

CULTURAL PROVISION AND CULTURAL PARTICIPATION IN THE CENTRALISED CULTURAL SYSTEM IN SERBIA

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Abstract. *In this paper, we have analyzed cultural provision and cultural participation in Serbia, as well as measures taken by the Ministry of Culture to decentralize culture. Our research into cultural provision revealed significant differences in the number of cultural institutions, organizations, and associations between Belgrade, Novi Sad, and the rest of the country. Additionally, there are significant disparities in the financial resources allocated to them from the budget and through donations obtained via open calls. As a key contribution to the centralization of culture in the country, we identified the existence of 24 out of 27 national cultural institutions in Belgrade, i.e., 14 out of 17 provincial institutions of Vojvodina in Novi Sad. Although these institutions are funded by taxes paid by all the citizens of Serbia and Vojvodina, their programs are typically only available to those residing in the cities. On the other hand, analyses of cultural participation indicated the dominantly anti-elitist nature of cultural needs, a very low level of cultural habits, and small regional differences in the cultural practices of the citizens of Serbia. This seemingly paradoxical finding that pronounced inequalities in the cultural offering do not have a greater impact on cultural participation – because it is at a very low level in all parts of the country – represents a framework for future strategies of cultural decentralization in Serbia.*

Key words: *cultural provision, cultural participation, decentralization in culture, Serbia*

1. INTRODUCTION

Serbia is a pronouncedly centralized country. The structural factors influencing the centralization of culture in Serbia can be found in the political and economic spheres. One of the main factors is state capture, which refers to the control of the executive, legislative, and judiciary branches by the political elite, leading to centralized decision-making. Another factor are the oligarchic tendencies in political parties where career

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advancement of political representatives is based on loyalty to the party central, rather than serving the interests of the citizens who elected them. The country's fiscal policy also contributes to centralization, as most of the income is funneled into central institutions that then distribute funds to cities and municipalities based on estimates by the central government. Finally, property rights in Serbia dictate that the most important properties located in cities and municipalities are considered national property.

In this paper, we analyze cultural provision and cultural participation, as well as the measures taken by state agencies to decentralize culture in Serbia. It is based on the findings of the research project 'Experiences of Centralization of Culture in Serbia'. This project was part of the 'Culture for Democracy' program, which was financially supported by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) and coordinated by the Hartefakt fund.¹

The research activities were carried out from March to December 2022 and employed a comprehensive multi-method approach. In July and August 2022, a survey was conducted on a nationally proportional, multi-phase stratified probability sample extracted from the population of the citizens of Serbia aged between 18 and 80. A standardized survey questionnaire consisting of 45 items was used, and a total of 1026 respondents were surveyed face-to-face using Tablet-Assisted Personal Interviewing (TAPI).² In addition, from October to November 2022, 28 semi-structured interviews were conducted with respondents from twenty-three cities and municipalities in Serbia. For this part of the study, we used purposeful sampling and snowball techniques to locate interviewees, ensuring a diverse sample.

In parallel, desk research was also carried out. It included an analysis of theoretical texts on the decentralization of culture and existing studies on the cultural resources in Serbia. Most of these studies had been done by The Institute for Cultural Development Research (<https://zaprokul.org.rs/>), such as 'The Cultural Resources of the Districts in Serbia' and 'The Cultural Resources of the Cities in Serbia' and 'Kultura: Culture 2022'. We also took into consideration the list of cultural institutions, concert halls, and exhibition spaces created as part of the project 'E-culture' (<http://e-kultura.net/>), as well as an electronic map of the cultural institutions and organizations in Serbia (<https://a3.geosrbija.rs/share/111135adf09a>).

In the first part of this paper, we discuss the various types of decentralization of culture. The second segment of the paper analyzes cultural provision in different regions and cities across Serbia and points out factors that lead to the centralization of culture. The third segment presents the results of a study of cultural participation in Serbia, including data broken down by regions and cities. Additionally, this paper analyzes three attempts made by the Ministry of Culture and Information between 2010 and 2023 to contribute to the decentralization of culture in Serbia. Finally, the conclusion provides recommendations on how to improve the decentralization policy in Serbia.

2. TYPES OF DECENTRALIZATION IN CULTURE

In the article 'Planning for Equality? Decentralization in Cultural Policy' Nobuko Kawashima (2004) distinguishes between three types of decentralization in the sphere of culture: cultural, fiscal, and political decentralization. These types of decentralization differ in

¹ Please see: <https://heartefact.org/fond/cfd/>

² For the response rate and description of the sample, please see Tables A1 and A2 in the Appendix <https://figshare.com/s/ecdc630f7acb6dc9ac88>

two aspects: their place in the process of defining and carrying out cultural policy and which actors are affected by inequality³.

According to Kawashima, cultural decentralization is the aim of cultural policy. It strives to remove barriers that prevent participation and to provide equal opportunities for all citizens to enjoy the culture and the arts, irrespective of their place of residence, physical ability or disability, income, social class, race, or gender. Discussions on cultural decentralization are usually dominated by indications of geographical barriers and inequality in the availability of a high-quality cultural offer, depending on which part of the country people live in.

Contrary to that, fiscal decentralization has to do with cultural policy measures and refers to the inequality in the distribution of budget funds among the creators of the cultural offer. It could be aimed at overcoming three different types of inequality. Firstly, inequality in the regional budget allocations, whereby the main 'accusation' is that the capital city receives much more funds than the 'rest' of the country. The second aspect of fiscal decentralization refers to the level of participation of (or inequality among) central, regional, and local authorities in financing culture. The third aspect refers to the inequality in budget allocations among the various types of arts and the institutions/organizations that create them (film, theatre, the visual arts, music; the public, private, and civic sectors in culture or established and alternative cultures).

Political decentralization involves the administration of cultural policy and the balance of power among the decision-makers in this area. In most cases, it has to do with central, regional, and local authorities. However, it can also refer to the so-called horizontal decentralization, the division of responsibility among various governing bodies sharing the same power level (for example, the Ministry of Culture and Ministry of Education, or even the Ministry of Culture and Art Councils). According to Kawashima, one form of political decentralization also requires that non-government actors take on more activities in creating cultural policy. The resources that are necessary for political decentralization to be successful and to lead to cultural decentralization include legitimate decision-making power, sufficient funds, possession of knowledge, skills, and information, and the availability of suitable organizations/institutions (i.e., human, spatial, technical resources).

Political decentralization is a means of achieving an end (cultural decentralization). The dominant understanding is that political decentralization is a prerequisite for cultural decentralization, but Kawashima indicates that at least two strategies are possible: cultural decentralization with and without political decentralization.

According to Kawashima, there are three strategies used to achieve cultural decentralization *without* political decentralization:

- 1) First, the central government can form regional structures which promote regional development (decomposition). Even though the activities focus on regional development, the central government appoints officials, provides the means, and establishes standards. A case in point is France, where regional directorates have been founded since 1974.

