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**VALUE ORIENTATIONS  
OF SECONDARY SCHOOL  
STUDENTS IN SERBIA**

**2019.  
RESEARCH**

**MARIJA RADOMAN**



Helsinki Committee  
for Human Rights in  
Serbia

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**MARIJA RADOMAN**

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Author

*Marija Radoman*

Publishers

*Helsinki Committee for Human Rights in Serbia*

*Institute for Sociological Research, Faculty of Philosophy, Belgrade*

Reviewers

*Dr Jelena Pešić, Faculty of Philosophy, Belgrade*

*Dr Dragan Stanojević, Faculty of Philosophy, Belgrade*

*Dr Jelena Božilović, Faculty of Philosophy, Niš*

*Dr Miloš Jovanović, Faculty of Philosophy, Niš*

Translated by

*Spomenka Grujičić*

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*Ivan Hrašovec*

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# I INTRODUCTION

This publication analyzes Serbia's secondary school students' statements and value orientations. Interviewees participating in this survey were 17–18 years of age, coming from generations born after the October 5, 2000 change of the regime in Serbia. The survey focused on students' values and statements on gender issues, abortion, homophobia, ecology, nationalism, Roma minority, as well as on the past and the 1990s wars on ex-Yugoslav territory, and analyzed how deep rooted those statements were among this population. The purpose was to gauge possible changes in statements in comparison with findings of the survey conducted in 2011.<sup>1</sup> The compared findings of the two surveys results in major information about the values characteristic of this age group. The survey was conducted on a sample of 866 interviewees in five towns in Serbia: Belgrade, Novi Pazar, Niš, Kragujevac and Novi Sad.

Asking the same questions about the same issue today, ten years later, and seeing whether anything has changed young people's minds is most interesting. Namely, findings of the 2011 survey showed that secondary school students were tending towards stereotypes, especially about LGBT population, that their statements on patriarchy were moderate and that they displayed animosity for other ethnic groups (Roma, Albanians, Croats) usually distrusted by people over here. Such statements mostly derive from deep-rooted traditionalism of the entire society, while their nationalistic orientation, homophobia and opposition to gender equality are often in the same package as parts of a shared ideological matrix. When it comes to a change in mainstream value patterns – a change manifesting a change in the society as a whole – it should be noted that values, unlike norms established by the system, depend not only on the existing system of social relations but also on longstanding historical facts – tradition (Lazić, 2011). Our intent was to see in what way young people's values have changed in a short period of time (eight years) and whether we can speak now about some major changes in value perceptions of post-October generations this study is focused on.

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1 *Stavovi i vrednosne orijentacije srednjoškolaca u Srbiji* (Radoman, 2011), available at <https://www.helsinki.org.rs/serbian/doc/sveske31.pdf>





## II CONTEXT OF THE SURVEY

### Social conditions

According to sociological analyses, over past several decades the Serbian society has gone through the following period of systemic changes: the period of “a blocked transformation” that lasted till the end of the 1990s and, as of 2001 the period of “a political U-turn” and “democratic government” marked by hasty process of unblocking post-socialist transformation (Lazić, Cvejić, 2004).

“Over the two decades of the 21st century transformation processes in Serbia have been characterized by a deep socioeconomic and political crisis” (Petrović, Radoman, 2019: 39), caused not only by the global economic crisis but also domestic structural processes. Namely, the beginning of a transition period is followed by a fall of economic production and a rise of the financial sector, and growing unemployment and poverty (Lazić, 2011: 135). Besides, the war, inter-ethnic conflicts and sanctions that have additionally slowed down transition processes after the fall of socialism are not to be neglected. However, not even after 2000 marking the period of “normalization,” consolidation of the political system, the rule of law, decline of the gray market and the growth of GNP and better financial situation of middle classes, can we speak about some significant mobility of social strata and society of equal rights for everyone (according to economic indicators, the same as in other post-socialist countries, the growth of market economy was followed by growing inequalities between social groups, Lazić, 2011:153). The idea that after the fall of socialism, social transformation will be following the path towards market-oriented and liberal-democratic society was just “a type of ideological consciousness that is more and more questioned” (Lazić, 1994:6). Other authors also alert of inequalities – naimely, the system market by “neo-liberal transitional strategy devoid of social responsibility” (Mitrović, 2019:26) resulted in economic and social havoc that placed Serbia on the list of dependent countries in the periphery of the capitalist system.<sup>2</sup>

2 An optimal model of transition, modernization and development is closely connected with social-democracy. Unfortunately, Anglo-Saxon model of neoliberal transition that

The political elite played a major, though not a crucial role in systemic changes – capitalism was established under the strong influence from abroad, Lazić, 2011.<sup>3</sup> After the fall of Milošević's regime and the so-called democratic changes, most political elites that are today in power were in opposition. And yet, today's regime's economic program differs not from the one adopted by the preceding, "democratic" regime: it is just a follow-up of neo-liberal policy.

In this context, systemic changes in the past couple of decades brought about devastation of public services such as healthcare or education (they were commodified, i.e. turned into commodities), the state's withdrawal from the domain of welfare and the fall in standards of living, whereas privatization of social enterprises only further undermined the set of labor and pension rights (Vukša, Simović, 2015). As we have been witnessing over the past couple of years, such state of affairs has been cemented through legislation – latest amendments of a set of laws (Labor Law, Law on Pension and Disability Security and Law on Employment Agencies)<sup>4</sup> undermined the situation of the majority of population. Besides, environment has been impaired and is at risk of getting even worse. According to Serbia's Bureau of Statistics, poverty rate in 2017 was 25.5 percent, meaning that poverty hovers over one-fourth of citizens. The data in 2018 indicate a bit lower poverty rate – 24.3 percent.

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has destroyed the social state predominates in today's world, in Europe and in post-socialist societies of the Balkans. As they have uncritically implemented the said model, these societies are in transitional chaos now, and undergo deep economic crises and suffer social losses (Mitrović, 2019:21).

- 3 Till mid-1990s political and economic elites have overlapped to a certain extent, given that the political elite of the socialist era has converted its power into economic capital. However, this new, still emerging economic elite was at odds with Milošević and the then system, as it wanted to have its capital protected in a different social system and at a better regulated market (Lazić, 2011: 185).
- 4 A set of laws, including amendments adopted in 2014 and 2015, additionally deteriorated working conditions in Serbia. The alleged purpose of the amendment to the Labor Law was to have it adjusted to EU standards and international legislature, to create a better atmosphere for foreign investment and improve the employment rate; however, in reality the same law has legalized flexible forms of labor (mostly uncertain jobs) and exploitation such as unpaid overtime, arbitrary distribution of workplaces, night work, night shifts, etc. (Reljanović, et.al. 2016).

Poverty risk index in the countries in Europe's periphery in the period 2008–16 shows that as many as 43.1 percent of people in Serbia are at risk of poverty (2014); and, although this percentage is smaller in 2016 (38.7) the risk of poverty is still higher than in Spain (27.9) or Greece (35.6) (Birešev, 2019: 118).

The indicator of expected lifespan in Serbia reflects the existing living and working conditions. Namely, a person's average lifespan depends on many factors (such as lower deathrate of newborns, better standards of living, better lifestyles, better educations, better healthcare and medical treatment, etc.) Comparison between two periods, 2007–17, shows a longer lifespan, though still relatively short when it comes to Serbia (75.6). According to available information, Romania (75.3) and Lithuania (74.9) are the only two countries with shorter lifespans; average lifespan in EU (28 countries) is 80.9 years (Eurostat, 1)<sup>5</sup>.

When it comes to contemporary capitalism, in Serbia we witness step-by-step privatization of public infrastructure and the public wealth distributed to the most affluent (Vukša, Simović, 2015); this unavoidably leads towards higher poverty rate and worse living conditions of people dependent on public services. Besides, neoliberal transformation of the society deepens the gap between social strata and shapes people's value systems. The more so important is to examine the values orienteering "collective and individual actions, and can, therefore, more or less indicate changes in the character of predominant social relations and interests of different social groups" (Pešić, 2016).

Some cases of normative and institutional solutions testify of the relations between system changes and value orientations this study is focused on. And so, today's problems plaguing the reform of the welfare system and relevant legislations testify that the situation of the most vulnerable social strata is growing worse. Namely, as a signatory of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights Serbia has taken upon itself to work for the betterment of the position of the poorest social strata, i.e. to ensure the exercise of their social and economic rights (Ćurčić, 2019). However, in everyday life and under the Law on Financial Assistance for Families with Children, subsidies for pregnant women and breast-feeding mothers have been decreased; namely, the Law provides that in order to receive full salaries

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5 Izvor: [https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/tgm/table.do?tab=table&init=1&language=en&pcode=sdg\\_03\\_10&plugin=1](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/tgm/table.do?tab=table&init=1&language=en&pcode=sdg_03_10&plugin=1)

women on pregnancy leave shall be working full-time for 18 months prior to the leave; hence, many women who have been employed for less than 28 months before going on leave are deprived even of minimal subsidies. Provisions as such have a negative impact on the situation of working women; without institutional support to families with small children and subsidies for pregnant women, women remain anchored to home and private sphere, and the existing gap between women and men further deepens. Data for the year 2017 show that women's employment rate amounts to 38.1 percent, 14.7 percent less than the employment rate of men (52.8 percent)<sup>6</sup>.

Gender-based stereotypes are notably characteristic for systems in which social state services are inadequate, high unemployment rates and disputable reproductive rights. Violence against women is the most telling example of gender-based stereotypes. Over the past years NGOs have been alerting of growing violence against women in families and households. In 2016 registered cases of violence grew for 24 percent when compared with the year 2015, and as much as 57.8 percent than in 2014 (Ignjatović, 2017). Statistics also show that almost one out of two women has been abused (mentally, physically or sexually), and that one out of three has been physically assaulted by a member of her family (Nikolić-Ristanović, 2010; Ignjatović, 2017). The survey conducted in 2010 testified of a high correlation between threats with physical abuse and the actual abuse, which means that threats are mostly being realized (Petrović, 2010).<sup>7</sup> Victims' economic dependence on perpetrators, the problem of custody over children, stigmatization and sense of shame are still major components of this vicious circle of violence, usually predominating rural areas (UNDP, 2019).

Besides, the law on subsidies for families with children provides that only children inoculated with all obligatory vaccines shall be entitled to child allowance despite the common knowledge that by far smaller percent of Roma children are properly inoculated than their non-Roma peers

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6 Žene i muškarci u Republici Srbiji, 2017.

