularly	0.3	2.1	9.8	9.5
1–2 times a month	3.3	6.9	7.3	/
Several times a year	22.7	39.1	40.9	37.2
Never	72.5	42.7	42.0	53.3
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.00

Note: Data in all research were obtained by the self-evaluation of religiousness.  
Research:

1. Braničevski okrug, 1993 (Blagojević, 1995);
2. *Srbija krajem milenijuma* (Beograd, Novi Sad i Niš) 1999 (Radisavljević-Čiparizović 2006);
3. *Religioznost u Srbiji* 2010 (HKC, 2011);
4. The Center of Religious Studies research 2013.

Almost one-tenth of the students (9.5%) say that they attend the most important Christian service regularly, and 37.2% do from time to time. More than half of the interviewees never go to the liturgy (53.3%). Compared to the 1993 research, the regularity of going to liturgy has increased much, and the number of people who never go has dropped. On the other hand, the number of believers who attend the service regularly is stable at around ten percent.

### 2.1.2. *Going to church*

There is no definition of church, except in the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed, which was finally formed in the fourth century, where the attributes of church were listed: “One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church” (article 9). The word ‘church’ originates from the Greek word *ekklēsia*, and it means ‘assembly’, and from the Jewish *kagal*, which means ‘sum’. The Russian word *tserkov* stems from the Greek *kyriakos*, which means ‘the house of Lord’. Church first of all denotes a group of people who believe in God and Christ” (*Bogoslovska enciklopedija*, 2000). Of course, church is also an institution, founded more than two thousand years ago. Going to church was always considered to be a strong indicator of religiousness, the most representative one on certain occasions. Along with attending liturgy, with the prayer, believing in God – going to church gives us a true picture of the real, present, conventional religiousness. When asked whether they go to church/temple, our respondents answered as follows:

**Table 6.** Going to church/temple in (%)

How often do you go to church or temple?	1. 2010	2. 2013
Several times a week	3.5	3.0
At least once a week	4.8	10.2
Once or twice a month	8.5	19.7
Several times a year	42.1	43.8
Not often	20.4	/
Never	19.5	23.4
Total	100.0	100.0

1. *Religioznost u Srbiji* 2010 (HKC, 2011);

2. The Centre of Religious Studies research 2013.

Almost one-third of the students (32.9%) go to church regularly (the sum of the first three numbers), and almost 44% go to church several times a year. A bit less than a quarter of the respondent never go to church (23.4%). Compared to the 2010 research we have double the number of people who go to church at least once a week, or once or twice a month.

## 2. 2. Religious behavior as “an act of piety”

Following indicators belong to religious behavior as an act of piety: prayer, fasting, Holy Communion, confession and reading religious books and magazines.

### 2.2.1. Prayer

Prayer is one of the basic needs of the human body, soul and spirit. It is cherished under various names and in various ways in all the religions of the world. Prayer represents direct contact of a believer with God, which is represented through faith, hope and love. It falls among strong indicators of religiousness, and is highly significant in all religions, not only Christianity. Prayer, as an intrinsic need, cannot be considered to be conformist behavior,

nor is it a result of peer pressure. Usually, it has a personal touch to it, and it is associated with one's everyday problems.

Almost two-thirds of the students (65.4%) say they pray to God, whereas one-third (34.6%) never pray. One quarter of the interviewees pray regularly (24.3%), and 41.1% occasionally.

## 2.2. Fasting

Every religion requires some form of fasting. It means abstinence from the earthly gifts for the sake of reaching a higher spiritual development on the “ladder” that leads to salvation or enlightenment. Muslims eat and drink noting for 40 days during daytime, “from sunrise to sunset”, and the Catholics distinguish between fasting, which is reduced to several days (Ash Wednesday, Good Friday and Christmas Eve) and abstinence from meat (when eating eggs and dairy products is allowed) which is usually on Friday. The Orthodox Church recognizes fasts that lasts one day and those of several days<sup>5</sup>. It is a very important part of holiday rituals. Fasting on water, oil or fish are common. It is customary to fast on water for seven days before taking Holy Communion, but if the priest allows it, this period can be shortened. Of

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5 Fasting days, according to the Orthodox religious calendar, are every Wednesday and Friday, except during compact weeks of which there are five. Fasting is also recommended on the following days: Theophany Eve (January 18), Beheading of St. John the Baptist (September 11) and the Exaltation of the Holy Cross (September 27). There are four fasts that last more than one day: The Great Lent and Holy Week, Apostles' Fast, Dormition fast (August 14–28) and Nativity Fast (November 28 to January 6). The first two are moveable feasts, and their time depends on the time when Easter is celebrated. The Great Lent is also called Holy, (because it encompasses the time of the passion of Jesus and his crucifixion onto the Holy Cross), Veligidanski (*The Big Day*), and the **Great** Lent because of its special significance, but also its length – 49 days: seven weeks (Čista (*Clean week*), Pačista (*Following the Clean week*), Bezimena (*Nameless week*), Sredoposna (*Middle week*), Gluva (*Silent week*), Cvetna (*Flower week*) and Strasna nedelja (*Passion week*)).

course, this permission is given to the sick, the old, the children, or some similar cases. In the *Orthodox Encyclopedia (Enciklopedija pravoslavlja 2002)* fasting for several days is explained as follows: “One does not have to fast. Fasting is a feat and not everyone can do it, despite their good intentions. In times of hardship, when someone gets sick unexpectedly, or goes on a longer trip, spends some time away from home, it is possible and permissible to stop fasting. If one has been fasting for more than three days, then they can attend the service in a temple of God and take communion from a priest, and they can stop fasting.” The purpose of fasting is to purify the body, to strengthen the will, to raise the soul above the body, and most of all, to celebrate God. Fasting means abstaining from meat dishes and impure thoughts, desires and actions, as well as multiplication of prayers and good deeds. When we asked the students whether they fast before the important religious holidays, we got the following answers:

Similar to the results concerning prayer, there are two-thirds of those who fast (67.3%), and a bit less than one-third of those who never fast (32.7%). 27.3% fast regularly, and 40% fast from time to time. The weakest spot is confession, which is practiced by less than one quarter of the respondents (23.7%), and there are only 6.5% of who go to confession regularly. A huge number (76.3%) never confesses. Half of the students (50.8%) take communion (12.1% regularly, 38.7% occasionally), whereas 49.2% never take communion.

### *2.3. Reading religious literature*

Regardless of the religion or church, disseminating and maintaining the faith means that there are institutionalized ways of communication between believers and religious organization, as well as between the believers themselves. Let us remind ourselves that the first means of mass communication – printing – was first used to print the Bible. Church publications contain

valuable materials which are necessary for the study of cultural and ecclesiastical past. During the period of socialism, religious organizations were restricted to the printed word only, without legal possibilities to open their own radio and TV stations, which are common in the rest of the world. Today, the Church has its radio stations, such as *Slovo Ljubve* and *Radio Svetogora*.

8.1% of the respondents read religious books and magazines. 38.5% read them occasionally, whereas more than a half of them (53.4%) never read religious books and magazines.

**Table 5.** Indicators of current religiousness in 2013, ranked

Indicators of Present Religiousness in 2013, Ranked	%
Going to church regularly	32.9
Fasting (regularly)	27.3
Praying (regularly)	24.3
Taking communion (regularly)	12.1
Going to liturgy (regularly)	9.5
Reading religious books and magazines (regularly)	8.1
Confession (regularly)	6.5

At first glance it appears that the percentages of the respondents taking part in religious rituals are not as high as they are in the case of those who are traditionally religious. However, when we compare these results with those of previous research, a gradual change is noticeable – a slow rise in church attendance compared to the 1990s (research done by M. Blagojević in 1993, D. Radisavljević-Ćiparizović in 1999), whereas compared to the 1980s, there is no drastic change (research conducted by D. B. Đorđević in 1983 with students from Niš).

Questions concerning dogmatic and/or superstitious beliefs appear in the 2013 research, which we did not have the

chance to explore in 1999 (because it was an omnibus survey). Almost 80% of the respondents believe in Jesus Christ, the Son of God, or in Muhammad, the Messenger of God. Around 60% of young people believe in the Resurrection, a bit more than a half believes in Heaven and Hell. The number of superstitious people is not small (17.6% believe in magic, 23.6% in astrology). Neither is the number of those who are not true Orthodox believers (there is 42.9% of those who believe in reincarnation). The true Orthodox belief, accepted by the church, would be believing in the afterlife, as opposed to reincarnation.

**Table 6.** Beliefs of young people, 2013

	In Jesus Christ/ Muhammad	In resurrection	In Heaven and Hell	In reincarnation	In magic	In astrology
Yes	78.1	58.9	53.7	42.9	17.6	23.6
No	21.9	41.1	46.3	57.1	82.4	76.4
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

### 3. Students' attitudes toward accession to the EU

Before we analyze the results of the research about the students' attitudes toward accession to the European Union, let us remind ourselves of Father Radovan Bigović, one of the greatest theologians of the Serbian Orthodox Church in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, who thought that one creative synthesis between the European East and the European West would mean Europe's salvation. This would be possible if European values were to be united, and not the EU merely "extended"<sup>6</sup>. Bigović cautiously warned that

6 Proropresbyter–staurophor (the highest Presbyter title), Radovan Bigović (1956–2012): On Europe as "the story of the golden calf" in conversation with

Europe and the world are integrating incredibly fast at technical, technological and political levels, and disintegrating at anthropological, moral, spiritual and psychological levels. That is why the people feel the need to create a common European home, but they are also afraid of it. Christianity was one of the main notions that shaped the European ethos and mentality, and today the Orthodox Church is present in all European countries. Nevertheless, Europe has decided not to mention its Christian heritage and Christian values in its Constitution<sup>7</sup>. They only mention the “cultural, religious and humanist heritage of Europe”. The basis of this attitude was the fear of discriminating all of those people who do not have the sense of belonging to Christian tradition, and the fear of stepping back from the “united in diversity” formula which determines the EU. At the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, while the citizens of Europe question the scope of liberal democracy, the intolerance between European “native inhabitants” and the increasing number of Muslim immigrants who are not ready to adjust to formal secularism is growing. There is an increase in religious beliefs and the influence of religious institutions. Extension of eastern borders meant confronting European secularism with the strong religious identity of the new members (Bulgaria and Romania) and the countries of the “Western Balkans”<sup>8</sup> who are candidates for the membership in the “European club”. The

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journalist Goran Kozić (“Pečat“, issue 35) <http://www.pecat.co.rs/2012/06/radovan-bigovic-1956-2012-evropa-i-mit-o-zlatnom-teletu/>.

7 The first European Constitution was signed by the heads of states and governments of the EU members on October 29, 2004, in Rome. The Lisbon Treaty (the reformed European Constitution which was not accepted in France and the Netherlands in 2005) was signed on October 13, 2007. It was enforced on December 1, 2009, when it was signed by the Czech Republic.

8 The Western Balkans is an artificially coined term made in order to change the image of the entire region – it is a common name for the countries which are not in the European Union, and geographically they are in the west of Balkan Peninsula: “The ex-Yugoslav countries: Slovenia + Albania = Western Balkans” (Pavlović 2010:92).

newest, 28<sup>th</sup> member, is the neighboring Croatia (2013), whereas Serbia is expecting the beginning of the accession negotiations.<sup>9</sup>

When asked whether they wish Serbia to join the European Union, our respondents gave the following answers:

**Table 7.** Attitudes toward accession to the EU

The respondent wants Serbia to join the EU	1. 2010	2. 2013
Yes	54.1	58.2
No	28.5	41.8
Both yes and no	2.3	/
I don't know	15.1	/
Total	100.0	100.0

1. *Religioznost u Srbiji* 2010 (HKC, 2011);

2. The Centre of Religious Studies research 2013.

Almost 60% of the students want Serbia to become a EU member, whereas a bit more than 40% are against it. In terms of gender, they are pretty much equal, although men seem to be slightly more in favor of joining the Union than women

9 On the website of the EU Info Center, which is located at the Belgrade Youth Centre, one can get many useful pieces of information, and we would like to single out the answer to this question: Where is Serbia now, regarding the process of integration? “The Integration process of Serbia has taken a very positive direction and it has advanced a lot. As the result of this progress, the citizens of Serbia, as well as companies, are can already feel certain benefits, form the abolition of visas to the Interim trade agreement. In October 2011 the European Commission states its opinion about the readiness of Serbia to become an EU member candidate. The candidate status opens the doors for the next phase – the negotiations. After finishing the negotiations, Serbia and the member states of the European Union sign the accession treaty, after it had been accepted by the EU Parliament. It then must be ratified in Serbia, as well as in all the member states, according to their constitution (either in parliament or in a referendum)” – <http://www.euinfo.rs/interactive/q-a.html?position=1>.

(59.4% to 57.4%). Irreligious students are more inclined toward Serbia joining the Union of the European countries (70%), than religious students (55.3%), whereas 61.5% of those who are undecided students support this. See Table 8.

**Table 8.** EU membership and religiousness 2013.

		Religious in %		
		Religious	Undecided	Non-religious
Do you approve of Serbia becoming a member of the EU?	Yes	55.3	61.5	69.2
	No	44.7	38.5	30.8
	Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

To the question why they accept the EU we got the following answers.

**Table 9.** Reasons for accession to the EU 2013.

	It is our extended cultural, spiritual and language homeland	You will be able to earn more although you will have to work more	You will be able to travel	You will berespected more	You will be able to work/study wherever you want	You will be able to start your own business
I completely agree	9.7	15.9	<b>29.6</b>	13.2	<b>27.9</b>	16.0
I agree	23.6	36.4	<b>41.0</b>	21.7	<b>36.2</b>	26.7
I am indecisive	27.8	22.6	12.3	27.6	16.4	29.8
I don't agree	<b>20.2</b>	12.8	7.7	21.4	9.0	14.7
I completely disagree	<b>18.7</b>	12.3	9.4	16.0	10.4	12.7
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

From the given answers, the students mostly chose the following options – *you will be able to travel* (70.6%) and *you will be able to work/study wherever you want* (64.1%), which was expected because it corresponds to their age and interests; whereas most of them (38.9%) disagree with the statement that *the EU is our extended cultural, spiritual and language homeland*.

What are the expectations of (ir)religious students about the change of life after Serbia becomes an EU member concerning the following aspects: unemployment, standard of living, economic growth, preserving the national identity and culture, social security, personal security, differences between the rich and the poor, pollution, corruption, organized crime, our citizens going to live abroad, migrations of foreigners to our country, influence of our country in the world, and the influence the world will have on the events in our country?

As for how life will change after our country becomes an EU member, most religious people think it will “stay the same” in many of the offered categories. Most religious people think that the only thing which will increase is our citizens moving abroad (63.6%), as well as foreign influences on the events in our country (57%).

Those who are undecided about religion are also undecided when it comes to unemployment (almost the same number of people think that the situation will remain the same or that unemployment rates will shrink – around 40%), the standard of living (it will improve, or it will remain the same – more than 40%), and the economic growth (50% think it will stay the same, and 43% think it will improve). They too say that the number of our citizens living abroad will increase (more than a half – 62%), and that foreign influence on the events in our country will grow (51.5%).

Most irreligious people (51.4%) think that the economic growth will improve when Serbia becomes and EU member, and that pollution will decrease (44%). They agree with those who are religious and undecided that more people will move to other countries (as many as 72.4% irreligious people think that), whereas increased foreign influence on events in our country is observed by 58.4%.

**Table 10.** How life will change after our country becomes an EU member

How life will change after our country becomes an EU member		Religiousness in %		
		Religious	Undecided	Non-religious
Unemployment	Will increase	22.2	16.5	16.3
	Will stay the same	43.5	41.2	46.2
	Will decrease	34.4	42.3	37.5
Standard of living	Will increase	38.1	46.4	44.3
	Will stay the same	46.8	42.3	43.7
	Will decrease	15.1	11.3	12.0
Economic growth	Will increase	42.4	43.3	51.4
	Will stay the same	44.7	50.5	41.0
	Will decrease	12.9	6.2	7.7
Preserving national identity and culture	Will increase	12.2	10.3	8.2
	Will stay the same	54.1	59.8	66.8
	Will decrease	33.7	29.9	25.0
Social security	Will increase	31.3	34.0	37.5
	Will stay the same	51.5	48.5	48.4
	Will decrease	17.1	17.5	14.1
Personal security	Will increase	30.5	33.0	29.3
	Will stay the same	56.8	53.6	60.9
	Will decrease	12.7	13.4	9.8

How life will change after our country becomes an EU member		Religiousness in %		
		Religious	Undecided	Non-religious
Differences between rich and poor	Will increase	38.1	39.2	32.1
	Will stay the same	49.9	46.4	50.0
	Will decrease	12.1	14.4	17.9
Environment pollution	Will increase	25.6	19.6	17.3
	Will stay the same	42.7	44.3	38.9
	Will decrease	31.7	36.1	43.8
Corruption	Will increase	18.9	17.5	17.3
	Will stay the same	50.3	49.5	45.4
	Will decrease	30.8	33.0	37.3
Organized crime	Will increase	19.6	17.5	16.2
	Will stay the same	48.9	54.6	46.5
	Will decrease	31.5	27.8	37.3
Our citizens living abroad	Will increase	63.6	61.9	72.4
	Will stay the same	29.2	24.7	21.1
	Will decrease	7.1	13.4	6.5
Foreigners living in our country	Will increase	39.6	41.2	39.5
	Will stay the same	55.5	54.6	54.6
	Will decrease	4.9	4.1	5.9
The influence our country will have in the world	Will increase	18.8	14.4	21.1
	Will stay the same	68.3	71.1	70.3
	Will decrease	12.9	14.4	8.6
The influence the world will have on events in our country	Will increase	57.0	51.5	58.4
	Will stay the same	39.8	47.4	39.5
	Will decrease	3.2	1.0	2.2

How is the fear of joining the European Union manifested? The offered options were: loss of social security, loss of national identity and culture, loss of Serbian influence in the world and fewer jobs in Serbia.

**Table 11.** Fear of joining the EU

	Loss of social security	Loss of national identity and culture	Loss of Serbian influence in the world	Fewer jobs in Serbia
Likely to happen	22.0	33.1	21.5	21.7
I am not sure	<b>51.8</b>	33.8	<b>43.8</b>	<b>41.4</b>
It will not happen	26.2	33.0	34.7	36.9
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Loss of national identity and culture is the biggest fear, and the answers are equally divided (33%) between the affirmative, negative and “I am not sure”. More than half the students (51.8%) say “I am not sure” about the loss of social security. This answer is also chosen by most when it comes to the loss of Serbian influence in the world (44%) and fewer jobs in Serbia (41%). When it comes to gender, the answers are more or less the same, except in the case of the loss of national identity and culture. Almost 37% of the men think that this will happen, and the number of women is a bit smaller – 30%.

When we cross-reference the data concerning fear of joining the EU with the religiousness of the respondents, the following distribution of answers in percentages is achieved.

**Table 12.** Fear of joining the EU and students' religiousness

		Religiousness in %		
		Religious	Undecided	Non-religious
Fear of joining the EU – loss of social security	It will happen	25.1	16.3	12.0
	I am not sure	<b>53.1</b>	<b>51.0</b>	<b>46.4</b>
	It will not happen	21.8	32.7	41.5
	Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
Loss of national identity and culture	It will happen	37.2	23.5	23.0
	I am not sure	34.3	36.7	28.4
	It will not happen	28.5	39.8	48.6
	Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
Loss of Serbian influence in the world	It will happen	25.5	14.3	8.7
	I am not sure	45.7	40.8	37.7
	It will not happen	28.7	44.9	53.6
	Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
Fewer jobs in Serbia	It will happen	24.3	18.4	13.1
	I am not sure	43.1	37.8	36.6
	It will not happen	32.6	43.9	50.3
	Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

The young are very “cautious” in giving their answers, since they chose the “I am not sure” option often. This might stem from the fact that they do not know how much time is needed for Serbia to become an EU member state, as well as the possible obstacles which our country might encounter on that path.

### Conclusion

The 2013 research yielded valuable experiential data not only on students' religiousness, but also on the moral and socio-political values of the student population in Serbia. The

results of the latest research involving young population confirm that there is a trend of de-secularization in Serbia, especially when compared to the time of socialism from the 1970s and 1980s. Alongside the denominational religiousness, traditional religiousness not only stayed at a high level but also increased a little. And so 71.6% of the respondents define themselves as religious, and most of them belong are believers of the traditional denominations, only two percent follow under modern religious trends, and almost 12% do not belong to any denomination. One-tenth is indifferent toward religion, and 18.6% are not religious (in all aspects of religiousness). When we compare the research on religiousness in Serbia which was conducted at the end of the last century (1999) with the one of 2013, where students' attitudes are examined, the results are very similar, almost identical.

Next, almost one-tenth of the young (9.5%) say that they regularly attend the most important Christian religious service, and 37.2% of them attend it from time to time. More than half of the respondents never attend liturgy (53.3%). Compared to the 1993 research the regularity of attending liturgy has increased several times, and not attending has decreased. On the other hand, the number of those who attend religious service regularly is stable and is at about 10%. Almost one-third of the students (32.9%) go to church fairly regularly, and almost 44% of them go several times a year. A bit less than a quarter of the respondents never go to church (23.4%). Compared to the 2012 research the numbers denoting church attendance have doubled in the following categories: at least once a week and once or twice a month. Almost two-thirds of the students (65.4%) say they pray to God, whereas one-third never prays (34.6%). One quarter of the respondents pray regularly (24.3%), and 41.1% do it occasionally. The same situation that we have with praying can be observed with fasting. There are two-thirds

of those who fast (67.3%), whereas a little less than one third of the interviewees (32.7%) never fast. 27.3% of them fast regularly, and 40% fast from time to time. The weakest aspect is confession – less than a quarter of the respondents (23.7%) confess their sins, out of which only 6.5% do it regularly. As many as 76.3% of the respondents never confess. Half of the students (50.8%) say they take Holy Communion (12.1% regularly: 38.7% from time to time), whereas 49.2% never take communion. 8.1% read religious books and magazines regularly, and 38.5% read them sometimes. More than a half of students never read religious books and magazines (53.4%).

At first glance, it is noticeable that the percentages for practicing the religious rituals are not as high as they are in the case of traditional religiousness. But when we compare these results with the previous research, a gradual change can be observed – a slight increase in the church attendance compared to the 1990s research (conducted by M. Blagojević in 1993, D. Radisavljević-Ćiparizović in 1999), whereas compared to the 1980s (the research involving students in Niš, conducted by D. B. Đorđević in 1983) the change is drastic. Almost 80% of the respondents declared that they believed in Jesus Christ, the Son of God, or in Muhammad, the Messenger of God. Around 60% of the young people believe in resurrection, and a bit more than a half of the respondents believe in Heaven and Hell. The number of those who are superstitious (17.6% believe in magic, 23.6% believe in astrology) and of those who are not true Orthodox believers (up to 42.9% believe in reincarnation) is not to be neglected.

Almost 60% of the students want Serbia to become an EU member state, whereas a bit more than 40% are against this. Those who are not religious are more inclined toward Serbia joining the community of European countries (70%), than those who are religious (55.3%), whereas 61.5% of those who are undecided about religion support this. Most religious people think

that when our country become an EU member the number of our citizens living abroad will increase (63.6%), as well as foreign influence in our country (57%). This is also the opinion of those who are undecided about religion, and there are more than half of them who say that the number of our citizens living abroad will grow (62%), and so will foreign influence in our country (51.5%). Most of the irreligious respondents (51.4%) think that the economic growth will increase when Serbia becomes an EU member state, and that pollution will decrease (44%). They also agree with those who are religious or undecided about an increase in the number of our citizens living abroad. As many as 72.4% of the irreligious think the same, whereas 58.4% expect that foreign influence on the events in our country will increase. What people are most fearful of is loss of the national identity and culture, and the answers are evenly divided among the affirmative, the negative and the “I am not sure” option (33%).

The young were very “cautious” in giving answers, because they often chose the “I am not sure” option. This might be due to the fact that it is still unknown when Serbia will join the European Union, due to possible obstacles that await our country on that path. We also found that the students who defined themselves as religious in the 2013 survey are more skeptical toward European integration, which might be due to the fact that the young are very critical of the complex and delicate situation that Serbia and its student population have lived in practically since the day they were born.

If what we wrote about the attitudes toward joining the EU according to the 2010 research is that we are “onboard a train without a timetable”<sup>10</sup> (Radisavljević-Čiparizović 2011), in 2013 what we can say is that we still have before us “a long journey to Europe”.<sup>11</sup>

10 *Train Without a Timetable* – title of a popular Yugoslav movie.

11 *A Long Journey to Europe* – title of a popular theater play.

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[www.popis2011.stat.rs](http://www.popis2011.stat.rs)

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## Post-Secularity and “Modernization with a Soul”

**Abstract:** *This text deals with the research project of the Center for Religious Studies which implicitly encompasses the issue of post-secularity. The issue is actually a dilemma whether post-secular means transformation or continuation of secular neglecting of the transcendent sense of spirituality. Additionally, the meaning of the concept of “religion” which looks for a meaning on “this side” only and which originates from the human spiritual need for understanding of the telos of being is discussed. However, considering the spirit of the time of dominant modernization, which abandons the concept of otherworldliness, institution of religion becomes obsolete, especially when it loses its own spiritual connection with the “other side”. In spite of this, it reveals that the idea of spirituality is important and that the crisis of material goods and the need for a sustainable organization in the environment brings us back to the non-material values. In this way, spirituality ceases to be considered as a part of religion, or its alternative. Spirituality may also be a way by which the world and human nature may be viewed. The possibility of confirmation of these assumptions is, however, given only in a partial way, as the explicit questions on spirituality are not posed here.*

**Keywords:** *modernization, environment, post-secularity, religion, spirituality*

The expression “modernization with a soul”, can be found in the introductory text of the research project presented on the website of the Centre for Religious Studies (CreS)<sup>1</sup>.

1 The draft of the research of CREs, entitled: “Post-secular Turn: Religious, Moral and Socio-Political Values of the Student Population in

It suggests certain questions to which we cannot give definite answers, but their mere placement and consideration becomes an attempt of a deeper reflection of the current social situation, which is also the topic of the text. Therefore, let us start with the question: how should this term be understood? The term “modernization with a soul” might be a call to explore a different conceptualization of life largely ignored or rejected by consumerist orientation of modernization. If that is the expression of a need for an alternative form of modernization, the question is whether it can lead us to right thinking about what it should be.

Seeing how the idea of a different approach to modernization (the one that would accompany “the soul”) emerges from the margins of global processes, we cannot help wondering: is it in such a position because of the possibility of abuse, or because of its emancipating potentials? Namely, it seems that *alternative modernization* requires a spiritual context which has remained unexplored within modern science, because, within the framework of the ideology of modernization, the *progress* is measured only by the value of the repertoire of the industry of consumption and the technology of profits.

There are good reasons for this to change and they will be discussed here, but the term “modernization with a soul” should be understood through the prism of the assumption of the existence of a tendency for transformation that requires a different view of modernization. Possible findings that such a global transformation has already begun would not have much use of the research addressed to one particular society only.

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Serbia” has the following text as an entrefilet: “Post-secular Europe: a reality in which the discrepancies between the contemporary imperatives of development and sustainability on one side, and the religious worldviews, rooted in tradition, on the other, are being transcended. Modernization with a soul: A fantasy or the future?” (Retrieved September 22, 2013 from <http://instifdt.bg.ac.rs/crs/studentske-vrednosti.html>)

Even if the present study had been more focused on obtaining the relevant data on such a transformation, it could only have shown whether there is a mental capacity for that.

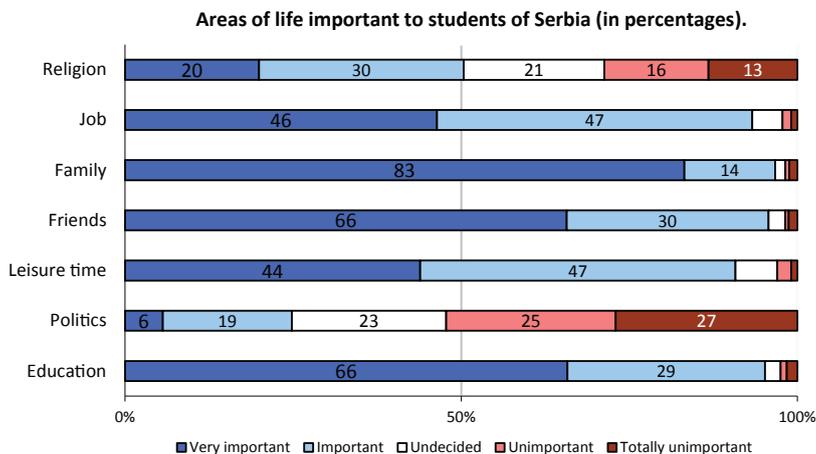
Given that it generally seems to us that flows of global and local processes are not harmonized, it is strange that there is still a synchronicity that connects us to something that may favor the aforementioned assumptions. It is the *collective memory* of the Serbian society that used to know a similar idea, once expressed as an invitation by the former intelligence to the need to build “socialism with a human face”.

Now, it is not the issue that this research can confirm the critical continuity of this idea on the basis of transposing humanistic ideals of the ongoing transition of the regime in Serbia. Even if there were room for such a history to be presented here, it would not guarantee the outcome of future development. It is mainly a question of power, and sources of human potentials that could change strongly networked ideas and practices of the domination of post humanism are not sufficiently obvious in the society. After all, we know that under socialism the aforementioned humanistic idea shared the fate of the marginalized, all those who resisted the alienating system.

In principle, the power of the idea of “modernization with a soul” can be found in the fact that it results from a real need, planetary urgent, that understanding of economic principles of globalization be harmonized with environmental as well as psychological sustainability of ideas that are presumably associated with the acceptance of post-secular values.

Certain answers of respondents that could illustrate this topic are presented in tables of frequencies obtained in this study by the CreS. Tables of frequency reveal, among other things, ethical potentials of future academic citizens of Serbia on the basis of their evaluation of different areas of life.

**Table 1.** Areas of life important to students of Serbia (in percentages).



Based on this table (p14), we can see that of the proposed areas, most respondents valued family (97%), and only slightly fewer valued friends (96%), education (95%), then the job (93%), and leisure time (91%). To this population of respondents, religion (50%) is far less important, and the least important is politics (25%).

What does this mean, that is, how is it related to the meaning of the concept of post-secular? To understand this issue, the attention should be drawn to the flow of pre-evaluation, which globally opens the topic of post-secular worldview. On the one hand, there is a shift in perspective that leads to the point that the *sacred* is starting to be recognized the middle of *secular* (Hammond 1994). On the other hand, there is an extension of the term “religion” in a way that is obscured, for example, in which sense is the statement that the modern world is shaped by “religions” including: the “war against terrorism”, intelligent

design, abortion ... (Nye 2004:1; Sremac, Beuk 2013:62-3), the expression of post-secularization?

Moving the role of “sacred” (religious) from the religious sphere into the sphere of “temporal” (secular) – which is related to ideological-political and socio-economic life and everything psychological that touches the deepest feelings and the highest values of personality and culture – there is a shift that changes the understanding of “religion”. However, if thus religion becomes immanent to the world, the question is imposed: what happens to the metaphysical sense of religious that we refer to as “otherworldliness”? As the word says, “otherworldliness” is set against “this world”, that is, the secular. So what happens when the “this” and “that” side are leveled? Apocalypse or the annulment of the otherworldliness?<sup>2</sup>

The main dilemma of the concept of post-secular is: does it signify a transformation, or the continuation of secular neglect of otherworldliness and transcendental sense of spirituality as a symbol or archetype of “super sensuous” world? In this regard it remains unclear how this dilemma is solved in relation to the expansion of the meaning of “religion”, which comes from

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2 The shift in the meaning of “holiness” and “spirituality” that were once an integral part of religion, leads to the fact that a metaphysical sense religious becomes obsolete. “Holy” is becoming a broader term than “religious”, as it can be attributed to the values of both “this” and “the other” side. However, if we were left without “the other” side, if only “this” side remained, it would imply that only secular institutions (i.e. science, and in facts – politics) have the authority to define the objects and phenomena of the sacred. Since the disappearance of the holy happens in the processes of politicization, to which scientific and religious institutions are subject to, the question of “the autonomy of holiness” should be set to institutions in general. It is essential, in fact, whether there is anything outside that is imposed or suggested as a “sacred” by the institutionalized “authorities”, or whether something is sacred as such because it brings with itself proper sense of the synergy with the environment?

the human spiritual need to apprehend the *telos* of existence? Does the search for the meaning and purpose of existence only on “this side”, in anything in which can be believed, mean “religiosity”? Given the disappearance of the idea of otherworldliness, in the spirit of the age of the dominant modernization, the institution of religion becomes obsolete, especially when it itself loses the spiritual connection with “the other side”.

Hence, the economy and ecology are beginning to be seen as “religions” (i.e. as if religion were imminent to them). Nelson (Robert H. Nelson), for example, analyzing antagonistic relations between economy and ecology in the twentieth and twenty-first century, determined that the questions of what the attitude of people towards nature should be, and it influenced their conversion into public, secular religions (although they do not mention their Judeo-Christian origin). Environmentalists see human activities as something that leads to climate change, or population growth, while economic growth is considered an immoral violation of the natural order. Economists tend to use nature as much as possible to produce more goods, services and other benefits to the people. Struggles between these secular rivals – the economy and the environment, have a disguised religious nature, according to Nelson, suggesting that, as the outcome of these struggles will have immediate consequences for all, should influence their choice of using in-depth analysis, which, beneath the rhetoric surface, reveals the area of the religious purpose and the vision of both points of view.

Since this means moving religious purpose and vision into the science, then the true subject of in-depth analysis should be the politics of this shift. It is known that modernity began when, centuries ago, science separated from those areas of the human spirit over which the institution of religion had the power. That meant the separation of science from the ultimate

questions of existence which are intimately associated with the belief. Questions of belief and faith, then, remained in religion, while science, having found no certainty, kept to probability, by which it revealed considerable knowledge expressed through sophisticated technology and its appropriate power. Weaknesses of this power point to paradigmatic and methodological limitations by modernizing politicized science, but it cannot be seen what the further policy about it will be. It is also obscure how to stop the inertia, which – through “science”, and, if necessary, “religion” – is focused on the fact that “ism” is to take all the power – for which control of solutions is important.

The human mind is, thus, at a crossroads from which it may or may not continue to serve the interests of power, regardless of the harmful consequences, or to seek the possibility of transformation, “modernization with a soul”, which requires a paradigmatic change of views and attitudes towards the world. However, since this way the science gets the possibility of emancipation from the temptations of the abuse of power, the choice is tried to be previewed, and its idea is suppressed more and more as the transition progresses for the purpose of globalization, which has become a major “religion” of the modern world. It seems this is why the idea of a link to “the other side” is annulled, while “spirituality” is reduced to the phenomena and processes of the world (usually accompanied by descriptions of descent of the human nature). Having taken for granted the replacement of thesis “transcendent of the sacred” for “the holiness of the secular”, the crisis, instead of using inner spiritual effort, is tried to be solved by technological means. It is anticipated that technological solutions are, in fact, delayed defeats, which provide the ultimate collapse if human values are betrayed.

Then it would not be a “modernization with a soul”, which tends to bring back materiality to the spirit. On the

contrary, it is now considered that “spirituality” is not just “embodied in the self and culture,” but also “extended in technology” (Rowson 2013). This relationship to spirituality, as Rowson explained (Jonathan Rowson), is a result of “the evolution of knowledge.” This “evolution” means changing the meaning of essentially important concepts and ideas. Articulating the reasons that could persuade intellectual atheists to accept “spirituality”, Rowson says it is not necessary to consider spirituality as a part of religion, as it does not have to be understood as its alternative. Spirituality, he says, could be a way of thinking about human nature.

But Rowson does not want to link human nature to values, which are the archetypes of the divine as such, but instead he lists scientific knowledge about human nature being social and subject to automatism of unconscious impulses received from the environment. He notes that with the “evolution of knowledge,” the core of spirituality is seen in meaning, faith, morality, as well as that morality does not fit as much to the ethical principle, as the idea of the self and the ability to see morality as constructed, while at the same time we still work on our own integrity. In this “evolution of knowledge,” the idea that common sense is no longer related to the facts as to social and cultural norms is quite acceptable. Solutions of post-structuralism related to changes in the perceptions of “self” also belong to this list. Based on this, not only is the self considered unique and solid, but is considered to be illusive, or rather, virtual, which means created and maintained by stories we tell ourselves about who we are. The only thing that lacks is the insight as to how the ground has been prepared to lose the distinction between the *self* and the *image* we have about ourselves (or image of us by the others), and that loss of self has become, in fact, a win for the technological superiority through digitization of the body and the reality in general, the media, for example (Đurić 2012:191; 201).

