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The Right to Culture or the Right to Develop Cultural Needs¹

Abstract: The paper examines the possibility of exercising the right to culture by meeting the needs in the field of culture within the institutional system in Serbia. The unclear definition of the right to culture and the assumption that cultural needs exist “per se” within public practical policies, leads to cause-and-effect mechanisms and systems that result in the decline in the interest of citizens for art and culture, and ultimately in an unexpressed and undeveloped need in the field of culture in a large number of citizens. In the second part of the paper, the results of the empirical research carried out in the Novi Sad theatres are presented, and they point out that a theatre with its cultural activities satisfies only the existing cultural needs. Such an arrangement of the institutional cultural system implies indirect discrimination against the rest of the population.

Keywords: right to culture, cultural needs, cultural policy, activities of the institutional cultural system, indirect discrimination

Introduction

Culture is one of the basic conditions of human’s dignified existence, so the formation of cultural values and their spread are prerequisites for preserving a particular human community. For these reasons, the right to culture is one of the basic human rights. Every study of cultural issues inevitably involves attempts to define the concept of culture, so to avoid adding another definition to that list, we

¹ The second section of this paper is part of the empirical research conducted in 2015 and 2016 in the Novi Sad theatres within the author’s doctoral dissertation titled *The Methodical Agents of Socialization: School, Theatre and the Media and their Impact on the Development of Interests of High School Students for Theatre* at the Faculty of Dramatic Arts in Belgrade

will only say that in the broad sense culture can be seen as the totality of human material and spiritual creations, and in the narrow sense as artistic creation. In this narrow sense, in the context of creativity, for the sake of operationalization for the purpose of this work, we will make a rough division of culture into elite (high) and mass (popular) culture.² The focus of this work is on the artistic creation that arises within the cultural activities of the institutional cultural system,³ which has always and traditionally been considered as “high” i.e. elite culture (Bourdieu, 1984; Burdije, 1978; Chan & Goldthorpe, 2005; 2007a; 2007b; Featherstone, 2007; Gans, 2008; Khan, 2012; Peterson, 1992). The dominant subjects of high culture are creators, but also critics and audience who share the standards of creators. Most often, these are highly educated individuals belonging to upper or upper-middle class. The difference between this and other cultures of taste is that its subjects pay particular attention to issues of form and content (construction of a cultural product), methods, overt and covert symbolism (Mrđa, 2016). The state (at the provincial or local government level) is the founder of a large institutional cultural system, an extensive network of cultural institutions across the country, financing or co-financing their work, and accordingly they (should) represent the most significant entity of cultural activity and the backbone of the cultural life of a community. By cultural life we mean: the total content, scope and form of cultural consumption and the presence of culture in everyday life (Mrđa, 2011b).

The cultural activities of the institutional system provide the most significant and extensive production of artistic creativity by which the state ensures the exercise of the right to culture by meeting the needs of citizens in the field of culture, and therefore the term “cultural activity” is the “central term of cultural policy” (Dragojević, 2006:40) “whose purpose are cultural life (current situation) and cultural development of society (a process of moving towards a projected future)” (Djukic, 2010:30). The basic question of this paper is, do all citizens of Serbia have equal opportunities to exercise their right to culture within the cultural activities of the institutional system in Serbia?

The right to culture, i.e. the right to participate in cultural life

² According to Herbert Gans, this division into elite culture (high taste) and mass culture (popular taste) is too simplistic. He proposes a taste typology that contains five tastes of cultures: high culture, upper-middle culture, lower-middle culture, low culture, and quasi-folk low culture, and these five taste types are primarily class-specific (Gans, 2008).

³ Within the cultural policies of the European Union, the cultural activities of the institutional system usually include the visual, musical, theatrical, literary, publishing, library, museum, archival and other activities. In the case of this work, Novi Sad theaters were taken as a case study.

The right to culture even today, after 70 years, is not fully defined. It was the most widely labelled and somewhat regulated for the first time in the United Nations *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* in 1948. Since then, many experts have repeatedly addressed this question in their theoretical works and they have tried to define its meaning. The attempt to determine the content of the right to culture in Paris in 1968 ended with the statement that the task is very complex because this right, more than all other rights, changes from situation to situation. So what is the right to culture and what are we, citizens, entitled to?