7 The number of women killed in family violence is more than alerting. Statistics about femicide are not officially publicized (Lacmanović, 2019: 40), but only compiled on the basis of media stories monitored by women NGOs. Reports issued by Women Network against Violence estimate that in the period of 7 years (2010–17) 225 women at least were killed in Serbia, mostly by their spouses. The fact that most of those women were killed with fire arms testifies of the correlation between the use of fire arms in family violence and the wars in ex-Yugoslavia (Nikolić-Ristanović, Petrović, 2010: 82).

(Ćurčić, 2019). Amendment of the said law would mean a lot for improvement of the situation of the Roma community as one of the most vulnerable ones. Despite the Decade of Roma Inclusion (2005–15) Roma women and men rights to and prospects for employment, proper housing, education, healthcare and welfare are still inadequate. “Roma men and women are growingly experiencing disappearance of a social state and its services, and are totally incapable of participating in decision-making processes” (Baković-Jadžić, 2018). Further on, ever since Roma families are allowed to lesser social subsidies, the civil sector has been more and more concerned with socioeconomic problems of the Roma community, while the state less and less (Radenković, 2018a: 18). Researchers have analyzed the effects of financial consolidation measures on ethnically-based stereotypes and bias on the Roma community (Radenković 2018b, Kasumović, 2018a). Namely, the problem of discrimination against Roma is not just a matter of the majority nation’s bias and deep-rooted interethnic tensions. Transition and economic restructuring of post-socialist economies and decline in living standards of most people notably affected vulnerable social groups that are, at the same time, culturally defined or determined as Others (Radenković, 2018), and evidently subject to ethnically-based animosity but of class animosity as well. Certain special measures the regime takes in the case of the Roma community only contribute to its ghettoization and could only fuel ethnic distance: forced dislocation of Roma informal settlements far from downtown (disabling Roma from collecting and selling secondary row material, they mostly live on), fencing off Roma settlements with brick walls as in the case of their settlement in Krusevac, and discrimination against them when applying for jobs (Kasumović, 2016). Basic problems plaguing the Roma community – ranging from employment, education, social and medical services (Roma men and women have the shortest lifespans<sup>8</sup>) to social housing and education – have been solved through “cultural dialogue” (which pacified economic and political antagonisms), whereas such problems should have been solved through structural changes and changes in “politics” (Radenković, 2018b: 30).

The state’s attitude towards LGBTQ population is barely any better; it can be best described as pinkwashing – by some of its actions the state

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8 Average lifespan of women in Serbia is 75, while Roma women’s lifespan is almost 30 years shorter: <http://www.niar.rs/2014/08/16-8-2014-euractiv-romkinje-u-srbiji-zive-znatno-krace/>).

pictures itself as democratic and non-homophobic, open to differences, while its policy is basically conservative (same-sex families are completely invisible in legislation, and LGBTQ parents are deprived of their parental rights). In this context, the event marking a couple of past years was Ana Brnabić's appointment to premiership, whereby she became the first outed lesbian in such a high office in any post-socialist country. When President Vučić nominated her in June 2017 LGBT organizations and activists reacted in all sorts of way given that there was no telling whether or not her appointment would make any difference in governmental policies in the context of the struggle for LGBT rights.<sup>9</sup> Symbolically, the action itself indicated the possibility of making non-heterosexual identities more visible; on the other hand, however, her statements have been exemplifying the use of LGBTQ problematic for political purposes – they are meant to promote Serbia as a democratic state and tolerant society, while things stand quite the opposite. While the actual regime denies the Srebrenica genocide, she has been marginalizing it in her public addresses.<sup>10</sup>

The examples quoted above indicate that economic and political context is “suitable” for deepening gaps between various social groups on the grounds of their gender, social position and ethnicity. Surveys conducted in Serbia testify of deep-rooted stereotypes, especially stereotypes related to gender and ethnicity, and of high level of homophobia. Several characteristics of stereotypes denote “standardized notions” about various groups; stereotypes are offering a simple criterion for classification of persons (“an individual is left under the impression that he/she understates the society”); further on, stereotypes are used to justify “privileges and differences in access to resources;” and, stereotypes crucially determine the borders of “our group,” which mostly boils down to “our group’s” superiority (Ericksen, 2004).

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9 “We are looking forward to a law on same-sex partnerships during Prime Minister Ana Brnabić’s term of office,” Labris, 2017.

10 “I do not think that was a genocide. That was an awful, awful crime. It’s hard for me to speak about it. That was a crime that makes me feel bad, the crime I am ashamed of because it was committed in the name of Serbs, the crime that pictured Serbs as they should not be pictured, it pictured them as conservative, homophobic people” (2017).

The findings of the survey conducted in 2013 show that most discriminated against are women (CESID, 2014).<sup>11</sup> According to this poll, as many as 49 percent of interviewees see homosexuality as “a disease that has to be treated.” The ethnic distance manifested is also most evident – especially vis-à-vis ethnic categories: more than one half of interviewees would not like to see Albanians in their families, 25 percent do not want them in their neighborhood, while one-fifth of them take they should not be citizens of Serbia at all (Ibid.). Further on, the majority of interviewees would not have any family tie whatsoever with Roma (56 percent), Bosniaks (43 percent) and Croats (39 percent). More than one-third of interviewees is of the opinion that discrimination is most present in the sphere of labor and employment.

Political elites and the media are playing important roles in shaping of stereotypes. Nationalistic patterns were mostly those that legitimized the elites of the Milosevic’s era (Pešić, 2016); although we are here referring to a different system of social reproduction and different mechanisms for reproduction of elites, some of the above-mentioned “values” are still visible in the regime’s rhetoric of predominant “neoliberalism.” Legitimization of new political elites following on Milosevic’s fall resulted in brought about a new revision of history (after the revision marking the 1990s wars). Namely, now it is anti-communism that is being promoted, and new elites are distancing themselves from the socialist past (which is in accordance with their neoliberal project) – “this is why major “revisions of the past” were made about WWII,” seen as the period of a mythical birth of the communist regime; by changing national holidays, laws, street names, contents of textbooks, etc. (the regime) has been working thoroughly on a change in the system of memory” (Stojanović, 2010). Nevertheless, ruling elites of the post-October era have not given up nationalism. “Since programs of most of political parties in the new ruling coalition were basically nationalistic, the myth of historical fate of the Serbian people was kept alive even after 2000” (Stojanović, 2010: 17). This explains the continuity of nationalistic ideology, which was especially reproduced through textbooks and will, therefore, strongly influence younger generations of today.

The state’s official stance toward the past has not changed a bit when it comes to facing up the past and political elite’s accountability for the 1990s wars. Moreover, history of the Second World War has been brutally revised

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11 The survey was conducted by the Center for Free Elections and Democracy (CESID) on a random sample of 1,200 citizens over the age of 15.

through glorification of collaborationists and followers of the Chetnik movement. In 2009 the democratic government of the time established the State Commission for Examination of Circumstances in which General Dragoljub Draža Mihailović Was Executed, and then another State Commission for Secret Mass Graves.<sup>12</sup> With today's political elites in power judicial proceedings for rehabilitation of Chetnik commander Nikola Kalabić are initiated; and yet, in 2019 the court of law decided against rehabilitation of collaborationist Milan Nedić.

The culture of memory is almost nonexistent; by official version, Serbia has never waged a war and, hence, victims of the war are not its concern. According to some authors, however, even the denial of crimes constitutes a part of history, which unavoidably creeps into national identity. "Resistance to facing up the past shall persist, because the process itself manifests permanent tensions between a variety of interests, rather than just mere differences in opinion in ideological debates. Overcoming the past is not a final but a lasting process, a permanent warning, rather than the past eventually agreed on. This is why (the overcoming) is always incomplete; distortions of the past are defense systems of group and individual interests that are being pictured as identity" (Kuljić, 2006).

All the above-mentioned aspects help us determine the values various categories of population are standing for, and then "place" these values in a specific social context. In sociological studies of value-based orientations in Serbia, patriarchy, nationalism and authoritarianism are interpreted as parts of a single traditionalist pattern (Pešić, 2016). The structure of traditionalist value system basically leans on "renewal of traditionally hierarchical values (weak-poor, male-female, older-younger, etc.). Apart from hierarchy, traditionalism denotes in the first place "uncritical consciousness" about tradition, as well as instrumentalization of tradition and insistence on "continuity" with actual or imagined past (Golubović et. al. 1995: 112). Conservativeness, i.e. opposition to new ideals, built up reliance on the past, denial of any individualism, etc. are the benchmarks of traditionalism.

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12 Source: <http://www.starosajmiste.info/blog/institucionalna-i-medijska-potruga-za-grbom-general-a-dragoljuba-mihailovica-2009-2011/>



## Situation of Serbia's youth

What mark the situation of Serbia's youth – speaking of their living conditions and quality of life – are high unemployment and unsteady jobs (although this study scrutinizes the period of the already longtime National Strategy for the Youth with measures for systematic investment in progress of the youth<sup>13</sup>). According to Eurostat statistics for the year 2017, unemployment rate of the youth in all monitored countries was higher than unemployment rate in general. In EU member-stat the former rate exceeds the latter by 16.8 percent, while in Serbia it is higher than 31.9 percent – in other words, more than 3 out of 10 young people ages 15–24 in Serbia are jobless.<sup>14</sup> The same statistics also show that the highest percentages of young people ages 16–29 who are at risk of poverty or social exclusion are to be found in Greece (45) and Serbia (43.2), while the lowest are in Slovenia (16), Malta (15.3) and Czech Republic (12.1).<sup>15</sup>

According to the Republican Bureau of Statistics for the year 2019, the youth unemployment rate is twice as high as general unemployment (in 2019 employment rate was 49.6 percent and unemployment 9.5 percent; employment rate of the youth ages 15–24 is two times lower, while the unemployment rate is tripled (26 percent). Earlier statistics show the highest unemployment rate of young women, ages 15–24 (39.5 percent). The situation of young men of the same age was barely any better (32.2 percent) (Women and Men in the Republic of Serbia, 2017).

Flexible contracts – full-time contracts are usually cut short – also indicate the youth's bad position at the labor market. The percentage of the youth (15–24) with full-time contracts dropped from 74.5 (2008) to 51 (2016), while the percentage of those working on contractual basis grew from 18.1 (2008) to 40.9 (2016) (Stanojević, Petrović, 2018:151). Besides, one aspect of the Statistics Bureau recording of the employment rate is to be noted; namely, persons “spending at least one hour on a paid job over a

13 <http://www.pravno-informacioni-sistem.rs/SlGlasnikPortal/eli/rep/sgrs/vlada/strategija/2015/22/1/reg>

14 The situation is about the same in Montenegro and Albania, and worse in North Macedonia, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosovo.