- 2) The second strategy is for the central government to build cultural infrastructure, cultural institutions, and art organizations across the country, which will then be jointly funded by the center and from local funds (for example, the polyvalent cultural centers in France in the 1960s-70s).

³ For other important theoretical considerations of decentralization in culture see Kawashima (1997), D'Angelo and Vesperini (2000) and Heiskanen (2001).

3) The third strategy, which is prevalent in countries such as Sweden and Scotland, involves organizing constant touring of exhibitions and performances. National institutions have an obligation to be available throughout the country to the citizens who fund their work through taxes.

On the other hand, there are two strategies of cultural decentralization *with* political decentralization:

1) The first includes a shift of power from the central government to the local ones and represents a 'zero-sum game'. The transfer of power includes a transfer of control over an entire group of resources (legitimate decision-making power, funds, increased skill levels and levels of knowledge, control over organizations/institutions) so that the local authorities can successfully realize their aim (cultural decentralization).

2) The second is focused on strengthening the power of the local authorities without reducing the power of centralized government and represents a win-win situation. This second strategy includes increasing the capacities of the local authorities while retaining the central government as a guarantee of stability and an actor of strategic focus.

Our previous research (see Cvetičanin 2011; and the 'Strategy of Decentralization of Culture in Serbia', 2008 report) shows that one source of the centralization of culture in Serbia is the very low level of resources available to local governments. In light of this, we believe that the most effective approach to decentralizing culture in Serbia would be joint action of central and local authorities. This is especially relevant given the dual task that awaits them, which is identified by current research.

3. CULTURAL PROVISION IN SERBIA

The cultural policy in Serbia shares the characteristics of the centralized state system it belongs to. As can be seen from the list of institutions of culture created as part of the 'E-culture' project, the study 'Kultura: Culture 2022' and the electronic map of the cultural institutions and organizations in Serbia 'Geo-Serbia', there is inequality in the availability of cultural resources (cultural institutions/organizations/association) between the regions in Serbia. They are not limited solely to the differences between Belgrade on the one hand and the provinces on the other. Still, the differences in terms of the availability of cultural resources in Belgrade and all the other cities in Serbia are so big that they inevitably require special attention.

If in the Yugoslav federation, where there were other cities with similar potential, Belgrade was the first among more or less equals, today it is the capital of a country in relation to which it seems cumbersome large. Almost one-quarter of the country's population lives in Belgrade, which is almost five times larger than Novi Sad and six times larger than Niš, the next two largest cities in the country.

As part of the desk research, data were compiled to indicate that regarding the availability of cultural institutions and organizations on the territory of Serbia, it is possible to identify four groups. The first group comprises libraries and cultural centers, which can be found in almost all the larger settlements in Serbia. The second group, which is also mostly territorially equally distributed across the regions in Serbia, is made up of organizations that deal with amateur cultural activities (mostly folklore). The third group comprises traditional cultural institutions: professional theatres, museums, orchestras, and galleries. Of the total number of these institutions in Serbia, more than one-half are to be found in the capital city. Finally, there

is a fourth group of organizations dealing with the distribution of cultural production (publishing houses, discography houses, magazines, electronic media with a national frequency, and cinematographic companies), which are almost completely located in Belgrade.

Besides 30 city cultural institutions, including 12 theatres, 8 institutes for cultural heritage protection, 4 libraries, and 6 cultural centers, 24 national cultural institutions are located in Belgrade. In addition, there are 565 active cultural agents, which include film producers and distributors, private galleries and museums, concert halls, orchestras, folklore amateur societies, and non-profit organizations. This means that almost one-third of all the cultural agents (cultural institutions/organizations/associations) in Serbia operate in Belgrade. Novi Sad comes second with 101 cultural agents, followed by Niš with 41, Kragujevac with 39, and Subotica with 28. In 26 settlements that have city status in Serbia, there are 484 cultural agents, 135 less than in Belgrade alone. The total number of active cultural agents in all the other settlements in Serbia is 1,037, less than half of the total number in the country (Table 1).

Table 1 The territorial distribution of cultural agents and the population in Serbia (per city)

| City | No. cult. agents | % | Population | % | City | No. cult. agents | % | Population | % |
|------------|------------------|-------|------------|-------|-----------------------------|------------------|--------|------------|---------|
| Belgrade | 619 | 28.9% | 1,681,405 | 25.3% | Pančevo | 22 | 1.0% | 115,454 | 1.74% |
| Bor | 9 | 0.4% | 40,845 | 0.61% | Pirot | 13 | 0.6% | 49,601 | 0.75% |
| Čačak | 12 | 0.6% | 105,612 | 1.59% | Požarevac | 12 | 0.6% | 68,648 | 1.03% |
| Jagodina | 13 | 0.6% | 64,644 | 0.97% | Prokuplje | 10 | 0.5% | 38,054 | 0.57% |
| Kikinda | 14 | 0.7% | 49,326 | 0.74% | Smederevo | 13 | 0.6% | 97,930 | 1.47% |
| Kragujevac | 39 | 1.8% | 171,186 | 2.58% | Sombor | 13 | 0.6% | 70,818 | 1.07% |
| Kraljevo | 20 | 0.9% | 110,196 | 1.66% | S. Mitrovica | 19 | 0.9% | 72,580 | 1.09% |
| Kruševac | 10 | 0.5% | 113,582 | 1.71% | Subotica | 28 | 1.3% | 123,952 | 1.86% |
| Leskovac | 21 | 1.0% | 123,950 | 1.86% | Vranje | 12 | 0.6% | 74,381 | 1.12% |
| Loznica | 10 | 0.5% | 72,062 | 1.08% | Užice | 15 | 0.7% | 69,997 | 1.05% |
| Niš | 41 | 1.9% | 249,501 | 3.75% | Zaječar | 10 | 0.5% | 47,991 | 0.72% |
| Novi Pazar | 14 | 0.7% | 106,720 | 1.61% | Other settlements | 1037 | 48.5% | 2,461,671 | 37.03% |
| Novi Sad | 101 | 4.7% | 368,967 | 5.55% | | | | | |
| | | | | | Total | 2140 | 100.0% | | |
| | | | | | Total number of inhabitants | | | 6,647,003 | 100.00% |

Sources: For cultural agents: database E-kultura (<http://e-kultura.net/>), study 'Kultura : Culture 2022' and an electronic map of the cultural institutions and organizations in Serbia (<https://a3.geosrbija.rs/share/111135adf09a>); For data on population: Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia, Census 2022, Total population by municipalities and cities (<https://popis2022.stat.gov.rs/en-US/popisni-podaci-eksel-tabele/>)