To further illustrate the image of our research, let us remember an earlier study that points to the “confirmation of sociological assumptions” that “chances for revitalization of religion proliferate to the extent in which secular responses miss” (Vasić, 2008). From the perspective of thinking about post-secular, it is now important to determine the real meaning of this “revitalization.” The claim that by religious changes that have occurred in the society in the period of “the collapse of socialism” and “transition” should also be reexamined, the theory of secularization, which implicitly exists in sociology prior to its formulation in the sixties of the last century, has also been questioned.

When, several years ago, religious changes were observed in several sociological studies of public opinion, it was found that they were not only “in religious complex in general,” but especially in traditional religious groups in all areas of religious life, verified changes that were not primarily religious in nature, but a synthesis of worldly motives, primarily ethnocentric, national and traditionalist (ibid: 195). However, if we bear in mind that interpretations, deriving from the contemporary research, evaluated desecularisation from the point of view of modernizing progress as a phenomenon of regression of the society, then for elucidation of the post-secular concept, we have to reexamine these interpretations.

From the perspective of our consideration of the problem of post-secular, it seems that the “traditionalist confessional identification of the population of Serbia,” which was “in function of out-confessional objectives” (ibid.), in fact meant the neglect of spirituality (in the transcendental sense). In this way the social significance of church mediation of spirituality was reduced, that is, religion has been misused, and not revitalized. It can remain undetected only within the context of secular modernized worldview. By adopting this view, sociology does not

recognize the spiritual human need related to otherworldliness, and that should be the main factor in the motivation of believers, who are not just mechanical and interested members of religious communities.

Another question is whether and to what extent this spirituality factor (of transcendental sense) is present in the “religious-church complex at all,” i.e., in the one that exists in modern developed societies, where it should “serve to maintain the balance of political and social scene between religious and atheistic population” (ibid.). It is possible that there are cases, even many of them, in which members of the traditional religious institutions do not consider the sanctity of otherworldliness, and that their traditional religiosity in the spiritual sense is below the spiritual level of those who call themselves atheists, because they do not belong to a confessional institution, but who have raised their views and behavior experiencing the sacred in the secular.

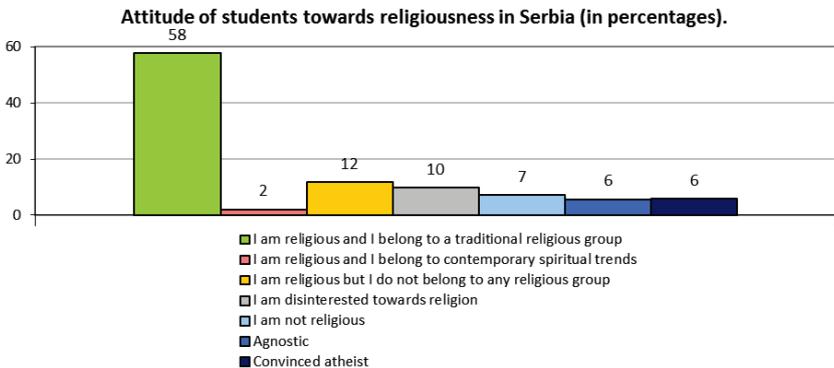
The insights in such a way set problem of spirituality, as a measure of post-secularity society in Serbia, cannot be reached by crossing ethical and religious parameters only. Indicators of respondents’ relationship to spirituality, dependently or independently on what their relationship to the confessional institution is, can also be reconstructed on the basis of the questions which are directly or indirectly related to spirituality, that is, those that show post-secularity. Thus, for example, among the issues concerning life goals, the following may be taken into account: the development of their own imagination and creativity, valued as very important in 46% of respondents, and important in 42%; or helping people in need, valued as very important in 35% of respondents, and important in 54% of respondents.

On the other hand, when it comes to trust in others, few of the respondents estimated *that they cannot trust a lot of people, while the majority of respondents think that people care*

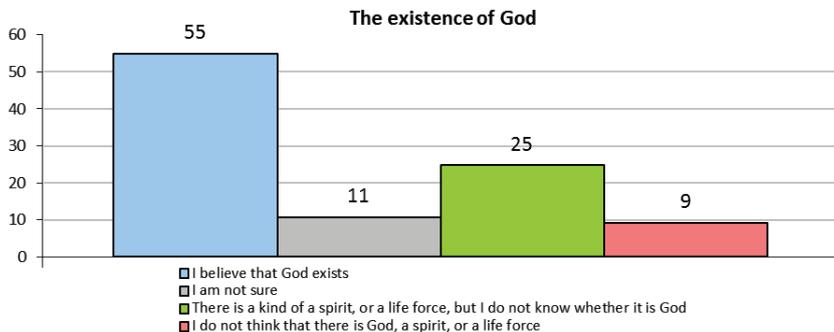
only about themselves. However, most of the students (a total of 99%) would address for help to their university colleagues (always 37%, sometimes 62%) and relatives (a total of 94% – always 37% and sometimes 57%), and even acquaintances (always 5%, and sometimes 71%). The following to deserve confidence are neighbors (always 10%, sometimes 63%), godparents (always 19%, sometimes 48%) and countrymen (always 6%, sometimes 60%).

Data that it is far less trusted in help of a religious group members (always 6% and sometimes 35%), show a very weak bond of Orthodox religious group, since 88% of respondents said they were Orthodox. Perhaps it has something to do with the fact that the majority (99%) associates religion with privacy (66% believe that religion is entirely private matter, and 33% experience it as a semi-private and semi-public). It is also not sufficiently clear to what extent spirituality could be determined on the basis of issues that are directly related to religion, such as, for example, attitudes about religion (Table 2), or the existence of God (Table 3), or how important God is. (Table 4).

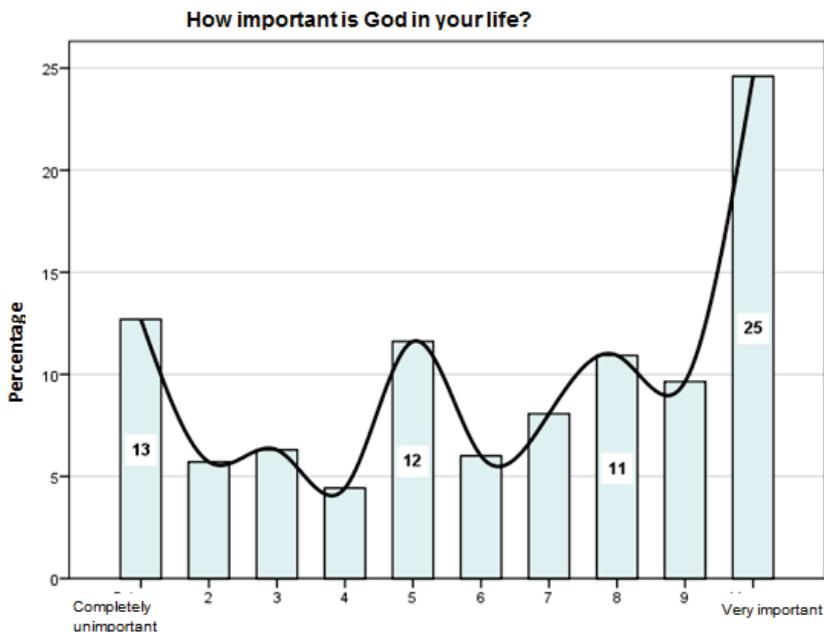
**Table 2.** Attitude of students towards religiousness in Serbia (in percentages).



**Table 3.** Attitude of students in Serbia towards the existence of God.

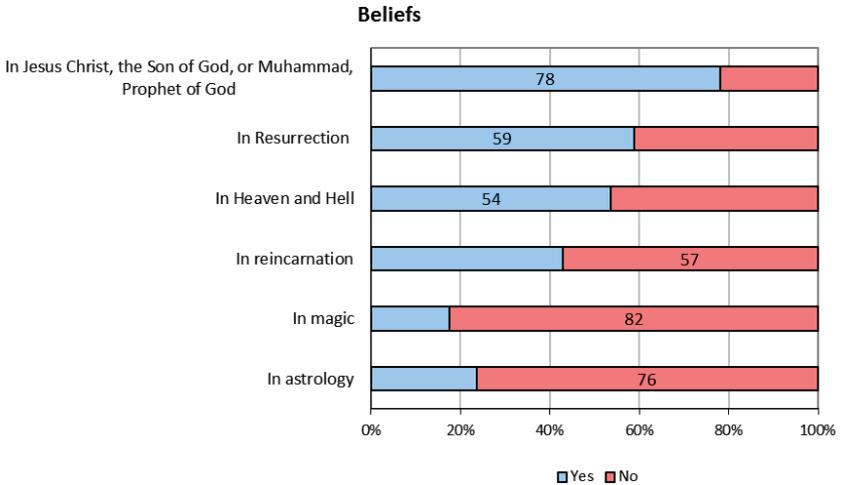


**Table 4.** The importance of God for the life of students in Serbia (in percentages).



Among values which point to spirituality, anthropological-traditional-cultural-religious border areas of knowledge, i.e., beliefs such as metempsychosis, magic or astrology can be added.

**Table 5.** Dogmatic and non-dogmatic beliefs of students (in percentages).



Philosophical orientation of the text actually needs quality more than statistical quantification, so that the interpreter of the research, like me, can only thank the organizer for the insight in comments of the research, because the dimension of qualitative personal response actually appears in the text added by respondents on the margins of the questionnaire. These comments are just as important as they point to weaknesses of the questionnaire. Thus, for example, it showed that the item 36, “What is your attitude towards religion?”, does not have the offered option that a person belongs to a traditional religious group, but does not believe in its teachings. A person who processed these answers felt that the example for this is a girl who checked two responses – no. 1, that she belongs to a traditional

religion, and no. 3, that she does not belong to a traditional religion; in the next question she checked that she belonged to the Orthodox religious group, while as the answer to the question of believing in God, she replied she did not believe in anything above mentioned and added a comment that “there is a higher power, another dimension”.

Nevertheless, a significant lack for reflecting post-secular spirituality is that the research did not examine how spirituality is understood. The attention to this is drawn by a comment of one respondent, who, on the margins of the questionnaire while completing the questions on the importance of different areas of life, under the item 1 – religion, wrote “spirituality” and circled “very important”.

In anticipation of such data for any future research, we can search for some answers to the question: Why is spirituality important? Perhaps the most elegant assumption that has begun to be scientifically tested is that spirituality is one of fundamental human needs. If so, then the need is frequent, but in this case the problem is that in the current environment its achievement is neglected. Superficial consumerism, which is a constant of modern society, prevents reviewing and corrects attitude towards both the external environment (natural and social), and its own inner life. Consequently, a lot of people have the sentiment of spiritual emptiness, i.e., the feeling that something is missing.<sup>3</sup>

The dominant modernizing worldview does not allow human problems to be perceived fully, as organic problems of

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3 Understanding of this disadvantage includes the assumption of its internal origin (i.e. the assumption that it arises from personality itself and its development, that it originates from Lacanian theory, derived from the “linguistic turn” of structuralism). However, given that no person belongs to oneself, but to others, no one can avoid the influence of problems that come from the world (and this inevitably involves complementing assumption of Foucauldian provenance) (Đurić 2012).

human life and human society. It is, however, important because people depend on the conditions in the environment to a great extent – the whole world of life and human beings can thrive only in synergy with the environment.<sup>4</sup> The mere awareness of the fact that the purpose of the whole should be taken into account is a good enough reason to finally reevaluate modern culture and society. Even if we leave aside the problem of otherworldliness, there is a whole circle of practical issues that can be understood better by taking into account people's spiritual needs.

The purpose of post-secular “modernization with a soul” may be in understanding that many areas will *benefit* by accepting spirituality, because it can improve our relationship with education, mental health, death, and understanding of ourselves. Such a utilitarian approach to spirituality is possible even in the acceptance of asceticism – restraint that is valued more than preference for material goods, pleasure and so on. It is oriented towards the crisis of material goods in the society and the individual, and does not consider virtue as a stimulus for improving its part of human nature. Rowson relies only on the fact that the persistence of environmental problems shall get people to “take spirituality seriously” and “change their behavior”. Not only personally, but also on the social level, the meaning of immaterial

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4 This, according to Robinson (Ken Robinson), is especially important in educational institutions, as these are institutions of the systems dealing with the young. Instead of knowledge being standardized and depersonalized, it should go back to the fundamental question, and that is the development of personality. Since education is a part of culture, it is essential for this party to be represented as well, and to be in function of social economy. But above all, human potentials should be taken care of, since they are the one that can enable transformation. It is essential to be conscious of the fact that education involves the human system which operates on the basis of relationships: emotions, interest, inspiration. Therefore, for good education it is necessary to engage every student, and it requires the ability of each to be recognized. This is the essence of a social change.

aspirations will be seen due to the crisis of material goods and because the concept of economic growth has proved to be environmentally problematic, and the adjustment to the possibilities of the environment and sustainable organization of the system will become necessary (Rowson 2013).

Perhaps on the second thought we realize that it does not matter whether the final values are reached on the utilitarian or deontological way. Namely, if intangible aspirations are justified on the basis of combining economic and environmental principles, then we should not insist on the difference between whether a belief in spiritual progress is seen as a way to more easily accept restrictions, or as a motive for self-improvement. In this context, it becomes justified that the problems of spirituality, given their importance, cease to be reserved for philosophy and religion, and answers are beginning to be searched for elsewhere.

Having in mind the *telos* of a whole, then what is good in itself and what is useful for our purposes should be the same. When our goals are wrong (when they are not good, true, right), then what seems really good for us is different from what is good to the whole; although we should know that, without the common good, nothing good awaits us in the future. It is therefore important to have a theological view, because only in this sense usefulness and goodness are equated. Only what is useful for the purpose of the whole, can be essentially good for individuals belonging to it. Of course, it is important not to distort the meaning of words, and not to abuse common good for personal purposes. On the other hand, it is important for individuals to understand that not everyone immediately sees all the necessary parts of the whole – the environment they belong to. Thus, detection of “the other side” is not available to everyone, but it is important for everyone to find their place in the general scheme

of things, and one shall know that it is true when one feels in accordance with one's environment. This is the only way for personal spiritual development and transformation of his human nature, which is a part of everything and therefore knows how to appreciate the sacred, both in this world and beyond.

Therefore, such a worldview that leads the human spirit to uncertainty between incredible dogmas of religious doctrines and persuasive methods of scientific probability should be overcome. Both areas of society, each in its own domain, also appear as institutions of power, that never notice the emotional needs of people. When we add the connection between spending/profits, which dominates the society, and does not save the nature, it becomes clearer why consumerism does not manage to destroy the sense of absence and terrifying emptiness permanently and totally. Raising awareness is the precondition for freedom to review the basis and further prospects for the system functioning and to find a way to change the view that the progress is considered a technological development only, and to disregard the spiritual development of people.

In this light, interpretation of the research reveals the opinions of young people, who are the future of the society, as a stimulus to consider what must or what should be changed urgently, and what opportunities there are for some adjustments – individuals as well as social systems. Human resources, as well as all resources of the world, are stored deep and are often hidden. In order to reach them, favorable conditions should be acquired, which could mean a call to “modernization with a soul”.

The research results, that is, the responses obtained from the questions and sets of questions, demonstrate value judgments of academic youth in Serbia to different kinds of problems. The research has, in fact, included a wide range of problems that can be grouped as follows:

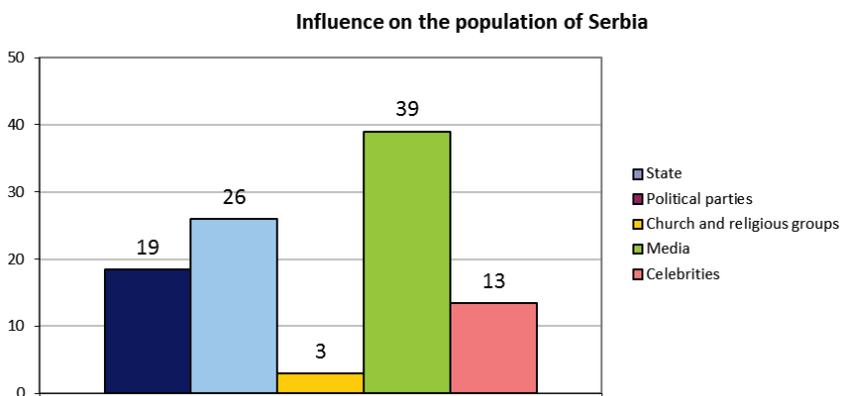
- 1) *attributing importance to* leisure time and different areas of life: (religion, work, family, friends, politics, education); trust, solidarity, freedom of choice and control of one's own life; relationship to power and class; reliance on others; conditions important to the community; home relations, relations with children, marriage, homosexuality, parents, responsibilities, work, household independence; attributes that are important for socializing; belonging to groups; understanding of Serbian, understanding of nationality and national distance towards other nations;
- 2) *behavior*: corruption (bribery, tax evasion), promiscuity (extramarital affairs, casual sex, prostitution, homosexuality), abortion, scientific experimentation on human embryos, in vitro fertilization; divorce, euthanasia, suicide, capital punishment, genetically modified food, drugs;
- 3) *responsibility*: individual and / or state, government or businesses, the unemployed, competition, income level, public or private property;
- 4) *goals of Serbia in the next ten years*: maintaining order in the country, giving more rights to people to express their opinion about decisions of the Government, fight against the rise of prices, protection of the freedom of speech;
- 5) *changes*: the importance of work, technology development, submission to the government and authority, and the importance of family life, problems of youth (p32), who should solve problems, trust in institutions, associations;
- 6) attitude towards religion, religious affiliation, belief in the existence of God, the importance of God in people's

- lives; claims about religion, attitude towards baptism, a symbol of faith, engaging in religious activities, frequency of religious activities, public understanding of religions, participation of religious institutions in public life, social role religious institutions, the adequacy of religious institutions, religious instruction; basic religious education; secondary religious education;
- 7) the relationship between religion and politics; friendship and politics; interest in politics; influence of various institutions on the population of Serbia, assessment of the quality of governing in Serbia, comparison with socialism;
  - 8) *attitudes about*: the success of a multi-party system, social inequalities and a just society, relationship between privatization and economic situation in Serbia, relationship between solidarity and socialism, preferable governing in Serbia; modern secular values: liberalism, capitalism, gender equality, civil society, human rights attitude towards democracy;
  - 9) *causes of conflict in the Balkans*: interests of political elites, interference of foreign powers, nationalism, confrontation of different religions, memories of past conflicts, insufficient knowledge of the culture of neighbors, collapse of socialism and the “warrior culture” of the Balkan nations: political preferences; the future of states belonging to great civilizations;
  - 10) EU accession; reasons for accepting the EU: cultural, spiritual and linguistic similarities, better earnings potential despite higher labor, travel opportunities, reputation, work and study, own business; life changes after joining the EU: unemployment, living standards, economic growth, preservation of the national identity

and culture, social security, personal safety, social inequalities, environmental pollution, corruption, organized crime, emigration of our people, immigration of foreigners, Serbian influence in the world, the influence of foreigners on the events in Serbia; fears about the consequences of joining the EU: loss of social security, national identity and culture, influence of Serbia in the world, reduced number of jobs in Serbia.

Explored students' attitudes include information on the types of relationship towards the existing situation and a possible transformation of values in personal and social level. Will the changes really mean post-secularity and modernization of a soul? – “It remains to be seen,” to use a phrase common in the media, and to note that, according to the respondents, the media (and a single comment from the sidelines says, “along with show business” because “the two are the same”) are the most influential on the population in Serbia.

**Table 6.** Opinion of students on influence of certain institutions on the population of Serbia (in percentages).



This table displays that the influence of religious-church complex on the population has been estimated as insignificant, which, in line with previous findings, can be seen as a legacy of secularization, that is, the loss of contact with the transcendent sense of spirituality.

Reconstruction of a topic such as *spirituality*, based on the given questionnaires to students and their answer to certain questions or parts of questions, is not completely exhausted. There are more implicit data in the questionnaire indicating the immanent spirituality of the academic youth of Serbia. But given that they require interpretation which would involve additional space, yet insufficient to make the final opinion for lack of explicitly formulated research apparatus, we can specify just one simple example here. It is evaluating circumstances important for a successful union of two people (marriage) that can be associated with thinking about post-secular spirituality, since it reveals spirituality through the experience of what could be perceived as immanent or secular sacred.

In this regard, most of the respondents opted for *mutual understanding and respect* (98% – very important 82% and important 16%). Also a large number of respondents opted for *love* (95% – 81% and 14%) and *loyalty* (94% – 69% and 25%). After that, for many of the respondents *time for friends and activities* are important (93% – 48% and 45%), and lower rated were *good sexual relations* (90% – 52% and 38%), and *children* (85% – 57% and 28%). After that, *shared housework chores* are considered important (83% – 32% and 51%), and *household income* (80% – 21% and 59%), as well as *good housing conditions* (75% – 19% and 56%). About 70% of respondents want *a life separate from their parents*, and only 30% of respondents believe that the same *religion* is important, and even fewer of them find *social origin* as important (about 25%), and the least important are those to whom *similar political beliefs* are important (about 15%).

Based on these elements, we will assume that “immanent spirituality” is close to the investigated sample of academic youth of Serbia, which may seem encouraging, especially when one takes into account the problematic environment. However, the problem to make a decisive conclusion in this regard, or to claim anything more specific in connection with this subject (“post-secularity and ‘modernization with a soul’”), lies not so much in the fact that the number of respondents is quite small compared to the entire population – because it is still an important class of the future intelligence of the society, as it is disabled by insufficient directionality of the research categorical instrument to the answers that would allow creating a clearer picture about this subject. This may be changed in some further similar studies.

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## II Religion, National Identity, Politics and Economy

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### Religious and National Identity of Young Intellectuals in Serbia

**Abstract:** *We used attitudes toward one's own nation and members of other ethnic communities expressed by young Serbian intellectuals in an attempt to examine the correlation between national and religious identities. We have often heard Serbian church dignitaries pointing up faith as a feature of ethnicity, which was bound to have an effect on believers' attitudes. However, theorists emphasize the difference between traditional and current religiousness, and we assumed that traditional religiousness, as one of cultural foundations of a nation, is linked with strong national identity, while current religiousness is characterized by stronger commitment to the religious community and weaker national identity.*

**Key words:** *religious identity, national identity, young intellectuals, Serbia.*

Belonging to a faith, although upon first glance it appears a personal question of each individual, due to the diversity of religions and manners of expression (and feeling) bound up with religiousness, is not an easy thing to pinpoint. We most often relate religiousness to the identification of an individual with a certain religious group, thus forgetting that identification can have different sociological and psychological bases, and, consequently, shapes. Some individuals express their religious identity through ties with a specific faith and current personal

religiousness. Others have traditional bonds with a certain faith, identifying religious and national belonging. They do not have a developed personal religious feeling, but they do have a clear awareness of the religious background. The third group of people form their religious identity through the religion of their fathers, accepting the denominational origin, but with an undeveloped personal religious feeling. The fourth group, even though it might be part of this classification, refuses to be identified with a specific religious community or does not want to formulate its convictions in this manner.

For the Yugoslav nations, religion was not so much a matter of personal choice as of social identity. Identifying religion and national identity was in some cases so pronounced that a change of faith entailed a change of nationality – if not in the eyes of the individual who has changed their religious affiliation, then certainly in the eyes of others<sup>1</sup> After attempts to create a powerful Yugoslav historical consciousness as a common basis of personal and collective identity, the end of the 1980's in Serbia saw a foregrounding of identification with the ethnic collective. At a time of radical changes that swept through the Serbian society, the awakening of the national consciousness was often linked to the religious dimension, and the reviving of the religious consciousness of the citizens. The common stance was that national identity was inextricably tied to the religious, which was emphasized in centuries of creative spirit, where the national survived owing to the preserving of the religious identity and rallying around the only institution that survived through centuries of enslavement – the Church. However, the

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1 The data collected in the 1953 census show that the population was divided denominationally into three groups; 41.5% of the population was of the Orthodox faith (41.7% of Serbs, 5.2% of Slav-Macedonians and 2.7% of Montenegrins), 31.8% was Catholic (23.4% of Croats and 8.7% of Slovenes) and 5.8% was Muslim (who did not publicly declare their ethnicity) (Perica, 2006).

initial enthusiasm and relying on the organic unity of the ethnic collective is slowly waning. The original championing of the idea that there existed only Us and Them slowly takes on other, transitional forms. Religion also no longer represents the most significant indicator of someone's ethnic belonging. It became an identity in its own right to the extent that individuals admit into the We group all those in the same religious denomination, irrespective of ethnic background. There still remains, however, the question of how far the process has taken us so far.

### **The relationship between the religious and national identity in Serbia**

Every human identity is a social identity, as it is closely tied with the meanings shaped by the influence of society and culture. Still, we must not lose sight of the fact that man is not a mere product of the socialization and education processes, but rather a participant in the creation of his own makeup, so in the analysis of collective identification it is necessary to take account of the dialectic of relations between the internal and external factors in its shaping. Identification with a social group is developed based on the sense of belonging to a group, and represents an integral part of the self-image, as well as on self-confidence. It is a product of the place that the individual objectively occupies in the society, but also of her self-determination, where belonging to a social group defines the status of the individual in society. Hence, the identity of the individual is not seen as a natural given or innate trait, but rather as a characteristic conditioned by the historical, social, and political circumstances. Therefore, collective identity is characterized by the temporal continuity of the community (historical link), common experience and memory (link through common destiny), unconscious custom-based behavior (common traits, characteristics), and collective ceremonies (rituals), which strengthen the feeling of solidarity and belonging of the members of a community (Golubović, 1999).

If our starting point is Smith's definition of national identity,<sup>2</sup> which underscores the fact that nation, albeit a modern construct, is based on a common homeland, history, and culture, we will see that the author makes an effort to include two different approaches to the problem (Smith, 2010). If we believe that national identity is based on an extended kin system (i.e., connection with common ancestors), where commitment to the community and solidarity with One's Group depend on the symbolism of the blood connection,<sup>3</sup> then we are talking about an ethnic community with a marked sense of common origin, a common and unique history, common traits peculiar to the community members, and common cultural values. By means of cultural values, members of the community estimate belonging to a community, because those individuals that have different customs are labeled as foreigners and given a wide berth (Golubović, 1999). Smith thinks that nations are a product of the tradition that was taking shape for generations and acquired the form of ethnic ties and memories, and in some cases even of ethnic identity and community, as the unification of a population always takes place around a dominant ethnic core.<sup>4</sup> According to Smith, the modern character of the nation is, however, reflected in the common rights set by law, and duties of community members, in common economy and common mass, public culture (Smith, 2010). By adopting cultural values and

2 Important features of national identity, according to Smith, are: historical territory (homeland), common myths and historical memories, common mass, public culture, common legal rights and duties, and common economy (with territorial mobility) of the members of a nation (Smith, 2010).

3 According to the primordial understanding, nation is reduced to a natural given, biologically conditioned, because the individual is born with a constitutive element of her ethnic identity (Golubović, 1999).

4 According to one model of nation development, developed by Anthony Smith, unification is a product of the centralization of the state, and according to another, the driver is the striving for autonomy (Smith, 2010).

accepting the institutions and norms of the political community (the state), individuals become its members, and in return it offers to them protection against the outside world and social security. The individual, however, does not feel the fateful link to the modern nation,<sup>5</sup> so he can critically examine the values, norms, and institutions on offer, even pick his own nationality, so the difference between ethnic communities is not seen as a basis for exclusion (Golubović, 1999).

According to Smith, the process of nation forming in Serbia (initiated for the purpose of achieving autonomy) relied on the unity of a collective of subjugated individuals, which unity stemmed from the common faith. Religious norms made inroads into the smallest aspects of the everyday life, managing relationships (within the community as well as with other ethnic groups) and thus maintaining the individual nature of the ethnic community (Smith, 2010). Here, there is a marked difference between Us and other communities, whose basic requirement is the cultural ties of the community members and the existence of the criteria according to which an individual belongs to one, and not another nation. Montserrat Guibernau holds that national identity reflects the sense of belonging to a nation irrespective of whether it has or does not have its state. The people who claim that they share a certain national identity believe that they have a common origin and territory, a common history, made up of the key turning points of the nation<sup>6</sup>, and a common culture, consisting of tradition, symbols, language, religion. Guibernau attempts to complete Smith's theory by intro-

5 Relational (situational) approach to the nation insists on the historical, social, and cultural conditioning of the formation and maintaining of national commitment (Golubović, 1999).

6 According to Guibernau, these are the moment of founding a nation, of common suffering and oppression by an enemy, of attaining freedom and sovereignty, of triumph and the leadership position of the nation (Guibernau, 2004).

ducing five dimensions of national identity, which she connects into a system. The psychological feeling of closeness among the members of a nation is a result of the belief in common origin, which is based on the historical dimension of national identity. This continuity of the community is maintained by passing on the cultural elements (values, beliefs, customs, and language) to the new members of the community, thus tying them to a specific territory which represents their homeland. All this is the basis of the legitimacy of state power, which separates the members of the nation (citizens) from those who are not by equal rights and duties of its members (Guibernau, 2004).

In the past, society survived thanks to two institutions – state and church, which established order together, defined the place individuals were to occupy, as well as entire communities within the social structure, provided a guarantee of the survival of society, gave meaning and role to even the smallest cog in the social system. Of course, religion gave yet another dimension to this, drawing a map of the Universe into which it would place every individual, providing a purpose and goal for their activities. Church was the center of social life, and not only did it determine the yearly calendar, but also control the daily rhythms via religious services and rites. It was the only institution that provided education, healing, and a form of social assistance. In it, people gathered together not only to hear the word of God, but also state proclamations, seeing as it represented the main gathering place for the entire community, all of which made it the social, economic, and political center of the community. On the territory of what are at present the Balkans states, the tyrannical rule of the Ottoman Empire based the state organization on the administrative division of the population on the basis of religious affiliation. This led not only to the primary role of the religious identity, but it also gave the church institutions an opportunity to act politically, as they mediated in the relationship

between the individual and the state. Due to this, religious leaders were mostly passive and obedient, not wishing to lose the position of power given to them, so Orthodox Christianity (and Islam) are not familiar with the tradition of the conceptual separation of church and state because of the close collaboration between them (Dingley, 2011).

The religious component, therefore, was crucial for the development of the Serbian nation, but the question can be posed – what role was it given later, in the conflicts which broke out at the end of the last century in former SFR Yugoslavia. The strongest impact in causing war conflicts came from the political (striving for political domination), social (strengthening of nationalism), and economic factors (the economic crisis), but religion revives (retains) its role in the strengthening and maintaining the ethnic and cultural identity of the nation, by virtue of which it becomes one of the factors in the political scene. At the time, the social system collapsed, the values and ideologies generally accepted up until then disappeared, and an identity crisis ensued, due to which the traditional collective identity of the nation is revived. In Serbia, Orthodox Faith becomes a key factor in the protection and homogenization of the Serbian national core, which strengthens its position, since it is the only institution which has continually preserved the tradition and the historical memories of the Serbian people. This time, Orthodox Christianity (religion) acquires a positive connotation,<sup>7</sup> owing to a positive valuation of tradition, worshipping of the national and religious past, which leads to a political abuse of the connection between religion and nation. Although religion is not the cause of the conflict, it is used as a criterion based on which the differentiation between Us and The Others is effected, i.e. as a manner of articulating much deeper and more complex

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7 Unlike the period in which the communist ideology reigned supreme, when the politicized religion had a negative connotation – a negative value.

reasons for hatred and conflict (Vukomanović , 2000; Blagojević , 2009). According to the data obtained by research conducted in 1989/1990, on a stratified sample in seven former republics and provinces, a conclusion was drawn that identification with Orthodox Christianity among Montenegrins, Slav-Macedonians, and, to a lesser extent, Serbs from Serbia, was largely part of confirming a separate cultural identity, but not an expression of religious belief. Within the research, religiousness was measured by a subjective assessment of the respondents themselves, and was based on the attitude of the respondent to do with whether (s)he considered his/herself a believer, and the respondent's attitude towards the religious creed. In slightly over four fifths of the cases, Slovenes, Serbs, Slav-Macedonians, Croats, and Montenegrins (in the republics named after their ethnicities), identified themselves as Catholics, and/or Orthodox Christians. When we introduce the other criterion as well, the number of believers (believers with strong convictions and those who do not accept all the teachings of the faith) drops sharply, so that between one sixth and one fifth of the Serbs in Vojvodina, Montenegrins, and Slav-Macedonians identify themselves as believers of varying degrees of conviction, whereas among the Serbs in Serbia, almost every third respondent declared himself to be a believer. In addition, two tendencies can be discerned in the attitudes of Yugoslav nations and nationalities which are demographic minorities in a given environment. Their members often demonstrate a higher degree of religious identification than their compatriots in the main environment. The group that deviate from such a form of religious expression (Serbs in Croatia and Albanians in Montenegro) aspire towards assimilation in the environment or towards overcoming ethnic and religious divides via a non-religious provenance in the then federal republics. It is for this reason that they distance themselves from Orthodox Christianity, or Islam, as a symbol of national identity (Vratuša, 1996).

This first stage, characterized by instrumentalizing religion by the national leaders in order to unite the population and form a coherent national core, according to Rada Drezgić, has lasted from the 1980's and 1990's. In Serbia, this stage of a restricted influence of the Serbian Orthodox Church, ends with the toppling of Milošević, when, in the aforementioned author's opinion, a stage begins in which the religious rules and beliefs impact on the decisions taken by the state bodies, and religious beliefs are implemented as part of the legal provisions. Religious education is then introduced in state schools, which, as the author believes, enables the Church to enter all spheres of social life. After the removal from power of Milošević, the political parties which had vied for power saw the Serbian Orthodox Church as a useful partner, as according to many surveys, it was an institution that the citizens trusted the most. Another reason for the alliance with Serbian Orthodox Church is the question of Kosovo, over which territory Serbia had lost control, while the Church was the only Serbian institution operating on this territory and which will possibly operate regardless of the final solution for the status of Kosovo. Both these factors enabled the public presence of Serbian Orthodox Church and strengthened its social influence. Rada Drezgić holds that passing the law on the introduction of religious education in state schools was a redemption of the state authorities for extraditing Milošević to the Hague, which was not supported by the Church or by the patriotic (nationalistic) forces in Serbia. The new Prime Minister, Vojislav Koštunica,<sup>8</sup> continues the close collaboration with the Church, which is a natural ally for him and his party, seeing as he is an advocate of the nation state and the dominant social role of religion, church, and family. Although he is succeeded by a minority government of the Democratic Party,<sup>9</sup>

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8 Vojislav Koštunica was at the helm of the Serbian government from 2004 to 2007

9 They came to power in the extraordinary elections held in 2008.

which is secular in its political provenance, due to a powerful presence of nationalistic parties in the parliament, it has to maintain cooperation with Serbian Orthodox Church, in order to ensure a balance in the political strength of the government. Rada Drezgić holds that the second stage is characterized by a powerful influence of Serbian Orthodox Church, not only in making important political decisions but also in passing laws, even in managing state institutions (Drezgic, 2010).<sup>10</sup> If we retain the same criteria for measuring the religiosity of the citizens of Serbia which were used in the abovementioned research from 1989/1990, we will see that the results of a survey conducted in Serbia in 2010 are not very different. Four fifths of the respondents still declare themselves as religious (77.9%), whereas believers (with conviction and those who do not accept all the teachings of their faith) make up one third of the respondents (4.3%). In comparison with the self-declared believers, the percentage of self-declared traditional believers is somewhat higher – 36.9% (Blagojević, 2011). In the same survey, however, the obtained data to do with religious and national identity of the pilgrims<sup>11</sup> in Serbia demonstrate that as high as 80% of pilgrims responded to the question of whether they prioritize religious or national identity by saying that for them religious belonging is primary (Radisavljević-Čiparizović, 2011). These results give us room to ask ourselves in what way people who declare themselves as believers see the role of religion in their lives and the life of their nation (state)?

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10 Serbian Orthodox Church was consulted or it exerted influence on passing an array of laws (law on education, which introduces religious education in state schools, law on religion and religious communities, law on abortion, law against discrimination, law on gender equality). In this period, clergy takes part in managing a state institution, there is more religious content in the media, a chapel is founded in the dormitory of the University of Belgrade, state institution Saint's Days are publicly celebrated (Drezgic, 2010).