15 Eurostat (3) [https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Young\\_people\\_-\\_social\\_inclusion#Severe\\_material\\_deprivation](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Young_people_-_social_inclusion#Severe_material_deprivation)

monitored week” are recorded as employed, which means that the publicized employment rate speaks not about real-life working conditions, type of engagements, wages and salaries, as well as unregistered work young people are mostly engaged for on the contractual basis.

No doubt that such bad prospects at the labor market affect young people’s lives. “Postponed family nests mean postponed integration into the process of social reproduction” (Tomanović, Stanojević, 2015). Young people are dependent on their parents for longer and longer time. Eurostat statistics reveal a very high percentage of young people in Serbia living with their parents – as many as 59 percent of younger persons ages 25–34 were still living with their parents in 2018, comparing with 54 percent in 2013. The percentage is also high in Croatia (62.4) and in Greece (57.5) while the average percentage in EU member-states amounts to 28.4<sup>16</sup> Poor prospects for getting appropriate jobs and generally bad financial situation of the youth certainly have to do with the choice they are making – not to leave a housing and financial safe haven of their primary family.

Apart from these factors which create barriers to the social integration of young people, the surveys show that the young people’s level of “political and civic participation” is low, which points to their insufficient integration into the society’s political system (ibid.). The conclusion of one more study is that young people are not “interested” in politics and “don’t discuss politics”, nor do they try to be politically informed (Popadić et al, 2019).

Generally speaking, young people are rather doubtful about their future, considering that “academic titles and high qualifications less and less guarantee stable and safe careers,” while “the transition from education to employment is growingly losing its standard form” (Tomanović, Stanojević, 2015: 7).

Poor financial situation of the youth forces them to develop more and more “individual, atomized work practices” (Tomanović et, al. 2012). In the case of secondary school students in the sample of this survey, such practices also correspond to their parents’ generations that have mostly lived and worked in the post-socialist period of “blocked transition” (Lazić, 2011).

Data compiled in 2019 testify that, apart from unemployment and risk of poverty, bad situation of marginalized groups and their mental health, are among basic problems plaguing the youth. Findings of the survey conducted

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16 Eurostat (4), <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/products-eurostat-news/-/EDN-20190514-1>

by the Ministry of Youth and Sports, and the Center for Education on a sample of 1,000 young persons 15–19 years of age show that more than 45 percent of them are concerned about everyday problems, 12 percent see themselves as worthless beings, while 7 percent had suicidal thoughts.<sup>17</sup>

All the above-mentioned factors – earning for better living standards and job opportunities, as well as pessimism about the future of the Serbian society being the most prominent – make numbers of young people emigrate (Popadić et al., 2019). According to the poll conducted in 2019 on a sample of 1,200 interviewees, three-fourths of young people in Serbia, ages 14–29, wish/plan to leave the country. Such figures place Serbia first on the list of all other countries in the region (Popadić et al., 2019).

Many studies testified that socioeconomic conditions and young people's value systems are closely connected. European comparative studies show that young people's feeling of well-being strongly depends on the economic situation, which, for its part, influences their statements on major political issues (Helve, 2001). Following on economic fall in Finland (1991–3) young Finns' stances about refugees and welfare turned more rigorous. However, in 1989 they saw living standards in Finland good enough so that the country could afford considerable subsidies to the unemployed and other vulnerable groups; recession simply dwindled their supportive views.

A cross-cultural survey on a sample of 46 nationalities, conducted by Dutch researchers, show that adolescents' views about men and women are less traditional in the countries seen as “rich” and societies based on individualistic values than the same views of their peers in “poorer” countries in which collectivistic values are predominant (Gibbons, 1991:638)<sup>18</sup>.

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17 Source: [http://www.rtv.rs/sr\\_lat/mladi/aktuelno/dvanaest-odsto-mladih-u-srbiji-ima-osecaj-potpune-bezvrjednosti\\_993912.html](http://www.rtv.rs/sr_lat/mladi/aktuelno/dvanaest-odsto-mladih-u-srbiji-ima-osecaj-potpune-bezvrjednosti_993912.html)

18 The interviewees were 265 students of international schools in the Netherlands, aged 11–17, from 46 countries.



## III FINDINGS OF THE SURVEY

### Methodology, sample and hypotheses

The survey was focused on value-based statements of secondary school students, ages 17–18. These are generations born in 2001–3, namely after the change of the regime on October 5, 2000. The survey was conducted in five towns: Belgrade, Novi Sad, Niš, Kragujevac and Novi Pazar, all of them bigger regional centers with ethnically-mixed population.<sup>19</sup>

Interviews were conducted on a sample of 890 students, whereas 866 interviews were analyzed. The very sample was appropriate given that it included all bigger regional centers. Four schools at most – gymnasiums and vocational schools proportionally – were selected in each town; and one third-year and one fourth-year class was picked up for the purpose in each of them. The sample included all the students in those classes (the choice of the classes was also appropriate to the age group of the sample).

Students were filling questionnaires for approximately 35 minutes. The form of the questionnaire followed the five-point Lykert scale – ranging from utter disagreement to full agreement – and measuring attitudes towards nationalism, patriarchy, homophobia, abortion and Roma population. The paper uses the term “traditional:” since modernism is often used as quite the opposite to traditionalism, the paper is using descriptive notions such as “non-traditional” and “non-conservative.”

The advantage of the choice of interviewees was the possibility to include the entire sample in a relatively short period of time (one month); disadvantage, however, was the possibility of peer-to-peer influence and conformism since questionnaires were being filled during regular classes.

The sample is age homogenous; all interviewees are third and fourth grade students. Main socio-demographic characteristics of the sample are presented in the table below:

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<sup>19</sup> According to the 2011 census the ethnic structure of the population in Novi Pazar is as follows: 77.13% Bosniaks, 16.17% Serbs, 4.09% Muslims, 1.23% Albanians, etc.

Table 1. Structure of the sample by socio-demographic variables:

Gender	Female	51%
	Male	49%
Town	Belgrade	205
	Niš	213
	Novi Sad	130
	Novi Pazar	202
	Kragujevac	118
Ethnicity	Serbs	531
	Bosniaks/Muslims <sup>1</sup>	118
	Roma	6
	Hungarians	5
	Albanians	4
Religion	Eastern Orthodox	66%
	Muslim	20%
	Roman Catholic, Protestant	1,4%
Mother's professional qualifications	Unschooler/elementary school	8,5%
	Secondary school	42,4%
	Higher school/unfinished university studies	18,7%
	University graduate	30,4%
Father's professional qualifications	Unschooler/elementary school	8%
	Secondary school	48,6%
	Higher school/unfinished university studies	20,4%
	University graduate	26,7%
Mother's employment status	Unemployed	27,7%
	Worker (semi-/high qualified)	39,6%
	Clerk	7,3%
	Freelancer (arts, sports)	0,8%
	Expert	9,4%
	Manager, department head	6,5%
	Director of a small company	1,2%
	Director of a bigger company	0,6%
	Company owner	4,5%
	Politician	0,5%
Father's employment status	Unemployed	7,3%
	Worker (semi-/high qualified)	42,2%
	Clerk	7,2%
	Freelancer (arts, sports)	1,3%
	Expert	7,3%
	Manager, department head	10,1%
	Director of a smaller company	3,7%
	Director of a bigger company	2%
	Company owner	12%
Politician	0,4%	

\* In Novi Pazar, students differently determined their ethnicity – sometimes by ethnic origin and sometimes by religious beliefs; the table, therefore, includes both determiners.

Apart from this socio-demographic information, the survey encompassed data about interviewees' families' material statuses in order to gauge the relationship between family income and values interviewees stand for. The above-mentioned relationship was evaluated by the means of information collected about mother's/father's professional qualifications and employment statuses, as well as the answers indicative of the way interviewees perceive their financial situations of their households and their families' classes. The following table shows the amounts of family monthly incomes, as estimated by interviewees.

**Table 2. Range of monthly incomes (in RSD)**

Up to 20,000	4.3 %
20,000 – 40,000	17.6 %
40,000 – 80,000	28 %
80,000 – 150,000	31 %
More than 150,000	19 %

The table shows that monthly incomes of 21.9 percent of households do not exceed 40,000 RSD, while 50 percent of households have incomes above 80,000 RSD. Given that for years in a row the amount of an average salary in Serbia has been lower than an average customer basket, the quoted information testifies that only one out of two households of the sample can afford a monthly customer basket for a family of three (71,302 RSD), which meet just basic existential needs.

But when the same information is compared with interviewees' answers about their families' economic status, we see that interviewees are overestimating their standards of living – in other words, that the information about incomes barely corresponds to interviewees' perceptions about the situation of their households. As many as 68 percent of interviewees take that there are living “averagely,” although the actual incomes indicate that only 30 percent of them can say so (80,000–150,000 RSD).

**Table 3. Economic status of interviewees families – subjective belief**

Low (We live rather poorly)	1.1 %
Average (We can afford just basic necessities)	7 %
Average	68 %
Above-average (We live somewhat better than the rest)	21 %
We are rich	2.8 %

Besides, the information about monthly incomes of households do not correspond to interviewees' perception of classes their families belong to, given that 84.5 percent of interviewees categorize their families as "middle-class."

**Table 4. Social stratification of families – self-perception**

Lower class	0.8 %
Working class	8.3 %
Lower middle class	8.2 %
Middle class	59.6 %
Upper middle class	16.7 %
Upper class	5.5 %

The indicators above describe the socio-economic status of interviewees' families; income indicators testify of low standard of living, which is crucial for analyzing young peoples' social statuses and chances for education and economic progress.

The following chapters analyze students' value-based statements about nationalism, homophobia, patriarchy, abortion and Roma, as well as a set of their views about Serbia's warring past in the 1990s. The questionnaire used provides a wider scale for gauging nationalism, patriarchy and homophobia than the one in the survey conducted in 2011, whereas students' statements about the Roma minority are gauged separately on a special scale in order to determine attitudes towards one of the most vulnerable ethnic groups in Serbia.

The statements presented by each scale provide a general picture of values cherished by the youth in Serbia. Some of those statements will be comparable to the findings of the 2011 survey, to those of general population



in the survey conducted in 2018<sup>20</sup> and to the research about the youth in 2015.<sup>21</sup> From sociological perspective, statements are being formed on the basis of experiences and, hence, denote acquired dispositions; they not only indicate one's pros and cons, but also an "action" one could take. The term that is often used in considering statements is bias – we are considering statements that are not based on facts, that can be barely changed are marked by strong emotions (Tripković, 2007:591).