Serbia is bound by all the most important universal international human rights treaties. The Article 27 of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* states that: “everyone has the right to freely participate in the cultural life of the community, to enjoy the arts and to participate in scientific progress and in its benefits.” *The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights* (adopted in 1966, and entered into force in 1976) was ratified in 1971 at the time of the former SFRY.⁴ in its Article 15 states that: “The member states of this Covenant recognize the right to participate in cultural life; (...) The member states of this Covenant have an obligation to take all necessary measures to ensure the full exercise of this right and all the necessary measures to ensure the preservation, development and dissemination of science and culture.”⁵ (*European Declaration on Cultural Objectives*, 1984) calls on togetherness in promotion of the cultural participation and in taking democratic actions in the community for the benefit of the community. *The Fribourg Declaration of Cultural Rights* (2007) also highlights the importance of participation. The Article 5 of this Declaration discusses the access and participation in cultural life, whereby every individual has the right to freely participate in cultural life through the activities of their own choice.

In recent years, additional efforts have been made to clarify the implications of the right to culture, the most recent from 2010 by the United Nations Independent Expert on Cultural Rights, for whom “the cultural rights are key to the recognition and respect of human dignity (...) and they include important freedoms related to identity issues” (Baltà & Dragičević Šešić,

⁴ Following the changes in October 2000, the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia issued a succession statement at the United Nations concerning the re-accession to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights on March 12nd, 2001. <http://www.ljudskaprava.gov.rs/sh/node/19967>

⁵ It is important to emphasize that citizens in Serbia are prevented from filing individual petitions before the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, since Serbia has not ratified the Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

2017: 160-161). In spite of all the efforts, it seems that the determination of the right to culture floats in the haze scattered in the tiny pieces of a puzzle that, even if we manage to assemble it, doesn't get a clear picture. We find the same observations in many recent works (Blake, 2014; Campagna, 2017; Clammer, 2018; Ivey, 2008; Koivunen and Marsio, 2007; Laaksonen, 2010; Pascual, 2017; Shaver, 2009; Vickery, 2018), and it is not coincidence that the cultural rights are, due to "their vague content", called "the Cinderella" of human rights" (Baltà & Dragicevic Šešić, 2017: 160).

In the case of Serbia, the right to culture, i.e. the participation in cultural life, has received some normative support through the guarantee of basic human rights, where the right to culture is not explicitly stated. *The Constitution of the Republic of Serbia* (2006) guarantees the freedom of scientific and artistic creativity, and the state encourages and aids the development of science, culture and art (The Article 73). The Republic of Serbia regulates and provides a system in the field of culture, as well as a system of public services (The Article 97) where all cultural institutions belong. *The Law on Culture* (2009) also does not explicitly address the participation of citizens in cultural life. The Article 22 defines that cultural institutions are established for the purpose of performing cultural activities that ensure the realization of citizens' rights, that is, meeting the needs of citizens in the field of culture.

Apart from specifying activities, these international documents do not define what is meant by "participation in cultural life" nor does the national legal framework define the term "citizen's needs in the field of culture." The term "participation", first of all, implies an active attitude towards the cultural creativity and cultural life of the community by the audience and the citizens and, by its definition, cultural life should, by definition, be organized by facilitating cultural reception (Djukic, 2010). Cultural participation includes "cultural production" and "cultural consumption" activities.

Cultural production refers to an amateur or professional pursuit of the arts or creative hobbies, while cultural consumption means "cultural reception" which is consumed by attending cultural events (public cultural reception) and cultural reception taking place through the media and at the recipient's home (private cultural reception) (Morrone, 2006). It is important to emphasize that cultural participation does not necessarily achieve a cultural reception, unless the sender and recipient have a common communication code and the recipient does not pay attention to the content and form of communication. Within his theory of practice, Burdije points out that "an individual has a limited and definite ability to understand the information that a play offers him, the ability that depends on his

general knowledge (and it depends on his education and background), a generic code of the kind of message that is in question” (Burdije, 1978: 10–11).