11 Pilgrimage is a form of religious expression..

### **Indicators of religious and national identity**

Nikola Rot and Nenad Havelka defined national ties as a system of “mutually interconnected views which foreground the attitude of the individual towards his own nation, his own nation state and territory, national culture, language and history, then towards national values and symbols, towards other nations, including both those that his own nation was politically and economically on friendly terms with, and other nations in general, and lastly, towards national differentiation as a social phenomenon” (Rot, Havelka, 1976:36). Based on the three criteria (attitude of the individual towards her own nation, attitude towards other nations and towards national differentiation as a social phenomenon), they developed a classification of the forms of the national bond, which can be placed on a cline going from: exclusive national bond, pronounced national bond, shared national bond, shared Yugoslavian bond, pronounced international bond, and non-existent national bond. Exclusive national bond implies foregrounding the superiority of one’s own nation as compared to others, whereby the respect for one’s own nation is linked with denying the rights of other nations, even their extermination. The pronounced national bond, however, gives emphasis to the importance of national identification, but alongside the acceptance of national tolerance, so we can talk about as national idealization or patriotism. Shared national bond with loyalty to one’s own nation also considers as important the coexistence and cooperation between one’s own and other nations, while the shared Yugoslavian bond insists on the acceptance of the Yugoslav identity instead of international cooperation; the Yugoslav identity is a consequence of common socialization in the former state union. The ties with humanity as a whole implicate a powerful identification with the general community of mankind, where the transcendence of narrow national interests is a precondition of mankind’s progress. The absence

of national bonds can find its roots in the view that for humans the feeling of national bond has no importance (a-nationalism), or that it is harmful (antinationalism), or that it is the individual that is important, and not her group (national) belonging – personalism (Rot, Havelka, 1973). The existence of a form of identification does not rule out all the other such forms, which was proved in subsequent research (Vasović, 2000), as certain forms of bonding are parts of the same continuum. Some authors (e.g. Dragan Pantić) transformed these forms of national bonds into a scale whose extremes are being closed off within one's own nation and openness towards the world, in order to quantitatively measure the presence of national feelings. Mirjana Vasović, on the other hand, reduced it to four elements, holding the view that pronounced national bond and shared national bond constitute one aspect of the attitude towards the national, whereas general bond with mankind or pronounced international bond, in her opinion, do not belong in the aspects which represent first and foremost the attitude towards the national (Vasović, 2000).

We will use the specification of national bonds developed by Rot and Havelka in the operationalization of our concept of national identity, which we will use in the analysis of the collected data<sup>12</sup>. Rot and Havelka emphasize the attitude towards the national community, towards the territory considered as homeland, the national culture, language, history, national symbols. However, the attitude towards members of other national communities is also very important, because the awareness of belonging to a group entails perceiving the differences with respect to the other group. Based on the attitudes of individuals towards their own nation (territory, myths, symbols) and members of other national communities (conflict, tolerance, not perceiving the differences), we have developed a scale of national

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12 The survey was conducted in the first half of 2013 in six university centers (Belgrade, Novi Sad, Niš, Kragujevac, Novi Pazar, Priština).

identification, using which we will measure the degree of national bonding of the individual. For lack of a better terminology, we will use the terms used by Rot and Havelka, in order to formulate different degrees of national identification. These are the following: exclusive national identification, characterized by the respect of one's own nation and the attitude that other national groups jeopardize it, therefore it is in need of protection; pronounced national identification, implying respect for one's own nation alongside the acceptance of difference via tolerance and possible cooperation between ethnic groups; mankind-oriented national identification, whose elements are respect for one's own nation but not more than for other nations; lastly, non-existence of national identification, characterized by lack of respect for one's own nation but also for another nation as well, i.e. denying the significance of this form of social identification.

The concept of religiousness is not an easy one to determine, not only due to the diversity of religions and the manner of expressing (and feelings) associated with religiosity, but also because of the concepts with similar meanings or meanings overlapping with the concept of religiosity. For this reason, Mirko Blagojević seeks to separate the concept of religiousness from the concept of ecclesiasticity, whereby the latter implies the degree of participation in church life. Religiousness can be church-oriented via participation of believers in religious rites but, in certain situations, it implies only a personal attitude, which is to say a subjective feeling of belonging to a religion. Ecclesiasticism, on the other hand, does not have to entail religiousness, as religious rites can be performed within the tradition of a society and in this way they represent the glue of the community, or they confirm the social position of an individual or a group (Blagojević, 2010). One of the indicators of religiousness which is most often used is religious identification, but it is not only an expression of a personal attitude and feeling, but

rather a product of the social and cultural context as well.<sup>13</sup> By expressing an attitude towards religion, the attitude towards tradition is also expressed at the same time, as well as towards nation and cultural origin, so it is one of the most important indicators of the traditional ties to religion and church. In order to overcome the shortcomings of this identifier, we introduce the self-assessment of the religious position of respondents, who, by deciding between three answers (religious, undecided, not religious), provide a more complete picture of religious identification. Based on the problems which arise in researching the religious identification of respondents, we can speak of two forms of religious behavior of believers – traditional religious behavior and current religious behavior. Current religious behavior is oriented towards the essential in religious rites, whereas the traditional religious behavior superimposes social connotations on the religious, and in so doing shifts the motivation of the believer towards the conformist observance of tradition. We class as rites which can acquire the features of customs the following: baptism, marriage, burial, church holidays, Saint's Day, owning religious symbols, refraining from work at a time of religious holidays, as well as the teaching of faith. They are fundamentally deeply dogmatic in meaning, but they can acquire the connotation of normal and socially desirable behavior, so practicing them is retained even at times when religion itself and religious identification are not socially supported. In this manner, even when they do not have a marked religious overtone, these rites contribute to the presence of religion and church in some significant personal, familial, and social situations. The indicators of the current attitude towards religion and church (attending a liturgy, church attendance, receiving communion, confession, attending religious education classes, prayer, fasting, reading

13 The society in which traditional religion and church had a prominent place and a powerful influence on society demands a positive religious identification.

books and magazines with religious content, contributions to the church, active involvement in church life) demonstrate the extent to which people are connected to religion and church via participating in church life. These are original religious needs, satisfied in ways prescribed by the church, and thus they strengthen the solidarity and togetherness in the church as a denominational unity of its members. One of the main indicators of current religious behavior is attending liturgy because of the crucial role of this rite in the unity of the believer and God.<sup>14</sup> Whereas the church is a mediator between God and believers, pointing out to the believer the road to salvation,<sup>15</sup> prayer makes possible a direct communication between the believer and God,<sup>16</sup>so both these indicators are significant in researching religiousness. Unlike prayer, fasting is, as the believer's duty, prescribed in strict terms. Its role is not only the purification of the body and elevating the soul, but also as a reminder of Christ's suffering for the purpose of the salvation of mankind.<sup>17</sup> Participation in religious rites, however, without having the knowledge of and accepting religious dogmas<sup>18</sup> is only a sign of the conformist behavior of individuals,<sup>19</sup>so it is necessary to examine their religious beliefs as intellectual-epistemic dimensions of

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14 Liturgy is connected to the communion by partaking of the consecrated bread and wine which symbolize the body and blood of Christ.

15 Church organization consists of people who have been instructed in the secrets of the interpretation of the Holy Scripture and unto whom God himself gave the teaching of the believers.

16 Here the reference is first and foremost to personal prayer.

17 It is practiced by refraining from certain drinks and food, prayer, refraining from bad thoughts and deeds, and doing good deeds.

18 Religious dogma is a belief accepted by the believer as the only true and absolute truth, as it was revealed by God himself.

19 On the other hand, having the knowledge of and accepting the dogmatic truths of a religion without participation in the church life is a sign of subjective religiousness and non-belonging to the church.

religiousness. This is especially important due to the fact that religious dogma is a system of ideas which provides the believers with a consistent worldview, so by not accepting only one dogma the whole system collapses. The basic indicators of dogmatic identification are belief in God,<sup>20</sup> belief in Jesus Christ and his divine nature,<sup>21</sup> then belief in the afterlife, heaven and hell, and the resurrection of the dead<sup>22</sup> (Blagojević, 2004).<sup>23</sup>

### Results of the study

How does one paint the picture of Serbian society today and its attitude towards the national and religious? In the conducted study, the selected sample was the university student population which is still pondering its future, its place in the world, but is sufficiently mature to have developed and stable views of the significant social issues. Based on the results obtained in a survey conducted in the first half of 2013 in six Serbian university centers (Belgrade, Novi Sad, Niš, Kragujevac, Novi Pazar and Priština), we will attempt to present the national and religious identity of young intellectuals in the present-day Serbia. Our starting assumption is that the traditional religious behavior, as a custom comprising the cultural foundation of a nation, is linked to a stronger sense of national identity. Current religiousness is based on a powerful identification with the religious community, which is primary for the believer, so we assume that it conditions a weaker national identification.

20 Within the Christian religion, this question could be used to examine the knowledge of God as the Holy Trinity.

21 In order to separate it from the belief in the historical existence of Jesus Christ.

22 Belief in the afterlife, heaven, hell, and the resurrection of the dead are the fundamental eschatological beliefs of the Christian religion.

23 The text provides an example of examining the ecclesiasticism of the Orthodox believer. The ecclesiasticism indicator will be adjusted to the denomination of the respondents.

### a) *National Identity*

The first identifier of national identity is almost always self-declaration of the respondents on belonging to a specific nation (with the possible answers *other*<sup>24</sup> or *nationally undecided*). A large majority of the respondents is nationally decided (96.7%), but in response to the question of how much belonging to a nation is important for you, they said that it was important for 33.3% of the respondents, something in between for 27.2%, and unimportant for 39.6%. the percentage of those who think that belonging to a religion is important is somewhat smaller – 29.2%, something in between 24.7%, while 46.1% of the respondents think it is unimportant. Similarly, when it comes to belonging to the group of citizens of Serbia: it is important for 28.2% of the respondents, something in between for 27.6%, and unimportant for 44.2%. Being European is important for 16.8% of the respondents, something in between for 31.5%, and unimportant for 51.7%. To belong to the group of the citizens of the world is important for 27.4%, something in between for 26.9% and unimportant for 45.7% of the respondents. From these data it can be seen that the number of the respondents for whom belonging to a group (belonging to one's own people, citizen of Serbia, European, citizen of the world) is not important but not unimportant either, is constant. Being a member of one's own people is, nonetheless, somewhat more important for respondents than it is to be a citizen of Serbia and of the world, while the number of those who think it is important to be European is much smaller. Two thirds of the respondents do not think it is important to belong to a nation, while almost as much as a half think it is not important to be either a citizen of Serbia or belong to broader groups (being European or a citizen of the world). It is obvious that the respondents are hostile towards the

24 Alongside the request to provide the nation to which the respondent belongs.

European identity, and consider it less important, so we can assume that this attitude is a consequence of the political attitude of the European states towards the Republic of Serbia. Still, we can notice a difference<sup>25</sup> between the attitudes of various nationalities, because for Bosniaks (434.28) and Serbs (505.17)<sup>26</sup>, as compared with other nations, it is more important to be members of one's own nation, while for Yugoslavs (610.61) and for the nationally undecided (739.54) this is the least significant. Being a member of one's own faith is important for Bosniaks (383.72), followed by Serbs (506.02), while it is less important for those who see themselves as Yugoslavs (688.21), or they are nationally undecided (713.61). The picture is the same in belonging to a group of the citizens of Serbia, with a remark that the difference between the groups is now smaller (Bosniaks – 455.61, Serbs – 509.59, Yugoslavs – 635.68, nationally undecided – 693.77). Statistically speaking, although still significant, the difference becomes even smaller regarding belonging to the group of Europeans (Bosniaks – 439.53, Serbs – 518.83, Yugoslavs – 557, nationally undecided – 548.47), and citizens of the world (Bosniaks – 451.66, Serbs – 522.01, Yugoslavs – 526.29, nationally undecided – 454.29). Therefore, one could conclude that the question of national identity and belonging is most pertinent in Bosniaks, as a nation which is still in the process of forming its own identity, and in Serbs. The nationally undecided see themselves for the most part as citizens of the world, while the Yugoslavs do not show greater interest in belonging to any of the listed groups.

The respondents were also asked to assess the features of what is considered to be true Serbdom, so for the feature born in Serbia we obtained responses that it is very important in

25 Statistically significant difference.

26 And Montenegrins (399.71), but the sample is too small for the conclusions to be generalizable.

the opinion of 15.3% of the respondents, largely important for 33.4%, largely unimportant for 27.9%, and utterly unimportant for 23.4%. Respecting political institutions and laws of Serbia is very important in the opinion of 26.7% of the respondents, largely important for 38.6%, largely unimportant for 21.4%, and utterly unimportant for 13.2%. For true Serbdom, in the opinion of the respondents, being of Serbian origin is very important for 34.0%, largely important for 36.4%, largely unimportant for 16.9%, and utterly unimportant for 12.7%. Speaking Serbian is very important for 46.5%, largely important for 33.0%, largely unimportant for 11.9%, and utterly unimportant for 8.5%. Living in Serbia for a long time is very important for 16.9%, largely important for 32.8%, largely unimportant for 32.0%, and utterly unimportant for 18.2%. Being of the Orthodox faith is very important for true Serbdom for 33.9%, largely important for 26.0%, largely unimportant for 18.7%, and utterly unimportant for 21.4% of the respondents. For our respondents, the following ethnic features stand out as the most significant features of true Serbdom: being of Serbian origin (very important and largely important for at 70%) and speaking Serbian (very important and largely important at 80%). Immediately following are respect for political institutions and laws of Serbia (at 66%), which shows a civic nationality developed to an extent. Being of Orthodox faith is after all not so important because in terms of percentages it is as low as the fourth place (at 60%). There are, however, statistically significant differences by national groups,<sup>27</sup> where Serbs stress the importance of all the attitudes (born in Serbia 498.46; respect political institutions and laws in Serbia 502.87; being of Serbian origin 489.20; speaking Serbian 494.17; living in Serbia for a long period of time 500.61; being of the Orthodox faith 485.31). Bosniaks agree that for true Serbdom it is important to

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27 Except in the statement that for true Serbdom it is important to respect the political institutions and laws of Serbia.

be born in Serbia (445.29), respect the political institutions and laws in Serbia (459.06) and living in Serbia for a long period of time (452.44), whereas they disagree about the importance of being of Orthodox faith (759.50). The assumption is that Bosniaks identify with Serbia as their homeland, emphasizing territorial origin (born and living in Serbia), but also a component of civic nationalism (by respecting state institutions and laws). Yugoslavs and the nationally undecided for the most part do not hold these differences to be important features of true Serbdom (Yugoslavs – to be born in Serbia 730.54, respect the political institutions and laws in Serbia 497.58, being of Serbian origin 733, speaking Serbian 593.81, living in Serbia for a long period of time 495.12, being of Orthodox faith 780.19; nationally undecided – be born in Serbia 553.7, respect the political institutions and laws in Serbia 667.95, being of Serbian origin 765.51, speaking Serbian 709.71, living in Serbia for a long period of time 687.27, being of the Orthodox faith 768.80).

Ethnicity is virtually an unimportant feature for our respondents, seeing as 31.6% of them stated that they are indifferent and as many as 59.7% stated that this feature is unimportant when they are choosing who to be friends with.<sup>28</sup> The result is similar regarding belonging to a religion (91.3% of those who are either indifferent or they do not care). However, when we analyze the responses given by the members of different ethnic groups, we can see that the difference between them is statistically significant. Ethnicity of the person they are friends with is the most important for Bosniaks (440.08) and Serbs (508.14), while it is of least importance for Yugoslavs (657.79) and the nationally undecided (671.23). The picture is the same regarding belonging to a religion: this characteristic of a person they

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28 When these numbers are added up, the result is obtained of 91.3% of respondents for whom ethnicity is not important when it comes to being friends with someone.

are friends with is the most important for Bosniaks (427.33) and Serbs (512.41), and it is of least importance for Yugoslavs (606.46) and the nationally undecided (640.14).

When we look at the attitudes to do with nationality, we obtain data that suggest only 13.7% of the respondents think that nationally mixed marriages are more unstable than others (by providing the answers I fully agree and I agree), whereas 61.3% do not agree with this statement (I disagree and I do not agree at all). The view that you can only feel safe when you live in an environment where the majority is the same nation as you is accepted by 23.4% of the respondents, and not accepted by 52.9%. In difficult times you can only rely on your nations is a view held by 11.1% of the respondents, whereas 66.1% disagree and does not agree at all. Our nation's past must be sacrosanct for all of us is an opinion of 39.8% of the respondents, but 36% of the respondents does not agree with this view. Foreigners should not be trusted entirely is a view held by 16.5% of the respondents, but 60.7% claims this is not true. Belonging to a nation is no more than a burden for 37.1% of the respondents, while 35.8% disagrees with this view. That the foregrounding of national symbols is an expression of vulgar nature is held by 24.9% of the respondents, and 49.6% disagrees. That ethnic minorities in our country exercise their rights is accepted by 51.1% of the interviewed students, and 20.2% disagrees with this view. Based on such data, we can say that young intellectuals in our country are characterized by prominent national ties, with emphasis placed on the loyalty to one's own nation, and cooperation with other nations is accepted. Regarding the views to do with relations with other nations, however, there is a statistically significant difference between members of different nations: Bosniaks accept in the greatest degree that mixed marriages are more unstable than others (248.87), and thus in terms of the demonstrated results leave Serbs far behind (516.86). The

nationally undecided are those who agree with this view in the smallest degree (614.97), followed by Yugoslavs (660.75). Bosniaks (460.41) and Serbs (501.05) agree that you can only feel safe when you live in an environment where the majority is the same nation as you, and Yugoslavs disagree with in the larger degree (718.04), as well as the nationally undecided (733.44). The past of one's nation must be sacrosanct according to Serbs (494.91) and Bosniaks (574.94), whereas for Yugoslavs (719.71) and the nationally undecided (810.76), it is not that significant. If we ask the Bosniaks, foreigners should not be trusted entirely (338.56), whereas the Serbs (510.45), Yugoslavs (742.29), and the nationally undecided (698.54) have less extreme views. Ethnicity is only a burden according to Yugoslavs (210.64) and the nationally undecided (315.21), whereas Bosniaks disagree with this to a greater extent (546.73), as well as Serbs (530.90). The order changes when it comes to the view that foregrounding national symbols is an expression of vulgar nature, accepted by the nationally undecided to a greater extent (365.67), as well as Bosniaks (406.52), but not accepted by the Yugoslavs (504.21) and Serbs (526.13). That ethnic minorities realize their rights in our country is a view espoused by Serbs to a greater extent (497.17) and the nationally undecided (593.25), and Bosniaks (740.15) and Yugoslavs (665.79) entertain this view in a somewhat smaller degree. These data show that Bosniaks and Serbs are less open towards members of other nations, holding the view that marriages and neighbor relations between members of different nations are more unstable. Going for help to other nations, as well as trusting members of other nations, is not entirely acceptable for Serbs and Bosniaks, whereas Yugoslavs and the nationally undecided are much more liberal, holding the view that ethnicity is only a burden.

In investigating national distance, the results show that the majority do not have any qualms about accepting Albanians

in their immediate vicinity (country, town, neighborhood, job, as a superior at work, or a friend), which is seen the percentages that are at over 50% (living in my country 61.9%, living in my town 58.5%, living in my neighborhood 56%, being a co-worker 63.3%, being my university professor or teaching assistant 59.9%, being my friend 58.4%). Regarding the most intimate relationship (marriage), in which a family is started (and offspring given birth to), the data suggests the exact opposite, as 66.8% of the respondents stated that they would not accept a member of the Albanian nationality as a spouse. However, there is a statistically significant difference between the views of Serbs and other nationality members regarding national distance towards Albanians, even though the percentage of those who have nothing against Albanians in their vicinity is at around 50% and more; it can be seen that this percentage is noticeably higher in other nations (see Table 1).

**Table 1.** The degree of acceptance of the members of another nation – Albanians

Albanians	Serbs		Other nationalities	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
Living in my country	58.6	41.4	85.9	14.1
Living in my town	55.6	44.4	78.2	21.8
Living in my neighborhood	52.7	47.3	79.5	20.5
Being a co-worker	60.5	39.5	83.3	16.7
Teaching me at the university	56.9	43.1	78.2	21.8
Being my friend	55.5	44.5	76.9	23.1
Going out with or being married to them	30.4	69.6	44.9	55.1

The situation is somewhat better regarding Muslims and Croats, as the rate of acceptance is higher. As a nation, Croats are more acceptable to most respondents as potential spouses, too (for Muslims – living in my country 77%, living in my town 74.5%, living in my neighborhood 70.9%, being a co-worker 78.1%, being my university professor or teaching assistant 72.9%, being my friend 76.3%, going out with or being married to 46.1%; for Croats – living in my country 76.2%, living in my town 73.3%, living in my neighborhood 70.3%, being a co-worker 78.4%, being my university professor or teaching assistant 73.2%, being my friend 76.3%, going out with or being married to them 57.7%). Here, too, exists a statistically significant difference between Serbs and members of other nationalities, seeing as Serbs find them less acceptable than other nations (see Table 2 and Table 3).

**Table 2.** The degree of acceptance of the members of another nation – Muslims

Muslims	Serbs		Other nationalities	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
Living in my country	74.6	25.4	96.2	3.8
Living in my town	71.1	28.9	94.9	5.1
Living in my neighborhood	68.1	31.9	94.9	5.1
Being a co-worker	76.4	23.6	92.3	7.7
Teaching me at the university	70.7	29.3	89.7	10.3
Being my friend	74.2	25.8	92.3	7.7
Going out with or being married to them	42	58	71.8	28.2

**Table 3.** The degree of acceptance of the members of another nation – Croats

Croats	Serbs		Other nationalities	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
Living in my country	74.5	25.5	85.9	14.1
Living in my town	71.4	28.6	84.6	15.4
Living in my neighborhood	68.1	31.9	83.3	16.7
Being a coworker	76.8	23.2	88.5	11.5
Teaching me at the university	71.4	28.6	83.3	16.7
Being my friend	75.1	24.9	80.8	19.2
Going out with or being married to them	56.1	43.9	57.7	42.3

Regarding the ex-Yugoslav nations which Serbs did not go to war with, the national distance is lesser still, although it is still the largest when it comes to entering intimate relationships (for Slovenes – living in my country 89.9%, living in my town 87%, living in my neighborhood 84.9%, being a coworker 88.1%, being my university professor or teaching assistant 82.9%, being my friend 86.9%, going out with or being married to 69.1%; for Montenegrins – living in my country 90.8%, living in my town 88.6%, living in my neighborhood 87.3%, being a coworker 90%, being my university professor or teaching assistant 84.9%, being my friend 91.6%, going out with or being married to 75.9%; for Slav-Macedonians – living in my country 93.7%, living in my town 91.1%, living in my neighborhood 89.6%, being a coworker 91.9%, being my university professor or teaching assistant 86.6%, being my friend 91.4%, going out with or being married to 74.4%).

The Roma national minority, however, enjoys a special status, because even though Serbs never went to war with this

nation, the results regarding it are very similar to those of the Croats and Muslims (living in my country 79.1%, living in my town 74.9%, living in my neighborhood 66.5%, being a coworker 75.6%, being my university professor or teaching assistant 71.3%, being my friend 71.5%). In terms of the most intimate relationship with Roma the results are similar to those relating to Albanians (going out with or being married to 36.4%).

Members of nations which surround the Republic of Serbia are more accepted than Croats and Muslims, but fare worse compared to the ex-Yugoslav nations Serbs did not go to war with (for Bulgarians – living in my country 84.6%, living in my town 80.2%, living in my neighborhood 77.5%, being a coworker 82.9%, being my university professor or teaching assistant 77.8%, being my friend 81.6%, going out with or being married to 59%; for Hungarians – living in my country 83.9%, living in my town 81.4%, living in my neighborhood 78.9%, being a coworker 83.8%, being my university professor or teaching assistant 79.2%, being my friend 83.4%, going out with or being married to 60%; for Romanians – living in my country 84.8%, living in my town 81.5%, living in my neighborhood 78.1%, being a coworker 82.6%, being my university professor or teaching assistant 78.1%, being my friend 81.9%, going out with or being married to 56.4%). A special case in this group are the Greek, to whom, despite their not being a neighboring nation, Serbs feel a special connection, a fact which our data bear out. The Greeks' scores are higher to those of Montenegrins and Slav-Macedonians, with whom Serbs shared not only a country but their religion and history (living in my country 95.7%, living in my town 93.3%, living in my neighborhood 91.2%, being a coworker 93.6%, being my university professor or teaching assistant 89%, being my friend 93.9%, going out with or being married to 81.5%). The same fact is shown by the statistically significant difference in attitudes between Serbs and members

of other nationalities, Greeks being more accepted by Serbs than by other nationalities (see Table 4).

**Table 4.** The degree of acceptance by the members of another nation – Greeks

Greeks	Serbs		Other nationalities	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
Living in my country	96.8	3.2	83.3	16.7
Living in my town	94.1	5.9	84.6	15.4
Living in my neighborhood	92.4	7.6	80.8	19.2
Being a coworker	94.6	5.4	84.6	15.4
Teaching me at the university	89.2	10.8	84.6	15.4
Being my friend	95.1	4.9	82.1	17.9
Going out with or being married to them	82.9	17.1	6.8	37.2

Based on this data we can conclude that there is no claim of superiority of one's nation or denying the rights of other nations to display their identity present in intellectual young people in Serbia today. Also largely absent is the identification with the broader community of mankind, unlike the ties to one's own nation. Our respondents, by and large, display a loyalty to their nation, but do not forget the cooperation with other nations, displaying the attitudes that express the values of tolerance. Thus we can say that in our society national ties are a dominating force.

### *b) Religious Identity*

Regarding religious identity, when asked about their views on religion, respondents mostly said they were religious (57.7%) and that they belonged to one of the traditional religious communities (Christianity, Islam, Judaism, Buddhism...). To this figure we should add the 2.1% of respondents who said

they were religious and belonged to contemporary spiritual movements (New Age, Scientology...), and the 11.8% of respondents who said they were religious but did not belong to any religious community. An indifference to religion was professed by 9.9% of the respondents, 7.1% described themselves as nonreligious, 5.7% as agnostic, and 5.8% as atheist. We should, moreover, examine whether respondents consider themselves members of a religious community, which will help in identifying traditional ties to religious community. Specifically, 57.7% of respondents said they were religious and that they belonged to a traditional religious community, whereas 87.9% percent of respondents said they were members of the Orthodox community. A total of 59.7% said they were religious and belonged to a religious community, and 95.1% said they belonged to a specific religious community (Orthodox, Catholic, Protestant, Muslim or some other). The difference of 35.4% can be attributed to traditional believers, who respect the religious community as a way of accepting customs and the cultural heritage of their environment. This can be seen by comparing the data<sup>29</sup> which shows that Orthodox respondents claim to be religious and members of the traditional religious community in 65.7% percent of the cases, religious and members of one of the contemporary spiritual movements in 1.8% of the cases, religious but not member of any religious communities in 11.2% of the cases, undecided in 10.2% of the cases, and not religious in 11.2% of the cases.

Our conclusion concerning the observance of the cultural tradition is also confirmed by the difference in number of those who see themselves as members of the Christian community (Orthodox, Catholic, Protestant), of which there are 90.7%, and those who have been baptized, of which there are 82.7%. Of those

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29 There is a statistically significant difference between members of the Orthodox community, members of other religious communities, and those who do not belong to any religious community.

who have been baptized 17.1% are not sure whether they would have their own children baptized. Regarding other activities that characterize traditional religiousness – 94.1% of respondents regularly or occasionally celebrate major religious holidays (Christmas, Easter, Saint’s Day), whereas 84.5% of respondents regularly or occasionally attend church funerals of family members.

Current religiousness includes attending the Sunday liturgy (Mass or Jumu’ah on Fridays) – the percentage of respondents who regularly or occasionally attend is 46.7, regular or occasional participation in the religious community charity actions is at 50%, regular or occasional reading of religious literature is at 46.6.%, regular or occasional prayer outside of church is at 65.4%, regular or occasional communion is at 50.8%, regular or occasional fasting is at 67.3%, regular or occasional church confession is at 23.7%. Somewhat more frequent is church attendance outside of the religious ceremonies such as baptisms, marriages or funerals – 76.6% (several times a week, at least once a week, once or twice a month, several times a year), which also speaks to current religious behavior of our respondents. The data show that around one half of the respondents are currently religious, which matches the number of those who consider themselves religious and members of the traditional religious community (57.7%).

The dogmatic basis of religious identity is a belief in God (when speaking of traditional religious communities, to which 94.2% of the respondents belong), the existence of whom 55% of respondents accept, while 24.6% of them say that God is very important in their life. Examining the dogmatic beliefs of the respondents in greater detail, we see that 78.1% of them believe in Jesus Christ, Son of God (or Muhammad, God’s messenger), 58.9% believe in resurrection, 53.7% in heaven and hell, 42.9% in the afterlife. This shows that a number of believers who

profess the basic belief in God and Jesus Christ, Son of God (or Muhammad, God's messenger), do not complete their belief with other basic dogmas, which disrupts the systematic worldview offered by the religious community. This is exemplified by the respondents' attitudes on religion: only 19.5% of them believe that there is only one true religion and the truth it offers. Other attitudes include "there is only one true religion, but other religions offer some fundamental truths as well" (17.7%), "there is no one true religion, all the religions offer some fundamental truths" (30.8%), "no major religion offers any fundamental truth" (11.6%), and "I do not know" (20.4%). Among the Orthodox respondents, 7.7% thinks that none of the major religions offers any truth, while 20.8% of them are not sure. Divergence is also apparent when we consider the respondents who said they were religious and members of one of the traditional religious communities (Christianity, Islam, Judaism, Buddhism), out of which 92.9% are Orthodox, but only 80.3 believe in the existence of God, while 3.7% aren't sure, 15.5% believe there exists some sort of spirit or life force, but do not know if it is God, and 0.5% do not think there is any sort of God, spirit or life force.

Striving to provide a realistic picture of the religious identity of intellectual young people in Serbia today, we compared the answers regarding being baptized and intending to baptize one's child with those that involved various religious activities. A pattern emerged which suggested that those respondents who were baptized and who intended to have their children baptized were the most active in their religious life: attending the Sunday liturgy (Mass or Jummu'ah on Fridays) – 438.52; celebrating major religious holidays (Christmas, Easter, saint's day) – 445.05; participating in the religious community's charity actions – 449.54; reading religious literature – 459.45; praying outside of the church – 419.52; communion – 410.75; fasting before major church holidays – 422.79; confessing to a priest 462.35;

church funeral of family members – 436.95. In terms of practicing religious activities characteristic of traditional believers, the group following the one consisting of the baptized respondents who would have their children baptized is the one consisting of non-baptized respondents who would have their children baptized. They are active at celebrating major religious holidays (Christmas, Easter, Saint's Day) – 443.63, fasting before major church holidays – 453.54, and attending church funerals of family members – 483.50. They attend the Sunday liturgy (Mass or Jummu'ah on Fridays) more frequently – 622.33, participate in the religious community's charity actions (470.19), read religious literature (555.21), pray outside of the church (508.97), confess to a priest (559.62), than the baptized respondents who would not have their children baptized (attendance at the Sunday liturgy (Mass or Jummu'ah on Fridays) 700.80, participating in the religious community's charity events 681.23, reading religious literature – 652.67, praying outside of the church – 742.75, confessing to a priest – 594.20), and also more than baptized respondents who are not sure if they would have their children baptized (attendance at the Sunday liturgy (Mass or Jummu'ah on Fridays) 654.19, participating in the religious community's charity events 632.80, reading religious literature – 630.77, praying outside of the church – 695.84, confessing to a priest – 598.16). We can assume that a sense of national identity has arisen in the respondents who have not been baptized but who would have their children baptized, and that they would want to strengthen the national ties using tradition (traditional religiousness). On the other hand, in the baptized respondents who would not have their children baptized or are not sure whether they would we can notice a loss of faith (which may never have been there in the first place, as they were baptized as infants), or a process of (religious) exploration, which leads to their not wanting to impose a choice upon their children.

### *c) Religious and National Identity*

The degree to which ethnicity is important to those who have different views on religion and religiousness is apparent considering that it is most important factor to those who are religious and belong to contemporary spiritual movements (365.45), followed by those who are religious and belong to one of the traditional religious communities (Christianity, Islam, Judaism, Buddhism) (473.02), while for others is it less important. The same quality also matters to those who have not been baptized, but would have their children baptized (475.84), and those who were baptized and would have their children baptized (481.85). It is more important to those who believe in God (475.53) than to those who are not sure (512.00), or those who believe in some sort of spirit or life force (552.29), or to those who do not think there is any sort of God, spirit or life force (553.55). The frequency of church attendance also show statistical significance regarding the degree of importance attached to ethnicity when choosing a friend (several times a week – 456.92; at least once a week – 462.95; once or twice a month – 465.41; several times a year – 504.72; never – 551.34). There is an apparent regularity which suggests that the ethnicity of a potential friend is more important to those who are religious (and belong of one of the religious communities), to those who believe in God, and to those who would have their children baptized and attend the church more frequently.

When it comes to being a member of certain social groups, it turned out that being a member of one's people, religion and being a Serbian citizen is most important to religious respondents, regardless of whether they belong to the traditional religious community, contemporary spiritual movements, or do not belong to any religious community (member of one's people – religious and belong to the traditional religious community 444.41; religious and belong to contemporary spiritual

movements 513.00; religious, but does not belong to any religious community 552.14; indifferent to religion 590.51; not religious 561.79; agnostic 575.31; atheist 682.95; member of one's religion – religious and belong to the traditional religious community 413.71; religious and belong to contemporary spiritual movements 483.67; religious, but does not belong to any religious community 563.59; indifferent to religion 638.34; not religious 645.47; agnostic 653.21; atheist 711.00; Serbian citizen –religious and belong to the traditional religious community 458.58; religious and belong to contemporary spiritual movements 483.19; religious, but does not belong to any religious community 536.63; indifferent to religion 570.07; not religious 569.62; agnostic 604.59; atheist 600.96). Regarding the sense of being a citizen of the world, it proved to be most important to agnostics (382.00), religious respondents who belong to contemporary spiritual movements (410.02), atheists (430.47), and those who are not religious (481.17).<sup>30</sup>

If we compare belonging to groups with belief in God, we can see that belonging to one's people, to one's faith, and being a citizen of Serbia is of the greatest significance to those who believe that God exists (belonging to one's people 455.77; belonging to one's faith 425.32; citizen of Serbia 467.58), followed by those who are either unsure or believe in the existence of a spirit or life force (unsure – belonging to one's people 546.53; belonging to one's faith 571.64; citizen of Serbia 530.19; there is some kind of a spirit or life force – belonging to one's people 540.14; belonging to one's faith 575.46; citizen of Serbia 536.17). It is of the least significance to those who do not think there is a God, spirit or life force (belonging to one's people 626.23; belonging to one's faith 682.23; citizen of Serbia 598.38). Being a citizen of the world is of the greatest significance to those who

30 Regarding being European we found no statistically significant difference.

do not think there is a God, spirit or life force (435.82), followed by those who believe there is some kind of a spirit or life force (492.91), those who are unsure (521.02) and those who believe that God exists (516.30).<sup>31</sup>

As regards the attitudes towards baptizing one's children, the importance of belonging to the group of one's people, one's faith and the citizens of Serbia is most significant to those who would baptize their children regardless of whether they themselves are baptized (baptized and would baptize their children – belonging to one's people 459.78; belonging to one's faith 446.40; citizen of Serbia 470.50; non-baptized and would baptize their children – belonging to one's people 426.30; belonging to one's faith 458.79; citizen of Serbia 434.56). Groups of participants with other responses gave evenly distributed responses, except in regard to belonging to citizens of Serbia, where the non-baptized who would not baptize their children are notable in their attitude that this is less significant to them than it is to the participants who gave different responses (baptized, but would not baptize my children 597.26; non-baptized and would not baptize my children 652.18; baptized and do not know whether I would baptize my children 585.52; non-baptized and do not know whether I would baptize my children 581.75). Being a citizen of the world is most significant to those who would not baptize their children (baptized and would not baptize my children 384.83; non-baptized and would not baptize my children 438.47), followed by those who do not know whether they would baptize their children (baptized and do not know whether I would baptize my children 477.96; non-baptized and do not know whether I would baptize my children 446.35).<sup>32</sup>

31 With regard to belonging to the group Europeans there is no statistically significant difference.

32 With regard to belonging to the group Europeans there is no statistically significant difference.

Those who attend church at least once per week (438.55) consider it important, more than do others, to be a member of one's people. They are followed by those who attend church once or twice per month (461.06), those who attend several times per year (479.61) and those who attend several times per week (487.20). Those who do not attend church consider this, more than do others, to be insignificant (591.34). With regard to being a member of one's faith and being a citizen of Serbia, the order is somewhat different, but those who are most attached to these groups are still those who attend church at least once per week (belonging to one's faith 384.47; citizen of Serbia 434.39), followed by those who attend several times per week (belonging to one's faith 408.30; citizen of Serbia 469.83), then those who attend once or twice per month (belonging to one's faith 427.90; citizen of Serbia 474.97) and those who attend several times per year (belonging to one's faith 490.41; citizen of Serbia 487.20) and finally those who do not attend church (belonging to one's faith 632.25; citizen of Serbia 574.19).<sup>33</sup>

Being a member of one's people, one's faith and being a citizen of Serbia is, then, most valuable to those participants who are religious (regardless of whether they belong to a traditional religious community, contemporary spiritual movements or do not belong to any religious community), who believe in the existence of God, a spirit or life force or are unsure, who would baptize their children (regardless of whether they are themselves baptized) and who attend church (whether this is at least once per week, several times per week, once or twice per month or several times per year). Being a citizen of the world is more significant to those participants who are not religious (agnostics, atheists and the non-religious), or are member of contemporary spiritual movements, for those who do not think

33 With regard to belonging to the groups Europeans and citizens of the world there is no statistically significant difference.

there is a God, spirit or life force, for those who would not baptize their children and those who do not know what they would do in this regard.