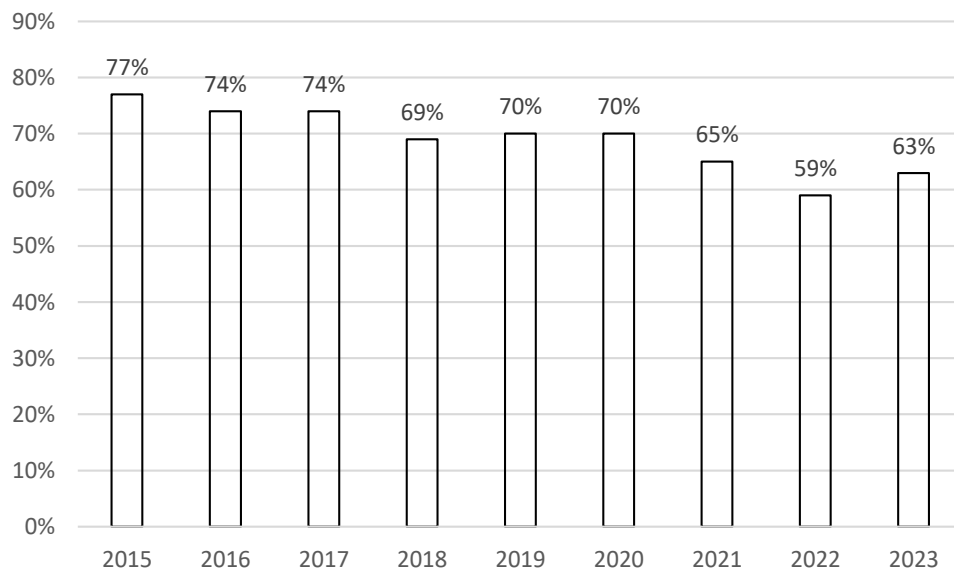
Upon analyzing the distribution of cultural agents across Serbia based on statistical regions, a more favorable image emerges. Table 2 shows that the number of cultural agents in Belgrade is almost the same as that in Vojvodina. However, the number is still significantly lower in Šumadija and West Serbia, and even lower in South and East Serbia.

Table 2 The territorial distribution of the cultural actors in Serbia (per region)

| | No. | % |
|--------------------------|------|-------|
| Belgrade Region | 636 | 29.7 |
| Vojvodina | 658 | 30.7 |
| Šumadija and West Serbia | 449 | 21.0 |
| South and East Serbia | 375 | 17.5 |
| Kosovo and Metohija | 20 | 0.9 |
| Total | 2140 | 100.0 |

Sources: Database 'E-kultura' (<http://e-kultura.net/>), study 'Kultura: Culture 2022' and an electronic map of the cultural institutions and organizations in Serbia (<https://a3.geosrbija.rs/share/111135adf09a>)

The most significant contribution to the centralization of culture in Serbia is made by the fact that almost all the republic's cultural institutions are located in Belgrade; that is, almost all the provincial cultural institutions of Vojvodina are located in Novi Sad. Out of 27 national cultural institutions, 24 are located in Belgrade. Their status of being "national" is only based on the fact that their work is funded by the taxes paid by all citizens of Serbia. Their programs, theatrical performances, exhibitions, concerts, opera, and ballet performances, with rare exceptions, are attended only by people who reside in Belgrade. At the same time, a huge part of the total budget of the Ministry of Culture is allocated to these institutions – between 60% and 70% (see graph 1).

**Fig. 1** The percentage of the budget of the Ministry of Culture allocated to the republic's cultural institutions

Source: Laws on the budget of the Republic of Serbia 2015 – 2023
(<https://www.slglasnik.com/sluzbena-glasila/stampana-izdanja>)

The situation is very similar in Novi Sad, where, in addition to the 13 cultural institutions and 8 cultural stations created in relation to its status as the European Capital of Culture, there are a further 14 to 17 provincial cultural institutions, which are also provided with significant funding from the provincial budget.

Novi Sad's successful participation in the competition for the European Capital of Culture (ECoC) for 2021 has had a significant impact on improving its cultural infrastructure, cultural provision, and overall position in Serbia's cultural system. This remarkable achievement holds great significance for Serbia's culture as a whole. However, it is important to note that the Melina Mercouri Award, which is the participation prize from the European Union, is about one million and five hundred thousand euros. The approximately 30 million euros allocated for activities related to the ECoC and at least as much for infrastructural work came from the national and provincial budgets. These sixty million euros that were invested into the cultural infrastructure and programs in Novi Sad, will further widen the gap between it and other cities in Serbia.

Even though they could be one instrument contributing to leveling out the drastically unequal distribution in funding culture, open calls of the Ministry of Culture and the Provincial Secretariat for Culture for funding projects, further contribute to the increase in inequality.⁴

For example, the Ministry of Culture's open call for 2022 provided support for 448 projects submitted by organizations from the region of Belgrade (totaling 265,125,000 dinars, or more than half of the total budget for the open call), 294 projects from Vojvodina (totaling 116,300,000 dinars), and 167 projects from South and East Serbia (totaling 60,750,000 dinars).

Virtually identical distribution of funds can be seen in the open call in 2023 (Table 3).

Table 3 The territorial distribution of projects supported by the Ministry of Culture and Information for 2023 (based on region)

| | Number of projects per region | Funds per region | On average per project | % of total funds |
|--------------------------|-------------------------------|------------------|------------------------|------------------|
| Belgrade region | 449 | 223,105,000 RSD | 496,893 RSD | 48.91% |
| Vojvodina | 293 | 114,097,000 RSD | 389,409 RSD | 25.01% |
| Šumadija and West Serbia | 159 | 58,318,500 RSD | 366,783 RSD | 12.79% |
| South and East Serbia | 153 | 48,356,000 RSD | 316,052 RSD | 10.60% |
| Kosovo | 38 | 12,250,000 RSD | 322,368 RSD | 2.69% |
| Total | 1092 | 456,126,500 RSD | 417,698 RSD | 100.00% |

Source: Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Serbia (<https://kultura.gov.rs/konkursi/30>)

The situation was similar in the open call of the Provincial Secretariat for Culture, Public Information, and Relations with Religious Communities. Almost half of the supported projects and more than half of the total funds were allocated to organizations from the South Bačka District (whose capital is Novi Sad).

⁴ Support for the projects, of course, depended on their quality, but the cultural policy that tends toward the decentralization of culture could, through programs of positive discrimination, render the open competition an important tool in the process of strengthening the capacities of institutions and organizations originating from smaller environments in Serbia.