Cultural participation, therefore, can take place in different places and be transmitted through different channels of communication if there is a need (we can also say: motive, desire, interest, incentive, driving force, impulse) for this kind of participation, so now we are really talking about “the needs of citizens in the field of culture.” “Cultural needs are the needs that a person achieves as a being different from all others (...) by which a person develops his/her personality.” (Dragicevic Sesic & Stojkovic, 2007: 22)

They are a motive for participation in cultural activities and “represent a part of human motivation structure – these are aspirations that are satisfied through symbolic communication” ((Cvetičanin i Milankov, 2011: 7). According to Nemanjic, that need “inspired by cultural production, forms itself as cultural interest related with cultural value” (1991: 23). Cultural needs are extremely complex needs of higher levels and their development takes place in the process of socialization under the influence of many factors. They arise through initiation and development of interest for arts (Dragin, 2016). The development of cultural needs requires a stimulating social environment, education, continuous and meaningful contact with art, especially during childhood and adolescence, but also throughout life. Do Serbian citizens have such needs and to what extent? Do cultural and other public practical policies provide citizens with a stimulating environment in which they can develop cultural needs? These questions are answered by numerous studies on the cultural habits, needs and practices of Serbian citizens,⁶ suggesting that a large number of citizens rarely or never participate in the cultural life of the community; that they have scarce knowledge of artists and works of art and that passionate participants in cultural life are only 1 to 2% of people, for most of the observed cultural activities. This means that the vast majority of Serbian citizens remain outside the reach of existing cultural policy measures (Cveticanin and Milankov, 2011).

According to Claude Molar, for cultural participation, first we need

⁶ See: Cveticanin, P. *Cultural Needs, Habits and Taste of Citizens of Serbia and Macedonia*, Committee on Citizens' Initiative, Nis, 2007; Cveticanin, P. and M. Milankov. 2011. *Cultural practices of Serbian citizens*. Belgrade: Institute for the Study of Cultural Development; Mrđa, S. 2011a. *Cultural life and needs of secondary school students in Serbia*. Belgrade: Institute for the Study of Cultural Development; Mrđa, S. 2011b. *Students' cultural life and needs in Serbia*. Belgrade: Institute for the Study of Cultural Development; Subasic B. and B. Opacic. 2013. *Values and cultural activism of high school graduates in Serbia*. Belgrade: Institute for the Study of Cultural Development; Milankov M. and B. Opacic. 2012. *The culture of aging and the old in culture*. Belgrade: Institute for the Study of Cultural Development.

creators of cultural and artistic content (offering) and audience (recipients of those contents), and then decision makers, who should create the conditions in which it takes place (Molar, 2010). Although it speaks of all the actors of this process “the law, actually, focused attention on creators, primarily cultural institutions” (Stojanovic, 2016: 86). The law does not include the terms “recipient” or “audience”, except explicitly stating “meeting the needs of citizens in the field of culture”, which means that cultural policy does not question cultural needs and it implies that they certainly exist “by themselves” for all citizens.⁷

In this way, a system was created in which (high) culture and artistic creativity are indisputably accessible. Theoretically all citizens are equally able to “freely participate in cultural life, to enjoy the arts” (Universal Declaration of Human Rights) and to meet their cultural needs (the Constitution and the Law on Culture); more precisely, to exercise their cultural rights. In practice, it is completely different and the question is whether open dialogue is possible on indirect, “covert”, discrimination against a large population in the context of the exercise of the right to culture?

The Anti-Discrimination Practicum explains that indirect discrimination is based on the idea that persons in different life positions should be treated differently to the extent necessary to allow them equal access to social goods and equal opportunities for the enjoyment of rights and freedoms. In accordance with this idea, when prescribing specific rules, setting criteria, conditions, requirements, etc. (which applies to all), one should take into account the position in which certain groups of persons are in because of some of their personal characteristics.