Attitudes which endorse orientation towards one's own national group are to the greatest degree accepted by those who are religious and belong to a traditional religious community (nationally mixed marriages are more unstable than others 468.00; one cannot feel perfectly safe unless one is living in surroundings where one's nationality is in the majority 457.33; in hard times one can only depend on one's own nation 461.14; our people's past must be sacred to us all 437.78; one must not trust foreigners too much 459.39). These attitudes are disagreed with to the greatest degree by agnostics (nationally mixed marriages are more unstable than others 590.45; one cannot feel perfectly safe unless one is living in surroundings where one's nationality is in the majority 643.70; in hard times one can only depend on one's own nation 664.27; our people's past must be sacred to us all 654.98; one must not trust foreigners too much 692.11) and staunch atheists (nationally mixed marriages are more unstable than others 617.90; one cannot feel perfectly safe unless one is living in surroundings where one's nationality is in the majority 708.46; in hard times one can only depend on one's own nation 654.75; our people's past must be sacred to us all 725.80; one must not trust foreigners too much 608.33). With regard to attitudes which rate national belonging negatively, the situation is reversed. The greatest degree of agreement is exhibited by agnostics (national belonging merely burdens one 350.05; displaying national symbols is a reflection of vulgar nature 390.34) and staunch atheists (national belonging merely burdens one 319.84; displaying national symbols is a reflection of vulgar nature 384.89), and the smallest by the religious belonging to a traditional religious community (national belonging merely burdens one 569.49; displaying national symbols is a reflection of

vulgar nature 551.12). The attitude that national minorities are able to realize their rights is agreed with to the greatest degree by those participants who are religious and belong to a traditional religious community (471.80), whereas the smallest degree of agreement is exhibited by the religious belonging to contemporary spiritual movements (603.57) and staunch atheists (608.76).

A similar situation presents itself when we speak of belief in God, where those who believe that God exists have a greater tendency to agree with the attitudes that it is better to be in the company of those who are members of the same people (nationally mixed marriages are more unstable than others 467.13; one cannot feel perfectly safe unless one is living in surroundings where one's nationality is in the majority 467.41; in hard times one can only depend on one's own nation 461.12; our people's past must be sacred to us all 448.53; one must not trust foreigners too much 455.62), and those who do not think there is a God, spirit or life force are least likely to agree with these attitudes (nationally mixed marriages are more unstable than others 584.50; one cannot feel perfectly safe unless one is living in surroundings where one's nationality is in the majority 646.29; in hard times one can only depend on one's own nation 607.30; our people's past must be sacred to us all 675.19; one must not trust foreigners too much 581.03). Attitudes which critique national identity are agreed with to the greatest degree by those who do not think there is a God, spirit of life force (national belonging merely burdens one 348.74; displaying national symbols is a reflection of vulgar nature 400.48), and to the smallest degree agreed with by those who believe that God exists (national belonging merely burdens one 566.89; displaying national symbols is a reflection of vulgar nature 549.73). With regard to the attitude that national minorities realize all their rights, it is agreed with to the greatest degree by those who believe that God exists (486.84), followed by those who believe there is a spirit or life force (510.97) and

those who are unsure (533.78), and to the smallest degree those who do not think there is a God, spirit or life force (575.17).

A regularity also emerges with regard to baptism as a rite, and so we see that attitudes which speak affirmatively of being attached to one's nation enjoy greater support from those participants who are baptized and would baptize their children (nationally mixed marriages are more unstable than others 478.27; one cannot feel perfectly safe unless one is living in surroundings where one's nationality is in the majority 463.47; in hard times one can only depend on one's own nation 462.58; our people's past must be sacred to us all 443.66; must not trust foreigners too much 464.54) and those who are not baptized, but would baptize their children (nationally mixed marriages are more unstable than others 512.48; one cannot feel perfectly safe unless one is living in surroundings where one's nationality is in the majority 426.84; in hard times one can only depend on one's own nation 500.15; our people's past must be sacred to us all 403.18; must not trust foreigners too much 456.36). The greatest disagreement with these attitudes is exhibited by those who are baptized, but would not baptize their children (nationally mixed marriages are more unstable than others 647.17; one cannot feel perfectly safe unless one is living in surroundings where one's nationality is in the majority 685.31; in hard times one can only depend on one's own nation 661.83; our people's past must be sacred to us all 713.63; must not trust foreigners too much 640.73). With regard to the attitude that national belonging merely burdens one, the greatest degree of agreement is exhibited by those who are baptized, but will not baptize their children (321.39) and those who are not baptized and would not baptize their children (361.44). The greatest degree of disagreement with this attitude is exhibited by the non-baptized who would baptize their children (587.23) and those who are baptized and would baptize their children (554.81). That displaying

national symbols is a reflection of vulgar nature is to the greatest degree believed by the non-baptized who would not baptize their children (379.05), the non-baptized who do not know whether they would baptize their children (419.19) and the baptized who would not baptize their children (420.22). Those who would baptize their children disagree with this attitude to the greatest degree of all the participants (the baptized who would baptize their children 535.74; the non-baptized who would baptize their children 615.47). With regard to the statement that national minorities are able to realize their rights, the baptized who would baptize their children stand out, as they agree with it to the greatest degree (464.14), whereas this attitude is disagreed with to the greatest degree by the non-baptized who would not baptize their children (604.48).

Those who attend church several times per week (382.30) and those who attend at least once per week (399.78) agree with the attitude that nationally mixed marriages are more unstable than others, whereas those who never attend church disagree with it (552.72). This distribution is repeated with the attitudes that in hard times one can only depend on one's own nation (several times per week 437.36; at least once per week 429.21; never 589.90) and that one must not trust foreigners too much (several times per week 448.83; at least once per week 436.89; never 577.96). With regard to the attitudes that one can only feel safe when living in surroundings where members of one's nation are in the majority (at least once per week 452.17; once or twice per month 465.78; never 583.09) and that our people's past must be sacred to us all (at least once per week 428.91; once or twice per month 436.78; never 632.94), they are to the greatest degree endorsed by those who attend church at least once per week and once or twice per month, and still to the smallest degree endorsed by those who do not attend church. The attitudes that national belonging merely burdens one and

that displaying national symbols is a reflection of vulgar nature are agreed with to the greatest degree by those participants who do not attend church (national belonging merely burdens one 396.75; displaying national symbols is a reflection of vulgar nature 419.15), and disagreed with by those who attend it several times per week (national belonging merely burdens one 627.22; displaying national symbols is a reflection of vulgar nature 605.50), or at least once per week (national belonging merely burdens one 606.23; displaying national symbols is a reflection of vulgar nature 546.14). That national minorities are able to realize their rights is believed by those who attend church once or twice per month (467.60) and those who attend several times per year (478.77), and is disagreed with to the greatest degree by those who attend church several times per week (594.24).

Attitudes which endorse orientation towards one's own national group are to the greatest degree accepted among those participants who are religious and belong to a traditional religious community, who believe that God exists, who would baptize their children (whether or not they are themselves baptized) and who attend church at least once per week (or several times during the week). With regard to those attitudes which rate national belonging negatively, the greatest degree of agreement is exhibited by agnostics and staunch atheists, those who do not think that there is a God, spirit or life force, those who would not baptize their children (whether or not they are themselves baptized) and those who do not attend church.

### **Conclusion**

The question of the relationship between national and religious identities is a very complex one, owing to the difficulty in defining, and thus measuring them. In play is a wide array of indicators, which need to be bound together into a single whole, and then placed into the socio-historical situation of a concrete

society. We must not forget that each of them is shaped on the basis of a person's free choice, but also of historical, social and political circumstances. In Serbia, the development of the nation relied on a common faith, which, for the purposes of preserving the community's cohesion, penetrated deeply into everyday life, guiding relationships, not only among community members, but also between the community and Others. The Serbian nation was founded on an ethnic community – a belief in shared origins, common specific characteristics, a common history and common cultural values. Realizing national autonomy helped develop the institution of the state, legal rights and obligations of the nation's members, a common economy and mass culture. Belonging to a state, however, is not based on an organic unity of its members, who can, unhindered by an inherited trait, change countries.

We have, therefore, associated the determination of national identity with one's attitude towards the national community, the territory which is considered to be the homeland, the national culture, language, history, national symbols. Also of significance is, as we have seen, the attitude towards other national communities, which can manifest as a conflict, tolerance, or failure to perceive any difference between Us and Them. On the basis of these identifiers, we surveyed the national identity of young intellectuals in Serbia today who, although they view themselves as members of a national group, for the most part do not attach much value not only to belonging to their national communities, but also to groups such as citizens of Serbia, Europeans, or citizens of the world. However, Serbs and Bosniaks consider belonging to their respective national groups and the state community (homeland) to bear more significance, whereas the nationally unaffiliated are more oriented towards the wider community (being a citizen of the world), and Yugoslavs do not exhibit any major interest in any of the groups. When

determining the essence of “Serbdom,” our participants have, apart from ethnic characteristics (being of Serbian origin, speaking the Serbian language, being Eastern Orthodox) also pointed out honoring the political institutions and laws of Serbia, which indicates a developed civic nationality. However, Serbs consider all the mentioned characteristics to be crucial, whereas Bosniaks accentuate the characteristics of being born and living in Serbia (Serbia as the homeland) and honoring the laws (civic nationalism). With regard to attitudes concerning national interrelations, young intellectuals in Serbia are characterized by a pointed national attachment, as, apart from endorsing loyalty to one’s own nation, what is also expressed is disagreement with attitudes which stress the isolation of the national community in relation to the Others. Serbs and Bosniaks, nevertheless, lead the way in matters of endorsing discriminatory attitudes, so we were not surprised when we perceived a significant difference between Serbs and other nationalities in our survey of national distancing. They were less likely to accept the presence of members of those nations with which Serbs had been in war conflicts over the previous years (Albanians, Bosniaks and Croats). It has, however, transpired that the majority of participants do not see a problem in the presence of members of other nations, even in their nearest surroundings, except in the case of the most intimate relationship between two people (to date or be married to her/him) where the percentage abruptly drops.

We have associated religiousness with a wide array of identifiers, because religious identity is not only a manifestation of personal attitudes and emotions, but also expresses one’s position regarding one’s tradition, nation, and cultural background. This is apparent in the fact that almost all our participants have identified as belonging to one of the religious communities, but barely more than half of them have identified as religious. Traditional religious behavior is confirmed by a larger percentage

of those participants who are baptized, who regularly or occasionally celebrate major religious holidays (Christmas, Easter, family patron saint's day), who will attend a church funeral of the deceased in their families, than the percentage of those who have identified as religious. Non-baptized participants who would baptize their children also very frequently participate in these rites. Current religious behavior is characteristic of half of our participants, which is in keeping with the percentage of those participants who consider themselves to be religious and members of traditional religious communities. The significance that practicing religious rites has for them should, however, be examined, and so questions about basic religious dogmas were asked. The data show that 20% of participants who identified as believers and members of traditional religious communities are not sure in the existence of God.

When we observe the entire sample, belonging to one's faith is significant to a small number of participants (29.2%), and of all the nations it has the greatest significance to Bosniaks and Serbs. The number is even lower when the importance of the religious affiliation of a person one would socialize with is under consideration (8.7%), but again this characteristic has the most significance for Bosniaks and Serbs. This can be illustrated by the positive attitude of Serbs towards Greeks, where they are accepted by Serbs in higher percentages than by members of other nations. The link between religiousness and indicators of a developed national identity has been proven, as the ethnic affiliation of the person they would socialize with is more significant for the religious participants than for other groups, as well as their own belonging to their people, their faith, and the state of Serbia. The religious who belong to traditional religious communities are more likely to accept attitudes which endorse orientation towards one's own national group due to the negative characteristics of other national communities. If we

use baptism as the identifier of traditional religiousness (especially with regard to the non-baptized who would baptize their children), we can say that traditional believers accentuate the interrelation between faith, culture, and nation. Those participants who would baptize their children consider (more so than other groups of participants) the ethnic affiliation of the person they would socialize with to be important, as they do their own belonging to their people, faith, and the state of Serbia, as well as an orientation in their everyday relationships towards those persons who belong to the same nation. In comparison to other groups, the participants who believe in the existence of God and attend church with more frequency both endorse these attitudes to a greater degree, so we cannot perceive a difference between traditional and current believers, and thus the conclusion imposes itself that religious people are more prone to isolating themselves in their own ethnic and religious groups.

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Translated by Goran Stanić

## **The Impact of Religiousness and Socio-Economic Background on Students' Economic Attitudes**

**Abstract:** *This paper analyses the results of a questionnaire survey performed in 2013, as part of a larger research project entitled: Religious, Moral and Socio-Political Values of the Student Population in Serbia, organized by the Centre for Religious Studies of the Institute for Philosophy and Social Theory. The questionnaire was filled in by more than 1,000 students from all major Serbian universities. The aim of the analysis of the survey data was to determine the interrelationship among the three different dimensions of the student population in Serbia, namely, their socio-economic backgrounds, economic attitudes, and religiousness. We have concluded that students' level of religiousness and their economic attitudes were significantly affected by their socio-economic background. It has also been observed that religiousness influenced students' economic attitudes, but not in the sense that they could reach a clear and coherent view towards greater or lesser economic equality.*

### **Introduction**

In 2013, the Centre for Religious Studies of the Institute for Philosophy and Social Theory conducted a research among the students of public and private universities in Serbia, with the aim to examine their religious, moral, and socio-political values. A total of 1058 male and female students from major universities were surveyed. The purpose of this paper is to examine only a

number of these attitudes – or more precisely, respondents' views on the relationship between the economy and religiousness. Based on the survey data, we have defined three dimensions and analyzed their interrelations. These included students' socio-economic backgrounds, economic attitudes and religiousness.

Prior to the analysis of the factual survey results, we formulated two working hypotheses about the interrelation of the three dimensions studied. The first hypothesis assumed that, in comparison to students' religiousness or religion, the socio-economic background had more impact on modeling their views on economy and the involvement of the state in economic affairs. The argument behind this was that none of the religions in Serbia, i.e. none of their representative institutions, had any well-defined and publicly expressed attitudes towards economic issues. On the other hand, the socio-economic background contributed significantly to one's sense of class belonging and, consequently, to the adoption of economic attitudes which conform to the interests of that class. The other hypothesis assumed that the students from low-income families and those coming from the provinces were more religious, and that religion was more important to them. The theoretical argument for the second hypothesis was that the students from lower socio-economic backgrounds were more likely to adopt a religious approach to life, not because they had a lower level of education or intellect, but because they had been influenced by the conditions during their growing-up years. Thus, they adopted a fatalistic attitude towards life, and the idea that human existence and the world were predetermined.

The three studied dimensions are very difficult to assess, and there is no universally accepted scale for their measurement. For that reason, we examined a number of variables in each dimension. Socio-economic background was assessed primarily according to the monthly household income of students' families. In addition, we measured the level of education of both

their parents, taking into account that higher socio-economic status was associated with a higher level of parents' education. The size of students' respective hometowns was also taken into account. Furthermore, their self-identification with a social class was considered, despite being the least precise method for assessing the socio-economic background, because it enabled us to gain insight into one's personal sense of socio-economic status and its influence on other dimensions.

The dimension of religiousness is also difficult to assess. Sociologist Charles Glock postulated five dimensions of religiousness: "religious experience, the ritualistic dimension (religious practice), the ideological dimension (religious beliefs), the intellectual dimension (religious knowledge), and the consequential dimension" (Blagojević 2012: 41). In this paper religiousness is assessed along the dimension of religious experience (which was measured by the question of how important God was in one's life) and according to respondents' religious self-identification. The relationship between religiousness and socio-economic background has always been an interesting topic for social scientists (Schieman 2010). Survey data have indicated the effect of household income on religiousness. Schieman's data from a survey conducted in the USA showed that the level of household income was in inverse proportion to the level of religiousness. However, as far as the ritualistic dimension was concerned, i.e. taking into account only the respondents who attended religious services, the negative association between religiousness and socio-economic background was attenuated. The association between socio-economic status and religiousness had been explained in another working hypothesis, postulated as early as Weber (Schieman). Weber asserted that the poor adopted a *misfortune theodicy*, which comforted them with the knowledge that their suffering in this life would be rewarded in the afterlife. Religiousness in Serbia has been changing a lot

over the last 100 years. While its sudden decline was recorded after the Second World War, religiousness has been rising steadily since the late 1990s, and today more than 80 per cent of the population self-identify as religious. Owing to the fact that this was mainly a spontaneous increase in religiousness among all citizens, and that it was not induced by the ruling politicians (in contrast to the situation after the Second World War), these changes did not affect the testing of our hypothesis.

The dimension of economic attitudes explores students' values and ideological orientation towards the political left or right. Since it has become more and more difficult to determine the difference between the political left and right (even when considering the economic sphere alone), we have assumed that all those who supported the alleviation of economic differences belonged to the left, while those who held the opposite view belonged to the right wing. In accordance with this thesis, the most important variable for measuring economic attitudes in this paper is the one assessing the answers to the questions regarding reducing or increasing the difference in the salaries of Serbian employees. Apart from that, students' positive answers to the question about the importance of being rich and enjoying the finer things in life have been considered to indicate their value orientation toward the right. Likewise, the opinion that the unemployed had the right to refuse jobs that did not suit them has been considered to correspond to the leftist economic ideology. Our first working hypothesis assumed that the socio-economic background would have more impact on economic attitudes than on religiousness. Of course, this claim is consistent with the Marxist view that class belonging in itself led to the acceptance of class interests and class action, i.e. to the creation of a separate class. On the other hand, the institutionalized religions in Serbia mostly do not have systematically adopted and publicly propagated economic attitudes, as opposed to their

views on other issues. The socio-political conservatism of traditional religious communities in Serbia is not related to the advocacy of capitalism and the free market, unlike the conservative religious right in the USA.

### **Methodology**

The first dimension of socio-economic background had a number of variables, and these were examined through the responses to these questions:

- Question No. 8: What is your total household income per month (including salaries, pensions, scholarships, etc? The following options were provided: 1) 200€ or less, 2) €201 – €500, 3) €501 – €800, 4) €800 or more.
- Question No. 10: What is the highest level of education your parents have completed? The answers ranged from less than primary school to a doctoral degree.
- Question No. 12: What is the approximate number of inhabitants in your permanent place of residence? The following options were provided: 1) village, 2) small town 3) town, 4) middle-sized town, 5) city, 6) metropolis.
- Question No. 19: Some people see society as divided into classes. Which of these classes would you identify yourself with? The following options were provided: 1) upper class, 2) upper middle class, 3) lower middle class, 4) working class, and 5) lower class.

This dimension and its variables have been considered independent, because the students could not have had much influence on them. During the process of analysis of the responses to the question number 8, the items 1) and 2) have been merged into one, because it was estimated that all students from families with a household income of less than 500 euros per month

should be grouped into one category, i.e. classified as students from households with lower economic status. The number of students coming from households with an income of less than 200 euros was relatively small, only 11.6 per cent. As for the question number 10, we have analyzed only two categories of students – namely, those whose parents had a high school degree at most, and those whose both parents had a university degree or more. We have done this to enable a better examination of the impact of parents' education on students' attitudes. In the question number 12 the responses 1) and 2) have been merged, while the *large town* category has been excluded, owing to a small number of respondents who came from towns of such size. As for the question number 19, responses 1) and 2) have been merged into one category (only 1.6 per cent of the respondents said they belonged to the lower classes), the item number 3) was examined as a separate category, while the responses 4) and 5) have also been merged into one category.

The second dimension of religiousness had two variables, which were examined through the responses to these questions:

- Question No. 36: What is your attitude towards religion (circle one answer)? The following options were provided: 1) I am religious and I belong to a traditional religious community (Christianity, Islam, Judaism, Buddhism); 2) I am religious and I support the modern spiritual movements (New Age, Scientology...); 3) I am religious, but I am not a member of any religious community; 4) I am indifferent towards religion; 5) I am not religious; 6) I am an agnostic; 7) I am a convinced atheist.
- Question No. 39: How important is God in your life? The answers were given on a scale ranging from 1 (“completely unimportant”) to 10 (“very important”).

The second dimension has been examined as dependent. During the analysis of answers to the question number 39, we have considered only the responses 1, 2, and 3, which indicated that God was not very important in students' lives, as well as the responses 8, 9, and ten, which referred to the vital importance of God in their lives.

The third dimension of economic attitudes had five variables, examined through the responses to these questions:

- Question No. 18: People have different goals in their lives. How important do you find the following? The question contained a number of attitudes. However, we have analyzed only the responses relating to the attitudes number 2) to be rich, and number 10) to enjoy the finer things in life.
- Question No. 24, attitude 4, which examined the importance of class belonging for the respondent. The answers included “important”, “something in between”, and “unimportant”.
- Question No. 29, attitude 2, which gave two contradictory answers: “the unemployed should accept any job that they are offered, otherwise they should be deprived of any allowance or benefit,” and “the unemployed have the right to refuse the jobs they do not want to do.”
- Question No. 29, attitude 5, which gave two contradictory answers: “the difference in salaries should be reduced so that all can be paid equally,” and “the difference in salaries should be increased in order to motivate one's efforts.”

### **Results and their analysis**

Having applied a cross-impact analysis of the responses to different questions, we have created the following tables. The

first working hypothesis has been tested by examining the results shown in tables 1-12, and the second one by analyzing the results shown in tables 13-15.

**Table 1.** How important is it to you to be rich? The results have been scaled according to students' household income:

	Very important	Important	Uncertain	Unimportant	Completely unimportant
Income between 0-500 euros	4.4%	31.9%	26.3%	28.8%	8.8%
Income between 500-800 euros	7.0%	43.3%	22.3%	24.0%	3.3%
Income over 800 euros	9.4%	43.1%	23.5%	18.4%	5.5%
Average value	6.4%	38.0%	24.4%	24.8%	6.4%

**Table 2.** How important is it for you to enjoy the finer things in life and to please yourself? (scaled according to students' household income):

	Very important	Important	Uncertain	Unimportant	Completely unimportant
Income between 0-500 euros	40.0%	47.5%	8.3%	2.9%	1.2%
Income between 500-800 euros	34.3%	52.0%	35.1%	2.0%	0.7%
Income over 800 euros	42.1%	47.6%	8.3%	1.2%	0.8%
Average value	38.9%	48.8%	9.1%	2.2%	1.0%

**Table 3.** How important do you consider class belonging?  
(Scaled according to students' household income):

	Important	Something in between	Unimportant
Income between 0-500 euros	12.9%	33.2%	53.9%
Income between 500-800 euros	17.4%	31.8%	50.8%
Income over 800 euros	20.5%	31.3%	48.2%
Average value	16.1%	32.3%	51.6%

**Table 4.** Students' attitudes towards the unemployed  
(scaled according to students' household income):

	The unemployed should accept any job that they are offered; otherwise they should be deprived of any allowance or benefit.	The unemployed should have the right to refuse the jobs that they do not want to do.
Income between 0-500 euros	36.9%	63.1%
Income between 500-800 euros	37.9%	62.1%
Income over 800 euros	47.5%	52.5%
Average value	39.7%	60.3%

**Table 5.** Attitudes towards the reduction of the difference in salaries (scaled according to students' household income):

	The difference in salaries should be reduced so that all can be paid equally	The difference in salaries should be increased in order to motivate one's efforts
Income between 0-500 euros	78.1%	21.9%
Income between 500-800 euros	68.4%	31.6%
Income over 800 euros	54.9%	45.1%
Average value	69.9%	30.1%

**Table 6.** Students' attitudes towards the unemployed, arranged according to the level of education achieved by both parents:

	The unemployed should accept any job that they are offered; otherwise they should be deprived of any allowance or benefit	The unemployed should have the right to refuse the jobs that they do not want to do
Both mother and father have a high school degree at most	35.0%	65.0%
Both mother and father have a university degree or more	47.5%	52.5%

**Table 7.** Students' attitudes towards the reduction of the difference in salaries, arranged according to the level of education achieved by both parents:

	The difference in salaries should be reduced so that all can be paid equally	The difference in salaries should be increased in order to motivate one's efforts
Both mother and father have a high school degree at most	77.2%	22.8%
Both mother and father have a university degree or more	57.0%	43.0%

**Table 8.** Attitudes towards the unemployed, according to class belonging:

	The unemployed should accept any job that they are offered; otherwise they should be deprived of any allowance or benefit	The unemployed should have the right to refuse the jobs that they do not want to do
Lower class or working class	45.8%	54.2%
Lower middle class	39.2%	60.8%
Upper middle or upper class	39.3%	60.7%

**Table 9.** Attitudes towards the difference in salaries, according to class belonging:

	The difference in salaries should be reduced so that all can be paid equally	The difference in salaries should be increased in order to motivate one's efforts
Lower class or working class	83.8%	16.2%
Lower middle class	71.6%	28.4%
Upper middle or upper class	62.8%	37.2%

**Table 10.** Attitudes towards the unemployed, according to the importance of God in students' lives:

	The unemployed should accept any job that they are offered; otherwise they should be deprived of any allowance or benefit	The unemployed should have the right to refuse the jobs that they do not want to do
God is completely unimportant in my life	52.9%	47.1%
God is very important in my life	38.0%	62.0%

**Table 11.** Attitudes towards the difference in salaries, according to the importance of God in one's life:

	The difference in salaries should be reduced so that all can be paid equally	The difference in salaries should be increased in order to motivate one's efforts
God is completely unimportant in my life	83.3%	16.7%
God is very important in my life	64.5%	35.5%

**Table 12.** How important is God in life? (arranged according to the level of education achieved by both parents):

	God is completely unimportant in my life	God is very important in my life
Both mother and father have a high school degree at most	7.3%	92.7%
Both mother and father have a university degree or more	9.5%	90.5%

**Table 13.** How important is God in life? (arranged according to the size of the places the students were born in):

	God is completely unimportant in my life	God is very important in my life
Village or settlement	4.9%	95.1%
Small town	5.8%	94.2%
Middle-sized town	10.0%	90.0%
Metropolis	6.9%	93.1%

**Table 14.** Students' religiousness (taking into account only those students who stated that they were religious and belonged to traditional religious communities), scaled according to students' household income:

	God is completely unimportant in my life	God is very important in my life
Income between 0-500 euros	6.4%	93.6%
Income between 500-800 euros	5.5%	94.5%
Income over 800 euros	9.9%	90.1%
Average value	6.9%	93.1%

**Table 15.** How important is it to you to belong to your religion? (scaled according to students' household income):

	Important	Something in between	Unimportant
Income between 0-500 euros	28.7%	23.4%	47.9%
Income between 500-800 euros	31.1%	23.4%	45.5%
Income over 800 euros	28.1%	29.3%	42.6%
Average value	29.3%	24.9%	45.9%

The analysis of the results has shown that the students from well-off households predominately believed (with 52.7%) that it was important or very important to be wealthy in life compared to the students from middle-income households (50.3%), and the ones from poor households (36.3%). As for their attitudes towards the enjoyment of the finer things in life, there has not been any significant difference between the students from lower-income households and those from higher-income households. The importance of class belonging has been strongly associated with their household income: 20.5 per cent of the students from wealthy households felt that it was important to belong to a class, as opposed to 12.9 percent of those who came from the households with an income of less than 500 euros per month, and shared the same attitude towards their own class. A significant difference has also been observed with regard to the attitudes towards the unemployed. Students from wealthy households (with an income of more than 800 euros per month) who believed that the unemployed had the right to refuse the jobs that did not suit them were less in number (with 52.5%) than those who came from the households with an income of less than 500 euros per month (63.1%). Another significant difference has been observed as regards the attitudes towards reducing the difference in salaries. Namely, 78.1 per cent of students from lower-income households held that the difference in salaries should be reduced, while only 54.9 per cent of students from wealthy households shared the same view. Our analysis has shown that household income significantly affected students' economic attitudes. The data given in tables 6 and 7 shows a similar picture. Students whose both parents had a high school degree predominantly believed that the unemployed had the right to refuse jobs, and that the difference in salaries should be reduced, as opposed to the students whose both parents had a university degree or more. Students who self-identified as belonging to the lower class or working class predominantly

believed (with 83.8%) that the difference in salaries should be reduced compared to those from the lower-middle class (71.6%), and those from the upper-middle and upper class (62.8%). *We can conclude that it is obvious that students' economic attitudes are affected by their socio-economic backgrounds, i.e. that the students from lower-income and less educated households, who self-identify as belonging to the lower or working class, are more inclined to have egalitarian economic attitudes.*

On the other hand, the analysis of the data has shown that religiousness affected students' economic attitudes as well. Of the total number of respondents who belonged to traditional religions and considered God very important in their lives, 62 per cent held that the unemployed had the right to refuse the jobs that did not suit them, as opposed to 47.1 per cent of those who thought that God was completely unimportant in their lives. The situation is different when it comes to the attitudes of religious and irreligious students as regards the reduction of the difference in salaries: 83.3 per cent of irreligious students believed that the difference in salaries should be reduced, while 64.5 per cent of religious students shared the same view. It is obvious that religiousness influenced students' economic attitudes; however, without providing a clear picture of whether or not it affected the development of consistent attitudes towards a higher economic equality. Thus, the conclusion is that our first working hypothesis has been partially confirmed. Even though religiousness significantly affected economic attitudes, socio-economic background had more impact on the development of consistent attitudes along the lines of greater or lesser economic equality.

The second working hypothesis assumed that students' socio-economic background and their religiousness levels were associated. The survey data have shown that parents' education did not significantly affect students' religiousness. Students whose both parents had lower education levels were slightly

more inclined to state that God was very important in their lives (92.7%), compared to those whose both parents had a university degree or more (90.5%). The size of students' respective hometowns also has not provided a clear picture of their religiousness. Although there were differences, there was no clear tendency – namely, 95.1 percent of students from villages or towns stated that God was very important in their lives, students from the metropolis had a similar per cent (93.1%), while those from middle-sized towns who considered God very important scored lowest with 90 per cent. Likewise, household income did not have a large impact on religiousness. Of the total number of students from households with the lowest income, 93.6% stated that God was very important in their lives, while 38.7 per cent said that belonging to their religion was important to them. The figures relating to the students from households with the lowest income were slightly different (90.1% and 28.1%). Students' socio-economic backgrounds had very little impact on their religiousness. Even though the level of religiousness was lower among the students with better socio-economic backgrounds in all cases, the difference was not large. However, if we consider the relationship between irreligiousness and socio-economic background, then the picture is somewhat different. While the percentage of students from lower-income households to whom God was unimportant was insignificant (only 6.4%), the number increased to 9.9 per cent for students from households with the highest income. The data allow us to conclude that the socio-economic background had very little impact on religiousness, which confirms our working hypothesis, but without a high degree of certainty. However, if we alter our initial hypothesis to state that higher socio-economic backgrounds affect higher levels of irreligious attitudes, then we will see that this altered hypothesis has been confirmed. Finally, we could add that our data analysis supports Schieman's findings that the socio-economic

background loses its impact on the levels of religiousness when it comes to the people who are deeply religious, as it can be seen in table 15 of this paper.

### Conclusion

The data analysis has allowed a number of conclusions to be drawn. The first one is that the socio-economic background has a real impact on students' economic attitudes, i.e. the students from less privileged and less educated households, and those who self-identify as lower class or working class, are more inclined to have egalitarian economic attitudes, as it was assumed in the working hypothesis. Religiousness affected the modeling of economic attitudes, which was not in complete accordance with the hypothesis, and therefore required further analysis. Students from all socio-economic backgrounds had very high levels of self-identified religiousness, and yet irreligious attitudes were more likely to occur among the students from higher socio-economic backgrounds, which confirmed our initial hypothesis after all.

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## The Impact of Gender, Income and Attending College on Students' Religious Values

**Abstract:** *This text analyzes results of a research conducted in 2013 into Serbian students' religious, moral and political values. Starting with the ideas proposed by functionalist theorists, the feminist movement, Anthony Giddens and Alex Inkeles, I tried to apply their theories on this research. The aim was to establish correlation between income, gender and the orientation of college (humanities vs. science) that students attend with their religiousness.*

**Key words:** *religiousness, students, income and religiousness, gender and religiousness, college and religiousness.*

The aim of our 2013 research, which was conducted on a sample of 1058 (bursary and self-funded) students of private and public universities from nine cities in Serbia, was to examine students' religious, moral and socio-political values.

Numerous sociological and socio-psychological theories have yielded hypotheses about the reasons why people are religious, i.e. about the factors that affect religiousness. These include theories such as functionalism, Marxism, interactionism, feminism, etc., which attempt to answer questions about the role of religion in society, as well as those regarding personal reasons for faith. Our analysis of respondents' data will focus mainly on

the factors which may correlate with religiousness, while the role of religion in society will be put on the back burner. The functionalists examined the impact of emotional stress and life crises on the religiousness of an individual. Bronislaw Malinowski was among the first to discuss this issue in his essay *Magic, Science and Religion*, where he wrote about the interdependence between religion and crises of life, i.e. situations and circumstances which are either unforeseeable or beyond our control. Malinowski observed this while he was studying tribes and later on contemporary sociologists followed in his footsteps and expanded his theory. For example, Talcott Parsons also wrote about unforeseen circumstances, i.e. those that one can't prepare for. He termed these the *unpredictability factor*, considering it crucial for man's belief in some transcendent higher power, such as magic or religion. Since ancient times people have been faced with the question: "Why must men endure deprivation and pain and so unequally and haphazardly, if indeed at all?" (Parsons in Haralambos 2002:440). To a certain extent, religion provided answers to these questions. For example, according to Parsons, God challenges people's faith by imposing suffering on them, while their good behavior is to be rewarded in the after-life. Parsons made the first reference to the impact of finances on religious attitudes. We can assume that poverty is associated with increased religiousness because it creates a feeling of uncertainty regarding daily existence and future plans. Rodney Stark and William Bainbridge also stressed the compensatory role of religion. According to them, man is driven by his desire to gain rewards and avoid punishment. However, most of what people want – e.g. wealth – is either not available to everyone or completely unavailable. Functionalists often referred to the point when people become aware of their approaching death (or the death of a close one) as an incentive to turn to religion. They made another reference to wealth as being one of the factors which trigger religious behavior. It is for these reasons

that I would like to test this hypothesis and see whether material wealth, i.e. students' income, affects their religiousness.

Gender as a determinant of religiousness has been widely discussed by the feminist theorists. Moreover, Anthony Giddens, one of the most prominent contemporary sociologists, addresses this issue. Giddens sees Christian religion as a resolutely male affair in its symbolism and its clear hierarchy. He states that God is the Father, a male figure, as well as his Son Jesus, while the first woman was created from the rib taken from a man. Karen Armstrong argues that none of the major religions have been friendly to women. What is more, women have been marginalized (Armstrong 1993). Haralambos writes that even though women rank low in the hierarchy of different religions, they are more involved in religious rituals (which they are allowed to participate in) than the men. Steve Bruce came to a similar conclusion when he analyzed the results of 1991 British Social Attitudes Survey, which revealed that 65 per cent of regular church-attendees were women, while males made up only 35 per cent. These results highlight an interesting paradox between religious discourse and religious practice. Therefore, one of the aims of this research is to test the hypothesis that women are more involved in religious practices than men.

Alex Inkeles conducted international comparative research where 6,000 men were interviewed. The survey respondents included young men from various world countries who pursued different occupations and came from different social groups. The aim of this research was to define the model a modern man, i.e. individual modernity with its characteristic marks, for which he examined respondents' belief in science and religion, among other factors. The research produced interesting results. Education had a significant effect on respondents' attitudes and value systems regarding religion and other dimensions. However, the impact of different colleges on shaping personalities

and forming attitudes varied in degree. Namely, humanities colleges proved to have a significant effect, as opposed to technical colleges whose influence was negligible. For the purpose of this research, we have made a distinction has been made between humanities and science colleges in order to test this hypothesis.

At this point we should mention social psychologists who recognized the compensatory relationship between religiousness and various unfulfilled motives. Among these, Rot included our need for company, self-affirmation, emotional bonding, altruistic motives, etc. This is another example that religiousness is affected not only by objective and social factors but also by numerous equally influential intrinsic factors difficult to examine.

### **Research results**

Before we proceed with the cross-impact analysis of variables and their significant correlations, we need to refer to their overall results.