Table 4 The territorial distribution of the projects supported at the open competition of the Provincial Secretariat for Culture of Vojvodina for 2023 (per district)

| District | Number of projects per region | Funds per region | % of the total number of projects | % of the total funds |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------------------|----------------------|
| South Bačka (N. Sad) | 273 | 388,383,000 RSD | 49.54% | 56.32% |
| North Bačka (Subotica) | 55 | 36,260,000 RSD | 9.98% | 5.26% |
| West Bačka (Sombor) | 42 | 8,052,000 RSD | 7.62% | 1.17% |
| South Banat (Pančevo) | 69 | 42,250,000 RSD | 12.52% | 6.13% |
| Central Banat (Zrenjanin) | 41 | 10,970,000 RSD | 7.44% | 1.59% |
| North Banat (Kikinda) | 34 | 8,315,000 RSD | 6.18% | 1.21% |
| The Srem District (S. Mitrovica) | 37 | 195,400,000 RSD | 6.72% | 28.32% |
| Total | 551 | 689.630.000 RSD | 100.00% | 100.00% |

Source: Provincial Secretariat for Culture, Public Information, and Relations with Religious Communities (<https://www.kultura.vojvodina.gov.rs/resenja-kultura/>)

Altogether, these data indicate that the centralization of culture in Serbia is structurally conditioned and that – since only one-third of the citizens of Serbia live in Belgrade and Novi Sad – it is necessary to take measures to provide the remaining two-thirds of the population with equal opportunities to participate in cultural activities⁵.

4. CULTURAL PARTICIPATION IN SERBIA

We have seen that cultural provision in Serbia is highly unequal. This led us to the question of its effects on the cultural participation of Serbian citizens. Our study of cultural participation in Serbia in 2022 indicated the dominant anti-elitist nature of cultural needs, a very low level of cultural habits, and small regional differences and class divisions in the cultural practices of the citizens of Serbia (see also Cvetičanin 2007; Cvetičanin and Milankov 2011; Cvetičanin 2014).

We operationalized the question related to cultural needs, asking respondents what they like to do in their leisure time, even if they cannot do so (for various reasons). In the survey questionnaire, we offered 17 different activities that fall within the domain of the elite, popular, and everyday culture and asked the respondents to, on a Likert-type scale, express their attitudes towards them, ranging from whether this activity is something they like to do most, to whether they expressly do not like to participate in it.

As can be seen in Table 5, the analysis of cultural needs indicated that the dominant culture in Serbia is expressly anti-elitist. Some of the favorite leisure time activities include practices that belong to popular culture (such as watching television and listening to folk music) or belong to the domain of everyday culture (attending family festivities related to patron saints, going to restaurants and cafes, or using social media). No more than one-third of the respondents like to attend events and enjoy the content of highbrow culture, which represents the traditional domain of cultural policy.

⁵ For the challenges of cultural centralization and possible ways of decentralization in the countries of South-East Europe see also: Katunarić (2003); Dragojević (2011); Paunović (2020); Žuvela (2021), and the collection of works published by the Faculty of Dramatic Arts (2018).

Table 5 What the respondents like to do in their leisure time (even if they are not currently able to do so)

| | | I like to do the most | I like to do | I neither like nor dislike | I dislike to do | I expressly do not like to do | Total |
|--|---|-----------------------------|--------------|----------------------------------|--------------------|--|-------|
| Watching television | n | 223 | 644 | 107 | 37 | 15 | 1026 |
| | % | 21.7% | 62.8% | 10.4% | 3.6% | 1.5% | 100% |
| Attending family festivities | n | 181 | 610 | 141 | 73 | 21 | 1026 |
| | % | 17.6% | 59.5% | 13.7% | 7.1% | 2.0% | 100% |
| Going to a restaurant or cafe | n | 174 | 535 | 142 | 111 | 64 | 1026 |
| | % | 17.0% | 52.1% | 13.8% | 10.8% | 6.2% | 100% |
| Listening to folk music | n | 112 | 550 | 206 | 110 | 48 | 1026 |
| | % | 10.9% | 53.6% | 20.1% | 10.7% | 4.7% | 100% |
| Taking up a hobby | n | 90 | 539 | 200 | 143 | 54 | 1026 |
| | % | 8.8% | 52.5% | 19.5% | 13.9% | 5.3% | 100% |
| Outings into nature (hiking) | n | 113 | 475 | 213 | 156 | 69 | 1026 |
| | % | 11.0% | 46.3% | 20.8% | 15.2% | 6.7% | 100% |
| Using social media | n | 146 | 451 | 135 | 139 | 155 | 1026 |
| | % | 14.2% | 44.0% | 13.2% | 13.5% | 15.1% | 100% |
| (Re)Decorating the apartment | n | 87 | 435 | 246 | 187 | 71 | 1026 |
| | % | 8.5% | 42.4% | 24.0% | 18.2% | 6.9% | 100% |
| Reading books | n | 74 | 362 | 198 | 268 | 124 | 1026 |
| | % | 7.2% | 35.3% | 19.3% | 26.1% | 12.1% | 100% |
| Attending sports events | n | 108 | 311 | 160 | 275 | 172 | 1026 |
| | % | 10.5% | 30.3% | 15.6% | 26.8% | 16.8% | 100% |
| Going to the theatre | n | 28 | 338 | 249 | 266 | 145 | 1026 |
| | % | 2.7% | 32.9% | 24.3% | 25.9% | 14.1% | 100% |
| Sports activities with friends | n | 64 | 300 | 185 | 283 | 194 | 1026 |
| | % | 6.2% | 29.2% | 18.0% | 27.6% | 18.9% | 100% |
| Singing. Playing an instrument. Dancing. Drawing | n | 33 | 227 | 227 | 345 | 194 | 1026 |
| | % | 3.2% | 22.1% | 22.1% | 33.6% | 18.9% | 100% |
| Attending an exhibition in an art gallery/museum | n | 16 | 260 | 248 | 298 | 204 | 1026 |
| | % | 1.6% | 25.3% | 24.2% | 29.0% | 19.9% | 100% |
| Playing video games (gaming) | n | 51 | 218 | 142 | 263 | 352 | 1026 |
| | % | 5.0% | 21.2% | 13.8% | 25.6% | 34.3% | 100% |
| Handicrafts (Knitting, Crocheting) | n | 31 | 166 | 109 | 303 | 417 | 1026 |
| | % | 3.0% | 16.2% | 10.6% | 29.5% | 40.6% | 100% |
| Listening to classical music | n | 6 | 145 | 168 | 385 | 322 | 1026 |
| | % | 0.65 | 14.1% | 16.4% | 37.5% | 31.4% | 100% |

Source of data: survey 'Experiences of Centralization of Culture in Serbia' (2022)

In the following step, we compared the respondents' socio-demographic characteristics with certain types of cultural needs. The results shown in Tables A3a and A3b (please see the

Appendix⁶) indicate significant differences in cultural needs, depending on the respondents' education level. They do not differ considerably when it comes to activities in the field of everyday culture and popular culture, but there are significant differences in relation to the practices of traditional highbrow culture. Thus, for example, 66.5% of the respondents with a higher education prefer going to the theatre, while 70.7% of those with an elementary education do not like to do so. The situation is similar when it comes to listening to classical music, whereby 30.6% of the respondents with a higher education like to do it in their free time, and only 3.3% of those with an elementary school education.