If this is neglected, then this rule, criterion, condition, requirement, etc. is discriminatory because it produces a clearly unfavourable effect on some groups. In indirect discrimination, it seems that the treatment is based on the principles of equality and non-discrimination, and only when looking at the consequences, can one see that equal treatment puts a person or group of persons at a disadvantage over another person or group of persons simply because of their personal characteristics. The list of personal characteristics listed in the Anti-Discrimination Law is quite exhaustive and, which is especially important, that list is not closed, thus allowing that discriminatory behaviour based on a personal characteristic, but not explicitly stated in the law, can also be characterized as unequal treatment. A presumed personal characteristic is a personal trait that a

⁷ The analysis of strategic state documents in the field of education, especially the rules on the curriculum for high school students, also „implies“ the existence of cultural needs.

person does not have, but the discriminator considers (believes) that the person has that personal trait.⁸

Meeting the cultural needs (theatre) in Serbia

The institution of culture in focus of the research (parts of which are presented in this paper) is theatre, and the target group of citizens whose “cultural needs” theatre needs to meet is high school students. For the purpose of the research, the work of three theatres in Novi Sad was analysed: the Serbian National Theatre (SNT), the Youth Theatre (YT) and the Novi Sad Theatre/Újvidéki Színház (NT). Theatre management relies on cultural policy and alignment of the process of creation, diffusion, and reception with legal regulations, by implementing public practical policy in the field of culture. SNT, YT and NT (as well as other theatres in Serbia), except for some regulated administrative and legal action, have almost no clear instructions, guidelines, frameworks, indications, suggestions, recommendations, short or long-term development plans or strategies as a basis upon which to shape their business in order to meet the needs of citizens in the field of theatrical art. The management of the theatre is “completely left to itself” (Djukic, 2004–2005: 419) and the executives have absolute freedom in determining the program orientation.

In order to determine the programmatic orientation of these theatres and insights into the attitude towards the high school population as a special target group, an analysis (qualitative method) of the work plans and development programs (WPDP) of the directors of these theatres and the statutes of the theatres was conducted; structured interviews were also conducted with employees of the aforementioned institutions.⁹

The mission of the analysis was to find out whether the programs implemented by these institutions are adequate for high school students and whether this program affects the development of their interest in the theatre arts. The research starts from the fact that a large number of high school students in Serbia very rarely or never visit the theatres and that the most common reason for that is the lack of interest (Mrđa, 2011a).

⁸ <http://www.ravnopravnost.gov.rs/wp-content/download/Praktikum.pdf>

⁹ In the case of the SNT, we spoke with then-manager, Aleksandar Milosavljevic, and the assistant of program manager, Ljubinka Gvozdenovic. Concerning the city theaters, in the case of the NT we spoke with the director, Valentin Vencel, while in the case of the YT we interviewed Ivana Cvejanov, who is employed as a stage organizer. Director Emilija Mrdaković did not explicitly refuse the interview, however, over the course of several months, she was unable to find the time or to answer our questions in written form via e-mail.

From the point of view of the cultural mission, the SNT emerged in 1861 as a national institution tasked with transmitting the Serbian language and history through the performing arts, awakening national consciousness and raising the cultural level of Serbs, with the aim of being the headquarters of the cultural community of the Serb community within the former multinational monarchy. The founders of the SNT have assumed that, if the theatre provides the basic conditions to educate the people about theatre and through theatre, it will have the power to create “healthy” societies in which morale, education, good taste, conscience and tradition are of dominant value. Although these words are in the SNT Statute, A. Milosavljevic, in his 2009 WPDP says that the context of this mission needs to be rephrased in the way “to give up the tedious platitudes about the theatre guardian of national values and the rampart defending Cyrillic alphabet and Serbian language”, and defines the SNT mission as following:

“SNT’s artistic mission is to represent the greatest and the most significant achievements of the national drama, opera and ballet art playing classics, but also to affirm local writers, composers and choreographers (by making powerful stage spectacles and also less demanding productions on the domestic and foreign stages), our best actors, opera and ballet soloists and ensembles, as well as other theatre makers – set designers, costume designers, light and sound designers.”