- Of the total number of respondents, 52 per cent were males, while females comprised 48 per cent, which is fairly balanced.
- Colleges were classified into four categories, according to their orientation (humanities vs. science) and location (Belgrade vs. other towns). Of the total respondents, 32% studied humanities in Belgrade, 27% per cent studied humanities in other towns, while those who studied science comprised 20% in Belgrade and 20% elsewhere in Serbia.
- Income was also classified into four categories:
  - 1) up to 200 euros per month (12%)
  - 2) between 201 and 500 euros per month (35%)
  - 3) between 501 and 800 euros per month (29%)
  - 4) more than 800 euros per month (25%)

First of all, we examine the interaction between the obtained results and the gender variable. As for the question “What is your attitude toward religion?”, seven model answers were provided: 1) I am religious and I belong to a traditional religious community; 2) I am religious and I support contemporary spiritual movements; 3) I am religious, but I am not a member of any religious community; 4) I am indifferent toward religion; 5) I am not religious; 6) I am an agnostic; 7) I am a convinced atheist. We have observed a certain fluctuation between male and female answers. Interestingly enough, as many as 59.3 per cent of the total number of respondents who declared themselves as atheists were men, which is at the same time the largest discrepancy in answers. However, from the total number of respondents who declared themselves agnostics, 54.4 per cent were females, which is nearly 10 per cent more than the men. We can observe that men tend to be atheists and to have more radical attitudes, while females tend toward agnosticism. Of the total number of religious respondents who were members of religious communities, 53.4 per cent were women. This is at the same time the largest subgroup with as many as 58 per cent of the total sample. Only 29 per cent of the total responded that they were “indifferent toward religion”, irreligious, atheists or agnostics. At this point, it would be interesting to make a reference to Dragoljub Đorđević’s survey research on students’ religious values, which he conducted in the city of Niš in 1985. From the sample of 780 respondents, merely 2.9 per cent saw themselves as being religious, whereas as many as 97.1 percent were undecided, irreligious or atheists. The two surveys conducted within a time-span of less than thirty years display an extraordinary oscillation in results. Here we need to take into account contributing factors including the collapse of the socialist system and the arrival of capitalism, as well as the decline in the standard of living, which is to be our next hypothesis for the cross-impact analysis of variables. An attempt to explain an enormous difference in students’

attitudes over the period of less than thirty years would certainly require a separate study and a much larger number of contributing factors than the ones included in our survey.

When respondents' religiousness is analyzed in relation to the colleges they attend, the following fluctuations in responses can be observed: the percentage of students who study humanities and define themselves as atheists (71%) or agnostics (64%) is significantly higher than the percentage of those who study science, which confirms Inkeles's hypothesis. Of course, it should be borne in mind that 58 per cent of the total respondents declared themselves to be religious, thus forming a substantial majority among both humanities and science students.

After performing the cross-impact analysis we have confirmed the hypothesis, assumed by many authors, that poverty correlates with a high level of religiousness. Even though it is impossible to determine the exact percentage of fluctuation in responses, due to the nature of the variables used, it can be observed that answers tend to concentrate around a certain value. By far the largest number of respondents who defined themselves as religious members of traditional communities had household income below 200 euros per month, whereas the percentage of religious believers decreased in proportion to the increase in monthly income. Conversely, the percentage of the poverty-stricken among irreligious, indifferent, atheist and agnostic respondents decreased in proportion to the increase in monthly income.

For the question "Do you believe that God exists?" four model answers were provided: 1) I do; 2) I am not certain; 3) There is some sort of spirit or life force, but I do not know whether that is God; 4) I do not believe that there is any sort of spirit, God or life force. Of the total respondents, 55 percent said that God existed (as opposed to the 1.8 per cent in Đorđević's

survey), 25 per cent believed in some spirit or life force, 11 per cent were not certain, and 9 per cent denied the existence of God or any force.

By examining the correlation between gender and response, one can observe considerable oscillations in the following groups of respondents: 1) those who believed in some spirit or life force, where 57.1 per cent of the total were females, and 2) those who did not believe that there was God or life force, where 58.9 per cent were males. As regards believers and those who provided other answers, oscillations in responses were statistically insignificant.

When comparing the responses to this question and the attending colleges, we observed the largest oscillation between humanities vs. science colleges with respect to the respondents who believed in the existence of God. Namely, as many as 62 per cent of the total number of believers were students of humanities. It is interesting to note that humanities students are more inclined to believe in some undefined force than their science colleagues. However, this distinction is valid only for the respondents who study in Belgrade. The effect of regional background on students' attitudes should be taken with reserve, considering that a high percentage of those who study in Belgrade come from the provinces. Interestingly enough, humanities students also predominate (with 60%) in the group of students who do not believe in the existence of God, which confirms Inkeles's results and is in accordance with the aforementioned theory.

As far as the correlation between the previous question and the income factor is concerned, once again the results follow the same pattern. Out of the total number of respondents who believed in the existence of God, the highest proportion were those with the lowest income, while the number decreased with an increase in income, and vice versa – the largest group of

respondents who did not believe in any force or spirit comprised those with highest income, while the number decreased in proportion to the decrease in income.

For the question regarding respondents' attitude toward religion, five model answers were provided: 1) There is only one true religion and the truth it preaches (20%); 2) There is only one true religion, but other religions do contain some basic truths as well (18%); 3) There is not one true religion, but all great world religions contain some basic truths (31%); 4) None of the great religions have any truths to offer (12%), and 5) I do not know (20%). We can observe that the largest number of believers are religiously tolerant after all, in the sense that they do not exclude other religions, which is certainly positive.

When considering gender, higher fluctuations have been observed only in the following two responses: "none of the religions had any truths to offer", where males predominated with 57.8 per cent of the total number of respondents, and "I do not know," where females predominated with 56.8 per cent. As regards humanities vs. science colleges, a considerable difference has been observed in the group of respondents who believed in the existence of only one true religion, where as many as 71 per cent were students of humanities. However, they also predominated among those who answered that "none of the great religions had any truths to offer", with 60 per cent of the total number of responses.

The income factor was not statistically significant for this response.

For the question "What do you believe in out of the following?" respondents were provided with a list of six options: 1) Jesus Christ; 2) Resurrection; 3) Heaven and Hell; 4) Transmigration of the soul. The question was answered by circling "yes" or "no". When examining the correlation between the gender

difference and responses, it can be observed that females tend to believe in the listed items more than males, with oscillations ranging between a few percent up to 20 or even 30 percent (women are more inclined to believe in astrology and magic). With regard to the college factor in relation to the responses to this question, it can be observed that the percentage of humanities students who gave positive answers to all of the above is higher in comparison to the students of science. However, the difference never exceeded 10 percent. The income factor was relevant only as regards the belief in Jesus Christ and the Resurrection. Following the trend of the previous questions, the highest proportion of believers in Jesus Christ were those with the lowest income, with the number decreasing with an increase in income. On the other hand, this was the first time that we observed an oscillation pertaining to those who believed in the Resurrection. The largest group comprised those with a monthly income up to 200 euros. Surprisingly, the second largest group included those with a monthly income between 501 and 800 euros. Students who had more than 800 euros per month ranked third, while those with a monthly income between 201 and 500 euros ranked bottom. The fact that the respondents with the highest income ranked immediately below those with the lowest income, as far as their belief in the Resurrection is concerned, would be an interesting topic for further and more detailed analysis.

The next question examined students' participation in religious activities in their everyday lives. The answers provided were "regularly", "sometimes", and "never", while the list of activities included:

- 1) Attendance at the Sunday Liturgy (53 per cent of the total number of respondents had never attended any);
- 2) Celebration of major feasts (80 per cent of respondents celebrated regularly);

- 3) Participation in charity activities of the local religious community (42 per cent answered “sometimes”, and 50 per cent “never”);
- 4) Reading religious books (39 per cent answered “sometimes”, and 53 per cent “never”);
- 5) Praying in places other than the church (41 per cent “sometimes”, and 35 per cent “never”);
- 6) Practice of taking Holy Communion (49 per cent “sometimes”, 39 per cent “never”);
- 7) Fasting prior to major feasts (40 per cent “sometimes”, 33 per cent “never”);
- 8) Confession to a priest (76 per cent “never”, 17 per cent “sometimes”);
- 9) Attendance at funeral service (52 per cent answered “regularly”, and 32 per cent “sometimes”).

The gender difference was relevant only for one of the above items, where a noticeable oscillation has been observed. Namely, 61 per cent of respondents who regularly attended the Sunday Liturgy were men. On the other hand, women tended to prefer the answer “sometimes” with 56.6 per cent. As far as the difference between humanities vs. science colleges is concerned, the results showed a different picture than the previous questions. Male and female students attending science colleges were predominantly involved in all of the above activities (apart from feasting prior to major feasts). This was rather unexpected in comparison to our previous findings, where humanities students predominated as religious believers. Furthermore, they tended to believe in superstition and mysteries that cannot be explained objectively and empirically. When it comes to the impact of finances, it can be observed that the tendency to perform religious activities decreases in proportion to the increase of respondents’ income, i.e. those with the lowest income are the

ones who are most frequently involved in religious rituals. However, owing to the non-parametric method that we have used, we are unable to determine exact percentages.

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## Politological Analysis of Religious and Socio-Political Values of University Students

**Abstract:** *The purpose of this paper is to analyze religious and socio-political values of Serbian university students from the viewpoint of politology of religion and it is based on the research project entitled “Post-Secular turn: religious, moral and socio-political values of the student population in Serbia“. Although most respondents consider themselves to be religious and members of a traditional religious community, other findings lead us to conclude that religious affiliation among the student population in Serbia must be viewed rather as part of tradition and identity, and not like an effect of true faith. Thus, our main hypothesis is that religion and religious affiliation of Serbian students are not just a matter of faith itself, but rather of identity and tradition. On the other hand, we will try to analyze their attitudes to some political views and issues, which will be based on findings about religion and religious values.*

**Key words:** *religion, values, students, survey, identity, tradition, politics, politology of religion.*

### Introduction

Research conducted by the Centre for Religious Studies of the Institute for Philosophy and Social Theory, Belgrade, entitled “Post-Secular turn: religious, moral and socio-political

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values of the student population in Serbia“ was aimed to examine religious, moral and socio-political values among the student population in Serbia and their interrelations. In other words, it is supposed to highlight the impact that religions and religious values have on the development of democratic values and attitudes among students with a particular focus on European values of democracy, solidarity, pluralism and tolerance. In view of that, the field to which this research belongs is sociology of religion, but since this paper will be focused on political issues and attitudes, it also belongs to politology of religion, which is concerned with interrelations between religion and politics.<sup>1</sup>

However, in social sciences, and particularly in political study, research into religion as an important political factor has been frowned upon until recently. Ronald Inglehart, Professor of political science, is absolutely right when he says that thirty years ago it was thought that religion would completely disappear from social life and remain in the private realm. According to him, nowadays, thirty years later, it turned out to have been a colossal mistake.<sup>2</sup> The treatment of religion in political science can be best seen in the analysis by Kenneth Wald and Clyde Wilcox, who analyzed the incidence of scientific articles which consider religion in general in one of the most famous political science journals and a hotbed of mainstream political science for more than a century – *American Political Science Review*.<sup>3</sup> Their findings show that there were only 35 titles which contained religious terms by the time they finished their research

1 For more information on politology of religion see: Miroljub Jevtic, Political Science and Religion, *Politics and Religion Journal*, Vol. 1, No. 1, 2007.

2 See Professor Inglehart’s interview “Is there a Global Resurgence of Religion“, <http://www.pewforum.org/Politics-and-Elections/Is-There-a-Global-Resurgence-of-Religion.aspx>, (Accessed 17th March 2013)

3 Kenneth D. Wald and Clyde Wilcox, “Getting Religion: Has Political Science Rediscovered the Faith Factor“, *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 100, No. 4, November 2006.

(2006), which means one article in three years. According to these authors, there are several reasons for that. They point to the very nature of political science, social background of scientists, methodological fact that the subject is difficult to investigate empirically, and to the current 'fashion' in political science.<sup>4</sup> However, the situation is getting better in this respect. Nowadays, there are more scientists who are interested in the relationship between religion and politics, there are new institutes, research centers and committees, international groups etc. Another proof is the research analyzed in this paper. Even a glance at its findings will point to 'revitalization of religion' in the modern world. If we compare these findings with those from some previous ones, particularly those based on research conducted in former Yugoslavia, we will find out that the level of students' religiousness has enormously increased. How this fact has an impact on their attitude toward politics and shapes their political attitudes is to be seen in this paper. However, since the scope of the paper is limited, the author will focus on two main issues expressed as working hypotheses which we will try to prove.

Our first hypothesis is that belonging to Orthodoxy as a traditional religion in Serbia is rather a matter of tradition and identity than a matter of faith, while the other hypothesis refers to the interrelation between religion and politics and it is: certain political attitudes are a result of the adopted religious values. Using the knowledge gathered by politology of religion, we will analyze the findings of this research by testing these hypotheses.

*Hypothesis 1: belonging to Orthodoxy as a traditional religion in Serbia is rather a matter of tradition and identity than a matter of faith*

At first glance this hypothesis does not reveal anything new, but conceptions and utterances like these ones are usually

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4 Ibid., p. 525.

the most controversial ones in social sciences. What we have here is recognition, not knowledge. For instance, most people would claim they know what democracy, violence etc. are. However, if we take the matter further, we will realize that very few of them actually understand the very essence of the concepts in question. When asked to explain, to provide definitions or arguments for or against them, most people usually go silent. It seems that it is similar with religious life among the Serbs, who are thought to be very devoted to Orthodoxy. But on the other hand, very few of them are church-goers. In that sense, best indicator is the 2011 Census. According to data concerning religious affiliation, as many as 6,079,396 out of 7,186,862 declared themselves to be Orthodox Christian.<sup>5</sup> But on the other hand, most Serbian churches are empty on Sundays. Then one must ask if being Christian Orthodox is a matter of faith, or a matter of tradition and identity? The author opts for the latter option and will try to prove it with the aid of findings from the aforementioned research. However, since this paper has a limited scope, the author will only focus on some distinctive findings.

When asked: “What is your attitude toward religion?“, more than 55% of students gave the following answer “I am religious and I am a member of a traditional religious community “.<sup>6</sup> But, when asked: “What religious community do you belong to?“, as many as 79.1% responded they are members of the Serbian Orthodox Church, which means 837 students. It immediately strikes the eye that there are more respondents who belong

5 2011 Census of Population, Households and Dwellings of the Republic of Serbia – religious affiliation, mother tongue and ethnic affiliation, Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia, Belgrade, 2013, p. 38.

6 According to 2006 law on religion and Religious Communities, traditional religious communities in Serbia are the Serbian Orthodox Church, Roman Catholic Church, Islamic Community, Jewish Community, Slovak Evangelical Lutheran Church, reformed Christian Church and Evangelical Christian Church.

to the Serbian Orthodox Church than those who have a positive attitude toward religion, which means that all other members of traditional churches are included. If we compare the questions from this survey, we will have the first evidence of the fact that belonging to a religion among the Serbs is merely a reflection of tradition and identity, and less of faith and belief. That is to say, out of 952 respondents who answered the question about belonging to a religious community, 905 responded they do belong to a religious community, and only 47 of them, or 4.4% responded they do not belong to a religious community.

The next question is even more interesting: “Do you believe in God?”. 562 students out of 1021 responded they believed that God exists (53.1%). This means that there are 905 students who belong to a religious community, but only 562 believe in God, which is yet another piece of evidence that this is a matter of tradition and identity, but not a matter of faith.

Answers to another two questions are also distinctive. One of them concerns belief in a number of elements of religion, but we will mention just a few we think to be considerably important. Of course, first and foremost comes God. A total of 67.6% respondents said they believe in God, almost 48% of them believe in resurrection, somewhat less, 43.5% of them, believe in Heaven and Hell, while there are more respondents who do not believe in transmigration of the soul than those who do, that is 46.1% vs. 34.6%. On the other hand, the question which examines what we termed “church-going“, which refers to religious activities, provide different findings: for example, the survey tells us that only 9.2% of students attend Sunday church service, and 51.2% never do. The situation concerning celebration of major feasts is different. 76.8% respondents state they regularly celebrate Christmas, Easter, family patron saint (Slava) etc. Taking part in charity events is something very typical of Roman

Catholicism and Protestantism, but not of Orthodoxy. Students' responses about participation in charity events are along these lines. Only 8.2% of them take part regularly (87 out of 1013), while 506, or 47.8% never take part, and 420 sometimes. The situation is similar with confession to the priest. 776 respondents (out of 1017) never confess to their priest, while only 6.2% do. Findings concerning Holy Communion are also interesting, since 47.2% (499 out of 1014) respondents never take it, while only 123, or 11.6% take it regularly. Concerning the frequency of visits to houses of worship, most respondents, 41.9% or 443 out of 1012, stated they visit them a few times a year.

How should we interpret these numbers? Our approach might be rigid or conservative, but the conclusion is that the very essence of, say, Christianity is belief in resurrection of the soul and its journey to Heaven or Hell. And this is the main strength and *spiritus movens*, someone will say, and main force of religion – belief that there is life after death. If we accept this attitude, it is then clear– you either believe that someone died and resurrected three days later, or not. That is – you are either a Christian, or you are not. Such rigid an attitude, supported in this paper leads us to conclude that religion is not just a matter of faith, although faith is the central point of its existence. In modern world religion has a much wider role than being a sheer belief in something unworldly, it is integral part of our lives, of the way we dress, behave, how we act within society, politics, economy, how we treat each other, our jobs, the state and its laws, how we think and form a worldview, *Weltanschauung*.<sup>7</sup>

Therefore we think that these findings prove the hypothesis that religion among students, which can be extended

7 This should not be taken to mean that only religion shapes these views. Likewise, it would be a mistake to claim that religion has no impact whatsoever. Accordingly, the author's attitude is that religion is not the only factor, but one of them.

to almost all other members of the population, is more a matter of identity and tradition, and less a matter of faith. Concerning the identity of the Serbian people and religion and proving the role of religion in forming the identity, this problem can be approached from several points of view. For the purpose of this paper we chose psychological approach. Since 1054, when Christianity split into two divisions (Roman Catholicism with its center in Rome and Orthodoxy with its center in Constantinople), the dividing line was on the Balkan Peninsula. That fact left deep traces on peoples who live in this region. If we focus on differences between peoples of the former Yugoslavia, we will see that religious affiliation was one of the main distinctive traits. In other words, religious affiliation made “us” different from “them”. Concerning Serbian tradition and religion there is no need to further explain that religion, or to be more precise, Orthodoxy, plays a vital role in the tradition of the Serbian people. And finally, Serbian worldview was formed under different influences, but being Orthodox is one of crucial elements. For example, Russia has been seen as a great friend of the Serbian people and it is still so today, and the magnitude of this image is best seen through the maxim “300 million of us and Russians”, which is quite common in colloquial language.

*Hypothesis 2: certain political attitudes come from adopted religious values*

As we stated at the beginning of this paper, there was no place for religion in political studies until recently. In the last few years that trend started to change, especially due to the growth of political influence of the Muslim world and a large number of fundamentalist organizations which use the doctrine of Islam. The research which is the starting point of this paper is not politological, but the findings can be useful to politologists in their analyses. In this paper, we will try to prove the

hypothesis that some political attitudes expressed by Serbian students are a result of religious values.

At the very beginning we should point to a very important fact – although religion is becoming increasingly prominent in the domain of politics and of the political, there is still a common attitude that religion should remain a private matter of each individual and that it should not be present in public and political spheres. When asked: “Is religion a private or public affair?“, only 4.4% of the respondents replied that it was public, as many as 59.7% replied that it was private, and 32.2% that it is both. The question regarding whether the Church and religious communities should take part in public and social life is complementary to the previous one. This question is very important for politicalology of religion. Students who replied with a yes total 31.9% of the respondents, 36.1% of them said no, and 28.4% of them did not know. Although the number of those who said yes is bigger than in some previous surveys, especially those conducted in the former Yugoslavia, we are still under the impression that the importance of religion and religious communities in society and politics is still not understood. Of course, we are not saying that this is the only impact on politics, but rather that it is an important element of the political domain. Modern Serbia could be the best example, because we can point to at least three socio-political cases in which the role of religion is indispensable. The first one is Kosovo. The Serbian Orthodox Church plays a very important role there due to its proclamations, opinions and actions. The last example was public invitation to Kosovo Serbs to vote, and was issued by Patriarch Irenaeus.<sup>8</sup> Another example is the situation with Islamic communities in Serbia, whose internal problems certainly reflect on political issues in which international subjects are also involved,

8 <http://www.politika.rs/rubrike/Politika/Irinej-Srbi-treba-da-izadju-na-izbore-i-biraju-najbolje.lt.html>, accessed October 30th 2013.

and one of these issues is particularly important for Serbia – the question of the Raška District.<sup>9</sup> A third example might be the impact of Vlachs on the relations between Romania and Serbia, which is why the Patriarch of Romania did not attend the celebration of 1700 years of the Edict of Milan in Niš, and Romania insists that this issue be solved; it can thus become an obstacle to Serbian integration into the EU.<sup>10</sup> On the other hand, those who accept the fact that religion can have an impact on politics and society and vice versa have different attitudes toward its role, i.e. whether it is positive or negative. This exactly is the focus of the question about positive or negative role of religion in society: only 10.1% of respondents stated that religion has a negative impact, whereas 33.6% of them stated that the role of religion is positive. However, as many as 52.5% of the respondents think that religion has both positive and negative roles.

Students were also given the question concerning the relationship between religion and politics, which is the crucial point of politology of religion. 8.5% of the respondents absolutely agree with the attitude “Politicians who do not believe in God are unfit for public office”, 7.2% of them agree, and 35.3% are undecided; 16.7% disagree, and 28.6% strongly disagree. It means that as many as 45.3% of the respondents have a negative attitude to this statement, versus 15.7% whose attitude was positive. These findings can be used to prove the first hypothesis, because if there are more than 50% of students who claim to believe in God, then we can assume that they will not vote for a candidate who declares himself as an atheist. For example, that is the case with the United States, which is considered to be

9 For more information see: Marko Veković, Velizar Antić, „Odnos Islamske zajednice BiH prema Islamskim zajednicama u Srbiji“, *Godišnjak FPN-a*, vol. 6, no. 7, 2012.

10 <http://www.novosti.rs/vesti/naslovna/drustvo/aktuelno.290.html:459577-Vlasi-i-crkva-pretnja-dobrim-odnosima-sa-Rumunijom>, accessed October 30th 2013.

a very religious community. Even de Tocqueville wrote about it in his classic work *Democracy in America*.<sup>11</sup> Americans' religiosity can be seen in how they vote for presidential candidates, which is best revealed by the fact that until today only one US President has been a Catholic – John F. Kennedy. All other presidents were members of Protestant denominations in the US.<sup>12</sup> To the author's knowledge, there has not been a single presidential candidate in the history of the United States who publicly declared his atheism. And there have been so many very religious ones, such as George Bush or Barack Obama's rival in the last presidential election Mitt Romney, who is a prominent member of US Mormons.

Statement that “religious leaders should not influence government decisions“ is supported by 47.4% of respondents, 32% are undecided, while 16.7% disagree. In accordance with the three examples from modern Serbian practice, it is clear that some socio-political issues are directly connected with religious communities, and it is thus normal that their leaders and members display interest in decisions which concern them directly and to try to lobby for solutions which favor their communities in some way. This viewpoint gave rise to criticisms of other religious communities, particularly small Protestant communities in Serbia and Islamic community, that the Serbian Orthodox Church uses the “monopoly” it has due its position as the dominant religious community and that in certain decisions the state mostly favors the demands of the Serbian Orthodox Church.

11 See: Aleksis de Tokvil, *O demokratiji u Americi*, Izdavačka knjižarnica Zorana Stojanovića, Sremski Karlovci, 1990. For more information about the relationship between religion and politics in Tocqueville's writings see: Miroljub Jevtić, „Aleksis de Tokvil kao preteča politikologije religije“, *Teme*, vol. 36, no. 1, 2012.

12 For more information see u: Miroljub Jevtić, *Politikologija religije*, Centar za proučavanje religije i versku toleranciju, Beograd, 2009. Chapter “Politički život SAD i religija“, pp. 101–112.

One of the questions invited students to estimate the impact of religion and religious communities on Serbian population. According to our results, only 2.6% of them think that the Church and religious communities have biggest influence on the population, while more respondents favor the state (16.3%), political parties (22.9%), media (34.3%), even show business (11.8%).

We think that the question of accepting secular values is of particular importance, and will thus separately analyze the responses in this part of the paper. First of all, the research classifies democracy, liberalism, capitalism, equality of genders, civil society and human rights as secular values. But, there is a question of whether all these elements are 'secular values'. The author thinks that the concept and idea of secularism can be approached from two viewpoints – sociological and politological. The sociological aspect of secularization is based on the fact that religion is slowly losing its position in society, accordingly in politics as well, and thus disappears from the public sphere. This viewpoint can be easily proved by empirical research of what we term "ecclesiasticity", that is, the number of church-going believers is declining, there are fewer people who get baptized, who fast etc. On the other hand, politological approach to secularization is based on legal separation of church and state. If we accept this argument, there are several countries in modern Europe which have some kind of legal association with a certain religion, such as state church, national church or state religion. And what is important is that these countries, and there are nine of them, are fully-fledged liberal democracies based on capitalism, in which gender equality and civil society are well developed.<sup>13</sup>

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13 They are England, Scotland, Denmark, Liechtenstein, Malta, Monaco, Finland, Iceland and Greece. For more information see: Marko Veković, „Mjesto i uloga religije u nesekularizovanim zemljama u Evropi“, to be printed in *Politička revija* journal, submitted on October 15th 2013.

Therefore, although religion is still closely linked with the state apparatus in some countries, it does not mean that these countries cannot adopt the aforementioned values. This points to the fact that religion, in this case Christianity, is a favorable ground for adoption of these values. However, we have to add that these values are more common in Roman Catholic and Protestant countries, and less in Christian Orthodox countries, which is where Serbia belongs, and this attitude is generally accepted in science.<sup>14</sup> Results of the survey lead us to a different conclusion. Serbian students accept democracy as one of secular values, and as many as 67.6% have a positive attitude toward it, while only 7.1% disapprove of it. If we add 21.5% who are undecided, we can reasonably conclude that democracy is an accepted value among Serbian students. On the other hand, there are results which show that only 12.1% of respondents have negative attitudes toward liberalism, 23.9% toward capitalism, gender equality is disapproved of by merely 4.5%, civil society by 3.4%, and human rights by 2.5%. These findings lead us to two conclusions. The first one concerns the fact that although most respondents believe in God and belong to a traditional religious community, it still does not have an impact their acceptance of secular values in the sense in which they are presented in the survey. On the other hand, it once again confirms the attitude that belonging to a traditional religious community and religion is more a matter of tradition and identity, rather than a matter of faith.

14 For example, an eminent author like Alfred Stepan writes about it in the following article: Alfred Stepan, Religion, Democracy, and the 'Twin Tolerations', *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 11, No. 4, 2000, pp. 37–57. In this article, Stepan asks whether all religious systems are compatible with democracy, or is it possible that some of them are not? He focuses on Confucianism, Islam and Orthodoxy. With regard to Orthodoxy, he clearly describes some theological elements which can be associated with political (in)activity, and concludes that Orthodoxy anti-democratic. He uses Greece as an example to illustrate the fact that Orthodoxy can work toward democracy if there is political willingness for that.

To be precise, a true believer cannot accept equality of genders, because the place of a woman in Orthodox Christianity and in other religions is such that she is *de facto* unequal with man. Firm and principled attitude that a woman cannot be a priest is a good example. It is similar with human rights and some ideas of civil society. To put it plainly, members of LGBT community cannot be accepted as equal members of society, because it is against Orthodox dogmas, which is something church leaders often emphasize. Thus it seems that students who took part in the survey are Christian Orthodox merely by tradition, while their attitudes are predominantly under the influence of various media and globalization, which is how these values spread their influence throughout the world.

Their views on causes of conflicts in the Balkans are also interesting. In spite of several different theories, as many as 44.8% of respondents agree that the conflict in the Balkans broke out due to a clash of different religions, which means between Serbs, who are Orthodox Christians, Croats, who are Catholics and Bosniaks, who are Muslims.<sup>15</sup>

### Conclusion

In this brief analysis of the findings of the survey our wish was to point to several things from the point of view of politology of religion. First, there is the importance of religion and politics for understanding the whole picture of society. As

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<sup>15</sup> There are many writings about this topic, but we wish to single out Samuel P. Huntington, Professor at Harvard, former president of the American Political Science Association. On his famous work *The Clash of Civilizations* he pointed to the fact that future conflicts will be between different civilizations in which the dominance of one religion is the main identity factor. In that sense, the Balkans are a kind of “laboratory” in which it could be best observed that the three belligerent sides in the wars of the 1990s were supported and aided by members of their own civilization – Christian, East Orthodox and Islamic.

Hegel put it: “Das Wahre ist das Ganze“, which means “The true is the whole”. Therefore, to understand and explain social and political behavior means, one has to be aware of all factors which have an impact on that behavior. It is our opinion that religion is certainly one of them and that it deserves scientific attention as such. On the other hand, by proving our first hypothesis we tried to explain how religion is not just a matter of believing into something unworldly which controls our lives. Religion is a much wider force which affects human through various channels. If we focus on Serbia, (and it is the same in most other countries of the modern world), then it is evident that religion was one of the most important socio-political factors in history. Therefore, we are not talking about faith, but that belonging to a wider circle of Christianity formed our tradition, customs, values, habits etc. In that sense, it is our opinion that religion among the Serbs is not just a matter of belief, but much more a matter of tradition and identity. We tried to prove how it is reflected on political attitudes in the second hypothesis. The scope of this paper did not allow a more comprehensive analysis of all attitudes analyzed in the survey, but we still hope that it is possible to find a link between belonging to a certain religion and certain political attitudes.

In the end, we wish to point out that this kind of research, apart from all methodological difficulties and the ensuing deficiencies, are one of the path which social theory, political theory included, should follow. Theoretical arguments followed by empirical evidence is the aim one should pursue, but it is a rough path which is still to be trodden. In that sense, contribution of the research project “Post-Secular turn: religious, moral and socio-political values of the student population in Serbia” to politology of religion is great and deserves every respect.

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### **Post-Conflict Democracy: Political Culture of Students in Serbia**

**Abstract:** *The paper examines the political culture of students in Serbia. The values of young intellectuals are assessed from the standpoint of Inglehart's theory of the switch to post-materialism. The results of the research shed light on this theory from a different angle and require a modification of Inglehart's original materialism – post-materialism scale. The study will present what kind of relation the students hold towards the current political system in the state, towards democratic principles, the EU, but also numerous important social issues, such as the equality of genders and minorities.*

**Key words:** *democracy, European Union, Inglehart, political culture, post-materialism, postmodernism, equality.*

#### **Context of Research: the Inter-Conflict Generation**

In the late 1960s, following the deflation of the post-war phase of the European economy boom, the need arises in social theory to theoretically conceptualize rebelling against oppression, colonial practices, racism and every form of chauvinism. Environmental movements, along with movements for the implementation of social justice and establishment of civic freedoms and all forms of equality, leave their mark on thinkers who

created in the times of the great protests of 1968. Philosophy and sociology announce the end of great structures and great truths and herald the beginning of the **era of poststructuralism**. Only with the slight passing of time, a little more than a decade later, does the French philosopher Lyotard manage to identify the turn, the point of discontinuity in the European way of thinking, their viewpoint on the world and action, the point after which there is no return and which represents a break with the Eurocentric and subject-centric way of thinking which was present up to that point. Namely, Lyotard emphasized the fact that the end of the old era had come, and the world had stepped into the **postmodern age**. The prefix “post”, which has become the marker of social theory from the seventies of the past century onwards, is used to denote a radical break with the oppression practices present up to that point: colonialism, the oppression of women, other races and ethnicities, totalitarianism, all forms of intolerance, absolutism, Eurocentrism, all with a view to celebrating equality, pluralism, the right to be different.

This turn in theory was also followed by the field of social psychology. American researcher Ronald Inglehart set up the hypothesis, which he corroborated with empirical evidence, that during the 1970s in Europe a change started to occur in the value orientations of the old, war generation and the post-war generation, i.e. the one that grew up in the period of economic growth and relative social-political stability. According to his viewpoint, in societies where there is economic and social stability values are developed in the direction of democracy, tolerance, pluralism, civic activism and individualism. However, aside from this the author also stresses the importance of cultural heritage and the social context which is specific for each individual country. According to the author, this theory about the occurrence of **post-materialistic values** provides the possibility of predicting the development of political systems and democracy in societies.

The case of value orientations of students in Serbia is important for testing this theory for various reasons. Firstly, one should examine in which way, to what extent and at which speed liberal-democratic values are developed in post-communist countries. On the one hand, one should determine to what extent the heritage of the old ideology, but also the civil wars, sanctions and economic and political instability, affect the formation of values of youth in Serbia. On the other hand, the conflicts and unresolved guilt, the emotions stirred up by the decisions of the ICTY in the Hague, but also the problems of territoriality and sovereignty make up a specific social context which one could expect to hinder the development of democratic values among the population. The economic situation in the country is characterized by a highly unstable economy, low GDP and a high level of unemployment. On average, the number of educated young people is on the rise, even though there are fewer and fewer realistic possibilities for them to find a job within their profession. The unfavorable financial position causes young people to stay with their primary family for longer periods of time and often they themselves become parents without having secured the necessary financial and living conditions. Instead of noting a development of post-materialistic values such as responsibility, independence and individuality among youth, we bear witness to a return to a form of forced collectivism and extended non-adulthood. Finally, young people are a very important social resource which is becoming scarce, especially in Europe, where the median age of the population is increasing.

Due to the influence of the aforementioned instability factors, young people in Serbia are characterized by a particular doubly transitional identity: “One of the phrases that was commonly used to name the situation typical for youth in societies that inherited socialist regimes was ‘double transition’: transition into adulthood in a society in transition” (Tomanović, 2012:

34). In other words, the identity of students in Serbia is of a doubly transitional character: on the one hand it denotes the passage into adulthood, while on the other it refers to life in a country in transition. The transition into the world of adults itself is actually very important because it greatly affects a clearer formation of various social categories and perceptions, i.e. stands on gender, social classes and ethnic divisions, which serves as a basis for social beliefs at a later stage in life (Roberts, 2003, p. 487).

Finally, with regards to the development of democracy in the society, *postponed democratization* is characteristic for Serbia. Namely, the first phase of transition: the phase of “blocked transformation” (Lazić & Cvejić, 2004) of the society lasted for a further decade after the collapse of communism due to the absolutism of the rule of Slobodan Milošević, and during this phase the governing ranks from the previous regime kept the monopoly in the society in the form of a general economic and political supremacy, which made the development of market economy and democracy impossible. The second phase, the phase of belated, postponed or extended transformation has been ongoing since the year 2000 and the ousting of Milošević (Lazić & Cvejić, 2004).

The generation of third-year students, which was examined within this research, mainly between 21 and 23 years of age, consists of young people who were born after the breakup of the Socialist Federative Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY), but they grew up in the period of the economic and social crisis, the bombing of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY) in 1999 and the 5 October overthrow. The aim of this paper is to establish to what extent democratic values have “taken root” among educated individuals from this generation and to what extent they have kept the prejudices of the former generations and what kind of attitude they generally hold towards socialism.

The paper will examine the value system of students who belong to the *inter-conflict* generation, who were on the one hand born after the breakup of the SFRY while on the other grew up under sanctions and during the bombing of the FRY. The research will present how value systems are constituted among youth in Serbia, what kind of relation young people hold towards communism, to what extent they idealize it,<sup>1</sup> what their attitude is towards democracy and the more important secular values, and, finally, to what degree their values are (post-)materialistic.

### Values and value orientations

With the aim of making the following text clearer, it is necessary to provide a general definition of values, political culture, along with a brief overview Inglehart's theory and the development of the World Values Survey.

Values are defined as relatively permanent and stable beliefs that serve as a guiding principle in the life of an individual (Rokeach, 1973, p. 5). This sort of definition would not be sufficient for the purpose of this study since it does not offer a solution for joining the two planes: the individual and the collective. A somewhat more encompassing and analytically more convenient solution is offered by Kuzmanović, who introduces the *social* dimension in the definition of the term: he considers values as beliefs in connection with general forms of behavior which are personally or *socially* desirable (Kuzmanović, 1995). In the process of assessing an object and the world around us, values are what affects which aspect of the object will be most important for our understanding and our attitude towards the object as a whole.

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1 The degree of idealizing the old system shows us the level of satisfaction with the current system of governing the state.

While values represent more permanent, in-depth structures of thought, stands and opinions are of a more “superficial” nature, and, consequently, are more easily changed, since they are more susceptible to the influence of the context, the concrete circumstances (Rokeach, 1979).