The initial assumptions are as follows:

1. Judging by the statements presented at the scale of patriarchy we expect today's secondary school students to be more moderate than in 2001, since this value-based orientation has been on a downward curve in the surveys of general population conducted up to now (Petrović, Radoman, 2019; Pešić, 2016). However, some significant fall in this value orientation is not to be expected necessarily considering retrograde tendencies in the sphere of law and labor market that affect women's position, and especially findings of surveys that testify of widespread exploitation of women's house labor.
2. Given that over the past year the regime has been strongly campaigning for higher birthrate and against "birth dearth," which threaten women's reproductive rights, it is assumed that students' statements about abortion will still be moderately conservative. Besides, all interviewed students have been attending classes of religious instruction since their first grade, and have been, therefore, exposed to conservative teachings about abortion and women's rights to give birth. Religious instruction was introduced in secondary schools in Serbia in 2001 as a facultative course.
3. Given that the survey used the modified scale for nationalism developed in the survey of general population in 2018 (Petrović, Radoman, 2019), it is assumed that findings will show that statements are grouped around two factors – two "types of nationalism" – *organic* and *ethnocentric* (see, pp. 34–5), and that the statements on the scale of organic nationalism will be more prominent. Further on, it is assumed that students – under

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20 The survey "Daily life of households and individuals against the background of social changes in Serbia" the Institute for Sociological Research conducted in 2018 on a representative sample of 2,200 interviewees.

21 Study "Young people in Serbia," 2015, a survey conducted on a sample of 1,186 interviewees, ages 15–29 (Tomanović, Stanojević, 2015).

peer influence and lack of life experience that could have otherwise decrease the gap between them and other ethnic groups – will be more condescending about ethnocentrism than general population. On the other hand, it can be also assumed that general population will demonstrate a higher level of ethnocentrism because of a bigger ratio of “elderly” people in this group that is more prone to the idea of “a common ethnic origin,” tradition and respect for predecessors (besides, old age proved to be a major predictor in earlier surveys of organic nationalism, see, Petrović, Radoman, 2019).

4. It is assumed that ethnic stereotypes and levels of “racism” vis-à-vis Roma population will be on the downward curve when compared to two earlier periods, 2011 and 2019. However, the information gathered for the year 2019 may indicate even more extreme statements about Roma population when taking into account that reports by Roma organizations speak about a considerable level of social distance about Roma and institutions that are denying the very presence of “racism” despite the fact that it is being widespread in our society.<sup>22</sup>
5. It is assumed that homophobic statements against LGBTQ+ populations will be on the downward path, while the number of those openly supporting non-heterosexual persons on the upward. The assumption rests on two facts: over the past ten years, ever since the first successful Pride Parade, the number of campaigns for the rights of LGBTQ+ persons has been growing, and, apart from the capital, many public manifestations supporting the queer community have been stage in Novi Sad and Niš; secondly, a woman who had outed herself as lesbian became Serbia’s prime minister, which could have a positive impact on tolerance.
6. It is assumed that interviewees’ gender will be a major factor in all scales; namely, that girl will be less homophobic, less patriarchal, less nationalistic and more tolerant to other ethnic and social groups than boys.
7. Given that religion proved to be a major statistical predictor in the 2011 survey of the same age group, it is assumed that the statements of Muslim interviewees will be more patriarchal and homophobic than those held by their atheist and Eastern Orthodox peers, and that their feelings against abortion will be stronger.

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<sup>22</sup> <http://chrin.org.rs/mreza-chris/aktivnosti-mreze-chris/rasizam-prema-romima-sve-prisutnji/>.

## Analysis of statements on patriarchy

Findings of earlier surveys of patriarchy as a value-based orientation indicating “traditionalism” show that it has been on downward curve – i.e. in the period 2003–2018 “intensity of patriarchy gradually declined” (Petrović, Radoman, 2019).

In order to understand better the notion of patriarchy beyond the “self-explanatory thesis about a patriarchal society” (Čakardić, 2017), i.e. correlate structural level and patriarchal relations, we rely on the analysis of gender relations a larger social backdrop. At its most abstract level patriarchy appears as a system of social relations, while at lower levels of abstraction it can be analyzed within six structures, namely: patriarchal relations in households, paid labor, patriarchal relations in a state, male violence, patriarchal relations in sexuality and patriarchal relations in culture (Walby, 1991: 20).

According to Eurostat’s comparative survey findings in two periods – 2012 and 2017 – employment rate among persons ages 20–64 was growing, though differently when it comes to men and women. As for Serbia, the gender-based difference in employment rate dropped from 15.7% (2012) to 14% (2017), but is still rather high (average difference in gender-based employment rate in EU was 11.5% in 2017).<sup>23</sup> According to Women’s Labor Rights Association “Rosa”, especially affected categories at labor market are older women, women in countryside and young, educated women. Comparison between the structure of the unemployed and movement of labor force shows that the number of unemployed persons ages 55–65 grew in the period 2014–16 (Reljanović, et.al, 2016). Statistics of the National Employment Bureau indicate that this growth is to be ascribed to the bigger number of unemployed women, ages 60–65 (from 3,706 in 2014 it grew to 9,011 in 2016). This was effectuated by the amendment to the Law on Pension and Disability Insurance providing gradually rising age-limit for women’s retirement. “This effect not only annulled the effects of the amendment of the Labor Law (in any) but also generated an even bigger problem in the structure of unemployed population in the category of population with anyway minimal chances for employment” (Reljanović, et. al, 2016: 81).

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23 Eurostat (2), p. 5.

Latest researches indicate that gender relations has been mirroring the value-based “non-modern” normative model in the past two decades; this is about the so-called re-traditionalization manifested by “women’s (forceful) return to the private sphere” (Ibid., 149). Changes for the better necessitate transformations at all levels, primarily at macro-level, changes in middle-level institutions and, naturally, transformation at micro-level (Ibid.).

The very private/public division is strongly determined by gender, and determines women’s and men’s social standing. Speaking about labor aspect and expectations about women’s gender role, surveys show that women still do most of chores, including laundry, cleaning, ironing, cooking, childcare, watching over school children’s homeworks, caring after the old and disabled, etc.; shopping statements out as the only activity equally shared by men and women.<sup>24</sup> Along with all these jobs women are doing for free (which goes without saying in all contemporary patriarchal regimes) – it is “in the nature of things” that parenthood, childbirth and childcare are activities assigned to women, and so those “biological duties” of women are staying as invisible forms of labor.<sup>25</sup>

Feminist campaigns in the 1970s threw light on this problem under the slogan Wages for Housework; housework is not only “imposed on women,” they stressed out, “but also transformed into a natural attribute of women’s anatomy and personality, into their inner need and aspiration, allegedly sourcing from the depths of our female character (...) It has to be admitted that capital has been most successful in hiding our labor. It managed to create a genuine masterpiece at women’s expense. By depriving housework of wages and transforming it into an act of love, capital killed many birds with one stone. First and foremost, it got an enormous quantity of labor for almost nothing” (Federicci, 1974). Although the campaign was staged a

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24 Earlier surveys show that women are doing housework in 80–95 percent of cases (Blagojević, 2013). According to recent surveys (Radović, Marković, 2017), women are still accepting the traditional gender-based distribution of labor, in line with the construct “good housewives.”

25 Gender-based role are greatly disproportionate in childcare – only 0.9% of male partner take upon themselves diaper changing, and 7.8% baby bathing. The only proportionate activity is taking babies for a stroll and to see pediatricians. “According to these indicators, beginning of parenthood is the turning point of life when overspending of female resources literally becomes socially accepted, and an obligatory norm for women” (Radović, Marković, 2017: 144).

couple of decades ago, debates on housework are as pressing as they were at the time (Čakardić, 2016).

Apart from the problem of gender-based conditionality of housework to be done, data about women's activity at labor market have been complemented with number of hours women are spending on housework; the outcome only testifies of the thesis about the double burden on their shoulders.<sup>26</sup> In this context women's earnings are often seen as mere additions to men's salaries, and their careers are often affected by pregnancies and motherhoods.<sup>27</sup>

Certain amendments to the Labor Law were meant to improve the position of working mothers through provisions on breastfeeding breaks.<sup>28</sup> Though such provisions seemingly improve conditions of motherhood, they are barely workable in practice. Namely, a 90-minute breastfeeding break per a workday necessitates that a baby of a working mother is somewhere close to her workplace. And this can hardly be the case in bigger towns. It would be much better had the lawmakers decided to have places for babies arranged nearby their mothers' workplaces. Without such additional support, it can only be assumed that most of working mothers would use this benefit for shortening their workhours, which is an advantage for a mother but misses the point of the provision primarily aimed at ensuring mother's

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26 The survey conducted by the Employment Bureau shows that in Serbia women, working or unemployed, spend twice more times on housework than men, and twice less on paid jobs. Compensation for housework calculated by minimal wage per hour for women older than 15 years of age would amount to 138 Euros per month or 1,650 on annual basis. (Source: [http://www.stat.gov.rs/media/1374/tus2016\\_srpski.pdf](http://www.stat.gov.rs/media/1374/tus2016_srpski.pdf))

27 It is estimated that more than 13,000 mothers have been affected under the amendments to the Law on Financial Support for Families. Source: <https://www.danas.rs/ekonomija/vise-od-13-000-mama-osteceno-zakonom-o-finansijskoj-podrsци-porodici-sa-decom/>

28 Article 93 of the Labor Law reads: "The employer is obliged to provide that the employed woman who returns to work prior to the expiry of one year after the child's birth, enjoys the right to one or more daily breaks during the daily working hours in the total duration of 90 minutes, or the right of reducing the daily working hours for 90 minutes, in order to be able to breastfeed her child. If the daily working hours of the employed woman amount to six or more hours. The break or the reduced working hours from paragraph 1 of the Article shall be calculated into the working hours, and the compensation to the employed woman on that basis shall be paid out in the amount of the base salary, increased by seniority compensation".

care for her baby during a workday rather than once it is over (Reljanović, et. al. 2016: 42).