With a mission defined like this, the SNT manager points out that the national theatre should give up its educational function and that, through the transformation and production of the powerful, lesser or greater, spectacles, should solely strive to achieve the highest artistic achievements. In the focus of such aspirations is the institution itself, and its primary function and production is an elite culture aimed at an elite audience.

Talking about animation projects and education policy, SNT management argues that theatre, as art, is something that requires knowledge and broadness from the audience, in advance. Asked if the National Theatre should educate the audience in order to develop an interest in theatre, A. Milosavljevic categorically stated that “it must, and therefore it is subsidized”, and that SNT does that especially through the play “*Seagull*” which is “absolutely adequate” for high school age¹⁰ and added: “(...) I cannot be concerned by youth theatre when we have a play

¹⁰ The play *Seagull*, directed by Tomi Janezic, lasts about 6 and a half hours, including three breaks.

that has been proclaimed as one of the best at the moment” (*The Bridge on the Drina*).

Regarding the possible educational programs for high school students, Ljubinka Gvozdenovic responded that the SNT “has no educational character in terms of special education of any age, its educational role is the very essence of theatrical creativity, and these programs should be conducted by the schools themselves, or by some other institutions.” Asked if the SNT has access to available research which shows that a large number of this population is uninterested in theatre, she said: “The SNT has no need to look at research, because it has its own repertoire and a large part of that repertoire represents plays based on literary or musical works.” In the context of this response, it is useful to mention a “scandal”¹¹ that occurred in SNT during the performance of *Antigone*, the play which was a part of the 2014 *School Reading in the Theatre* project, which aimed at organized visits of a large number of high school students to the theatre. Although *Antigone* is a part of the school's editorial, this work has proven to be inadequate for today's high school population, especially not for students of specialized high schools. The idea behind the project is initially good but the lack of knowledge and understanding of the work, interest in the work and the theatre, and finally the lack of cultural needs caused a counter-effect and total resentment of young people.

In the case of YT, we can say that it is completely disorienting in its program. The very name “Youth Theatre” clearly indicates a program that should be created at this institution but it has only programs for young children and adults. Analysing the WPDP of the director E. Mrdakovic, in the very introduction, we find that “YT is a unique art institution in Novi Sad, whose main goal is to make plays for children of all ages, but since it has an “evening” scene, YT defines its purpose and shapes its image in a natural way – as the THEATRE FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE.”

For E. Mrdakovic the mission of this theatre is:

“Promoting of activities through development of trust and friendly relationships between YT, media, audience and other target groups. Preserving of puppetry art, on which YT is based. Developing contemporary drama theatre for children and young people. Turning this institution into the CITY THEATRE CENTER for children and young people through attractive, educational, interactive, modern programs. Facilitating collaboration with similar provenance theatres from around the world and in the region.”

If we start from the fact that a cultural institution exists to meet the

¹¹ <http://www.intermagazin.rs/skandal-u-novom-sadu-daci-dovikivali-glumcima-tokom-predstave-church-and-you-want-to-die-more/> (accessed 27 March 2019).

cultural needs of citizens, the mission defined in this way completely displaces the audience from the focus of the theatre and highlights the institution itself. In terms of program orientation, E. Mrdakovic in her WPDP says that, in the creation of the repertoire, the focus will be on “diversity, criticism toward the society, overcoming taboos, discovering new talents (...) and that the theatre will respect the age levels of the audience when creating the repertoires for the youngest, for schoolchildren, for teenagers and for young people.”

Two years later, when asked about the structure of the repertoire, I. Cvejanov replied that “neither in the children's nor in the dramatic scene is the repertoire defined either by genre, by target audience, or by the artistic and organizational capacity of the ensemble” and that the parameters on which the decision to produce a new play were made are “personal decision of the director and/or artistic director.” When asked about the mission, vision and goals of YT, I. Cvejanov gave the following answer:

“Mission, goals and vision are united by one term – inertia. There is no well-designed and articulated development strategy and no competent management structure which, if not designed, would at least recognize and support one's vision, mission and goals. In the practice, during the last 17 years, as far as I am in theatre, management and leadership are spontaneous and subordinated to the goals, appetites and interests of the governing structure.”