Value orientations are a wider term than values, they denote a general system of important, key values. Value orientations represent an important analytical tool since they come into being when values become a cultural and social standard which governs and guides the behavior of the individual and the group. In other words, value orientations have the function of a conducting medium between the sphere of abstract, individual thinking (value) and the field of practical action, activity, and behavior.

### **Political culture and political values**

When it comes to values connected to the practical-political sphere, it is necessary to render the meaning of the expression political culture. Political culture refers to the values, beliefs, stands, but also patterns of behavior of a given political community. It comprises opinions, stands and values, or, most generally said, *orientations towards the political system*:

The term ‘political culture’ thus refers to specific political orientations – stands towards the political system and its different segments, as well as stands towards one’s own role in the system (Almond & Verba, 1963, p. 12).

It should be understood that political culture represents the general perception citizens have of the rules of the political system. Even though the public opinion on certain issues may change fairly quickly, especially due to the influence of the media and various media campaigns, political culture is a far wider term and represents a much more permanent, more stable construction.

Political culture, as part of general culture, brings order into political life, i.e. the field of the public. Political culture comprises values, beliefs, convictions, stands, symbols, styles and patterns of political action and behavior of the individual and the society. It plays a crucial role in the selection of the goals and directions according to which individuals, the society and the state move and develop. (Čupić, 2009, p. 339)

Political culture represents the encounter of individual, collective and public experience (Vujadinović, 2008, p. 32), and consequently as such implies familiarity with the political system, expectations from the political system, and political and civic participation, i.e. taking part in that system. If we apply this to the field of value orientations, we will get three analytical levels, which comprise:

- a. stands and values in connection with the evaluation and the **perception of the political system**, which is, naturally, influenced by the degree to which the individual is familiar with the current political system and state of society;
- b. stands and values in connection with the **expectations** the individual or the group have of the state, or, in other words, what needs, in the opinion of the individual or the group, the state should address.
- c. stands and values in connection with **civic and political participation** and activism, which is the most specific and most concrete level of the analysis, where one can actually see the implementation of values in everyday social-political life.

Value orientations make up the largest segment of political culture, “while at the same time in the mutual relation between values and political culture there are dialectical crossings of the mutual influences of the individual and the community, the

adopted cultural patterns and requests for changes, the past and the future, socialization and autonomous action” (Vujadinović, 2008, p. 30).

While speaking about *culture*, Ronald Inglehart in fact provided the definition for what is perceived as *political culture* in this paper: “the *subjective* aspect of social institutions: beliefs, values, knowledge and skills that the people of a given society have *internalized*” (Inglehart, 1997, p. 15). The paper examines the political culture of students, which is regarded as a *subjective dimension* of the political system, where one examines how the students view the political system and institutions, how they interpret them and in what way they would change them, and also to what degree they support them. Political culture defined in such a way encompasses a whole array of values, such as trust in other people, but also in institutions, the inclination towards authoritarianism/liberalism, hierarchy/egalitarianism, tolerance and accepting differences, etc.

The fact which is important for this research is that on the plane of political culture there is actually an interweaving and competing of traditionalist and modernist tendencies in society, and there is always a greater or lesser domination of one trend at a given moment and context, so one can speak about societies which are mainly but never fully (or *permanently*) traditional or modern. The dynamics in a society are shift and depend on a number of factors, most predominantly on the manner in which the existing system manages to satisfy the basic needs of the majority (or, in some cases, the *more powerful segment*) of the population (security, political and economic stability). In times of crisis, trends that oppose the governing system become stronger: if the system is perceived as modern, democratic, trends that advocate the return of “traditional” values stand out as opposition. However, one of the main questions is to what extent the dynamics of the struggle between the two

opposing factions are predictable, and what is especially important is what kind of image the young generations have of the previous political system, the one in which they did not have a chance to live in. For this reason it is necessary to understand how political values are passed on to the next generations – this in fact happens through the process of *political socialization*.

### **Models of political learning**

Political socialization is a process in which values connected to the political system are passed on from one generation to the next. This process takes place through agents of political socialization, such as the family, the media, groups that an individual belongs to, etc. They have a different influence on different people, which depends on several elements:

- a. which phase of the **life cycle** the individual is in;
- b. the influence of the cohort: the influence a concrete historical event has on a **group the individual belongs to** (e.g. the working, the middle class, parents, etc.);
- c. the influence of the **historical context**, i.e. the concrete social, political and economic conditions: e.g. wars, economic crises, natural disasters and the like.

In order to clarify the manner in which the values of an individual are formed, two main models of political learning and one which attempts to bring them together will be presented in this short introduction (Mishler & Rose, 2007; Tormos, 2012, p. 203). Within the theory that deals with the process of political learning, one can differentiate between two trends: one is the cultural theory of early political socialization, while the other refers to the theory of institutionalization, i.e. the rational choice.

The **cultural approach** insists on the formation of (political and social) values and stands during the formative years of an individual, and it stresses the relative stability of national

cultures and collective values, where one can speak about changes in the predominant value orientations in the society only in the case of the *succession of generations*. According to this theory, larger changes in a society come about after each new generation introduces something new, some new modification in values, and with the piling of these micro changes, a change occurs on the macro plane. The initial differences between generations do not change in time, i.e. as the members of these generations become older, but remain constant. This approach neglects the influence economic and political changes in a society have on the formation of an individual's values.

On the other hand, the **institutional approach** holds that the early experiences in the life of an individual have a proportionally small influence on the formation of stands at an adult age. Since people are conscious and rational beings, they revise their own values in accordance with their *estimation* of the current circumstances in the society. In other words, concrete events on the economic, social and political planes dictate changes in values and value orientations. Simultaneously, these events have an influence on the change in the orientations of all the generations at the same time, where the differences in value orientations predominantly depend on the phase of the life cycle an individual is in.<sup>2</sup> In other words, values change with the passing of time because priorities change in accordance with age, so concrete events in a society have the same impact on all generations, but depending on the age and the appropriately set priorities the values take root differently in different segments of society.

While the culturalists believe that there are huge differences in value orientations between different generations, and the institutionalists claim that the differences are not so great, but that

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2 For example, it is considered that young people are generally more likely to accept liberal values, while older people are more conservative.

they occur depending on the phase of the life cycle the individual is in, the **life-long learning approach**, which tends to bring the two aforementioned approaches together, stresses that both versions of the change in values and political learning are possible.

When it comes to shifts in political systems and the democratization process, the cultural approach holds that after the ousting of totalitarian regimes the transitions of societies into new political and economic systems are very slow and difficult, while according to the institutionalist theory a quick shift is possible if the people estimate that the new system and the acceptance of the new values are more convenient/beneficiary.

### **The World Values Survey: the post-materialistic shift**

Inglehart's theory, previously mentioned in the text, belongs to the cultural theory of political socialization, since it considers the differences in values between different generations to be constant. Inglehart claims that following the entry into the post-industrial phase of development, western societies have witnessed a radical shift in values. Post-materialistic values refer to those values that come about after the first degree needs, such as material and physical security, are satisfied. Post-materialistic values include gender and general equality, ecology, the freedom of speech, civic initiatives, etc. According to this author, this shift in value orientations came into being when material, physical and social security was obtained in western societies, and due to the increase in the level of education, the development of mass media, but also the change in the structure of the work force.

Two hypotheses outline the basis of Inglehart's theory: the **scarcity hypothesis** and the **early socialization hypothesis**.

The scarcity hypothesis implies that people tend to satisfy their primary needs first, the first degree needs, such as

hunger, thirst, physical security. Only after these needs have been satisfied do needs of a “higher” order come into focus, those such as hedonism and the need to belong. Maslow’s hierarchy of human objectives underlies this hypothesis.

If this is applied to the level of social values, the first degree needs, i.e. the materialistic needs include e.g. the fight against growing prices, the fight against crime and corruption, striving to obtain physical and material security and so on. On the other hand, post-materialistic social values could include values in connection with securing the freedom of speech and thought, the environment, minorities, etc. In other words, when the basic needs are fulfilled, they begin to be taken for granted, and the fulfillment of other, more sophisticated needs, becomes a priority.

The theory of early socialization holds that the circumstances in which someone grows up affect the formation of relatively stable values in later life. In other words, Inglehart believes that the values of an individual do not reflect his/her current financial status and sense of security he/she has, but have deeper connections to the circumstances in which the person grew up. Namely, the author stresses, people have a tendency to value more those things that they lacked in childhood. According to Inglehart, in order for social and economic stability to have an impact on the values of the population, it is necessary for enough time to pass, i.e. for the new generation, which grew up in conditions of stability, to reach adulthood.

Inglehart claims that within the phase of modernization there is a shift from the influence of traditional authorities and religious values towards legal rational authority. Afterwards, during the process of postmodernization, there is a general devaluation of authority, followed by radical individualization: namely, in the first phase there was a *secularization of authority*, i.e. its

lowering into the sphere of “this worldliness”, while in the second phase the society becomes *emancipated from authority* in general. In the postmodern society, very little attention is directed at secular values, since they are already “implied”, while emphasis is placed on self-expression, i.e. the plane on which it is necessary to secure more freedom (Inglehart & Welzel, 2005, p. 30).

Inglehart succeeded in empirically proving the existence of great differences in the value orientations between the generation that was brought up in the conditions of the post-war economic boom, and the generation that preceded it. However, critics raised the issue of whether these differences between the different generations are truly a consequence of a thorough cultural shift or, rather, the phase of the life cycle the individual is in. On the other hand, there is also the question of whether changes in value orientations can occur under the influence of concrete historical circumstances, since Inglehart considers economic and social crises insufficiently powerful to affect a change in value orientations which are, as he points out, already formed in the period of growing up.

As it has already been mentioned, the cultural approach has its weaknesses, but, in this paper, Inglehart’s theory – which has acquired a large number of followers, but also secured numerous opponents<sup>3</sup> – will be tested on the example of Serbia and, on the basis of this example, it will be supplemented and modified. Ultimately, the most comprehensive study of world values is based on his theory.

The World Values Survey<sup>4</sup>, based on Inglehart’s theory of the shift to post-materialism, brings together researchers

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3 See, for example, Abramson, P. (2011). Critiques and Counter-Critiques of the Postmaterialism Thesis: Thirty-four Years of Debate. <http://www.escholarship.org/uc/item/3f72v9q4>

4 <http://www.worldvaluessurvey.org>

from around the globe. It has been implemented in six cycles from 1981 until today, in more than 100 countries, in which almost 90% of the world's population lives. This study keeps record of changes that take place in the values and beliefs of people at global level, and is aimed at clarifying the factors that affect these changes.

In the World Values Survey, value orientations are examined using two dimensions:

- **The traditional – the secular:** on this scale one can see the opposing values of collectivism – individualism, submission to authority – liberalism, religious view of the world – secularism, domination of men – equality of genders, for – against divorce, euthanasia, abortion and suicide.
- **Survival – self-preservation:** this scale shows whether survival values are more important, such as personal and material security, or the values of self-expression, such as insistence on personal freedoms, human rights, pluralism, civic activism, etc.

The product of analyzing values on the basis of these two dimensions is the division into two value orientations: the **materialistic** and **post-materialistic**. However, according to Scott Flanagan, this scale is insufficient for adequate analysis of value orientations. He proposes the introduction of a scale that would measure the change in values according to the **authoritarian – liberal** dimension, one that would help in understanding the transition from medieval theism, to modernism, and then, afterwards, to post-modernism (Flanagan & Lee, 2003, p. 237). For a theist, authority is external, transcendental, and it is the guarantee of morality, morality “springs” from it. For a modernist, authority can be found in secular society, one should approach it through *reason*. For the postmodern man, authority

has become *individual* and internal. The author views this process as movement towards *autonomy at three levels*. Within each of the levels, Flanagan differentiates between two poles: the authoritarian and the liberal (Flanagan & Lee, 2003).

The **external societal level** represents the manner in which an individual expresses him/herself with regards to established and adopted social and political norms. At this level, one can see the transition from *hierarchical authority* to *autonomy*. On the authoritarian end of the scale values such as loyalty, respect of authority, patriotism, seeking security through the establishment of a powerful army and nation are prominent. The liberal end of the scale stresses independence, equality, various freedoms, the right to deny political authorities, political protests, etc.

The **inner cognitive level** refers to intellectual values. The values closer to the authoritarian pole are connected to conformism and closed, but stable and consistent systems of values and beliefs, those which are not open to new ideas and are not tolerant towards other ethnic or religious groups, and they involve belief in the absolute truth. The liberal values on this plane are connected to tolerance, pluralism, openness to new experiences, but also unstable and shifty value systems, the truth for them is relative and variable.

The **relational level** includes values that refer to the direct relation towards the society and the relation towards other individuals in the society. Here, on the authoritarian pole we find collectivism, loyalty to the group, serving others, putting group interests in front of one's own, while the liberal pole accentuates hedonism, self-development, placing one's own interests in front of the group's.

By introducing the authoritarian – liberal polarity, Flanagan shows that Inglehart mixed up two essentially different

value orientations: the materialistic and the authoritarian, since both liberal and authoritarian materialists can exist, just like materialistically and non-materialistically oriented “authoritarians” can exist. He emphasizes that today’s “new policy” is non-materialistically oriented, and that the share of *non-materialists* (those whom Inglehart calls post-materialists) grows with the national income that exceeds the limits of satisfactory (Flanagan & Lee, 2003).

Thus, Flanagan’s division of value orientations is somewhat different from Inglehart’s (Flanagan, 1982):

- a. on the basis of the perception of the economic situation and the level of economic and physical security of an individual: the division into **materialistic** and **non-materialistic** values;
- b. according to the *ideals* which are more in connection with *social* values: the division into **authoritarian** and **liberal** values.

Such an analysis, based on two dimensions, provides a more thorough analysis. According to Flanagan, the (non-) materialistic value orientation (both of the individual, and the group, even the society) is *variable*, and directly depends on the financial and physical security of the individual and the group. However, the change on the scale of materialism – non-materialism refers to the *economic plane* and does not have to imply shifting on the scale of authoritarian and liberal values. In other words, it is possible that a society going through an economic crisis will start to place emphasis on materialistic values again, but it will not necessarily become authoritarian, and Inglehart’s theory does not foresee this option.

With regards to the political culture of students, their values will be examined according to the following dimensions:

- a. On the basis of the primary orientation towards economic and social-political stability or towards the values of self-expression:

**survival/materialism – self-expression/non-materialism.**

- b. On the basis of the orientation towards preservation of tradition or modernization on the one side and towards a democratic/egalitarian and hierarchical/authoritarian system on the other:

**traditional/authoritarian/hierarchical – secular/liberal/egalitarian.**

The values on the other pole of both dimensions: self-expression and liberality I call factors of the **postmodern value orientation**. This term is important for a sole reason: to mark separation from Inglehart's definition of post-materialistic values. Namely, whether a society has developed towards the pole of postmodernity is visible through whether it appreciates the values of self-expression (personal development, individualism) and liberal values (non-discrimination, equality) which has no direct and necessary connection with the existence of materialistic values (gaining wealth, power, prestige, surviving). In other words, in societies in crisis one can also advocate the exercising of personal freedoms and equality, with simultaneous striving towards obtaining economic and social stability. Authoritarianism does not necessarily pair with countries with unstable politics and economies, just like liberalism does not necessarily appear in societies that are stable in this respect (the most striking example is that of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia).

### **Overview of examined values**

Kuzmanović, as it has already been stated, notes that the key division into personal and social values has been left out

of many contemporary studies of values and value orientations (Kuzmanović & Petrović, 2007).

- a. Personal values are connected to personal goals and they include: spending one's free time, striving towards social prestige, a reputation, power, achievement, hedonism, and other personal material goals.
- b. General social values, values in connection with the society as a whole, i.e. values "the fulfillment of which is not solely connected to their own welfare, but bears importance for the society these individuals live in" (Kuzmanović & Petrović, 2007, p. 568). Social values refer to the stand towards the political system in the country, democracy, the EU, minorities, abortion, divorce, etc.

The aim of this paper is to provide a general overview of the value orientations of students in Serbia, with their social aims being far more important for the research subject itself.

The **personal aims/values** of the students will be analyzed on the materialism – post-materialism scale.

The **social aims** will be examined according to the authoritarian – egalitarian scale and will include the following values: values in connection with interpersonal trust and trust in institutions, level of interest in politics and civic activism, the general stand on the political governing of the country, the perception of democracy, tolerance, pluralism, inclination towards (supra)national goals, attitudes towards the European Union, secularism, the social values of survival and self-expression.

### **Sociodemographic characteristics of the sample**

In the sample that comprised 1058 male and female students studying at state and private faculties, women made up 52%, and men 48%. The largest portion of the sample consists

of third-year students, aged 21 – 23 (80.9%). The studies of 62% of the respondents are budget-financed, while the rest pay for their own studies. A total of 48% live with their family, 15% in students' dormitories, and 37% rent private accommodation.

As far as sources of income are concerned, 92% of the students receive a part or most of their funds for living expenses from parents, 13% from part-time jobs, 3% are employed full-time, and 19% receive scholarship funds. The total household income for 12% of the students does not exceed 200 euro per month; for 35% it equals between 201 and 500 euro per month; for 29% of them the monthly income is 501 – 800 euro; while 24% of the households have income that exceeds 800 euro. The largest portion of the students consider themselves representatives of the upper middle class (40.3%), then the lower middle class (39.9%), the working class (12.9%), the upper class (5.2%), and 1.6% of the students see themselves as belonging to the lower class. The majority of the students live in households of 4 members (44%), then 3 members (21%), and 5 members (18%). When it comes to the highest level of education of the students' parents, the percentage of fathers with college and university degrees is slightly higher than that of the mothers. A total of 45% of the mothers and 39% of the fathers have a high school degree; 23% of the mothers and 27% of the fathers have a university degree, and 14% of the mothers and 17% of the fathers have a college degree.

With regards to the students' nationality, the greatest portion of the respondents declare themselves to be Serbian (89%), then Montenegrin (7%), Hungarian (6%), Bosniak (3.1%) and Yugoslavian (1.3%). The majority of the students (25.5%) live (as a place of permanent residence, not their place of residence during their studies) in towns of 20,000 – 100,000 inhabitants; 25% of them live in cities of over one million inhabitants, while 20.2% live in a medium-sized town (100,000 – 500,000 inhabitants).

## Value orientations of the students

### *Personal aims*

As it has already been pointed out, values can be brought into connection with personal and social aims. The values connected to personal aims are important because they give us a general insight into the structure of young people's preferences. Two types of personal aims were examined within this research:

- a. the areas which are important in the students' lives;
- b. their personal aims in life.

When it comes to the importance of certain areas in the students' lives, family is most important to them (83% consider it very important and 14% important), then friends (66% consider them very important and 30% important), education (66% consider it very important and 29% important), free time (44% consider it very important and 47% important). Religion is very important for 20% of the students, and important for 30% of them. Politics are the least important to them, where 6% of the respondents consider them to be a very important and 19% an important area in their life.

The personal aims in the lives of the students that are examined here were divided into two batteries (Tables 1 and 2).

**Table 1.** Security and duty.

	Very important	Important
Being wealthy	6%	38%
Being powerful and influential	9%	36%
Looking for security	34%	50%
Always fulfilling one's duties	35%	53%

When it comes to the values concerning security and the sense of duty, the first two claims refer to material wealth and reputation, and a small percentage of respondents value items like wealth and power as very important, and a little less than 40% consider them as important. On the other hand, when it comes to security,<sup>5</sup> a third of the respondents stress this item as very important, while half of them consider it important. The first three items in the table refer to **values of self-preservation**. The last item, the matter of fulfilling one's duties, refers to one's sense of duty, which characterizes societies with a higher level of authoritarianism and sense of belonging to a group (duty as opposed to the postmodernistic hedonism). From this table we can deduce that the problem areas are: a general sense of insecurity that young people feel on the one hand, and a great sense of duty and responsibility on the other. Finally, this table shows that it is possible for values of self-preservation that refer to security, but also those that do not particularly appreciate wealth, social power and reputation, to exist at the same time, and neither Inglehart nor Flanagan provide for this possibility. They, actually, presuppose a relative consistency within materialistic values (Flanagan) and values of self-preservation (Inglehart). In other words, it is possible that, and this should be further examined in research of a far wider scope, that analytically it would be most convenient to introduce two scales: the values of security and materialistic values. Namely, in societies that are predominantly amidst crises or conflicts, security is not a value but a *bare necessity*. On the other hand, wealth, social reputation, power and prestige are indeed values that refer to immediate, primary needs, and it is quite possible that in societies with postmodernistic idealism strivings towards these values are considered "low".<sup>6</sup> On the other hand, the

5 It is not specifically stated which form of insecurity is implied, so this can be interpreted as a sense of general in/security in the society.

6 After all, not even the ideology of communism highly values power, influence and wealth, regardless of the economic state of the country.

opposite is possible as well – that the age which Inglehart labels as *post-materialistic* actually does highly value social resources such as wealth and power, while the “materialistic” society emphasizes the importance of security, but not wealth.

**Table 2.** Self-expression, altruism and tolerance.

	Very important	Important
Developing one's own imagination and creativity	46%	42%
Enjoying fine things, indulging oneself	39%	49%
Assisting people in trouble	35%	54%
Tolerating another's opinion even when it does not reflect our own	21%	51%

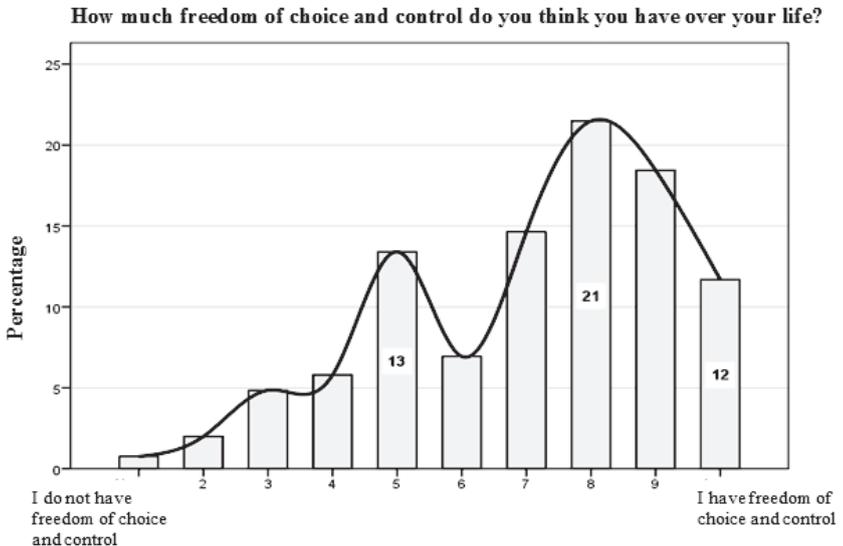
The first two items in Table 2 reflect the level of the presence of the value of **self-expression**: self-development and hedonism, and we can see they are vastly present among the student population. The last item refers to the **liberal** value of accepting difference, i.e., tolerance. The third item is connected with **altruism**. Without a new questionnaire, which would deal with this question in more detail, it is impossible to determine whether this refers to group solidarity, which is characteristic of modernism, i.e. the sense of belonging to a group, or, on the other hand, the postmodernistic altruism – a desire to help another in need. At first sight, the values of self-expression and individualism would sooner be connected with egoism, but, empirical results show that this is not necessarily the case, so certain authors propose that the analysis be conducted using two independent dimensions: collectivism/individualism and egoism/altruism (Welzel, 2010, p. 172). In addition to all this, there is a possibility that the values of self-expression, characteristic of individualist cultures, would sooner be connected with

a general solidarity, while collectivistic cultures dedicate themselves to solidarity with members of a narrower, immediate society (Welzel, 2010, p. 172). This division allows for the possibility of highly individualistic societies having a high level of altruistic impulses. The last item refers to a general tolerance towards different opinions, i.e. the level of support to the freedom of thought and expression, which is very high in the polled sample.

### *Social security and trust*

Not a single European state has a higher number of people who believe they do not have control over their life and freedom of choice than those who consider they hold a high level of control (Pavlović, 2006, pp. 253), and the students in Serbia are no exception. A total of 73% of them are more inclined towards the “I have a freedom of choice and control over my own life” pole.

**Chart 1.** Level of freedom and control over one’s own life



Apart from this indicator of security, three types of trust were also measured:

- a. a general trust in people (whether most people can be trusted and whether people mostly wish to help other people);
- b. individuals from one's immediate surroundings that can be depended on;
- c. to what extent institutions are trusted.

### *Trust in other people*

If we follow Inglehart's supposition that trust in other people is an indicator of a (feeling) of general social security, then it is strange to witness a high level of distrust in other people, but also in institutions, which is characteristic for an overwhelming majority of countries included in the World Values Survey. On the other hand, authors like Beck believe that we are living in a society of risk (Beck, 1992), while others, like Bauman point out that ours is an age of fluid identities and a particular kind of insecurity (but also freedom) which stems from this inconsistency (Bauman, 2007).

The highest level of distrust in other people is characteristic mainly of countries of Eastern and Central Europe (Pavlović, 2006, pp. 254–255). The only countries in Europe in which more than half the population believes that other people can be trusted are Sweden, Finland, Denmark and The Netherlands (Pavlović, 2006, pp. 255). The least trustful are the inhabitants of Portugal, Romania, Moldova, Bosnia and Herzegovina, etc. (Pavlović, 2006, pp. 255).

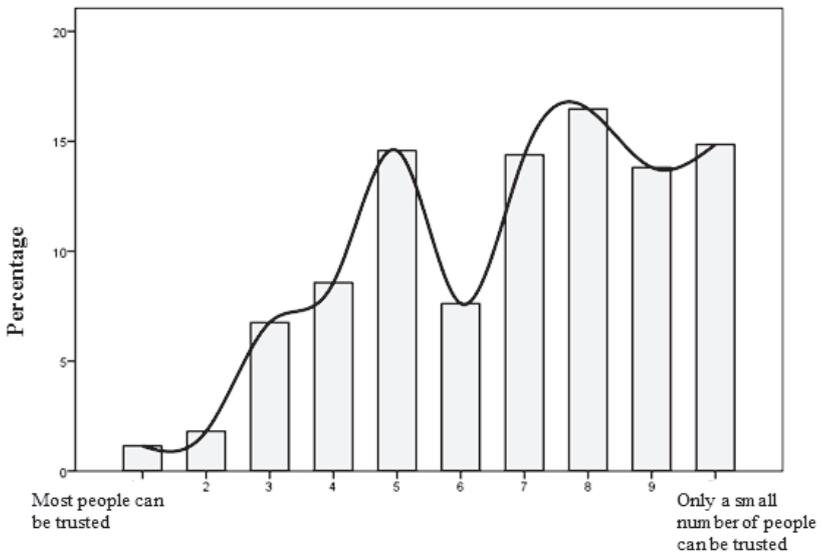
As one can see in Chart 2, most students believe that other people cannot be trusted (67%), while 33% of them lean towards the pole of trusting other people to a smaller or larger

extent. Similarly, when asked to estimate the general benevolence of other people, only 20% of the surveyed students stressed that they believed in the good intentions of others, while 80% believe that people mostly look after themselves to a larger or smaller extent (Chart 3).

As far as trust in the people from one's immediate surroundings is concerned, students trust their relatives most (31%) and their fellow students or friends from school (31%), and they can least lean on those people with whom they do not share a particularly close relationship, such as members of their political party (3%), members of their religious community and acquaintances which they had done a favor for at some point, as well as fellow countrymen (6% each).

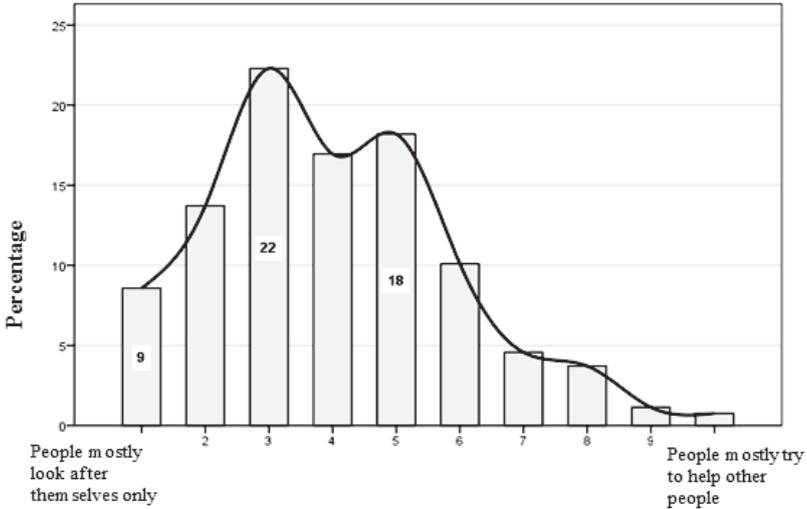
### Chart 2. Trust in other people.

**Would you say that most people can be trusted or that a person has to be very careful in one's relation towards other people?**



**Chart 3.** Egoism/altruism of other people.

Would you say that people mostly try to help other people or mostly look after themselves only?



### *Trust in institutions*

In addition to the scale that measures interpersonal trust, the students also showed a generally low level of trust in institutions. With regards to institutions, we can divide them into two groups: state and civic institutions on the one side and institutions of traditional authority on the other (Pavlović, 2006, pp. 255–256). One may expect citizens of developed democracies to trust state and civic institutions more than traditional authorities. The only institution that more than half the students surveyed trust in, are educational institutions (59%). A total of 45% of the respondents trust their church or religious community, and 44% of them the army. The highest amount of “absolute trust” (the “I trust it completely” grade) lies with the church/religious community – 18%, and the army follows with 12%.

The respondents are least trustful towards political parties, the media, NATO, the parliament and the government. These results are in line with the estimation of Pavlović that no European country has that low a level of trust in state and civic institutions and that high a level of trust in institutions of traditional authority (Pavlović, 2006, p. 257).

The level of trust in institutions is generally quite lower than with the general population in Serbia (Table 3), which means that young people have less trust in institutions in general, but they are still more trustful towards institutions with a strong ideological apparatus (the army, the church).

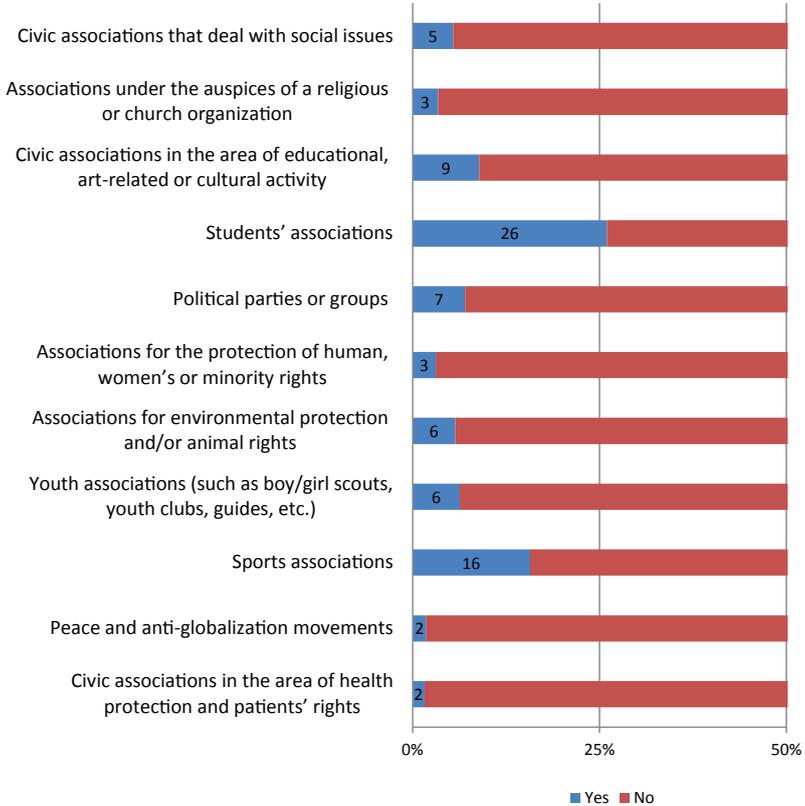
**Table 3.** Comparison of trust in institutions with students and with the general population.

Trust in the: (%)	Students, CReS, 2013	General population, (Bešić, 2011)
Educational system	59	57.8
Church/religious communities	45.3	69.7
Army	43.8	65.1
Health system	36.3	48.4
Police	25.6	49.6
Judiciary	20.5	30.4
EU	14.9	39
NGO	14.8	22.2
Government	9.2	33.5
Parliament	8.3	29.2
Political parties	5.4	17.6
NATO	5.4	13.1

*Relation towards politics*

The research results did not confirm the image present in the public that young people are generally very apathetic and disinterested in politics. Of the surveyed students, 12.6% stressed that they were very interested in politics, 29.4% are interested in politics to a certain extent, 30.3% are not very interested in politics, and 27.6% of the surveyed students are not interested at all. More than half the students (52.9%) discuss politics with their friends from time to time, 17.9% do it frequently, while 29.1% do not do it at all.

When it comes to civic and political activism, 49% of the surveyed students are a member or activist of some association or organization. The majority are members of student organizations (26%), then sports associations (15.7%), civic associations in the areas of educational, art-related or cultural activity (8.9%), and the smallest number of associations for the protection of human, women's and minority rights (3.1%), associations under the auspices of religious or church organizations (3.4%), peace and anti-globalization movements (1.8%), and finally civic associations in the area of health protection (1.6%). Of the total number of the respondents, 7% are members of a political party or group (Chart 4). From the aforementioned, one may deduce that the activity of youth in organizations mainly boils down to membership in associations related to free time (sports) and the realization of goals of immediate importance to them (students' organizations).

**Chart 4.** Membership in organizations and associations.**Member/activist of an association or organization***Political system: general evaluation and perception*

Within the set of questions which refer to a general evaluation of the political governing of the country, the students had a chance to:

- a. grade their level of satisfaction with the governing of the country;

- b. express their own opinion about who has the most influence on the population of Serbia;
- c. grade the state of the current political system in comparison with the period of socialism.

The students were first asked to grade their level of satisfaction with the current governing of the state (grade 1 meant “very bad”, and 10 “very good”). As many as 85.4% of the respondents are dissatisfied to a smaller or larger extent with the governing of the state (Table 4).

**Table 4.** Level of satisfaction with the current governing of the state.

Grade	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
%	18.8	16.4	18.8	12.6	18.8	6.2	4.4	1.7	0.9	1.3

When asked to express their opinion about who has the most influence on the population of Serbia, 39% said it was the media, 26% political parties, 18.5% the state, 13.5% the entertainment industry, while only 3% selected the church and religious communities.

With regards to the grading of the reform of the political system after the period of socialism, the respondents were given two sets of questions to answer:

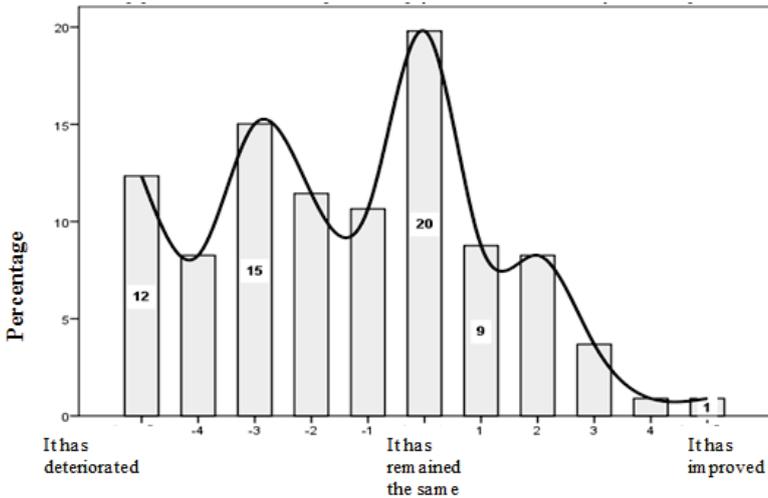
- a. to grade to what extent the life of ordinary people in Serbia has changed in comparison with the period of socialism;
- b. to express their opinion about some changes in the political system after the collapse of communism, such as the multi-party system, privatization, etc.

By far the largest number of the students surveyed marked the state of the political system after the period of socialism

(Chart 5) as unchanged (19.8%), and if we observe all the bad grades with which the respondents graded the changes cumulatively (from -5 to -1), we will notice that there is a far higher percentage of them (57.6%), than of those that graded the changes with a higher or lower positive grade (22.6%).

**Chart 5.** The nature of the changes in comparison with the period of socialism.

**Grade to what extent the life of the ordinary people in Serbia has changed in comparison with the period of socialism:**



Within the second set of questions, the focus of the research was on the students' relation towards the multi-party system, the existence of social inequality, privatization and solidarity in comparison with the period of socialism. There is a noticeable number of students who are undecided about all the listed questions (Chart 6). The multi-party system is viewed as an improvement by 26.4% of the respondents, and as a step back by 30.5%. The majority of the respondents consider a society



- 1) upholding order in the state;
- 2) giving more rights to the people to state their opinion about important decisions the government makes;
- 3) fighting rising prices;
- 4) protecting the freedom of speech.

