



**UNIVERZITET U BEOGRADU
INSTITUT ZA FILOZOFIJU I DRUŠTVENU TEORIJU**

✉ 11000 Beograd □ Narodnog fronta 45 □ P.fah 605 ☎ (+381) (011) 3613-856 □ 3613-859 □ 3618-187 □
3614-782 □ 642-955 □ Fax 646-242 <http://www.instifdt.bg.ac.yu> E-mail: institut@instifdt.bg.ac.yu

**INTEGRATION AND TRADITION
Research Project**

I. Background

A. The crucial problem of the transformation of societies in most South East European countries concerns the possibilities for their political, legal, economic and cultural integration in the European community. If integration is to be successful, several questions ought to be answered:

- Which elements of particular traditions are a potential for a successful integration into the European community?
- How can successful integration be achieved while at the same time preserving particular traditions?

B. Answering these questions demands comparative examination of structure of traditions in particular countries and their relation to modalities of cultural integration in the European community. The case of Serbia/Yugoslavia is highly instructive in this respect. For one thing, its society is multi-ethnic and multi-cultural, which means that cultural pluralism has been one of its defining features for centuries already. While in the recent period, marked by the disintegration of former Yugoslavia through a bloody civil war, this cultural pluralism has mostly appeared as cause for antagonism and conflict, our historical heritage also contains an important strand of coexistence, intermixing and cooperation between various communities. This strand, we believe, should be uncovered and revived, with a view to facilitating integration processes at the level of the country, the region, and Europe. This integrative aspect is especially crucial at the present moment, when all the wars are over and the country has set onto the course of stabilization and democratic reconstruction.

Several reasons could be adduced in favor of this view:

- In the society of Serbia/Yugoslavia several traditions have long been coexisting. Examining the possibilities and modes of internal integration of different traditions while at the same time preserving their peculiar features would be an important step in projecting broader integrations in the region.
- Different traditions in Serbia/Yugoslavia are not isolated, but rather connected with traditions of neighboring countries, thanks to historical processes of ethnic and cultural mingling characteristic of this region. Spreading across state borders, traditions could be an important factor of regional integration.
- Under the influence of multiple historical, cultural and political factors South East European countries, including Serbia/Yugoslavia, have appropriated and

made their own many elements of Central and West European traditions, while preserving their own specific features. This fact can be a starting point for projecting European integration along with preservation of one's own traditions.

C. This Project starts from the assumption that *traditions* are not mutually exclusive and that certain modes of *integration* are a prerequisite for their preservation. Successful integration implies respect for and preservation of the peculiar features of particular traditions, enhancing mutual enrichment and synthesis. Searching for feasible ways of achieving such a synthesis, it is necessary to bear in mind that cultural traditions are not unitary but involve various levels that should be analyzed in their own right. This refers to religious, legal-political, linguistic, artistic, and literary dimensions, as well as the dimension of everyday practices. This internal pluralism contains important potentials for for a successful internal, regional, and European integration.

II. Project Structure

In the conditions of social crisis, as is the case in Serbia/Yugoslavia, the shaping of the public opinion and thereby also of the self-understanding of members of particular traditions depends to a considerable extent on political factors. Political action, on the other hand, often relies on the available theoretical discourse on crucial social issues. It is the intention of this Project to influence public policy by way of enhancing the inclusiveness of available public discourse on extant cultural traditions in our society, stressing their integrative potentials. Hence the following structure of the Project:

1. Theoretical presuppositions of the relation between integration and tradition;
2. Political implications of the relation between internal, regional and European integration of traditions in Serbia/Yugoslavia.

III. Project Results

- a. Organization of Conference *Integration and Tradition*
- b. Collection of papers presented at the Conference, to be distributed to representatives of local communities
- c. Round tables with political representatives of local communities on the issues of integration and tradition
- d. Media presentation (Internet, newspapers and reviews, television, radio) of the conference, collection of papers, empirical research results, and round tables.

IV. Project Objectives

The Project has several basic objectives:

- to undertake an inter-disciplinary examination of possibilities for peaceful coexistence and integration of different traditions;
- to articulate the possibility for preserving the peculiarities of different traditions in integration processes;
- to examine comparatively the experiences of societal transformation in the region with respect to striking a balance between tradition and integration;

- to influence public opinion in the direction of overcoming exclusiveness between different traditions, by way of public presentation of conference papers and round table conclusions;
- to influence indirectly the formation of practical commitments in the direction of integration of society in Serbia/Yugoslavia;
- to influence indirectly the formation of practical commitments favorable to the inclusion of Serbian/Yugoslav society in integrative processes in the region and in Europe.

V. Project Bearer

The Project will be realized by the Institute for Philosophy and Social Theory, Belgrade. The Institute has had wide experience in conducting similar projects and cooperating successfully with numerous foundations and institutions, such as the Fund for an Open Society, Freedom House, Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, University of Pittsburgh, etc.

Apart from the fact that associates of the Institute are prominent scholars, some of them are leaders of democratic parties in Serbia, protagonists of democratic changes and key personalities of the political life in the country (President of FRY - Dr Vojislav Koštunica, senior research fellow; Chairman of the Federal Assembly Chamber of Citizens – Prof. Dragoljub Mićunović; Premier of the Serbian Government – Dr Zoran Đinđić, senior research fellow). In addition, numerous members of the Institute have been the founders of various associations and are important public personalities contributing to the development of democracy and the autonomy of civil society (Professor Svetozar Stojanović; Professor Zagorka Golubović; Dr Vesna Pešić, senior research fellow – the founder of the Center for Anti-War Action and the Civic Alliance of Serbia; Professor Nebojša Popov; Professor Božidar Jakšić, and others).

VI. Timing

1. Preparations for the Conference: March-November 2002
2. Holding of the Conference: November 2002
3. Publication of the collective volume and the study: May 2003
4. Distribution of the collection of papers to local communities: May-June 2003
5. Round tables with representatives of local communities: September-December 2003.

Project Coordinator
 Director of Institute for
 Philosophy and Social Theory
Dr Mile Savić