I. Cvejanov confirms that YT does not have a specific strategy for the high school population, and that there is no specific program for them.

When asked what the mission of the NT is, V. Vencel said that it is: “The improvement of Hungarian, minority theatre and development of Hungarian culture in general.” This theatre was created in 1974 with the idea to help preserve the cultural identity of Hungarians in Vojvodina, however, on the official website of the theatre, it is said that the address of this theatre became very quickly: “A place where some much more serious and complex theatrical stories were growing [...] Over time, this theatre has become, not only a gathering place for the Hungarian elite, but it transcended the Hungarian framework, and today it is considered one of the most relevant theatrical addresses in Serbia and in the region.”

As a candidate for NT director, in 2013, V. Vencel proposed a WPDP that was sharply condemned by “more than 20 intellectuals” and judged to be “substantially ignorant of the profile of this house, the ensemble’s potential, and the position that this theatre has in Serbian and

Hungarian theatre life.”¹²

The journalist, critic and connoisseur of the art theatre scene, Teofil Pancic, called the appointment of Vencel as the manager of this theatre “a dishonourable thing” and described his program as a “vulgarisation” and “attempted murder” of this art house, which is “an institution and as an artistic “drive” so far above the mediocrity standards of “the environment” (in every sense of the word) that it should be keep like little water on palm, taking care not to spoil something by accident.”¹³

For Pancic, V. Vencel’s program is adequate “for the broad folk – certainly Hungarian - masses, the one for the beautifully coiffured “aunties” from Telep and the moustached “uncles” from Gombosh, something in the Healthy Hungarian National Spirit, something to laugh ho-ho-ho, jumping of and banging on the knee with your hands and then dancing in the folk costumes with a hosszúlépés...”, but it is not for the artistic, elite, sophisticated audience of this cosmopolitan theatre. The reason we quote this statement of a theatre critic, a member of a jury of theatre festivals and an intellectual, is the question: Why are the broad masses unworthy of theatre and why do they deserve such an offensive tone? Didn’t the Hungarian philosopher and literary critic György Lukács said that the goal of the drama is – acting on the masses? The basis for the idea of theatre as an invaluable merit of a society was founded by the philosopher and playwright Denis Diderot long before Lukács. Diderot believed that theatre could be an extremely powerful tool of the enlightenment only if the government of a country would be able to use it.

On the basis of this a question arises: Aren’t some future “coiffured aunties and moustached uncles” the same modern Novi Sad high school students who are, mostly, not interested in theatre and don’t visit it? Are they unworthy of theatre then? The law requires theatre to carry out cultural activities that ensure the realization of citizens’ cultural rights, that is, to satisfy citizens’ needs. Who are these “citizens” to whom this Law guarantees the right and opportunity for culture and because of them establishes theatres? From whose money are created the funds for theatres, after all? Is it the money of the broad masses or just an elite who does not consider themselves part of that mass?

¹² <http://www.autonomija.info/da-li-ce-ujvideki-sinhaz-i-dalje-biti-odlicno-pozoriste.html> (pristupljeno 12.02.2019).

¹³ Text by Teofil Pancic in TIME magazine: „*The case of the Novi Sad Theatre: The attempted murder is ongoing*“
<http://www.vreme.com/cms/view.php?id=1132980&print=yes> (accessed 12/02/2019)

The analysis of the controversial WPDP of today's NT manager, instead of a list of plays for the masses, provides insight into the real reasons behind the tumultuous reaction of the theatre and the wider intellectual elite, which is a call for open dialogue about the problem as it is. In it, Vencel speaks about "hermetism in the treatment of dramatic works", about "imposing the directors goals which deny the profile of the theatre", about "artistic distinctiveness that, in some projects, hinders both professional reception and reception by the audience" and about that "the elitism is the biggest pitfall in the further development of theatre". In terms of program orientation, V. Vencel notes that this theatre has struggled for years to fulfil its own type of definition – is it a chamber-theatre exploring model or a national theatre? Asked about the structure of the repertoire and the basic parameters for deciding on the production of a new play, V. Vencel said: "Honestly? The structure is designed to accommodate - if possible - all members of the theatre's external staff." He claimed that contemporary theatre has renounced its educational function and that theatre for "adults" does not want to teach or educate. In the case of the target group that is in the focus of this research, Vencel says that "the NT seeks to do something in the segment of young people who are interested in theatre under the slogan "performances for young people and adults", and that certain projects have been created.