In addition to the impact of education on the formation of cultural needs, we studied the impact of economic capital, that is, the average monthly income per household member (Tables A4a and A4b). Even though the impact of economic capital is lower than that of education (cultural capital), it is still present, especially regarding affinities towards highbrow cultural practices.

Differences reappear among highbrow cultural practices in the public sphere, or what was the main domain of cultural policy: going to the theatre and galleries and listening to classical music. One-half of the respondents from the group with the highest income like to go to the theatre (50.0%), forty percent like going to exhibitions in galleries and museums (40.8%); while one quarter like to listen to classical music in their free time (25.9%), which is greater than all the other groups identified based on income.

We were also interested in generational differences, especially considering that previous studies carried out in Serbia and abroad indicate that education and age strongly impact cultural practices. As can be seen from tables A5a, A5b, and A5c, even in the case of cultural needs, there are clear differences between respondents of various generations.

The most frequent responses of the respondents from the generation aged 18 to 29, are that they neither like nor dislike certain activities, except for using social media and playing games, stereotypically confirming the image of millennials and post-millennials.

For the generation aged 30 to 39, the favorite way of spending leisure time is also social media and video games. For the other activities, they remain within the framework of the ratio of their presence in the sample. Unlike them, the respondents from the generation aged 40 to 54 have the clearest attitudes regarding what they do and do not like to do in their free time. They like to read books above average, like to attend exhibitions in galleries and museums, like to watch theatrical performances, and do not like to watch television. Only when it comes to using social media and playing games are they divided; that is, the occurrence of the response that they neither like nor dislike these activities is greater than the actual ratio of their presence in the sample.

The generation aged 55 to 64 is the first in which most of the respondents do not like to use social media. In the case of the oldest generation (65+), most of their responses are related to things which they do not like to do (they do not like to go out to restaurants, to go to the theatre, go to exhibitions, read books, use the internet), with the exception of listening to folk music.

Bearing in mind the basic topic of our study, we analyzed whether there are any differences in terms of the cultural needs of the respondents based on the region in which they live (the Belgrade region, Vojvodina, Šumadija and West Serbia, or South and East Serbia – see tables A6a and A6b in the Appendix). The fact that they live in various parts

⁶ Detailed documentation on the performed analyzes can be found in the Appendix
<https://figshare.com/s/ecdc630f7acb6dc9ac88>

of Serbia was proven not to have a great independent impact on shaping the cultural needs of the respondents.

The second aspect of cultural participation that we analyzed are the habits of the respondents, that is, the citizens of Serbia. Cultural habits are the actualization of cultural needs – what the respondents actually do in the sphere of culture. Bearing in mind that this is a study of the field of cultural policy, the survey focused on cultural habits in the public sphere. The respondents were asked how many times during the six-month period⁷ prior to the survey they attended cultural events (including those that belong to the elite, popular, and everyday culture).

The results obtained indicate a very low level of cultural participation for all types of cultural practices – highbrow, popular and everyday. If we were to take the fact that the respondents attended any one of these cultural events at least four times in this period as a measure of active participation, then the most frequently mentioned events (restaurants with live music) were attended by one-quarter of the respondents (24.6%). Some 6.8% went to the library during this period, 5.4% to the movies, 4.8% to a pop/rock music concert, 4.5% to folk music concerts, 2.9% to the theatre, 2.8% to art galleries/museums, and 0.9% to classical music concerts.

Table 6 How many times did the respondents attend cultural programs over six months prior to the survey

| | | 7+ times | 4 – 6 times | 1 – 3 times | Not once | Total |
|---|---|-------------|----------------|----------------|----------|-------|
| Went to a restaurant with live music | n | 82 | 170 | 362 | 412 | 1026 |
| | % | 8.0% | 16.6% | 35.3% | 40.2% | 100% |
| Attended a sports event | n | 49 | 92 | 223 | 662 | 1026 |
| | % | 4.8% | 9.0% | 21.7% | 64.5% | 100% |
| Went to the movies | n | 11 | 44 | 261 | 710 | 1026 |
| | % | 1.1% | 4.3% | 25.4% | 69.2% | 100% |
| Went to a fair | n | 3 | 23 | 258 | 742 | 1026 |
| | % | 0.3% | 2.2% | 25.1% | 72.3% | 100% |
| Went to a pop/rock music concert | n | 8 | 41 | 229 | 748 | 1026 |
| | % | 0.8% | 4.0% | 22.3% | 72.9% | 100% |
| Went to a folk music concert | n | 5 | 41 | 194 | 786 | 1026 |
| | % | 0.5% | 4.0% | 18.9% | 76.6% | 100% |
| Went to the library | n | 26 | 44 | 110 | 846 | 1026 |
| | % | 2.5% | 4.3% | 10.7% | 82.5% | 100% |
| Went to the theatre | n | 3 | 27 | 190 | 806 | 1026 |
| | % | 0.3% | 2.6% | 18.5% | 78.6% | 100% |
| Visited an art museum or gallery | n | 3 | 26 | 137 | 860 | 1026 |
| | % | 0.3% | 2.5% | 13.4% | 83.8% | 100% |
| Went to a classical music concert | n | 1 | 8 | 60 | 957 | 1026 |
| | % | 0.1% | 0.8% | 5.8% | 93.3% | 100% |

Source of data: survey 'Experiences of Centralization of Culture in Serbia' (2022)

⁷ A typical question of this type in survey questionnaires takes into consideration a timeframe of 12 months prior to the survey. However, bearing in mind the restrictions related to public gatherings during the fall and winter of 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we limited our study to visits to cultural events in 2022.

Yet, if we were to analyze the number of those who took part in these activities at all (at least once), then the level of participation would revolve around approximately one-third of the respondents or citizens of Serbia. Sports events were attended – at least once – by 35.5% of the respondents, movie theatres by 30.8%, county fairs by 27.7%, pop/rock music concerts by 27.1%, folk music concerts by 25.4%, and the theatre by 21.4%. Our respondents mostly attended restaurants with live music (59.8%). while the least often exhibitions of the visual arts (16.2%) and classical music concerts (6.7%).

On the other hand, the percentage of those who did not take part in any of these activities over the past six months prior to the survey was quite large. Some 40.2% of the respondents had not gone to a restaurant with live music (as the most frequently attended form of cultural event), while somewhere between 70% and 90% of the respondents had not participated in cultural activities understood in a narrower sense (highbrow and popular culture). Thus, 69.2% of the male/female respondents had not been to the movies, 72.9% to a pop/rock music concert, 76.6% to any folk music concert, 78.6% to the theatre; 83.8% to art exhibitions, and 93.3% to classical music concerts.