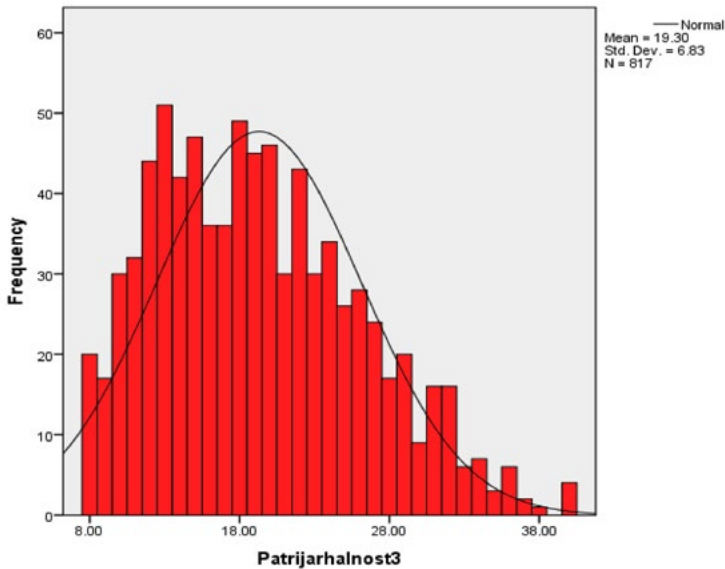
However, women's position depends not only on reproduction of capitalist social relations but also on reproduction of the values related to gender roles and "traditionalism." Findings of the survey of 2018, focused on value-based orientation of patriarchy show on the one hand that patterns of patriarchal attitudes towards the public sphere and gender roles were not predominant, and, on the other, that "over the period of post-socialist transition gender roles were more widely accepted in the private sphere than in the public sphere" (Petrović, Radoman, 2019). This finding is explained by almost forced inclusion of women in labor market over the post-socialist period on the grounds of "economically deprived households and the need for women's more active participation in labor market" (Ibid.). The outcome was, as stated in the paragraph above, a double burden placed on women's shoulders and more rigid patriarchal norms within households given that women were expected to simultaneously perform the tasks institutions are duty-bound to (kindergartens, pre-schools, social protection, etc.)

This survey was after evaluating the youth's value-based attitudes towards patriarchy in households – their statements on men-women relations in childcare, distribution of power in partnership dyads and men-women equality/inequality in the public sphere. On the basis of interviewees' answers to 8 questions it can be concluded that secondary school students' statements on patriarchy is more un-patriarchal on the scale of patriarchy.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Maximum on the scale is 40, and minimum 8; arithmetic mean on the scale is 19.30, which indicates a downward curve towards non-patriarchy.

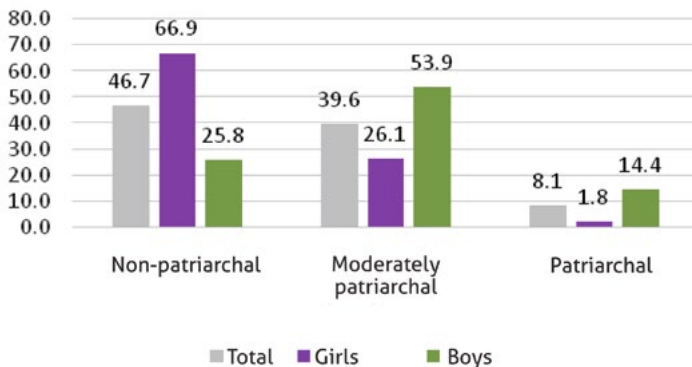
**Graph 1. Distribution of interviewees' responses on the scale of patriarchy**



**The scale comprises the following statements:**

1. A woman has a life of contentment only once she becomes a mother.
2. More sexual freedoms for a man are only natural and understandable.
3. A man still has to have a final say in his family.
4. Mother is the one who should take care of children, and only then a father.
5. Women should bear more children so that we could survive as a nation.
6. Men are generally better political leaders than women.
7. University degrees are more important to boys than to girls.
8. When a woman earns more than her husband, marriage problems are inevitable.

**Graph 2. Distribution of interviewees' responses on the scale of patriarchy by their gender**



Namely, 46.7 percent of students fall under the category of non-patriarchal, 39.6 percent are moderately patriarchal, while 8.1 percent patriarchal. into the category. According to the findings, girls are less conservative than boys, and more supportive to arguments about equality of gender roles.<sup>30</sup> Besides, some international studies testify that girls' stances are more equalitarian than those of boys, and that more than boys they support the idea of marriages in which both husband and wife work (*dual-earner marriages*), and are more tolerant about same-sex partnerships. As for sexual freedoms, girls are less supportive to idea of casual sex relations than boys (Astin et al. 2002; Schulenberg et al., 1995).

The following table presents average/mean values for the statements quoted in the questionnaire, that measure patriarchy, as well as mean values for some statements the surveys for secondary school students in 2011 and for general population in 2018 compiled. According to descriptive analysis, students' patriarchal statements were more rigid in 2011, which speaks for the assumption that patriarchy is on downward curve. Comparing the statements expressed by general population and some responses obtained in this survey, one comes to the conclusion that secondary school students' conservativeness is about the same as among general population.

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30 T-test result:  $t = 14.56$ ,  $df = 775$ ,  $p = .00$ . The average score for men  $M = 22.46$ ,  $SD = 6.59$ , while for women  $M = 16.25$  and  $SD = 5.52$ .



Table 5. Average values of the statements on patriarchy (1–5)\*

<i>Statements</i>	<i>2011 Girls/students</i>	<i>2018 General population</i>	<i>2019 Boys/students</i>
In Serbia society women are subdued by their families	/	/	2.80
A woman has a life of contentment only once she becomes a mother	2.88	/	2.46
More sexual freedoms for a man are only natural and understandable	3.34	/	2.18
A man still has to have a final say in his family	/	/	2.72
Mother is the one who should take care of children, and only then a father	2.64	/	2.37
It is crucial that a man should also be actively involved in parenthood	/	/	4.75
Women should bear more children so that we could survive as a nation	3.26	/	3.05
Men are generally better political leaders than women	/	2.44	2.73
University degrees are more important to boys than to girls	/	1.70	1.78
When a woman earns more than her husband, marriage problems are inevitable	/	2.51	2.14

\* 1 – total disagreement; 5 – full agreement

Considering the statements for making comparison between the findings in 2010 and in 2019, one comes to the conclusion the statements that support patriarchy are on downward curve. International studies also indicate that gender roles are yet another domain laible to volatile social changes, which would probably be manifested in changes in youth's statements (Karvonen, et al. 2011). Authors of a longitudinal survey conducted in Great Britain proved that despite well-documented gender differences in the statements on gender roles, men (grown-ups and adolescents) were growingly acknowledging non-traditional role of women but, at the same time, had trouble to relinquish "male power" in family (Burt, Scott, 2002).

Individual statements expressed in 2019 lead to conclusion that secondary school students are especially resolute about “It is crucial that a man should also be actively involved in parenthood.” As many as 94 percent of interviewees agree with this view. However, this percentage does not necessarily mean that students stand for equal distribution of parenthood duties between men and women; a possible interpretation of this statement is that a man should be equally involved in parenthood but in the process of a child’s socialization and raising – hence, such a high percentage of agreement. As for the statement that “Mother is the one who should take care of children, and only then a father,” 25 percent of interviewees expressed agreement. The percentage itself is not exactly high and can indicate that the idea of egalitarianism is on upward curve when it comes to distribution of parenthood duties.

However, some other statements do not exactly present students’ attitude towards patriarchy in a positive light: 38 percent of interviewees support the stance about women supposed to bear more children to that “we can survive as a nation (33 percent oppose it, while 28 percent are undecided). Such stance, though not in majority, considerably testifies of the general discourse about women’s reproductional, “biological” duty, and a nation’s dependence on birthrate. In addition, more than one-third of interviewed students approve the stance about a man’s final say in his family (35.6%), which indicates strong presence of private patriarchy<sup>31</sup> and hierarchy in a partnership. Although such views cannot be interpreted as “majority” approval of patriarchal patterns, they are still indicative of students’ partial assent to the dimension of private patriarchy.

A group of statements for measuring the extent to which students support the struggle against violence against women stand for a logical follow-up to the those expressed in the paragraphs above. Average values of the former are given in the table below:

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31 According to Sylvia Walby, there are two basic forms in which patriarchy is manifested – private and public patriarchy, and the former relates to power relations in families and households, i.e. to gender inequalities and exploitation of women labor in households (Walby, 1991).

Table 6. Average values the statements on family violence (1–5)\*

<i>Statements</i>	<i>2011</i>	<i>2019</i>
Family violence is a big problem of our society	3.67	3.88
A woman deserves to be beaten from time to time	1.66	1.43
If I know about a case of family violence, I will report it.	3.91	4.14
Violence against women and children should be punished harder	/	4.61

\* 1 – total disagreement; 5 – full agreement

The same as in 2011 one cannot but be concerned with the percentage of students arguing that a woman deserves to be beaten from time to time (2011 – 9%, 2019 – 8%), given that a percentage thus high indicates open support to violence against women.<sup>32</sup> However, more than 75 percent of students take that violence against women has to be punished harder and that would readily report such cases they are aware of – a percentage so high surely affords hope.

Capacitating children and the youth, especially boys, for changing their “discriminatory statements that degrade women and girls, and tolerate and justify violence against them” is among the measures against family violence that is being proposed.<sup>33</sup> One of the conclusions drawn from an international survey on gender equality conducted among male population is that violence against women is widespread in the region, and that keeping women closed in the “culture of silence” is one of the biggest obstacle to the struggle against violence (IMAGES).

32 The percentage is lower than the one got from the answers to the same question in a survey encompassing men. According to findings of the survey conducted by IMAGES Serbia, older generations of men are more prone to violence – 26.6 percent of men aged 51–60 agree with the stance about “beating from time to time, while men ages 25–30 say the same in 11 percent of cases (twice less), and those 18–24 years of age in 15.4 percent of cases (UNDP, 2018).

33 Source: <https://www.rs.undp.org/content/serbia/sr/home/presscenter/articles/2019/in-order-to-prevent-repetitive-domestic-violence--preventive-wor.html>

## Statements on abortion

Economy regulated at the market following on the fall of socialism and a boost in anti-communist ideology after 2000, that followed on the fall of socialism, blurred the public discourse about women's rights acquired in the period of socialism, as well as social assessment of the historical continuity of the struggle for women's rights.