Conclusion

The purpose of the existence of an institutional cultural system is to exercise citizens' rights to culture and to meet their cultural needs. In practice, this does not happen. A case study on theatres in Novi Sad proves that cultural institutions are striving to create ever greater artistic achievements, which is intended for critics, festivals and applause of regular audience with developed cultural needs and that only represents 1-2% of the population. Theatres are de facto pursuing cultural policy because it does not require an activity to initiate and develop the cultural needs of citizens, but only one that meets existing cultural needs. Dragojevic says that one of the key tasks of any cultural policy is to determine what is meant by cultural needs, to determine their scope and quality, and to put them subsequently in relation to cultural politics and cultural life. However, almost every cultural policy leaves the issue of cultural needs open, as it otherwise poses a double risk:

“Too rigid in determining the tastes, desires and behaviours of the population in relation to cultural activities; and, at the same time, too precise in defining of cultural goals that often cannot be

fulfilled and which can significantly reduce its resilience and dynamism. Hence, the great number of cultural policies bypasses this issue focusing mainly on cultural supply, demand and consumption.” (Dragojevic, 2006: 48)

However, despite “superficiality and omissions” of cultural policy, directors i.e. managers of cultural institutions should know that “research and knowledge of cultural needs, but also of social behaviour, is one of the basic tasks of cultural managers, mainly in order to be able to plan cultural activities and programs (meet cultural needs), but also to plan for cultural development (stimulating the development of new cultural needs or expanding the circle of people who will have richer and more diverse cultural aspirations) (Dragicevic-Sesic & Stojkovic, 2007: 22); but this is another topic that goes beyond the scope of this paper. What is particularly worrying is that, even if a particular institution emerges with some idea of developing citizens` interest in the arts through “adapted” programs and establishing communication with the non-public, as it was the case with the NT, such idea would be sharply condemned by intellectual elite.

For many years, we have witnessed unofficial written or spoken declarations on culture, but with a deeper reflection and understanding of society, (not only Serbian), in the cultural, sociological and historical context, it seems that it is a different arrangement almost impossible. There have been various attempts since the late 18th century democratic movements to make the results of the progress of human society and human civilization (in the technical, economic and cultural field) accessible to most peoples. The cultural needs themselves are, as already stated, of a very complex nature, because we are talking about the needs for that high or at least upper-middle culture, and such culture (in turn) requires education and stimulating environmental conditions, which in most cases are provided exclusively by the family. This, seemingly conciliatory, tone comes from the insight of a classical sociological study that, according to Gans, is based on two values. The first says that popular culture expresses the aesthetic and other needs of many people, making it a culture; and the second, that all people have a right to the culture they choose, whether it is high or popular (Gans, 2008)

This is indeed an indisputable, but the question to which citizens are devoted the works of institutional culture, remains open and also the issue of indirect discrimination. The citizens of Serbia are in different positions, they have diametrically different personal characteristics and, accordingly, the requirements made toward cultural institutions, in terms of cultural activities, must be different. Failure to do so makes it impossible for all citizens to have equal access to the creation of cultural institutions and prevent them to exercise the rights to culture.

Through cultural policy, the state can start processes that will, in the future, bring a positive change in the current situation, but the question is whether

it wants to do that. An innovative method of cultural policy could be the precise definition of cultural needs, followed by precise instructions and tasks for the management of cultural institutions to act towards the development of such needs, the requirement for artistic creativity that would be in the function of developing an interest in the arts; the requirement that candidates for the position of director of institutions must have a university degree in cultural management. Of course, such a task goes beyond the cultural sector, where it would be necessary to include a significant number of other sectors and launch comprehensive cultural action at the national level. There is every chance that this will not happen in the near future.

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