The data obtained by analyzing the relationship between the level of education and the cultural habits of the respondents indicate that the cultural habits of respondents with elementary school education and those with higher education are inverse – as if they were mirror images of each other (see tables A7a and A7b). The data on the (in)activity of the respondents with only an elementary school education is quite disheartening. The fact that only 94.9% of them had never been to a library six months prior to the survey might not be surprising, but 87% of them had never been to a folk music concert, 93% had never been to the movies, 97.2% had never been to the theatre, 97.2% had never been to a gallery exhibition, while of a group of 215 people with only elementary school, only one or two had attended any of these cultural events more than four times.

On the other hand, even though the levels of cultural participation of those with a university education were not particularly high, still for each of these analyzed practices, one-third of these respondents had attended cultural programs at least once (with the exception of folk and classical music concerts). Furthermore, the percentage of those who attended cultural events four or more times significantly exceeded the ratio of their presence in the sample. The frequency with which respondents with a high school education attended all the activities was, however, at the level of their presence in the sample.

As expected, income per household member has a greater impact on cultural habits than on cultural needs. The respondents from households with an income of less than 20,000 dinars (about 170 €) and with an income between 20,000 and 30,000 dinars per household member (between 170 € and 250 €) did not participate in cultural activities at the level corresponding to the ratio of their presence in the sample. Exceptions are folk music concerts for the group with the lowest income, which attended them 1-3 times during the six-month period prior to the survey.

Respondents with a monthly income per household member of between 30,000 and 48,000 dinars (between 250 € and 400 €) had been to the library (1-3 times), the cinema (1-3 times), and folk music concerts (4 times and more) at a level above the ratio of their presence in the sample. The members of the active audience – those who attended cultural events four or more times during the six months prior to the survey – are mostly found among individuals from households with an income exceeding 48,000 dinars (400 €) per household member. They attended the theatre, the cinema, art galleries, the library,

pop and rock music concerts, and restaurants with live music with a frequency that was above the ratio of their presence in the sample (see tables A6a and A6b).

We also studied the impact of generational differences on cultural habits. The respondents belonging to the youngest generation (ages 18 to 29) and the generation aged 30 to 39 participate more than any other age group in popular and everyday culture activities (going to the movies, attending pop and rock music concerts, folk music concerts, going to restaurants with live music), at a rate that is above the ratio of their presence in the sample.

Respondents aged 40 to 54 attended events that fall under the domain of traditional elite culture more frequently than others, but they also relatively frequently went to restaurants with live music and folk music concerts. The respondents aged 55 to 64 mostly participate in cultural activities to a very small extent, except for a certain number of them who go to the theatre. For the respondents over the age of 65, however, participation in cultural activities has almost stopped (tables A8a and A8b).

What was particularly interesting to us was whether there were any differences in cultural habits between citizens living in different parts of the country, bearing in mind the differences in the cultural provision. To our surprise, the differences proved not to be extensive and also emerged where they were not expected.

In all the regions, participation in cultural activities mostly ranged approximately around the ratio of their presence in the sample. The highest levels of cultural participation were found in Šumadija and West Serbia (for example, going to the library, movies, theatre, pop and rock music concerts, and classical and folk music concerts). The region of Belgrade is the only one to stand out with a slightly higher percentage of the most active respondents, those who attend cultural events four times and more (for example, going to the library, movies, galleries, and museums), but even there the number of respondents is low. In Vojvodina and in South and East Serbia, above-average frequencies of attendance were mostly noted for respondents whose ratio of presence in the sample was low. For example, in Vojvodina, this refers to cultural practices such as going to the library, movies, and classical and folk music concerts, while in South and East Serbia, for attending galleries, the theatre, pop and rock music concerts, and classical music concerts (see tables A9a and A9b).

By combining data on the level of the respondents' cultural needs and habits, we constructed different types of audiences in Serbia. We determined that the active audience consists of respondents with a high level of cultural needs and a high or moderate level of cultural habits or those with a moderate level of needs but a high level of cultural habits. The respondents with a low level of cultural needs and cultural habits defined the non-audience. Those who exhibited signs of the remaining combinations of cultural needs and habits we defined as the potential audience. The distribution of these types of audiences can be seen in Table 7.

Table 7 Types of Audiences

| Type of audience | Number | Valid % |
|--------------------|--------|---------|
| Active audience | 291 | 28.4 |
| Potential audience | 318 | 31.0 |
| Non-audience | 417 | 40.6 |
| Total | 1026 | 100.0 |

Source of data: survey 'Experiences of Centralization of Culture in Serbia' (2022)

Even for the types of audiences, level of education was proven to be a key determinant. The respondents with an incomplete elementary school education, elementary education, and a three-year high school education belong to the non-audience at an above-average rate. Those with a completed high school education or a four-year vocational education at an above-average rate are members of the potential public, while those with a community college or university education or even higher levels of education mostly belong to the active public (see Table A9).

Citizens from households with a monthly income exceeding 48,000 dinars (400 €) per household member make up the majority of the active public, while those from the lowest income group mostly belong to the non-audience (see Table A12). In a generational sense, the core of the active public is made up of citizens aged 18 to 54. The potential audience is mostly evenly distributed among all generations, while respondents over the age of 65 represent the majority of the non-audience (Table A13). At an above-average rate, there are slightly more men among the non-audience members and women among the potential audience (Table A14).

Bearing in mind the focus of the study, it was again of particular importance for us to see the distribution of the types of audiences based on region. However, no significant differences emerged. In all the regions, most of the respondents belong to the non-public (44.5% in Vojvodina, 41.6% in South and East Serbia, 41.7% in Belgrade, and 35.5% in Šumadija and West Serbia).

Table 8 Types of audiences and their distribution based on region in Serbia

| | | Active audience | Potential audience | Non-audience | Total |
|--------------------------|------------|-----------------|--------------------|--------------|--------|
| Belgrade region | n | 56 | 84 | 100 | 240 |
| | % region | 23.3% | 35.0% | 41.7% | 100.0% |
| | % audience | 19.2% | 26.4% | 24.0% | 23.4% |
| Vojvodina region | n | 73 | 74 | 118 | 265 |
| | % region | 27.5% | 27.9% | 44.5% | 100.0% |
| | % audience | 25.1% | 23.3% | 28.3% | 25.8% |
| Šumadija and West Serbia | n | 89 | 98 | 103 | 290 |
| | % region | 30.7% | 33.8% | 35.5% | 100.0% |
| | % audience | 30.6% | 30.8% | 24.7% | 28.3% |
| South and East Serbia | n | 73 | 62 | 96 | 231 |
| | % region | 31.6% | 26.8% | 41.6% | 100.0% |
| | % audience | 25.1% | 19.5% | 23.0% | 22.5% |
| Total | n | 291 | 318 | 417 | 1026 |
| | % region | 28.4% | 31.0% | 40.6% | 100.0% |
| | % audience | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% |

Source of data: survey 'Experiences of Centralization of Culture in Serbia' (2022)

Despite the best cultural offer, members of the active public were least prevalent in Belgrade (19.2%). Most of them are to be found in Šumadija and West Serbia (30.6%), while their percentages are the same in Vojvodina and South and East Serbia (25.1%). The potential audience mostly follows the ratio of their presence in the sample, and most of them were again to be found in Šumadija and West Serbia (30.8%), and least of all in South and East Serbia (19.5%)

In the final segment of this report, we analyzed the relationship between class membership⁸ on the one hand and belonging to various types of audiences that we identified on the other.