In ex-Yugoslavia the rights to abortion was guaranteed under one of most liberal laws at the time. In 1994 the right to free choice of reproduction became a constitutional provision (Drezgić, 2010). The measures enacted prior a boost in nationalism and Yugoslavia's disintegration were meant to economically empower families: "Family planning is closely connected with the point of view that economic and social development are solving 'demographic problems' per se. Demographic policy, for its part, derives from the belief that development is not sufficient enough, which is why transition of fertility has to be stimulated with economic and legal measures and/or pressure" (Drezgić, 2010). Contrary to the "socialist concept," aggressive campaigns brimming with conservative notions about women's role that boils down to their biological and reproductive functions were staged throughout the 1990s. "The question of abortion was reduced to the question of the nation's very biological survival" (Ibid.). The notion itself was under strong influence of predominant nationalistic and clerical discourses about abortion, especially manifest over the past several decades. What only changed in those discourses was the manner in which the Serbian Orthodox Church denied women's right to abortion. "The Church's attitude towards abortion was basically the same but the focus of discourses about abortion has changed as time went by. At the beginning anti-abortion campaigns were targeting women in the context of concern for the nation and its biological survival. Later on, men also became responsible for reproduction, but from the concern for the nation the context shifted to the safeguard of a traditional family and its values" (Drezgić, 2015: 129). Along with introduction of religious teaching in the educational system, a predominantly religious discourse as such was a major factor influencing statements on abortion among generations born after 2000. As for actual public discourses about the issue, their tone is also conservative.

In the period between two censuses (2002 and 2011) deathrate in Serbia was higher than birthrate, and the trends is still on. Besides, Serbia's population is older and older in average. In this aspect Serbia ranges among the countries with demographically oldest population in the world. According to demographic estimates, due to low natality and numbers of young people who leave the country, by 2061 population of Central Serbia and Vojvodina could drop by 20–30 percent.<sup>34</sup>

Some measures proposed in the Natality Strategy include encouragement of fertility (through housing programs), promotion of reproductive health among adolescents, and worktime adjusted to parenthood (the latter is barely workable considering too many parents working in grey market). The Strategy also provides legislative amendments; for instance, latest amendments of the Law on Financial Support for Families with Children (2018) provides all types of contracts as preconditions for subsidies for birth, childcare and special care, but not for pregnancy and maternity leaves. Some other provisions of the said law are barely stimulating for parents and have nothing to do with improved conditions for childcare. This especially affects pregnant women with uncertain jobs, parents with sick children that are entitled to financial assistance, and to single parent or Roma parents.<sup>35</sup> The law envisages decreased or annulled subsidies to all vulnerable categories of population that need to be supported. For instance, in some cases the law envisages drastically decreased subsidies during maternity leaves (Reljanović, 2018), when financial assistance amounts to several thousands of RSD or even just 900 RSD. A provision as such turns the idea of social support to families with newborns totally senseless.

Decreased social subsidies and increased exploitation in the domain of labor figure as heavy burden on the shoulders of individuals when it comes to reproduction; women's burden is twice heavier given that they are considered more responsible for biological reproduction and housework. In turn, such situation only strengthens conservativeness in the domain of reproductive rights (Radoman, 2015a).

As an element of its general propaganda, the regime has been promoting women as main players in the growth of natality. And so, moneys from the budget are spent on "propaganda" rather than on subsidies. For instance,

34 In 2019 the average rate of natural increase was – 5.5, while the overall fertility rate in 2018 1.5, a rate somewhat lower than the average rate in Europe.

35 Source: <https://pecanik.net/zakon-o-finansijskoj-propasti-porodice-sa-decom/>

phrases such as “plaguing” or “alarmingly low birthrate” are mostly exploited in natality strategies terms such as “problematic” or “alarming,” but used as well by experts. So, what we are having here is a political concept that promotes reproduction – ergo, women’s bodies – as an “instrument” for higher birthrate, while neglecting programs of support to families with children.

In 2016 Serbia’s government formed the Commission for Population Policy with Minister Slavica Đukić Dejanović at its head. In her public addresses, the Minister was claiming that the Council would involve “non-governmental sector, priests and various experts,” that “all women, even before they become pregnant, would be coming for counseling about pregnancy but also the consequences of its termination;” she also used to say that that every year Serbia was losing “one small town,” mostly referring in this context to educated women over the age of 30, who would not have babies because they “want to live comfortably.” The organization “Center for Moms”<sup>36</sup> reacted strongly to Minister’s many controversial statements. “Speaking about some comfortable life in a country where every fifth person capable of work is unemployed, where every third person is at risk of poverty until the age of 18, and where every tenth person cannot afford decent foodstuff is nothing but insulting.”<sup>36</sup>

Another failed governmental campaign for natality – that, in late 2017, only raised questions about budgetary squandering – included a public competition for the most effective slogan for promotion of population policies, “aimed at a higher birthrate.” It was hard to imagine in what way could slogans possibly stimulate parenthood and giving birth to more babies. Winning slogan actually alluded to “selfish” women who would not have babies – “All we need is love and a baby,” “Have a baby now, do not postpone,” “We need not words, but baby’s cry,” and the like.<sup>37</sup>

Various rightist organizations and the Church have also been campaigning and petitioning against abortion over the past years. This, plus mass meetings they have been staging once a month in downtown Belgrade, influence public opinion and statements on abortion of young people who are still forming their attitudes towards reproductive rights and practically know

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36 Source: <http://centarzamame.rs/blog/2016/09/17/centar-za-mame-osuduje-izjavu-ministarke-porucuje-majcinstvo-mora-biti-izbor/>

37 Source: <http://rs.n1info.com/Vesti/a364137/Izabrani-slogani-protiv-bele-kuge-Dostareci-nek-zakmeci.html>

nothing about accomplishments of the feminist struggle and their significance to many generations of women.

Against such backdrop the abortion scale in this survey encompassed several dimensions so as to assess various aspects of attitudes towards abortion. It includes five statements related to several dimensions: attitudes towards abortion as a religious issue (abortion is a “sin,” abortion as an individual right and a call for a ban on abortion).

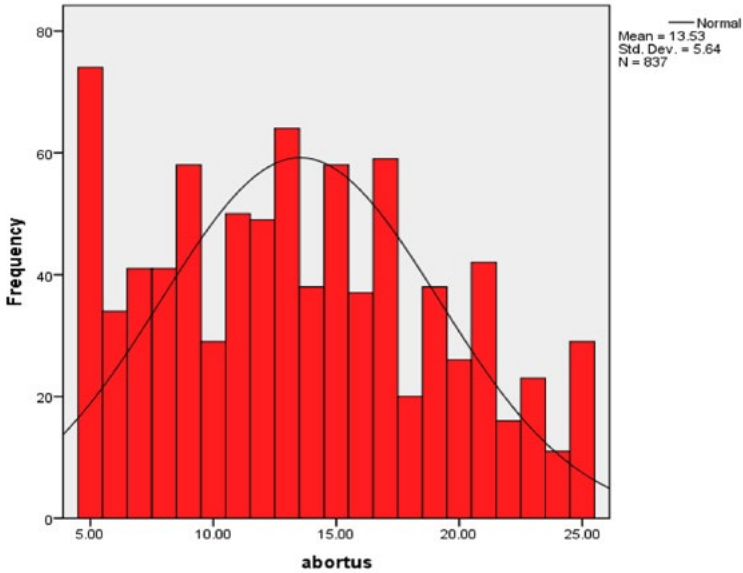
Graph 4 shows distribution of interviewees on the scale of their attitude towards abortion, whereas Graph 5 presents distribution by categories: conservative, moderately conservative and liberal. Findings of the scale of attitude towards abortion<sup>38</sup> show that 39% of interviewees hold liberal statements, 39% of them are moderately conservative and 22% are very conservative. Girls are more liberal in their statements than boys.<sup>39</sup> Girls are expected to be less traditional since gender roles considerably restrict most women’s autonomies and choices. Some international surveys of adolescents also testify of such a difference in statements between boys and girls (Gibbons et al, 1991; Burt, Scott, 2002).

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38 The analysis of reliability of the scale proved the high value of Kronbach’s alpha (Alpha = 0.812). Maximun is 24 and minimun 5, arritmetic mean is 13.53, while theoretic arithmetic mean 15.

39 The difference by gender is stastically significant ( $t = 7.18$ ,  $df = 828$ ,  $p = .00$ ). Girls’ statements ( $M = 12.18$ ,  $SD = 5.36$ ) are less conservative than boys’ ( $M = 14.9$ ,  $SD = 5.58$ ).

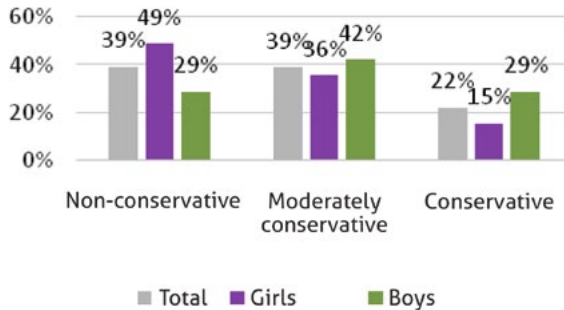
Graph 4. Distribution of interviewees on the scale of their attitudes towards abortion



Scale includes the following arguments:

1. If we allow abortion our nation will not survive;
2. I stand for a total ban on abortion;
3. I stand for every woman’s right to make her choice about giving birth;
4. Abortion is a sin;
5. Feminist organizations advocating women’s right to abortion should be banned;

Graph 5. Distribution of answers on the scale of conservativeness by gender:





The average values of three arguments in 2011 and 2019 (Table 7) indicate that the attitude towards abortion has undergone changes – today’s students are less conservative. Two affirmative statements on women’s right to make their own choice have high values in 2019, which may indicate that women are more aware about their right to make decisions about their own bodies, but may also indicate their declarative support to the argument that sounds acceptable: 50% of students support the stance about *a child’s mother as the only one who should decide on abortion, given that this is about her body*. However, such affirmative answers may also be disputable given that a high percentage of interviewees also support the following statement: *If we allow abortion our nation will not survive* (27%); *I stand for a total ban on abortion* (30%); *Abortion is a sin* (45.5%); *Feminist organizations advocating women’s right to abortion should be banned* (37.3). Answers probably indicate that interviewees are biased about their support to affirmative statements, while negative statements seem to reflect religious dimension as predominant; almost one out of two students considers abortion a “sin.”