According to Inglehart, the majority of people would mark all the goals as important. For this reason, it is necessary to establish their *priorities*, and this should be done by asking them to choose the two *most important* goals. The respondents that selected options 1 and 3 are marked as materialists. Those that selected options 2 and 4 are post-materialists according to Inglehart, while those that selected any other combination of answers are distributed into a mixed, transitional group.

**Table 5.** Materialistic – post-materialistic orientation.

		Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Valid	Materialistic orientation	333	31.5	32.6	32.6
	Post-materialistic orientation	59	5.6	5.8	38.3
	Mixed orientation	631	59.6	61.7	100.0
	Total	1023	96.7	100.0	
Missing	No reply	35	3.3		
Total		1058	100.0		

In 2009 Pavlović conducted research on a sample of 1410 respondents aged 15 to 89 and determined that only 6% of the respondents belonged to the post-materialistic trend, which

matches the results of this research. However, in his research an equal number of respondents (47% each) belonged to materialists and the mixed group (Pavlović, 2009, p. 182). In this research, mixed orientation (61.7%) is present with nearly double the respondents in comparison with the materialistic (32.6%).

### *Democracy*

Within the set of questions that refer to the presence of democratic values, research focus was on the students' stands on the following:

- a. what kind of cadre should govern the state;
- b. what kind of political party they would support with regards to its objectives and program;
- c. to what extent they accept modern secular values;
- d. how they grade the quality of the democratic political system.

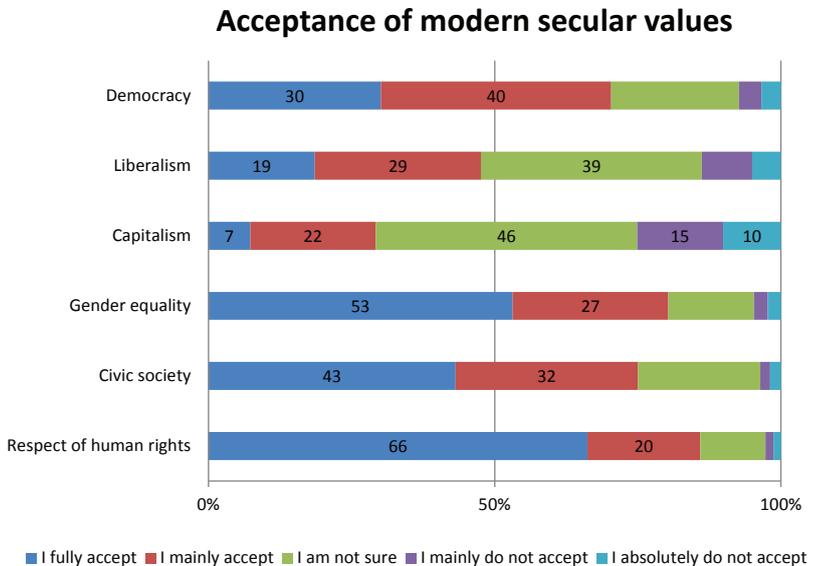
The first battery of questions refers to the most desirable cadre that should, in their opinion, govern the state. The highest number of the respondents (52.7%) believe that experts who know best what is good for the country should be the ones to govern it; 25.6% believe that the country should be governed by a government and parliament, while it is disconcerting to see that almost a fifth of the young people, 18.7% of them, believe that the country should be governed by a strong leader who is not hindered by a parliament and elections. Exactly 3% believe that the army should govern the state.

When it comes to the type of political party the respondents would support at elections with regards to the objectives they advocate, the largest number is undecided, i.e. not interested in politics (32.6%), 32.5% would support a party that places most emphasis on state and national interest, 29.6%

would support a party that promotes both national and European interests equally, while 5.3% believe it is best to vote for a party whose aim is prompt integration into the EU, regardless of national interests.

With regards to the level of acceptance of various modern secular values (Chart 7), the highest number of students surveyed accepts respect of human rights (85.9%), gender equality (80.4%), civic society (75.1%), democracy (70.3%), liberalism (47.6%), while capitalism is accepted by a mere 29.2% of the students surveyed.

**Chart 7.** Modern secular values.



In the analysis of grading the suitability of the democratic political system, there is a noticeably high percentage of undecided respondents. A total of 44.1% believe that democracy has its shortcomings, but that it is a better form of governing than any other; 31% believe that a non-democratic system is, in some cases, better than the democratic one. The smallest number of the surveyed students believe that democracy equals lawlessness (11.6%), while 51.5% disagree with this grade. There are 20.4% of those who consider the system they live in to be irrelevant, which at the same time shows their general relation towards politics. The majority of the students believe that the system they live in is indeed important (45.3%).

### *Equality, tolerance and pluralism*

The next series of questions examines the students' attitudes towards equality, but also the equal participation of both partners in a marriage/common law union, then, how much both sexes can and should take part in raising children, whether having children is an obligation to society, etc. On the basis of the results one can see to what extent the students can identify with traditional gender roles (Chart 8). Within each of the listed questions, the surveyed male students had somewhat more traditional attitudes in comparison with their female counterparts. As we could see from the previous section, a large majority supports gender equality (80%), but this orientation can be verified through specific claims relating to marriage and children; in other words, one may see to what extent, perhaps, gender equality is only formally accepted, as a general orientation, and how much it is applied to concrete cases.

The majority of the students believe that men and women should have children in order for their life to be complete, where one can witness the primacy of traditional collectivistic values and conceptions according to which children

give meaning to life. However, on the other hand, the majority believes that having children is not an obligation towards society, which may indicate that some norms of the collectivist society are internalized and are not experienced as an obligation, but something that actually gives life its meaning. The majority of the surveyed students support single mothers and working mothers, although a considerable percentage believes that a working mother cannot establish an equally loving relationship with her child as a homemaker can. A large majority believes that men too should be responsible towards the family as women should. Generally, gender equality and equal participation in the family is accepted by the majority of the respondents.

Within the given examples, which is completely expected, there is a noticeable aberrance with the question of whether homosexual couples should be allowed to adopt children, where 19% are in favor (of which 21% female and 16.5% male), and the same percentage is undecided, while the rest are basically against it or explicitly against it. Just as an example, in Croatia – where recently around 750 thousand citizens signed a petition for the announcement of a referendum at which citizens would state whether they are in favor of introducing an article into the Constitution of the Republic of Croatia which would stipulate that marriage is a union of a man and a woman, which would eliminate the possibility of same-sex marriages – the percentage of youth who condemn homosexuality is considerably lower than it is in Serbia among students.

**Table 6.** Acceptability of homosexuality.

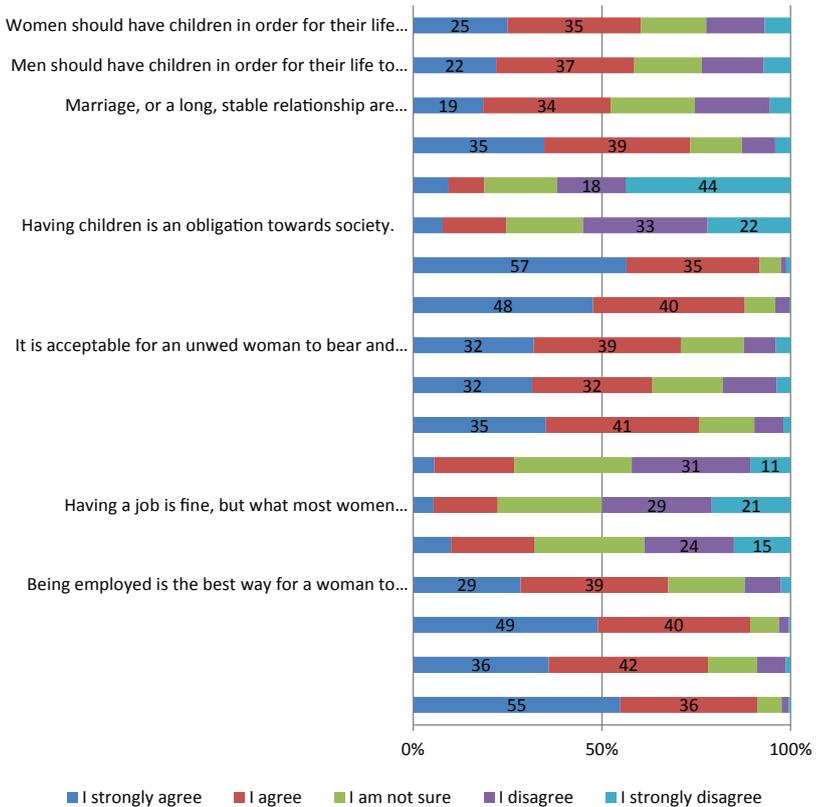
Acceptability of homosexuality (%)	in favor	neutral	against
Students in Serbia, CReS, Belgrade, 2013	27.7	20.3	52
Youth in Croatia, Institute for Social Research, Zagreb, 2013 (Ilišin, Bouillet, Gvozdanović, & Potočnik, 2013, p. 86)	31.7	31.7	36.6

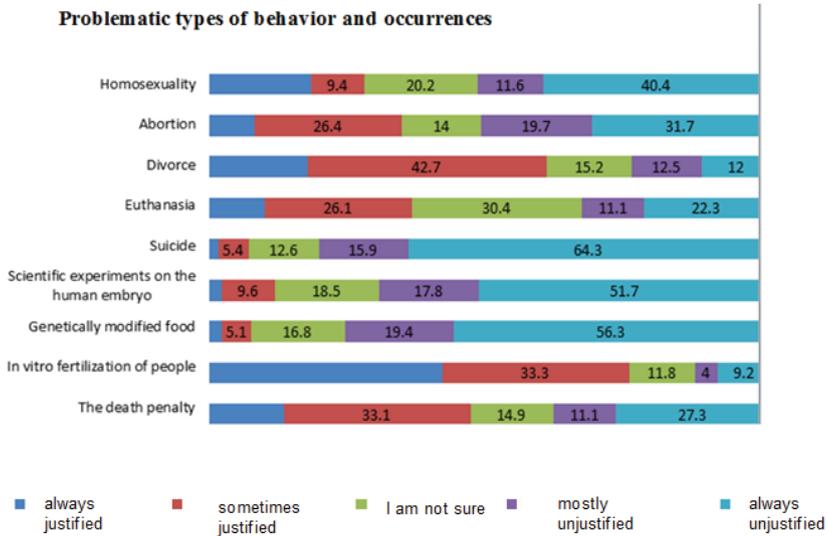
The other group of questions examines the students' attitude towards behavior regarding which the opinion of the public is divided, such as abortion, divorce, homosexuality, etc. The results reveal to us to what extent students support the right to being different and the freedom of choice (Chart 9). According to Ronald Inglehart's theory, as the level of emancipation from tradition and traditional authorities grows, individualism and values of self-expression grow, and they comprise hedonism, but also tolerance, and the number of individuals who accept the type of behavior listed in the table also grows (except in the case of the death penalty). The analysis shows that women support abortion more, as well as homosexuality, tax evasion, divorce, in vitro fertilization, while men support extramarital affairs more, casual sex, prostitution,<sup>7</sup> experiments on the human embryo. More than half the students surveyed accept divorce, 75% accept in vitro fertilization, while among the least accepted occurrences we find: suicide, genetically modified food and experiments on the human embryo.

When it comes to attitudes in connection with gender equality and the traditional/modern perception of the family, which were examined via claims in connection with marriage and children, it was determined that students are quite liberally oriented, except in the case of the possibility of homosexual couples being allowed to adopt children. However, with regards to other forms of behavior that can be considered "problematic", i.e. those that are publicly debated, such as homosexuality, abortion, etc. we note a relatively low to moderate acceptance of such types of behavior, which indicates the domination of more traditional value orientations, with two exceptions: divorce and in vitro fertilization.

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7 Which is in line with gender stereotypes.

**Chart 8.** Marriage and family.**Claims related to marriage and children**

**Chart 9.** Problematic types of behavior and occurrences.

### *Nationalism – Occidentalism*

The German political scientist Beyme, speaking about divisions within post-communist societies, introduced the nationalism – occidentalism division, in other words focusing on one's own nation or being oriented towards the West and western values (Beyme, 2002). This distinction in terminology proved to be convenient for this analysis, so within the set of questions that referred to nationalism/occidentalism, the following was examined:

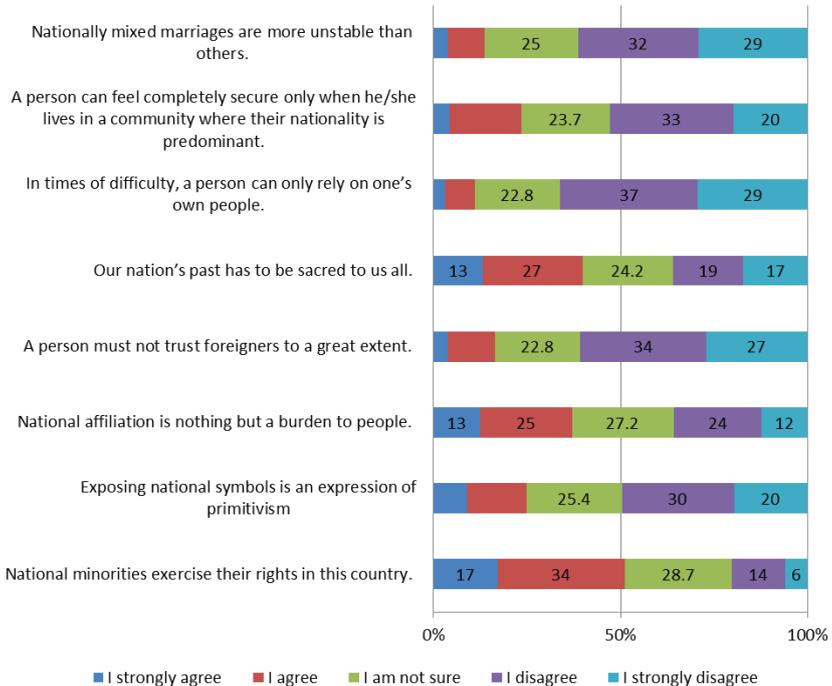
- what the students consider to be the characteristics of being “truly” Serbian, i.e. which of the given traits they considered to characterize being Serbian;
- attitudes that refer to nationality, national identity and relationships between people of different nationality;



With regards to attitudes relating to nationality (Chart 11), the questions themselves were formulated in such a manner that an affirmative answer denotes greater focus on the nation, and a negative answer on cosmopolitanism and/or occidentalism. The largest number of the surveyed students believe that national minorities exercise their rights in Serbia. The nation's past is sacred for 39.8% of the surveyed students, while an approximately equal percentage thinks that national affiliation is nothing but a burden to a man (37.1%); however, a fair portion of the students support the exposure of national symbols and do not perceive them as an expression of primitivism (49.6%).

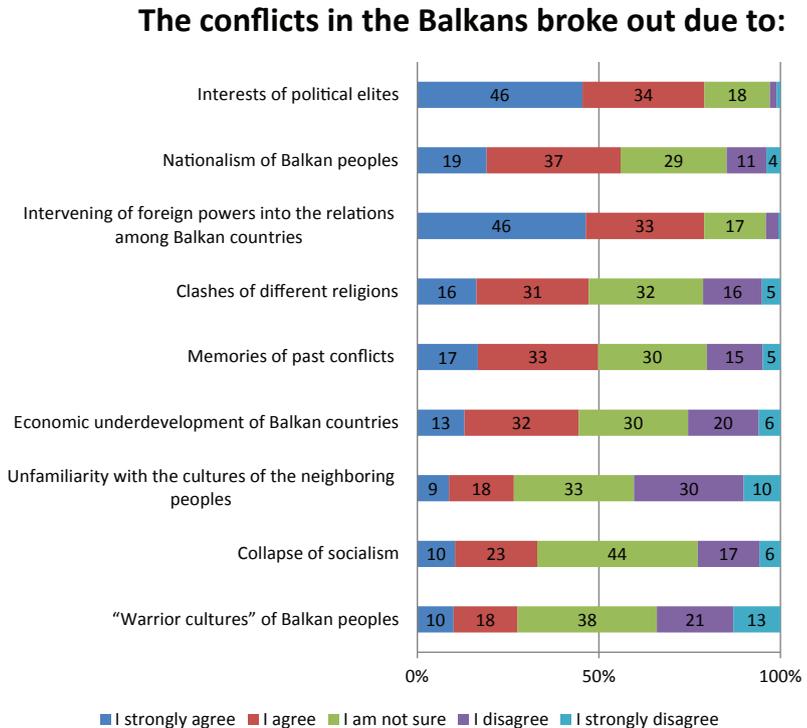
**Chart 11.** Nationalism.

### Attitudes that refer to nationality



In this research it was especially interesting to see who is, according to the opinion of this generation, which did not directly partake in the conflicts, but did suffer their consequences, responsible for the conflicts in the Balkans (Chart 12). By far the largest number of the surveyed students believe that the conflicts stemmed from the interest of political elites (79.1%) and the intervening of foreign powers in the relations among Balkan countries (79.1%), while the smallest number of the respondents believe that the cause of the conflicts lies in the unfamiliarity with the cultures of the neighboring countries (26.6%) and the warrior culture of the Balkan peoples (27%).

**Chart 12.** The Balkan conflicts.



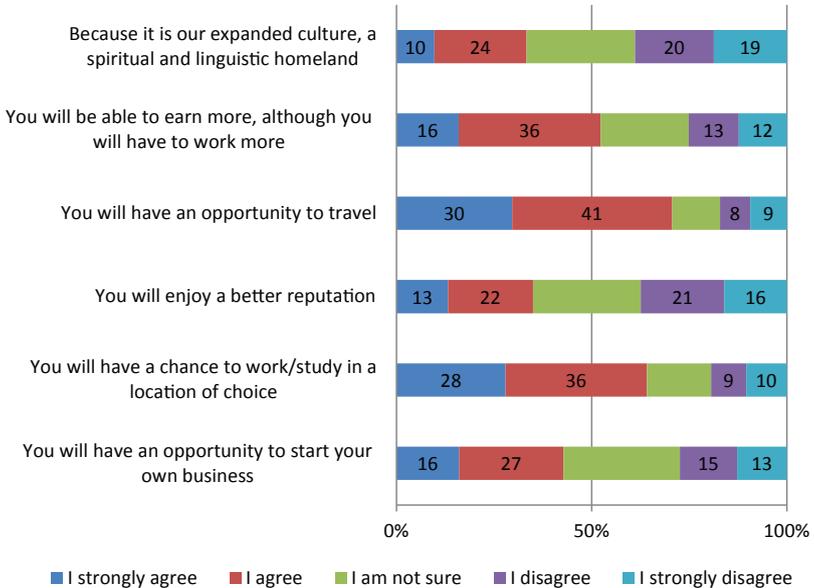
### *Attitudes towards the European Union*

When asked whether they support Serbia joining the European Union, 58.2% of the students surveyed answered affirmatively, and 41.8% negatively (a neutral stand was not offered in the questionnaire).

The reasons for acceptance are strongly utilitarian (Chart 13): 70.6% of the surveyed students believe that joining would provide them with more opportunities for travel; 64.1% with more opportunities to work and study in a place of choice. Only one third of the students perceive Europe as our extended culture, a linguistic and spiritual homeland (33.3%).

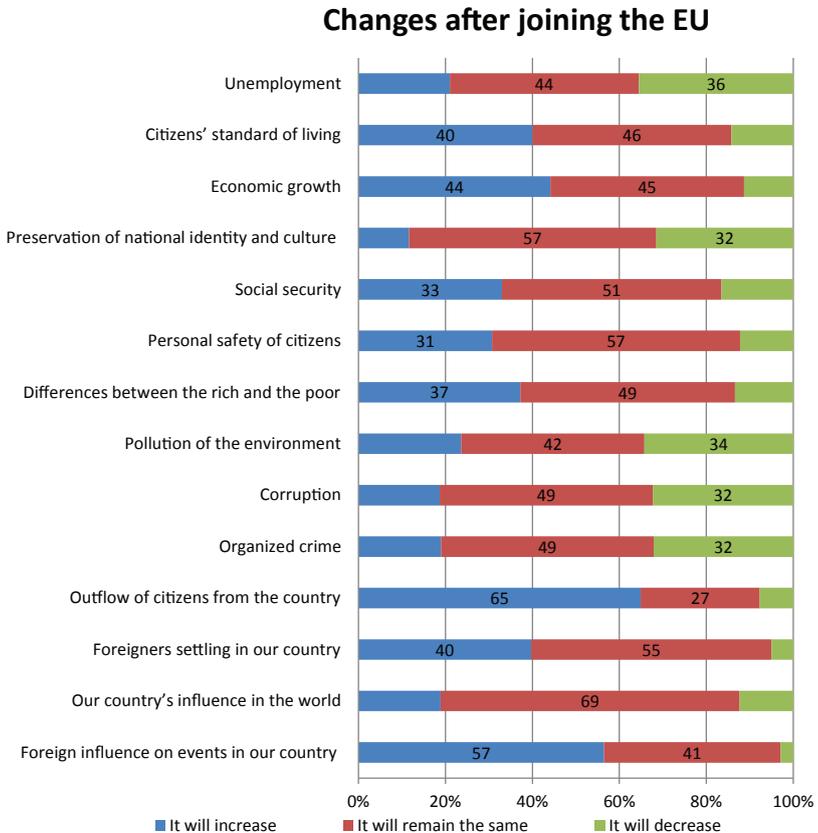
**Chart 13.** Reasons for accepting membership in the European Union.

### Reasons for accepting the EU



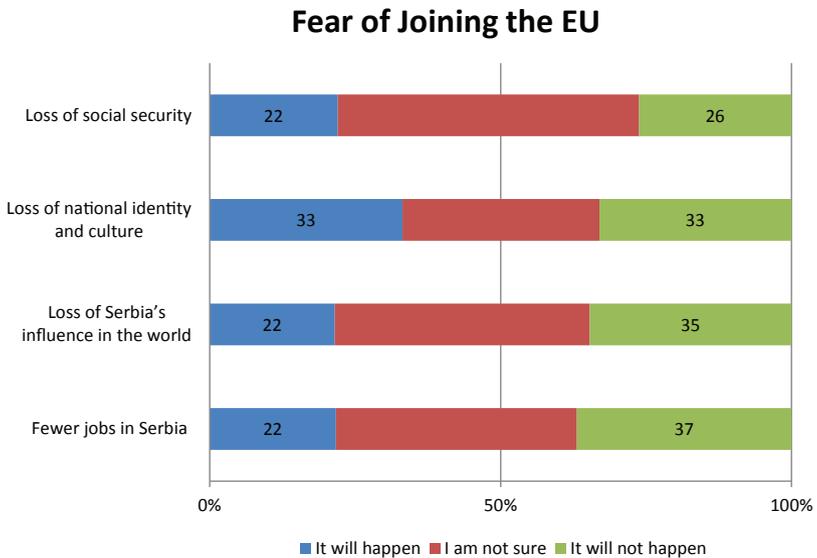
As far as the changes the students believe will come after Serbia has joined the EU are concerned (Chart 14), the largest number of the respondents expects a higher outflow of our fellow citizens who will leave the country (64.9%), a rise in the foreign influence on events in our country are predicted by 57% of the respondents, economic growth by 44.1%, of them, an increase in the standard of living by 40% of them, and a decrease in unemployment by 35.5% of the respondents.

**Chat 14.** Changes expected after joining the EU.



With regards to the fear of potential negative consequences of joining the EU (Chart 15), there is a noticeably high number of undecided individuals. A total of 33.1% of the students surveyed believe that the national identity will be lost, while the same percentage disagrees with this claim. Apart from the issue of losing the national identity, in general, a higher percentage of the students is optimistic and believes that joining the EU will not lead to the intensification of the current and emergence of new problems.

**Chart 15.** Fear of joining the EU.



### *Secularism*

The scientific community is debating whether we are living in a secular or postsecular age. Since the paper by Mirko Blagojević deals with this issue, it will not be expanded in detail in this section. A total of 71.6% of the students surveyed declared to be religious, while 58% of the total sample point out

that they belong to traditional religious communities. A larger portion of the respondents (62%) believe that religion is a private and 4.6% a public matter. When asked whether the church and religious communities should take part in public life, the majority answered negatively (37.5%), and 33.1% affirmatively. A total of 35% view the role of religion in society as positive, 10.5% as negative, and the highest percentage of the respondents view it as both negative and positive (54.5%)

With regards to the relation between religion and politics, 47.1% are not of the opinion that politicians who do not believe in God are not fit for public service, while 16.3% of the respondents disagree with this. On the other hand, in line with the previous question, 49.3% believe that religious leaders should not influence the government's decisions, while the number of those who are more traditional regarding this matter is quite lower (17.4%).

The results show that despite the large number of the students surveyed being religious, and religion representing an important factor in their lives (50.3%), the majority still do not hold that religiousness should be connected with a political function, and that the church should take part in public social life.

### **Cyclic (neo)materialism, democracy and survival**

The experience of democratization in postcommunist countries has been and is unfolding somewhat more slowly and modestly than in western countries. Among the causes of this blocked development in Serbia, as it has already been stated, are territorial conflicts and issues of sovereignty, along with an unstable economy. In addition, in the public discourse there is a relatively negative and pessimistic image of the state of the society, it is said of youth that they are becoming more and more conservative and more inclined towards nationalism.

In the first decade of this century, domestic experts estimated that the Serbian youth was not moving towards post-materialistic values but that, on the contrary, there is a rise in ethnocentrism which is no longer solely connected with the non-highly educated:

As far as young people are concerned, the transformation of value orientations is not only not moving towards post-materialistic values (Pavlović, 2009), but their orientations represent a strange mixture of materialistic, hedonistic and nationalistic values (Šram, 2004: 83). The increase in ethnocentrism among youth aged between 20 and 23, which is no longer tied to the non-highly educated and socially marginalized professions, but is spreading among youth from all segments of society, is connected to a large extent to authoritarianism and religiosity which are still very high. (Popadić, 2004: 115).

After the identity imposed “from above” in the period of communism, it is necessary to build an identity in a society where value criteria are very shifty. After numerous conflicts and periods of extended transition, along with striving to build a democratic society upon authoritarian foundations, *guilt* remains a key word.

The very feeling of national self-respect is denied, because Serbia is perceived as an *immature student* in the democratization process. Serbia has gone through a war, and, as the largest republic of the former SFRY, it is faced with the Kosovo question; it has gone through a period of sanctions and bombing; Croatia and Slovenia have joined the EU, while Serbia is still lagging behind and needs to fulfill conditions which are becoming more and more ample; the public opinion perceives the outcomes of the trials in the Hague as a national defeat and a condemnation of the Serbian people. All the listed factors affect the collective self-perception, which continues to create the

identity of the victim and sufferer in the collective identity. One reaction to this feeling of subordination is escapism and a return to one's roots, while another is the acceptance of responsibility and the taking of steps to further democratize the society. On a concrete political plane, an unresolved issue of guilt can create two types of rebellion:

- 1) directing one's rage towards the outside: refusing to join the European Union and further conduct the process of democratization;
- 2) directing one's rage towards the inside: attacking those who are weaker and fewer in numbers: *minorities*, or, the inversion of the collective ego: attacking *national interests* due to a feeling of shame.

The two aforementioned fears present in public discourse: that youth is becoming more and more intolerant and more and more nationalistically oriented, needed to be substantiated with concrete results. The analysis of the materials in this research did not note a high rate of ethnocentrism, but, on the contrary, that ethnocentric and cosmopolitan trends are equally present among young intellectuals. On the other hand, among the students there is a noticeable general disappointment in the society and the political system of governing. The students have a general tendency towards liberal ideals and tolerance of differences, along with gender equality. However, this tolerance is not equally directed towards sexual minorities which is, on the other hand, a consequence of a traditional perception of partner relations.

The students in Serbia mainly believe that they have control over their own lives, along with a freedom of choice. At the level of personal goals, they do not value reputation, power and wealth very highly, but they do strive towards security, which indicates an important problem in society – a resource

that young people feel is lacking – security. The majority of the students, consequently, falls under the mixed category on Inglehart's original scale, because as a society we still have not created those initial security conditions which are necessary for the development of democratic potentials and post-materialistic values. However, the fact that the largest portion of the students surveyed belong in a mixed group on the survival – self-expression scale, in comparison with earlier research, which determined the materialistic group being the most numerous one, indicates that our society is developing further towards the pole of non-authoritarian values and values of self-expression.

Young people do not trust other people, but they do trust institutions of traditional authority to a certain extent. A total of 42% take an interest in politics, while the largest number does not trust political parties, and a very small percentage are members of a political party. A great majority is dissatisfied with the manner in which the country is governed, while a large portion believes that the country's state of affairs has deteriorated since the period of socialism. The majority of the surveyed students accept democracy and joining the European Union and perceive the joining as an opportunity for a better life.

Although among the wider public there is mention of retraditionalization, and a renaissance of religion, i.e. a process of desecularization, the results indicate that the declared religiosity may be high, but still the majority of the respondents believe that religion should not influence public life and politics, so religion remains tied to the private sphere.

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Value orientations are not some unvarying and perfectly complete systems of values and beliefs. In the first place, values have to be *effective*. If they lead us to favorable results, then they are adequate. However, if our interpretation of the

world and of what the world should look like (our values) do not match reality, two reactions possibly follow: a social rebellion, even a revolution, or withdrawal into oneself and correction of one's own values. For this reason, value systems are a valuable analytic tool, since they reflect both the current state of the society, and the directions in which the society can change.

In the introductory theoretical section it was announced that value orientations would be analyzed using two dimensions:

- 1) authoritarianism – liberalism → traditional – secular values;
- 2) materialism – non-materialism → values of survival – self-expression.

The second dimension would refer solely to material goals, i.e. preoccupation with material and physical security. According to Inglehart, this very preoccupation with material goals speaks about instability in the society. However, this research has shown that the second dimension (materialism – non-materialism) is not thorough enough for an adequate analysis of values. Namely, the students in Serbia on the one hand preoccupy themselves with social security while on the other they do not highly value wealth, social reputation, prestige and power. Ultimately, a high presence of survival values does not have to imply a low presence of the values of self-expression.

For this reason, I believe that for the sake of a more thorough analysis value orientations should be examined using the following dimensions:

- 1) Authoritarianism – liberalism: this dimension would examine the presence of **traditional** and **secular values**.
- 2) Insecurity/instability – security/stability (**values of making ends meet/survival**): the difference with

regards to Inglehart's and Flanagan's setup is that the opposite of the survival pole *is not* self-expression but stability/security.

- 3) Materialism – non-materialism (**values of achievement – values of self-expression**): this dimension refers to preoccupation with material achievement in the sphere of personal goals, and it differs from the previous dimension in that, in this case, we have ideological materialism at hand, while the dimension of making ends meet/survival does not refer so much to *values* as it does to the human *need* for security. The values of self-expression would refer to values in connection with non-material self-development (freedom of speech, individuality).

Moving along the **insecurity – security** axis can be directed towards any pole, which is conditioned by the concrete economic and general (in)stability in a society. Preoccupation with securing material and physical stability does not necessarily have to imply the presence of authoritarian/non-democratic values. When it comes to the **materialism – non-materialism** axis, movement can also be directed in any way. However, aside from this, there is also the possibility of values of material achievement and values of self-expression being simultaneously present in a society, such as in the case of capitalist societies.

If one accepts the thesis that moving along these two dimensions is possible, then the question arises what happens with the first dimension. I believe that movement in both directions is also possible within the authoritarianism – liberalism dimension, in the form of temporarily “moving backwards”, but with a very limited scope. Thus, for example, it is difficult to imagine a western society which has secured the respect of the rights of all national, religious, sexual and other minorities, “reverting” to the level of hunting witches, homosexual people, etc.

In other words, development on the insecurity – security and materialism – non-materialism axes is of a *cyclic* character, while the development on the authoritarianism – liberalism scale is practically linear. On the practical-political plane this implies the following: as the social sphere is a field of constant conflict and pulling towards one end, the more conservative or the more modern, wavering is possible, at times towards liberalism, at times towards conservatism. However, the key is that chances are very slight<sup>9</sup> that there will be a radical turn towards authoritarian values.

In this sense, Inglehart was right: we are witnessing a shift in values in the direction of the spreading of liberalism in western societies. However, this does not mean that conservative trends in the society do not stand a chance any more, but that conservatism itself is being established at an increasingly liberal level, respecting difference to a higher degree than before. The conservatism of today can in no way be equal to restrictedness and the conservatism of the past. In western societies certain significantly higher civilization norms have been established in the sense of respecting equality and difference, so it is difficult to imagine these norms being shaken to a serious extent.

When liberal values start to develop, their further development is difficult to curb or stop. This development can be seemingly slowed down, although in reality the society develops through a Hegelian spiral: within the life cycle of civilization, a

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9 A recent example: the conservative trend, which until recently was the opposition in Serbia, changes its name to “progressive” and supports the Pride Parade, which it used to condemn earlier. Quite simply, the officials speaking against the Pride Parade would be received, in the international, but also the domestic public, with a lot more criticism. The borders of what is considered “civilized” change in time, so the attitude of the officials about banning the Pride Parade could be perceived by the public as backtracking and savage.

*seemingly* identical spot is reached several times, but it is actually a spot reached at a higher level each time, with a higher degree of self-consciousness, and with it a higher degree of freedom for all members of the society and a lower level of exclusion.

Ultimately, the term **postmodern value orientation** should be introduced in the value analysis, one which would, within the authoritarian – liberal and materialism – non-materialism dimension, encompass moving towards the pole of liberalism and the values of self-expression, and would *not* encompass the security – insecurity scale, but would not exclude a high presence of values of material achievement. In other words, one should reassess the economic determinism of Inglehart's theory of values, and the supposedly imperative connection between material prosperity and the development of liberal values and values of individual self-development and self-expression. On the other hand, both modern and postmodern societies can highly value material achievement, and it is very difficult to imagine the era of the global flow of **capital** *not* being characterized by valuing these resources.

The industrialization process in the region has been developing slowly due to centuries-long rule of the Ottoman Turks and the activity of their institutions but also the eastern cultural heritage. Then, in the period of communism, the society was forcibly secularized, through a banishment of any form of religious behavior or thought from the public sphere. At the same time, communism extended the life of the collectivist spirit in the people. Thus, what still lies ahead of us is a period of emancipation from authority, along with an individualization of the society after radical and *inorganic* collectivization. For all these reasons, it was very important to see in which direction the values of young intellectuals in Serbia, who are the actors of future political activity in the society, are developed.

In the end, one should not forget that change and progress do not exist separately from instability and an insecurity of identity. No change can come about without the willingness to leave the comfort zone. After a certain point, democratization is impossible to hold back, but, one should bear in mind that development stems from a crisis, an upheaval in the existing order, and there have been quite enough crises in these parts. It is time to move forward.

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Translated by Bojana Gledić

## **Contradictions in the concepts of the political and economic system in students in Serbia**

**Abstract:** *The paper offers an explanation of inconsistencies and contradictions in attitudes of third year university students in Serbia. The author places the research results in the context of associated political ideologies and economic theories, drawing the conclusion that while the young people express a desire for tendencies in opposition to those postulated by the system, they still do not reject the symbols of the system reflected in the liberal democracy and capitalism.*

**Key words:** *capitalism, democracy, technocracy, students, state interventionism.*

The paper before you aims to explain the inconsistencies and contradictions students expressed in the research conducted by the Centre for Religious Studies of the Institute for Philosophy and Social Theory, under the auspices of the Centre for European Studies in Brussels, and the Konrad Adenauer Foundation. The above-mentioned research covered a wide range of topics but the author shall focus only on the specific selected questions regarding the opinions on the political and economic system of Serbia. The author will not be using value judgments in terms of evaluating the responses themselves but will attempt to use the explanatory function of the discrepancies apparent in research results. It is precisely these discrepancies

that are intriguing and worth scientific study, since they represent a paradigm of the youth of today, and in particular of students, given that they are as a rule the most socially and politically active part of this social group. Methodologically speaking, taking into account the subject of research, the analytical method seems to be the most suitable for the task. In terms of general scientific methodology, the hypothetico-deductive method will be used, since it uses axiomatization and standardization of experience, which is crucial in subjects where trends and tendencies, based on universal, tested and testable experience are of significance. The axiomatic method, associated with the above model, shall be used as well, since formulating axioms emerges as necessary in this kind of research process.

The paper consists of three complementary sections. The first section presents the research results connected to the subject. In other words, the first section will present the answers to the questions pertaining to the political and economic system of Serbia, using graphs and tables. The second section will be devoted to placing the research results into the context of associated political ideologies and economic theories. The observed inconsistencies shall thus be explained and categorized. This is the section where the author shall attempt to place the classified inconsistencies and discrepancies into a theoretical and epistemological framework. The conclusion shall summarize the claims and axioms presented in this paper. It is the author's firm belief that this is the best way to present the statements from previous part in one place, making it possible to draw summary conclusions of a higher order.