As can be seen in Table 9, the majority of the active audience is made up of members of the middle class (73.5%), while the majority of the non-audience are members of the working class (62.5%). The members of all class fractions, except the agricultural fraction of the working class, take part in the potential audience to an extent similar to that of the ratio of their presence in the sample. All this confirms the existence of class division of cultural practices among the citizens of Serbia.

Table 9 Types of audiences and class fractions

| Class fraction/ Type of audience | Upper middle class | Lower middle class | Working class – precarious fraction | Working class – agricultural fraction | Total |
|--|-----------------------|-----------------------|---|---|---------------------|
| Active audience | 95 (32.6%) 47.0% | 119 (40.9%) 33.0% | 56 (19.2%) 23.5% | 21 (7.2%) 9.3% | 291 (100%) 28.4% |
| Potential audience | 71 (22.3%) 35.1% | 122 (38.4%) 33.8% | 68 (21.4%) 28.6% | 57 (17.9%) 25.3% | 318 (100%) 31.0% |
| Non- audience | 36 (8.6) 17.8% | 120 (28.8%) 33.2% | 114 (27.2%) 47.9% | 147 (35.3%) 65.3% | 417 (100%) 40.6% |
| Total | 202 (19.7%) 100% | 361 (35.2%) 100% | 238 (23.2%) 100% | 225 (21.9%) 100% | 1026 (100%) 100% |

Source of data: survey 'Experiences of Centralization of Culture in Serbia' (2022)

Overall, our findings suggest that a lack of cultural engagement is not primarily due to a lack of cultural offerings but rather due to the audience's traits. It appears that, due to a complex array of factors, a significant portion of the audience has become disengaged from cultural events in the public sphere, particularly those associated with highbrow culture. However, it should be noted that participation in popular and everyday cultural activities is also very low. This opens a question about the role of state programs aiming at cultural decentralization.

5. PROGRAMS OF THE MINISTRY OF CULTURE FOCUSED ON THE DECENTRALIZATION OF CULTURE

Since 2010, the Ministry of Culture has organized three programs aimed at contributing to the decentralization of culture in Serbia: 'Serbia in Serbia,' 'Cities in Focus,' and 'The Cultural Capital of Serbia.'

The 'Serbia in Serbia' program, realized during 2009 and 2010, was a kind of reaction to the report of the Commission for Decentralization of Culture in Serbia published in 2008. In that report, in addition to a series of suggestions for structural changes to the

⁸ The identification of classes and class fractions is based on a model outlined in texts by Cvetičanin et al. (2021). Using indicators of economic, political, social, and cultural capital, we applied a Multiple Correspondence Analysis to construct the social space in Serbia and identify four class fractions: the upper middle class, the lower middle class, the working class – temporary fraction and the working class – agricultural fraction (see Figure A1 in the Appendix).

cultural policy of Serbia, one of the less important measures⁹ was that a legal obligation should be instituted on national cultural institutions to present their programs and content to all the citizens of Serbia, that is, all those who finance them with their taxes. This would require national theatres, ballet companies, operas, and philharmonics to go on obligatory tours nationwide. This would contribute not only to the satisfaction of the existing cultural needs of the citizens of Serbia but also to their enrichment, as well as the development of new cultural habits.

The ‘Serbia in Serbia’ program, funded by the Ministry of Culture, allowed national cultural institutions to visit smaller cities in Serbia based on requests from local cultural institutions. The program, consisting of a sequence of one-time activities, was short-lived and had limited impact. Despite this, some of the people we interviewed had very positive opinions about the quality of the programs that were circulated and the positive impact they had on the cultural life in their local communities.

Unlike the ‘Serbia in Serbia’ program, which aimed to enhance the cultural offer by organizing visits from national cultural institutions, ‘Cities in Focus’ has focused on improving the cultural infrastructure, including objects and equipment, in smaller towns in Serbia. The program was launched in 2016 and is still ongoing. One notable aspect of this program is that applications are only accepted from units of the local self-government, such as cities and municipalities. The general goals of this program were defined as improvements in the field of culture and art in local communities, enriching cultural life, encouraging creativity and cultural diversity and the recognizable specificities of the cultural identity, and sustainable development of the local community.

As part of the ‘Cities in Focus’ program, to date, a total of 169 local government programs have been financed in the Republic of Serbia in seven open calls. In sum, 1,657,130,823 dinars or approximately 14,163,000 EUR were allocated to the improvement of working conditions of theatres, museums, galleries, libraries, as well as the state of cultural monuments, with a significant increase in the number of supported projects and the extent of funding from 2021 to 2023.

Table 10 – Projects financed within the ‘Cities in Focus’ program

| Year | No. of projects | Amount in RSD | Amount in EUR |
|--------------------------|-----------------|--------------------------|---------------------|
| 2016 | 6 | 151.763.442 RSD | 1.297.000 € |
| 2017 | 10 | 140.200.000 RSD | 1.198.000 € |
| 2018 | 22 | 150.000.000 RSD | 1.282.000 € |
| 2019 | 11 | 133.000.000 RSD | 1.137.000 € |
| 2020 | 22 | 83.400.000 RSD | 713.000 € |
| 2021 | 41 | 339.200.000 RSD | 2.899.000 € |
| 2022 | 35 | 345.517.381 RSD | 2.953.000 € |
| 2023 | 33 | 314,050,000 RSD | 2.684.000 € |
| Total 2016 - 2023 | 169 | 1.657.130.823 RSD | 14.163.000 € |

Source: Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Serbia (<https://kultura.gov.rs/konkursi/sr/30/2>)

⁹ The model on which national institutions in Scotland and Sweden function inspired the proposal – these institutions are national in the sense that they are constantly touring across the country, thereby rendering their program accessible to all the citizens in these two states.

‘The Cultural Capital of Serbia’ program was initiated in 2021, but its realization only began in 2023, with the selection of the City of Čačak as the first cultural capital of Serbia. This program is inspired by the European Capital of Culture initiative and aims to provide comprehensive yearly support to one local government in Serbia. The goal is to improve the key factors of cultural development, address structural issues in the cultural field, and enhance the quality of cultural life in the selected city. The program also aims to kick-start cultural, artistic, and tourist development in the region, revitalize existing cultural institutions, and promote new local cultural development strategies. A crucial aspect of the program is to ensure citizen and professional involvement in the development and implementation of cultural policies at the local government level.