Table 3. Average values of the statements on abortion (1–5)\*

Statements	2011	2019
If we allow abortion our nation will not survive	3.07	2.59
If we allow abortion our nation will not survive	2.93	2.68
I stand for every woman’s right to make her choice about giving birth		4.08
Abortion is a sin	3.40	3.25
Only a mother of a child should decide on abortion since it is about her own body		3.29
Feminist organizations advocating women’s right to abortion should be banned		3.12

\* 1 – total disagreement; 5 – full agreement

The most negative stance, the one reflecting religious motives, is the statement about abortion being a sin. The following findings also testify that arguing for a ban on abortion is religiously motivated: a higher percentage of traditional and conservative interviewees in the survey conducted in 2011 was recorded in Novi Pazar (as many as 62% of students supported the stance, Radoman, 2011: 28). Also, findings of the survey in 2019 show a strong connection between Islam and statements on abortion. In Novi

Pazar, 81% of students said they were Muslims by religion. An analysis of findings about the influence of a town and religion on abortion indicates that interviewees from Novi Pazar and those of Muslim religion are by far more conservative than their peers from other towns and those professing Eastern Orthodoxy and atheists.<sup>40</sup> Also, findings of a one-factor analysis of variance demonstrate a statistically significant difference between religious beliefs and statements on abortion.<sup>41</sup>

Judging by the findings of the survey conducted in 2015, percentages are not optimistic, generally speaking: 33.8% of young people take that *abortion should be banned under the law, except in the cases when it is medically justified*, while only 26.5% are of the opinion that *abortion should be legal*. Younger interviewees participating in the survey are more supportive about a ban on abortion, while such stance declines among their older peers (Tomanović, Stanojević, 2015: 78–79). In this context, one can only wonder whether students' rigid stances about abortion would decline in the future when they reach the period of sexual activity and begin thinking about contraception. If the campaign against abortion continues, mostly staged by the Serbian Orthodox Church, but also through the ideology of pronatalism advocated by ruling elites that barely manages to improve the bad situation of families in Serbia through social policy measures, women's reproductive rights can be rather jeopardized, while stances of younger generations attending classes of religious training can go on echoing religious conservatism.

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40 Brown-Forsythe test of difference between town F (4, 735.87) = 58.1, sig = 0.000); Post hoc Games-Howel test of difference between Novi Pazar and other towns, Sig = .000, Novi Pazar (M = 17.62, SD = 4.89), Belgrade (M = 10.97, SD = 4.72), Kragujevac (M = 13.14, SD = 5.42), Niš (M = 14.14, SD = 5.35), Novi Sad (M = 10.57, SD = 4.57).

41 Brown-Forsythe test of difference between religious beliefs F (7, 816) = 28.7, sig = 0.0. Games-Howel test proves the difference between Muslim religion (M = 17.50, SD = 4.82), Eastern Orthodoxy (M = 13.26, SD = 5.31) and atheism (M = 8.29, SD = 4.01).

## An analysis of nationalism among secondary school students

Before addressing the value-based pattern of nationalism as a constituent part of “right-wing ideology” let’s see what is it that determines right-wing in this region. In a wider sense, “right-wing” can be determined by the belief social hierarchy is justified “regardless of whether or not based on legally unequal and racially justified standing” (for instance, Nazi Germany), while, the “left-wing,” on the other end of the ideological spectre, is determined by the belief in equality and anti-capitalism – given that capitalism, due to its “irrationality manifested in periodical crises and in the rule of capital and goods over people, necessarily generates social inequalities, and so, cannot be basically reformed” (Bakić, 2019: 26–27). Consequently, it’s quite obvious that we refer to any of Serbia’s that call themselves “socialist” as truly “leftist;” neither representatives of social democracy to whom capitalism is justified are leftist, the same as social liberals who advocate upgrading of capitalism in order to “neutralize too big social inequalities that may threaten it” (Bakić, 2019: 28).

And yet, to define “radical” and “extreme” right-wing – though we cannot clearly point out to the criterion for defining these notions since they are “relational” and dependent on time, place and context on the grounds of which they are interpreted – we can start from the “belief” that in the struggle for their ideological goals fascism and Nazism have “brought about most suffering to the humankind in its history, and in the shortest possible while” (Bakić, 2019: 34); hence, “extreme” are the parties that “ideologically and organizationally resemble them the most” (Ibid.). Rights extremism and neo-fascism mostly resemble conventional fascism. Rightist radicalism that is probably mostly spread, does not necessarily renounce democracy and does not openly advocate racism, statements not against parliamentarians, but does have elements of fascism because it is after exclusive nationalism, xenophobia and authoritarianism (Kuljić, 2002; Bakić, 2019). Radically right-wing currents usually deny any connection with the extreme right-wing and fascism (having an eye on electoral outcomes), “although some of their supporters may be ideologically close to fascist movements of the past or extreme rightist movements of the present time” (Bakić, 2019: 38).

Unlike the “right-wing” that is a more comprehensive notion than nationalism, nationalism denotes an actual form of social hierarchy closely connected with “ethnicity.” An “ethnic group” as a notion means the same as “nation” and has to do with certain community members’ awareness about cultural differences between them and people from another community. According to Eriksen, ethnicity is actually about some group’s attitudes rather than characteristics. The relationship between nationalism and ethnicity is a complex one – since nationalism, like ethnically motivated ideologies, stresses out “cultural similarity between members of one group and thus implicitly draws a border-line between those members and other people who remain outsiders. However, unlike ideologies of ethnic groups that may and may not be after keeping a state under control, “a nationalist holds that state borders have to correspond with cultural ones” (Eriksen, 2004:22).

When it comes to reproduction of ethnic stereotypes and nationalism it has to be noted that Serbia’s elites are still playing on nationalism. An interesting finding of a survey of political elites shows that in the period 1989–2015 nationalism has not weakened in any significant way, just mildly when compared with the year 1989 (Petrović, Radoman, 2016). Explaining this finding authors of the survey noted that ever since 2000 nationalism has been generated through “unsettled” status for Kosovo and discourse denying Kosovo’s independence and through the question of status for Serbs in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Montenegro; further on, “the incumbent regime’s nationalism is especially manifest in its policy of rehabilitation and revisionism; the ruling party has seemingly abandoned its radically rightist ideology, but has not given up revisionism as its major segment” (Petrović, Radoman, 2016).

All this provides a frame for interpretation of political climate in Serbia. On the one hand, the ruling coalition led by the Serbian Progressive Party is still playing on nationalism as a “time-tested mechanism for mobilizing the public opinion at time of people’s dissatisfaction with economic situation of the country” (Petrović, Radoman, 2019), and on the rhetoric about “the safeguard of Kosovo,” though in somewhat softer tones since two goals (both EU and Kosovo) are being combined; on the other hand, the political elite is after “wiping out” the country’s anti-fascist past, while promoting the ideas of overt collaborationists in the WWII. While Ljotić’s movement and the Chetnik movement were rehabilitated in the 1990s, these years we are witnessing rehabilitation of historical figures from the period of collaboration

with the fascist regime; hence, we are witnesses of ideological continuity. Serbia is the only country of the post-socialist block that passed a law on rehabilitation (2006), which marked the beginning of institutional revisionism. Though other countries of the block practice other forms of revisionism (Hungary, Poland, Ukraine), “Serbia is the only post-socialist country in which political and intellectual elites came up with such mode of revisionism” (Radanović, 2017).

Shortly after the Appellate Court turned down the attempt at having Milan Nedić rehabilitated in 2019, during her official visit to Argentina the Premier of Serbia placed a wreath at the tomb of Milan Stojadinović, the ex-premier of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia (collaborationist of fascist Italy and Nazi Germany, and Benito Mussolini’s follower). The Premier explained it was all about honoring the memory of “a Serb” and “Premier of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia.” Many figures strongly reacted at her statement, saying that “an act as such makes a part of the ruling policy that equalizes fascist and anti-fascist, and executioners and their victims, allegedly meritorious alike for our state.” (Danas, 2019).

According to Eriksen, the notion about a shared origin is often a crucial component of ethnic identity, and this is why interpretation of history is so important to ideologies that are after justifying, strengthening and preserving a specific ethnic identity (Eriksen, 2004:108).

Radical left-wing inspired by nationalism of the past and close to racial ideologies is mostly to be found in youth, rightist organizations and football fan groups. Some of the latter were active throughout the 1990s, and especially so during preparations for the Pride 2009 and in street violence during the Pride 2010 (such as *Obraz*,<sup>42</sup> *SNP 1389*, *Naši*, “*United Force*” – fans of the soccer team “*Rad*”). The organizations such as *Alternativa*, *Zavetnici* and neo-Nazi *Srbska akcija* the actions of which mostly target the University, emerged later on. Youth groups like those are active in many European countries.<sup>43</sup>

One’s sense of closeness to his/her own state/nation figures as one of possible indicators of nationalism. An explanation provided in the survey of the youth in 2018 quoted “a strong bond with Serbia” (57 percent of interviewees agreed with the quote “I am proud of being a citizen of Serbia;”

42 The activity of this organization was banned pursuant to the June 2012 Decision of the Constitutional Court of the Republic of Serbia.

43 Izvor: <https://www.6yka.com/novosti/kako-su-srbi-postali-idoli-nacistima-i-desnicarima-evrope>

the said bond is actually ethnic by nature rather than a bond with Serbia as a political community given that most young people do not trust institutions and are dissatisfied with the situation of democracy in Serbia (Popadić et al, 2019: 72). This can also be interpreted as growing nationalistic feelings among the youth that inspire them symbolically and psychologically and thus compensate for the bad situation of the country. In this sense, nationalism provides a sense of “safety and rootedness” that assist one’s orientation towards the world, and boost one’s sense of importance by being “a part of a group narcissism” (Ž. Trebješanin, quoting Golubović, et al. 1995:135).

As for the denotations used in this survey, the notion of ethnocentric nationalism is close to the one of “exclusive nationalism” characterized by exclusivity, intolerance and chauvinism (Golubović et al., 1995:135). “Ethnocentrism is defined as overemphasizing of values of one ethnic group, and emphasizing advantages and supremacy of one’s own group, as collective thinking that is occasionally manifested in hatred of other groups” (Ibid.). “Nationalist is infatuated with power-complex arising from a sense of individual helplessness and insecurity;” one’s own ethnic group is usually treated as superior to ‘others.’ Such hierarchy easily gives birth to ethno-centrism and aggression since it operates within dichotomies – ‘moral us – immoral them,’ ‘right side – wrong side,’ ‘strong – weak’ and ‘domination – subjugation’” (Ibid.).<sup>44</sup>

The scale of nationalism is divided into two scales: the scale of “organic” and the scale of “ethnocentric” nationalism. Given that they both provide the same arguments as the survey of general population conducted in 2018, it is possible to compare their findings. Unlike the ethnocentric nationalism described in the paragraphs above, organic nationalism or organicism related to stances on one’s own nation, the stances that overemphasize “a nation’s cultural and biological unity” (Pešić, 2016: 494) and “boil down all the members of one nation to one big US, deprived of individual autonomy” (Dimitrijević, 1998; Petrović, Radoman, 2019).