### **Section I**

The research whose results are the subject of this paper was conducted on a sample of 1058 university students. The participants were from different regions all over Serbia, and

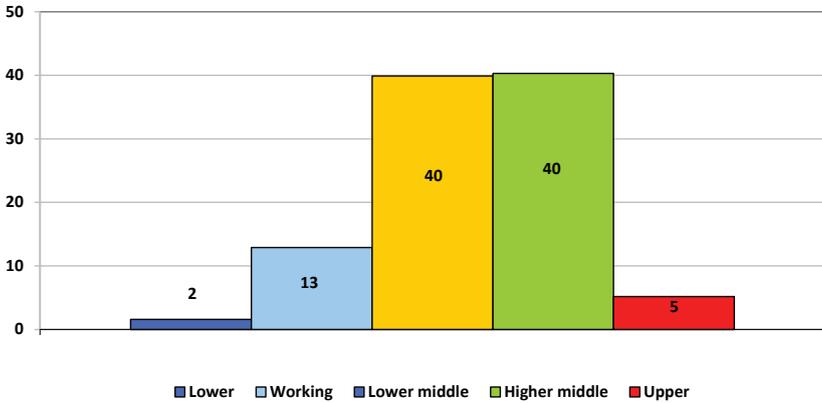
attended both private and state-owned universities. At issue were mostly students in their third year of university studies (93 percent of participants), aged between 21 and 23 (80 percent of participants). This information testifies to the participants being mature students, who should already have accumulated considerable knowledge in their chosen fields, which should make their responses even more competent. The social and economic characteristics of the participants in the study are also very important since they are in direct connection to the subject of the research and affect the opinions expressed to a great extent.

The class structure of the students who participated in the study is the most important factor in the analysis. It determines their political and economic interests, and thus in many cases also their orientation (in many, but not in all cases, since behavioral theory and its experimental methods have shown that a structural concept of interest in classic Marxists was not scientifically proved). The dominant social class in the study was the middle class, whose share of the sample was 80 percent, uniformly divided into lower and upper middle-class. Only 5 percent of the participants ranked themselves as belonging to the upper class of society, 12 percent said they were working class, while only 2 stated they were lower class (graph 1).

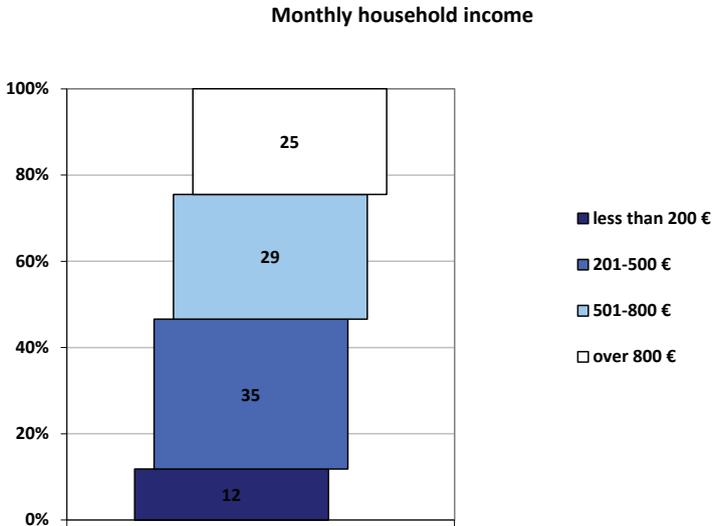
Their income seems to have been a corrective agent when self-ranking into a particular class of society. Around 25 percent of the students said their total family income was over 800 euros, 29 percent of them said their family income was between 500 and 800 euros, 35 percent said their family income was between 201 and 500 euros, while 12 percent declared the family income was under 200 euros (graph 2). The inclusion of students from private universities (20 percent of the participants) must have skewed the class and income structure in favor of a higher number of well-off students than it is actually the

case, but this is precisely what makes the answers to the political and economic questions even more interesting.

**Graph 1. Social classes**



**Graph 2. Monthly household income**



The previous claim is supported by the fact that as many as 37 percent of students said they were staying in private (-ly rented) accommodation, not their family home or a student dormitory.

Based on the above claim that most of the students belong to the middle class, in our theoretical discussion of opinion trends we might be tempted to conclude that most of them would be in favor of liberal democracy with its accompanying capitalist economic system. However, this was not the case in this study, and that is precisely why the explanation of the inconsistencies to be presented is of interest for scientific analysis. We shall begin our analysis with the question which was entitled “Modern secular values”, and which included liberalism and capitalism (although socialism is no less secular, nor modern, which makes for a leading question).

Capitalism is completely accepted by 7 percent of the students, mostly accepted by 22, completely rejected by 10 percent, and mostly rejected by 15, while 46 percent of the students are undecided about the issue. Therefore, almost half of the students who had no personal experience of socialism and whose formative years came after October 5, 2000, are not certain whether the economic system which they live in is acceptable. On the other hand, a quarter of the students reject capitalism out of hand, and only 29 percent of the students support the political direction that Serbia is heading in (and if we return to the previous information on income structure, it becomes very clear why this is the case). Liberalism seems to have a much better standing: 19 percent of the students support it completely, and 29 mostly, which makes for almost a half of the total number, with the undecided group again the biggest at 39 percent. If we consult the literature in the field of consolidating democracy, we come to the claim that the introduction of market-based,

capitalist economy is favorable for the establishment of liberal democracy. Juan Linz and Alfred Stepan in their work “Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation” after a series of empirical studies put forward a claim that economic growth is detrimental to non-democratic regimes and that it creates conditions for democratization (Linz, Stepan, 1998:101-104 Serbian edition). Naturally, this hypothesis will not be validated in all cases, predominantly due to the methodological shortcomings of the comparative method, which disregards the special characteristics of different systems and cultural matrixes. How can we then explain this greater confidence in an ideological system than in its inherently accompanying economic system? The answer should be sought in the test of functionality. It is easy to conclude whether the economy is efficient and functional, while ideological systems are represented in a utopian manner, and when they are the current governing systems they are hard to question in the main information channels, and even in scientific circles (and let us not forget at this point that international relations also have an impact on the issue).

Closely connected to the above is the response to the statement that “A non-democratic system is sometimes more efficient than a democratic one”, which is completely accepted by 6 percent, mostly accepted by 25 percent, while it is completely rejected by 6 percent, and mostly rejected by 18 percent. Here we encounter a majority attitude that under certain conditions a non-democratic system is more efficient, which in layman terms means better. There are more contradictions, for example with the statement “Democracy might have its problems, but it is better than any other form of government”, which is completely accepted by 10 percent, while 35 percent of the students believe that this is mostly true. Thus, there is no over 50 percent majority agreement about the claim that allows that democracy is not perfect, but it is still the best alternative either (if this question

had been posed to the students ten years ago, democracy would have fared significantly better). This batch of responses makes it crystal clear that the capitalist economy in Serbia is actually weakening the liberal democracy and the trends are moving in such a direction that the democratic system shall be in danger if it fails to create an efficient economy (this outcome may also be prevented by the international factor and the poorly-articulated alternatives to the present political and economic system). Another conclusion might be drawn from the above, which is that the saying 'democracy is the goal, and not the means' is increasingly losing its relevance in the contemporary world with its high unemployment rate – among the young people, democracy is either the means to achieve a “good” life, or it loses importance.

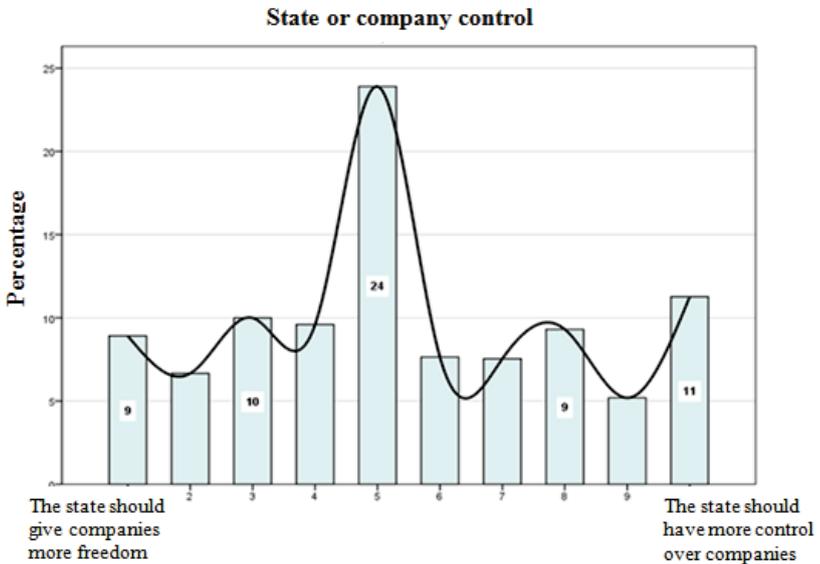
As addition to this part of Section I, there naturally emerges the information on rating problems among the youth. Among all the other issues such as alcoholism or drug addiction, the most relevant for this research are the problems of unemployment and lack of job prospects. As many as 89 percent of the students feel that unemployment is a serious problem, while 9 percent are undecided. The lack of future job prospects is held to be a problem by 79 percent of Serbian students, while 26 percent are undecided. A lack of prospects as a psychological impression of having no “good” future is a devastating result, because it sends the message that many students have already given up on the belief that the situation might improve. In line with this is the tendency of –if not actively working to destroy it – definitely not defending the current political and economic system. In terms of confidence, the participants in the study have no faith in either the trade unions or in the big business, with the majority of over 50 percent. It is strange that out of 29 percent of students who support capitalism only few of them have confidence in big companies as the main players in the contemporary capitalist economy.

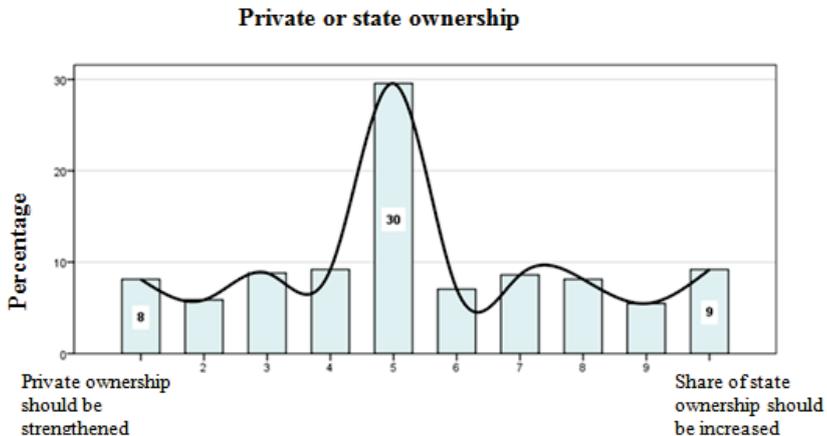
Students have clearly identified the main trend of development in the political and economic system when 53 percent of them decided that the state should be governed by “experts who know what is good for the state”. This technocratic and oligarchy concept of government is imposed through the media, and the trend did not originate in Serbia but primarily in the political sphere of Western Europe. To the same question, 22 percent of students responded in favor of open dictatorship, and 26 percent supported the current liberal democratic system. It is important to stress here that the technocracy of the 21<sup>st</sup> century is what theocracy was for the 14<sup>th</sup> century. There are no perfect visionaries to interpret the future, whether they invoke God, or science, which is slowly making a place for itself in the emerging post-Christian civilization. The main danger thus lies not in the return to the traditional non-democratic systems but in the transition to technocracy. In addition, it is important to grasp that a technocratic system would not pose a threat to the global capitalist system with its reliance on multinational corporations. On the contrary, it would invigorate it, because the majority of “the experts who know what is good for the state” would be coming from the ranks of employees of these corporate giants (or the research and university systems financed by them).

The set of questions which deal with state interventionism, inequality of income, and personal responsibility are of key importance for this paper as well. The previously explained questions and research results served to create a framework for the analysis. To a very important question of whether the state should have control over business enterprises, 35 percent of students responded negatively on a scale from 1 to 4, while 41 gave a positive response on a scale from 6 to 10. One in four students was in the middle (graph 3). To the question of whether private of state ownership should be encouraged, 38 percent supported the strengthening of state ownership on a scale from 6 to

10, while 32 percent opted for encouraging private ownership, on the scale of 1 to 4. The responses of the remaining 29.5 percent fell somewhere in the middle (graph 4). In both cases the majority of students were in favor of greater state involvement, with responses going beyond state interventionism or a mixed economic model and reaching the realm of command economy (and in both cases the responses at the top of the scale, point 10, were in the majority compared to the other end of the scale, marked 1). The responses in favor of capitalism and market economy were the most frequently at values 3 and 4, while the opposing side's responses dominantly clustered around points 10, 8, or 7, which indicates that the supporters of state intervention are firmer in their opinions.

**Graph 3.** State or company control



**Graph 4.** Private or state ownership

There is a great egalitarian spirit in the responses to the questions of whether income inequality should be decreased, where 43 percent of students expressed a desire for the inequality to be decreased, compared to 32 percent of those who said that greater differences in income would mean greater effort would be invested by individuals. It is of interest that to the part of question of whether the state or the individual should take greater responsibility for meeting basic needs, around 36 percent are of the opinion that this burden should fall to the state, while at the same time around 41 percent of the same students believe that individuals should take care of themselves. One possible interpretation for this inconsistency in responses may be that it is not that the students, who clearly have egalitarian tendencies, and might be said to be conditionally leaning towards a socialist economy, accept this as something good, but that they have recognized that in the capitalist system the state does not control the labor market and it is not oriented towards providing full employment. The question which asked the students to evaluate whether competition was good or not is not relevant

here due to its suggestive formulation. Student responders here clearly interpreted the question as referring to individual effort or competition, or they would not be in favor of greater state control over business enterprises, which by definition entails less completion in favor of more command economy.

## Section II

And now we come to the part which places the responses explained above into a clear ideological and theoretical framework in order to explain the contradictions which are the subject of our research. The ideologies to be included are neoliberalism, social-democracy, and socialism. We did not include conservatism here since it offers nothing new or essentially different concerning economic issues. The differences between the new right-wing groups or new liberals mostly concern some ethical and paradigm issues in the social sphere. Neoliberalism is considered to be the contemporary offshoot of liberalism merged with globalization processes, while social –democracy is the watered –down version of neoliberalism. Socialism would also include neo-Marxist ideas, where Marxism is not at the forefront in its classical form, since Orthodox Marxism in modern economic terms is just as obsolete as classic liberalism. According to Haywood, neoliberalism is a form of “*market fundamentalism where the market is considered to be in moral and practical terms superior to the government or any other form of political control...Economic globalization is behind the advance of neoliberal ideas and structures...As a result of this, institution of global economic power, the IMF, the World Bank and the WTO, have been adapted to the ideas of neoliberal economic order.*” (Haywood, 2005: 56–57 translated from the Serbian edition).

This author is by no means suggesting that the entire contemporary liberal thought boils down to liberalism, but the above selection was made primarily based on the practical

usefulness of ideologies mentioned. At this point it is unavoidable to mention the contribution of John Rawles, whose concept of “Justice as fairness” attempts to reconcile a liberal and socialist view of equality without favoring the society over the individual. In Rawles’s work, individuals remain the maximizers of personal gain who would choose equality only out of fear that they might find themselves in an unequal position. His model is the greatest achievement of liberal moralism as an extension of Kant’s “universal morality”, but it is merely an abstract philosophical position, not an ideological matrix which might be put into practice by political means. Social-democracy accepts liberal democracy, and in the economic sphere it demands a leveling of differences while respecting private property and the free market. The leveling is done by means of value redistribution via progressive taxation, various grants and subsidies and limited state intervention.

Socialism may but does not have to be, connected to a democratic system. In fact, the stronger the tendency towards command economy, the greater the need for social and political control. Some modern Marxists, under pressure of realities in the field, reject the working class as the driving force of social change and lean towards some forms of deliberative democracy, like Habermas. Another group, mostly focused on antiglobalization, is represented by Naomi Klein. In the current political and economic climate, some theories like Gramsci’s model of “cultural hegemony” Poulantzas’s “structural selectiveness” may still be highlighted as relevant. It is precisely through the hegemony of concepts of democracy and capitalism in this research that we notice the trends towards technocracy and curbing critical thinking. Otherwise, how could students be in favor of state ownership and control of enterprises, and yet give positive responses to the words like liberalism, democracy, competition, and capitalism. In this theory of relative autonomy of the state,

Poulantzas explains that governments always promote the interest of capital (Marsh, Stoker, 2005: 155 Croatian edition), which is an appealing statement in the circumstances where economic sovereignty of individual countries is diminishing and international economic institutions and financial capital predominate.

If we consider the specific questions concerning state ownership and control of enterprises, there are clearly two polarized groups, one neoliberal, the other socialist in position. The socialist group is more dominant and more radical and we may assume that their views are similar to those of anti-globalists. Bearing in mind that the students who participated in the research had no personal experience of the socialist economy and their views cannot thus be interpreted as unwillingness to change and accept a new system, the results obtained reflect their dissatisfaction with the current system. Still, when we consider the questions on acceptance of democracy, liberalism, and capitalism, we have the impression that students are not aware of alternatives, and that their dissatisfaction is not constructive. Those whose responses were mid-range seem to think that the system might be fixed with a little more market economy, or, conversely, with a little more state intervention. Ultimately, the most devastating component of the results is the indecision, where a third or a quarter of the participants are always undecided, sending the message that they too are dissatisfied, but are not certain which flaws in the system caused it. They feel the consequences of the problem, but cannot grasp or define it; it follows that the solutions for or the causes of it are alien to them. However, it is certain that a feeling of social equality is still predominant among young intellectuals.

One gains the impression that the youth are intuitively, and according to the cultural matrix, the most comfortable with socialism, but that the negative legacy of communism is still strong, so that it is not possible for them to rationally examine

arguments in favor of changing the system. These young people are also constantly exposed to media pressure which, as expected, legitimizes the current system of government, leaving no room for free argumentation (here we do not speak in terms of a specific party or regime, but of isolation of competing paradigms and concepts).

In epistemological terms, supporters of neoliberalism have always been close to the ideas of behaviorism and the theory of rational choice. In this study, the students who support the free market and a minimal role of the state make this decision in line with their personal interests. One might logically assume that they come from families with above-average monthly income and more opportunities to invest in their education and acquiring new skills, which gives them the advantage at the labor market. Their opposites are the students with socialist views, who see the world in structuralist terms. They are always encountering an invisible but comprehensible collusion which limits their endeavors, and they see the solution in a strong and fair government, which will reign in the exponents of large capital, close the gap between the social classes, bring a new lease of life to the economy through state investments and ultimately make it possible for them to find jobs (or work for the state directly as civil servants).

Finally, we get a summary answer to the question: “Where do these opposing attitudes and the contradictions between them come from?” After all the arguments listed above, the shortest answer might be that modern democracy, which uses political marketing and mass organizations as its chief tools, is dependent on funding and capital. This capital is in the hands of big investors, who are also owners of media companies disseminating this propaganda. Political parties’ legitimacy also depends on international relations and cooperation with great world powers, which often are (among others) the sources

of capital to fund the parties' political activities. Given that the parties must take into consideration this complex network of interests, they cannot be responsible to the citizens alone; in fact, the citizens come second after the interests of large capital and outside powers (national or supranational). Political parties thus tailor their propaganda to sound acceptable to their voters, but the policy they implement serves the abovementioned factors (and rarely do the interests of the twain meet). Given that the primary interests of the large capital and world powers are to maintain the current order, it is almost impossible, even in the most influential media, to start a critical discussion which would go beyond the party level. Students, like all other groups in the society, find themselves in this situation and on the one hand, express dissatisfaction at the practical level, which cannot be covered up with skillful marketing, and on the other demonstrate a failure to understand the workings of power and the existing options for change. The young therefore express a desire for tendencies contrary to those postulated by the system, without rejecting its key symbols: liberal democracy and capitalism.

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## Awaiting regional reconciliation: students and nationalism in Serbia

*Nationalism is, first and foremost, paranoia. Collective and individual paranoia. As collective paranoia, it results from envy and fear, and most of all from the loss of individual consciousness; this collective paranoia is therefore simply an accumulation of individual paranoias at the pitch of paroxysm.<sup>1</sup>*

Due to fierce social conflicts and development of xenophobic atmosphere on the territory of former Yugoslavia during the 1990s, nationalism as an ideology has become an unavoidable subject matter in humanities. Depending on the particular research tradition, authors have characterized the concept of nationalism in different ways, offering a wide variety of definitions. Besides signifying ethnocentric stances and beliefs, which imply the tendency to idealize one's own group and consider it superior to other groups, which are underestimated, nationalism can also indicate a political program which advocates the unity of state and national approaches, as well as pronounced national identity.

The modernist Ernest Gellner, who underlines the political character of nationalism, perceives it as a principle which

1 <http://www.kis.org.rs/web/bzivot/a/A/G/komentar.htm>

requires agreement between ethnic and state borders (Gelner, 1997). On the other hand, a representative of ethnosymbolism and one of the most prominent contemporary scholars in the field of nation and nationalism, Anthony Smith, understands nationalism as an “an ideological movement for attaining and maintaining autonomy, unity and identity on behalf of a population deemed by some of its members to constitute an actual or potential nation.” (Smit, 1998: 119). Here the author also describes the main characteristics of nationalism: the belief that the world is divided into nations, and that only the society divided into autonomous nations secures world peace and justice; the idea that the whole of political power resides in the nation, and that loyalty to nation is above all other loyalties; the understanding that it is only within the nation that an individual can achieve all his/her potential; and the view that nations must have full autonomy in order to be authentic (Smith, 2000). This implies that nationalism, despite the general belief, need not necessarily have a negative connotation. However, nationalism is often characterized as a specific form of national consciousness, which always emphasizes the differences between one’s own and the other nations, presenting one’s particular nation as superior to the other ones. It also implies invariable disdain and scorn for the cultural products and characteristics of other neighboring nations.<sup>2</sup>

It is important to point out that in this region nationalism most often appears only within the framework of theory, although it has become very topical during the past years. Upon recognizing the need for an empirical analysis of this specific phenomenon, the Centre for Religious Studies of the Institute for Philosophy and Social Theory from Belgrade, in partnership with the Konrad Adenauer Stiftung and the Centre for European Studies from Brussels, has conducted a survey of students’

2 <http://www.sijakovic.com/02/sta-je-nacionalizam/>

religious, moral, social and political values. This study is particularly important as the participants in the survey were mature young people with formed opinions and views which should not be underestimated in any way, since it is precisely through the values they cherish that we can anticipate the future development of our society.

What forms the framework of the analysis which will be presented here is the *index of nationalistic orientation*, formed on the basis of a series of variables which, each in its own manner, measure the degree of national exclusiveness of the participants. For clearer and more detailed analysis, the basic dimensions measured in this index can be divided into: views of socialism and reasons for its breakdown; nationality/ethnicity and current national distance which students take from certain ethnic groups; and views of Serbia's accession to the European Union and the possible changes which this accession might bring. In this manner, apart from learning about the presence of nationalist orientation, it is also possible to determine whether its causes can be traced back to the social conditions of the nineties, and whether it will further develop in the future, and in which direction.

### **A look back into the past**

In an attempt to determine whether, and to what extent, serious social and political impacts cause changes in citizens' identity constructs, thus affecting the inner dynamics of a particular society, the analysis presented in this part of the paper focuses on the changes of geopolitical identifications which took place in different moments of history. In order to approach this specific phenomenon as systematically as possible, the reconstruction will be conducted on the basis of comparison of the data collected during our research and the results of the earlier, extensive surveys conducted on the territory of former Yugoslavia, both before and after its breakdown.

In her study *National Consciousness of Young Generation (Nacionalna svest omladine)*, from the year 1990, Ljiljana Baćević reached the conclusion that thrice as many young people valued lowly the sense of local belonging, compared to those who valued it highly. According to this author, the essential elements of group identity of the young include common interests, professional, stratum, political affiliation and education. National affiliation was ranked much lower, except in the subsample of the Slovenes and Albanians. (Baćević, 1990).

Dragomir Pantić wrote in 1991 his study that it was found that national affiliation in the young generation on the territory of Serbia ranked ninth in importance – below the profession, circle of friends, and generational, familial, class, gender, political and religious affiliations. This study also showed that the young strove not only toward Yugoslavianism, but also mondialism, internationalism and personalism, and that nation was often too narrow a frame of expression (Pantić, 1991).

The research conducted during the mid-nineties showed a dramatic rise in the importance of national identification, which became one of the prevalent aspects of group identification. Zagorka Golubović, a prominent Serbian sociologist and anthropologist, believes that the high degree of nationalism recorded in these surveys was not of autochthonous origin, but that it was largely caused by social and historical events. Her 1995 study showed that as many as 33,8%, i.e. a third of participants, were nationalistically oriented (Golubović, 1995: 133-167).

“In her 1997 study Mirjana Vasović calls this turn connected to the change of identity constructs and group identifications a ‘Copernican’ turn, as it reveals a sudden and dramatic restructuring of group identity/identities in relation to the identity constructs found in the research from the previous period, especially before the outbreak of the wars on the

geographical territory of former Yugoslavia“ (Jarić; Živadinović, 2012: 211-212). Vasović also notes that the line was crossed when the national identity stopped serving merely as a framework for group identity and became the basis for the formation of negative prejudices and attitudes to other nations, adding that as many as 47.7% of participants chose nation as the subjectively most important category (Vasović, 1995).

The research conducted by Stjepan Gredelj in 2003 recorded a significant decrease in the self-identification of the young with national or ethnic groups (24%) compared to the data from previous works of research (Gredelj, 2004: 135-157). It seems that once the borders of the formerly shared state were reestablished, when the wars ended and acute social conflicts were defused, the importance of the national basis of group identity also started to be perceived as irrelevant.

The latest survey, conducted on the population of young students in Serbia, also showed some interesting trends related to determination of identity positions. Namely, according to our results, 33% of participants revealed that they found national (ethnic) group affiliation important, which brought it to the third place, behind family affiliation (50%) and professional group affiliation (39%). These findings speak about the percentage increase, in comparison to Gredelj's 2003 study of those young people who saw affiliation to a particular national group as an important defining point of their own identity, which was typical of the nineties.

The findings referring to the participants' views of the clashes in the Western Balkans during the last twenty years are particularly interesting. Namely, in Gredelj's 2003 survey, as many as 26% of participants believed that the people of former Yugoslavia themselves were to blame for the wars which had broken out (Gredelj, 2004). Today, however, students believe



of former Yugoslavia. On the other hand, one could be led to believe that this presupposes widespread Euroscepticism, which we will discuss in more detail in the following parts.

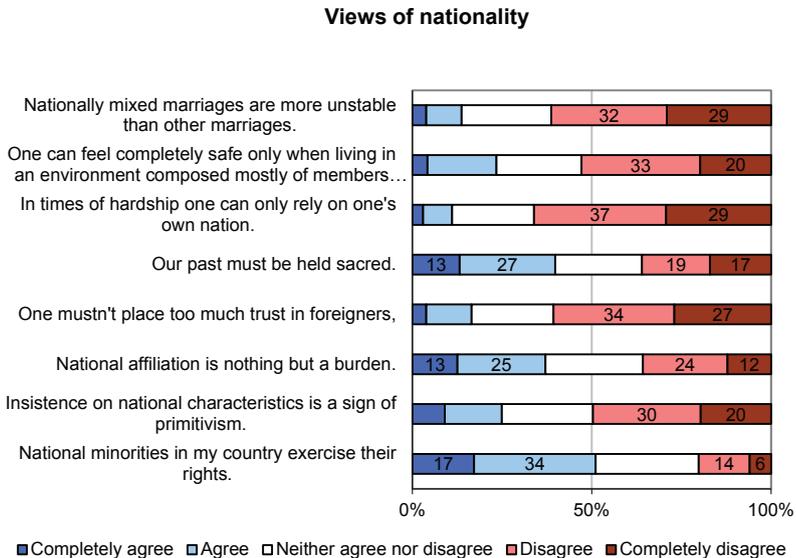
### **Facing the present**

As shown previously, national identity ranks high on the level of importance of participants' self-identification. However, this does not necessarily imply the existence of nationalism in the sense of representing one's own nation as superior to other nations, expression of prejudice toward other ethnic groups, and intolerant behavior towards the economic, social, cultural and political interests of other nations. In order to determine whether, and to what degree, some forms of national consciousness appear, it is necessary to analyze both the views and values referring to the very idea of nationality/ethnicity, and the ones related to the national distance which students take from certain ethnic groups, especially the ones which used to be part of former Yugoslavia. Precisely these items are the fundamental indicators for the construction of the index of nationalistic orientation, which has the status of a criterion variable of this study.

When it comes to the attitudes related to ethnicity (see Graph 2), we came to some quite interesting, if a little unexpected results. The overview of agreement with individual statements in graph 2 indicates that the minority of participants invariably agree with nationalistic statements, and the agreement percentage does not vary significantly. Thus, 3.9% of participants are against mixed marriages, 3.9% do not trust foreigners, and 3.0% maintain that in times of hardship one can rely only on one's nation. On the other hand, 12.6% of the participants hold that national affiliation is merely a burden, 9.0% perceive insistence on national characteristics as a form of primitiveness, and as many as 17.2% believe that in their country ethnic minorities can exercise their rights. This brings us to the conclusion that

among the student population in Serbia there are no increasing tendencies to present one's own nation as superior to other nations, which would otherwise be one of the main characteristics of nationalistic orientation.

**Graph 2.** Views of the idea of nationality



Apart from the glorification of one's own nation, the very concept of nationalism often implies a negative attitude to members of other national or ethnic groups. Therefore, what is particularly important for this analysis is national distance, measured with a modified Bogardus scale<sup>3</sup> which contains seven types of social interactions. The interactions are formulated as statements and listed from the highest to the lowest degree of distance (the highest degree of closeness). With their "yes" or "no" answers, the participants revealed what kinds of interactions they would readily accept with the members of the following

3 For more details about the Bogardus scale see: Dejvid Kreč et al. 1972.

nationalities, ethnic minorities and ethnic groups: the Albanians, Bulgarians, Montenegrins, Croats, Hungarians, Bosniaks (Muslims), Romanies, Romanians, Slovenes, Serbs and Greeks.

This clearly indicates a low degree of national distance which students take from these national and ethnic groups. The greatest distance was perceived in the attitude towards the Albanians, Romani and Bosniaks (Muslims), then toward the Romanians and Croats, and the slightest one towards the Greeks, Montenegrins and Slav-Macedonians. Taking into consideration the historical background, cultural and linguistic differences, this ethnic distance could partly be explained by the current social and political situation. For example, the current distance toward the Albanian minority could be understood as a result of the political atmosphere, or the problems in Kosovo.

Through the comparison of our study and the one the Friedrich Ebert Institute for Social Research recently conducted among 1500 young Croats aged 14 to 27, we came to a very interesting conclusion. Namely, according to the statistical data at our disposal, 57.7% of students in Serbia would accept to marry a Croat, whereas only 7% of young people in Croatia would be prepared for this kind of relationship. Similarly, when it comes to neighboring relations, 70.3% of students in Serbia accept Croats as neighbors, while this number is notably smaller in Croatia, and it amounts to 15%. The conclusion that young Croats have become greater nationalists than their parents, that they show stronger animosity toward the Serbs, as well as other minorities, than the generation which was born and raised during the war, and that they are becoming more conservative, was published on a Croatian portal, which explains that all of this is a consequence of political speech, non-sanctioned hate speech and the spreading of stereotypical images composed of negative attributes.<sup>4</sup>

4 <http://www.naslovi.net/2013-04-23/24sata/hrvatski-portal-mladi-hrvati-i-dalje-sve-manje-tolerisu-srbe/5425509>

**Table 1.** Acceptance of social interactions with members of other nations.

Type of interaction	Nationality/Ethnicity											
	Albanians	Bulgarians	Montenegrins	Croats	Hungarians	Slav-Macedonians	Bosniaks	Romanies	Romanians	Slovenes	Serbs	Greeks
As citizens in my country	61.9	84.6	90.8	76.2	83.9	93.7	77	79.1	84.8	89.9	99.1	95.7
As citizens in my town	58.5	80.2	88.6	73.3	81.4	91.1	73.5	74.9	81.5	87	98.9	93.3
As neighbors	56	77.5	87.3	70.3	78.9	89.6	70.9	66.5	78.1	84.9	98.9	91.2
As co-workers	63.3	82.9	90	78.4	83.8	91.9	78.1	75.6	82.6	88.1	99.2	93.6
As my university professor/ teaching assistant	59.9	77.8	84.9	73.2	79.2	86.6	72.9	71.3	78.1	82.9	99.3	89
As my friend	58.4	81.6	91.6	76.3	83.4	91.4	76.3	71.5	81.9	86.9	99	93.9
As my boyfriend/ girlfriend, husband/ wife	33.2	59	75.9	57.7	60	74.4	46.1	36.4	56.4	69.1	96.9	81.5

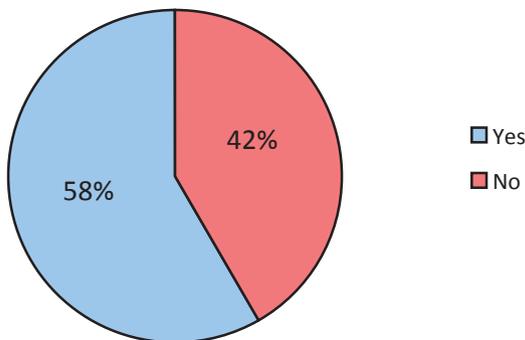
Young students from Serbia, however, send a more positive image when it comes to interaction with members of other nationalities. It appears that the process of defeating hate speech and ethnic animosity through educational, social and political programs has made considerable progress, both in comparison to the earlier years and to some other countries in the region.

### A look into the future

Since multiculturalism, international cooperation and people's mobility are at the core of the very idea of the European Union, openness to this kind of community is an important indicator through which it is possible to determine the direction in which the society will continue to develop its attitude to nationalism. As the date for the beginning of full membership accession negotiations between Serbia and the European Union is about to be determined, it is important to analyze the students' views of this political decision, and the changes which it can bring about.

**Graph 3.** Accession to the European Union.

#### Serbian membership in the EU



As shown in Graph 3, the views of Serbian membership in the European Union are polarized. Accession to the European

Union is supported by 58% of the participants, while 42% are against it. What is particularly important for this analysis refers to the preservation, i.e. fear of losing national identity and culture (see Table 2). Most participants (56.9%) believe that joining the EU will not affect this segment of life.

**Table 2.** Preservation of national identity and culture.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	It will grow	117	11.1	11.6	11.6
	It won't change	573	54.2	56.9	68.5
	It will drop	317	30.0	31.5	100.0
	Total	1007	95.2	100.0	
Missing	99	51	4.8		
Total		1058	100.0		

On the other hand, 55.3% of the participants in the study believe that the immigration of foreigners into Serbia, upon its joining the European Union, will remain the same, while 39.7% of the participants feel that this trend will grow.

**Table 3.** Immigration of foreigners into Serbia.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	It will grow	117	11.1	11.6	11.6
	It won't change	573	54.2	56.9	68.5
	It will drop	317	30.0	31.5	100.0
	Total	1007	95.2	100.0	
Missing	99	51	4.8		
Total		1058	100.0		

This indicates that in Serbia students' view of European integrations can be described as ambivalent. Unfulfilled promises of the international community about Serbia becoming a member state in record time, the recognition of Kosovo's independence by the European Union member states, and conditions for membership set by the European Union, are only some of the reasons for such results. Nevertheless, it seems that there are no traces of nationalistic orientation at the core of Euroscepticism, like a sense of threatened national identity and culture, or rejection of multiculturalism which is nurtured in this union of countries.

### **Discussion**

A general conclusion which can be reached from all of the above is that the political changes from the beginning of this century were largely followed by a change of social consciousness among the student population in Serbia. The index of nationalistic orientation showed a particularly low degree of nationalistic views in young students, which still appears to be on the decrease. Even though nationality/ethnicity is at the very top of the scale of the participants' self-identification, it is followed by a relatively tolerant attitude toward other ethnic, national and cultural groups. Likewise, the respondents did not insist on any particular exclusiveness of their nation in comparison to the other ones, which provides a solid basis for the economic, social and political progress and development.

And while the eyes of the world public are focused on the former Yugoslav countries, in anticipation of the great reconciliation of these nations, there is the question of how much effort and time it will take to overcome the shared tragic past. Are we going to wait for this full regional reconciliation infinitely and unreasonably, like Beckett's *Godot*? The encouraging results of this study cannot give a satisfying answer yet, despite seeing it faintly in the distance. It is yet to come in the future.

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