As part of this program, over several years of preparation and realization, the selected ‘cultural capital of Serbia’ will place culture at the center of the strategic development of the city, not just in a cultural but also in an economic and social aspect. The prediction is that after the realization of the program, the legacy of the completed process will be clearly visible and that the long-term plan of development of the local community in the field of culture will continue. This would be enabled by adopting a Strategy of Cultural Development, which is one of the preconditions for obtaining the title. The idea was that the city that became the capital would also become the center of Serbia's artistic creation that same year, thereby gaining the opportunity to present everything that renders the local community authentic and appealing.

In the case of Čačak, the total value of the project was 500 million dinars (4,273,000 €). The contribution of the Ministry of Culture was 298.5 million dinars (2,551,000 €), and of the City of Čačak 201.5 million dinars (1,722,000 €). For the project ‘The Cultural Capital of Serbia’ in Užice in 2024, the Ministry of Culture allocated 294 million dinars (2,513,000 €), and the City of Užice 196 million dinars (1,675,000 €).

Viewed as a whole, none of these programs attempted to deal with the essential problems of the centralization of culture in Serbia or to apply any of the strategies of decentralization that were presented by Kawashima (2004). However, it would be a considerable mistake to undermine their significance completely.

The contribution of the ‘Cities in Focus’ program, which has been underway since 2016, to the improvement of the cultural infrastructure in smaller settlements in Serbia is significant and visible. The program ‘The Cultural Capital of Serbia’ has been completed in Čačak, and a report is expected in the first half of 2024, so it is not yet possible to assess the program's effects. It is possible that the city may face negative consequences similar to those experienced by the European Capital of Culture. Specifically, once the additional funding and media attention end, the city's cultural scene may revert to its previous unremarkable state. However, for medium-sized cities in Serbia, this is an incentive to begin viewing culture as a developmental resource and not just a luxury or source of pressure on humble city budgets.

Finally, it would be a good idea to continue the practice of visits from national cultural institutions to smaller settlements financed by the Ministry of Culture – which was the basis of the ‘Serbia in Serbia’ program. National cultural institutions are obliged to present their programs, first and foremost, due to the fact that their work is funded with the taxes paid by all the citizens of Serbia. Since they have different priorities, the activities of all three programs could jointly contribute to mitigating the sense of isolation of the cultural life in small or medium-sized towns and can represent an introduction to more concrete activities directed toward decentralizing culture in Serbia.

6. CONCLUDING REMARKS

Our study indicated the structural conditioning of the centralization of culture in Serbia. Although key structural causes of the centralization of culture in Serbia are to be found in the political or economic sphere, the territorial distribution of cultural institutions and organizations and the low level of resources available to local self-governments contribute to the centralization of culture. Another factor that contributes to the issue is the way the Ministry of Culture and the Provincial Secretariat for Culture distribute their budgets, as well as the allocation of funds through open calls organized by these state authorities. It has been observed that more than half of the funds are directed towards Belgrade and Novi Sad.

On the other hand, our research into cultural participation in Serbia in 2022 indicated that, irrespective of the significant differences in cultural provision, regional differences in cultural participation are small. In other words, the cultural needs, habits, and tastes of Serbian citizens are not predominantly influenced by their geographical location in the country. This led us to the provocative thesis that the level of cultural participation in Serbia depends more on the characteristics of the audience and less so on the characteristics of the cultural offer.

However, the finding that the scarce cultural offer in regions of Serbia outside of Belgrade and Novi Sad is not the factor primarily shaping cultural participation only at first sight removes responsibility from the creators of cultural policy. It is important to note that cultural needs, habits, and tastes are learned and not innate. The lack of diverse cultural needs, low level of cultural habits, and homogeneity of taste among the people of Serbia can be attributed to insufficient effort or misguided policies by the creators of cultural, educational, and, in particular, media content. Therefore, their task for the future is both to improve the cultural offer and to create an audience for it.

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INTERNET SOURCES

- Appendix 'Cultural Provision and Cultural Participation in the Centralized Cultural System in Serbia'
<https://figshare.com/s/ecdc630f7acb6dc9ac88>
- An electronic map of the cultural institutions and organizations in Serbia
<https://a3.geosrbija.rs/share/111135adf09a> (accessed in the period 2022 – 2024)
- Database E-kultura: <http://e-kultura.net/> (accessed in the period 2022 – 2024)
- Hartefact fund Culture for Democracy: <https://heartefact.org/fond/cfd/> (accessed on June 4th 2024)
- Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Serbia: <https://kultura.gov.rs/konkursi/sr/30/2> (accessed in the period 2015- 2024)
- Provincial Secretariat for Culture, Public Information, and Relations with Religious Communities:
<https://www.kultura.vojvodina.gov.rs/resenja-kultura/> (accessed in the period 2020 – 2024)
- Službeni glasnik Republike Srbije: <https://www.slglasnik.com/sluzbena-glasila/stampana-izdanja> (accessed in the period 2015 – 2024)
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(<https://popis2022.stat.gov.rs/en-US/popisni-podaci-eksel-tabele/>) – accessed on June 4th 2024)

KULTURNA PONUDA I KULTURNA PARTICIPACIJA U CENTRALIZOVANOM KULTURNOM SISTEMU SRBIJE

U ovom tekstu analizirali smo kulturnu ponudu i kulturnu participaciju u Srbiji, kao i mere koje preduzima Ministarstvo kulture usmerene na decentralizaciju kulture. Istraživanje kulturne ponude pokazalo je ogromne razlike u pogledu broja kulturnih institucija, organizacija i asocijacija u Beogradu, Novom Sadu i ostatku zemlje, kao i u pogledu finansijskih sredstava koja one dobijaju za redovne programe iz budžeta i kao donacije na konkursima. Kao ključan doprinos centralizaciji kulture u zemlji, identifikovano je postojanje 24 od 27 republičkih ustanova kulture u Beogradu, odnosno 14 od 17 vojvodanskih pokrajinskih institucija u Novom Sadu. Njihovi programi su uglavnom dostupni samo stanovnicima ovih gradova, iako se njihov rad finansira ogromnim sredstvima iz budžeta koje obezbeđuju iz poreza svi građani Srbije, odnosno Vojvodine. S druge strane, analize kulturne participacije pokazale su dominantno anti-elitistički karakter kulturnih potreba, veoma nizak nivo kulturnih navika i male regionalne razlike u kulturnim praksama. Ovaj prividno paradoksalni nalaz, da izrazita nejednakosti u kulturnoj ponudi nema veći uticaj na kulturnu participaciju – zato što se ona u svim delovima zemlje nalazi na veoma niskom nivou – predstavlja okvir za buduće strategije decentralizacije kulture u Srbiji.

Ključne reči: kulturna ponuda, kulturna participacija, decentralizacija u kulturi, Srbija.