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44 According to Eriksen, “ethnic differences do not depend on cultural differences but on relations between groups, while these groups may but may not be culturally different.” The Yugoslav wars testify of this assumption.

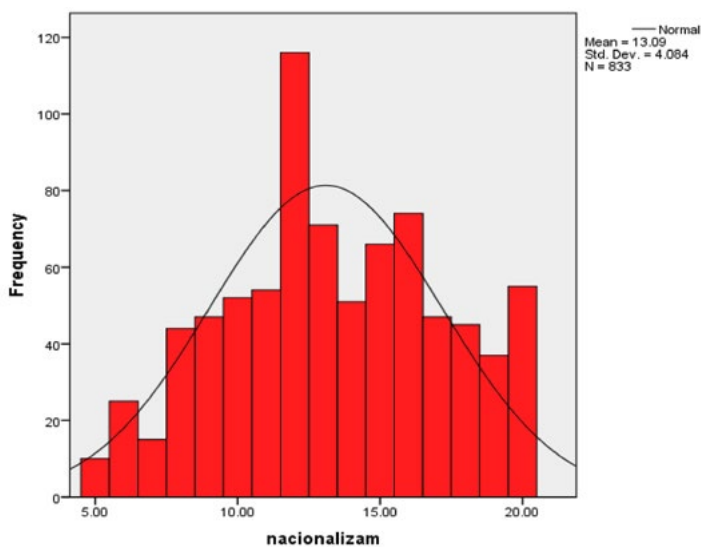
Table 8. Statements that make up the scales of nationalism

<i>Organic nationalism</i>	<i>Ethnocentric nationalism</i>
Survival of one's nation is a main duty of every individual.	Ethnically-mixed marriages are less stable than other marriages.
A nation that respects not its tradition is doomed.	A person can only feel safe in the environment where members of his nation are in the majority.
Our nation's past has to be venerated.	It is possible for nations to cooperate but not to fully trust one another.
Every inch of this land has to be sacred to each of us.	Ethnicity has to be a major criterion of choosing a spouse.
	Ethnic diversity undermines the unity of our society.
	Having all members of a nation in one nation-state is the best solution.

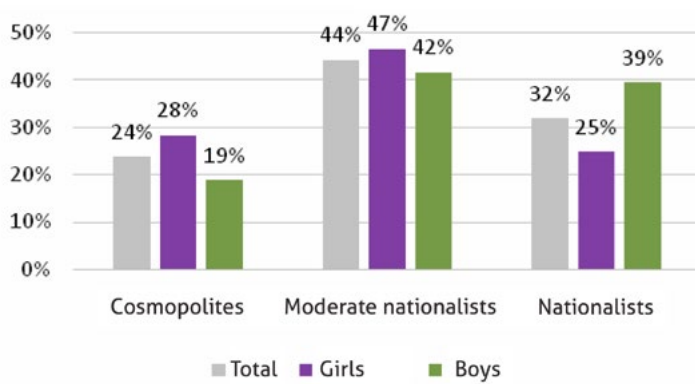
The scale of organic nationalism shows that students mildly incline towards nationalism.<sup>45</sup> In other words, 24% of them do not support nationalistic arguments, 44% are “moderate nationalists,” while 32% fully support all nationalistic argumentation. Girls’ statements are less nationalistic than those of boys, and they manifest more empathy for minority groups; the finding itself can be interpreted through the gender-based component of nationalistic ideology. Namely, various components of nationalistic policies – separatism, chauvinism, racism or marginalization of minority groups – are, as a rule, more than close to patriarchal policies against women (Papić, 2012: 304). The 1990s were marked by most violent abuse against women; women’s bodies were often seen as “instruments” against entire nations and their cultural identities. Hence, considering the continuity of nationalistic ideas throughout this region, it seems to be only logical that girls manifest more tolerance for “other” ethnic groups and are less tolerant to nationalism than boys.

45 The analysis of reliability proved a good value of Kronbach's Alpha (Alpha=0. 744). Maximum on the scale = 20, minimum = 4, arithmetical mean = 13.09; a mild curve towards nationalism – theoretically arithmetical mean = 12.

Graph 6. Distribution of interviewees on the scale of organic nationalism

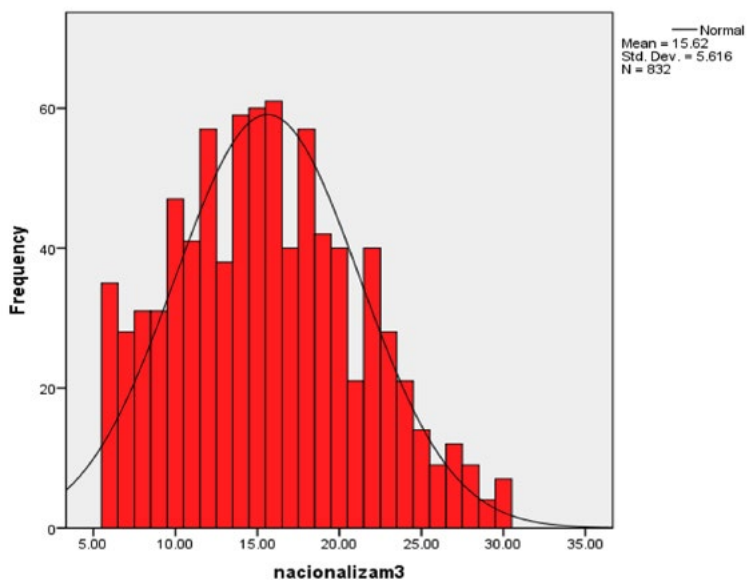


Graph 7. Distribution of answers on the scale of organic nationalism by gender

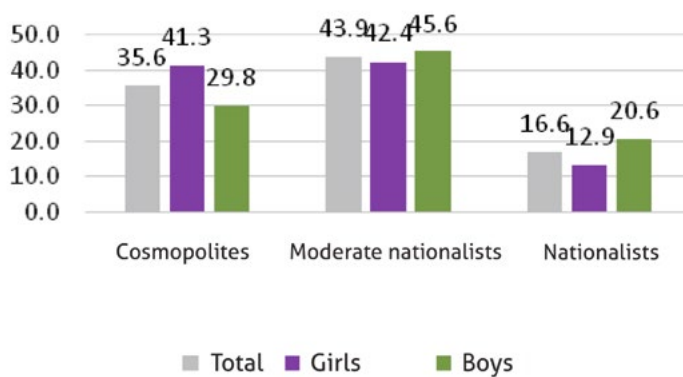




Graph 8. Distribution of interviewees on the scale of ethnocentric nationalism



Graph 9. Distribution of answers on the scale of ethnocentric nationalism by gender



The findings of the scale of ethnocentric nationalism<sup>46</sup> show that the highest percentage of students in the sample can be characterized as “moderate nationalists” (43.9%), while 16.6% support “nationalistic” arguments, and 35.6% opt for “cosmopolitan” statements. Girls’ statements are once again more liberal than those expressed by boys.

The following table presents average values of all statements used to measure nationalism as compared by the stances on same issues of the 2018 survey of general population.

Tabela 5. Average values of of all statements used to measure nationalism (1–5)\*

Statements	2018 General population	2019 Students
<i>Organic nationalism</i>		
Survival of one’s nation is a main duty of every individual.	3.98	3.43
A nation that respects not its tradition is doomed.	3.86	3.05
The past of our people must be sanctity.	4.08	3.38
Every inch of this land has to be sacred to each of us.	4.12	3.23
<i>Ethnocentric nationalism</i>		
Ethnically-mixed marriages are less stable than other marriages.	2.04	1.96
A person can only feel safe in the environment where the members of his nation are in majority.	2.70	2.72
It is possible for nations to cooperate but not to fully trust one another.	3.03	3.11
Ethnicity has to be a major criterion of choosing a spouse.	2.34	2.44
Ethnic diversity undermines the unity of our society.	2.26	2.50
Having all members of a nation in one nation-state is the best solution.	2.88	2.94
High exposure to foreign movies, music and books impairs national culture.	2.72	2.20
Serbia should look after its own interests, even at expense of conflicts with other nations.	2.93	2.69

\* 1 = total disagreement; 5 = full agreement;

46 The analysis of reliability proved a high value of Cronbach’s Alpha (Alpha=0.766). Maximum = 30, minimum = 6, arithmetic mean = 15.62, and theoretically arithmetic mean = 18; a mild curve towards left, i.e. towards interviewees not classified as ethnocentric nationalists.

According to a descriptive analysis, the average values are higher than 3 in the arguments related to organic nationalism secondary school students are with, while values of the statements that measure ethnocentric nationalism are about or beyond 3, which indicates “moderate” nationalism among students.

A comparative analysis of the two periods shows that statements on the scale of organic nationalism were more conservative in both cases; or, when it comes to ethnocentrism, interviewees seem to be more cautious about arguments dealing with inter-ethnic relations, advocating ethnically “pure” nations and contain the elements of “ethnic distance.” It can be concluded that organic perception of one’s nation predominates. It is interesting to note that the average values of the statements measuring organic nationalism are higher among general population than the average values measuring ethnocentric nationalism among the youth. The said speaks in favor of the assumption that secondary school students – considering their inadequate life experience and no memory of the 1990s wars – may be more consenting with the quoted argumentations than older generations (general population). Findings also prove that expectations that interviewees from general population could be more agreeable with the statements presented on the scale of organic nationalism were justified.

Apart from these scales, the questionnaire included yet another for measuring attitudes towards the past and the 1990s wars, especially focusing on Serbia’s responsibility. This was meant to assess students’ attitude towards this period in history, the way their memories of that political context have been formed, now that almost three decades have elapsed since developments that had brought about Yugoslavia’s disintegration.

Findings of the scale of attitude towards the past and accountability<sup>47</sup> show that secondary school students’ stances are muddled, as many as 42% hold “moderate” statements, 29% consider Serbs most responsible for war crimes committed in the 1990s, while 29% take that Serbs were not at all responsible of wars and crimes.

The following table may better illustrate the above. It shows that a high percentage of students hold not clear statements on genocide, cannot decide whether or not Mladić and Karadžić are war criminals, and that one

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47 The analysis of reliability shows a high value of Kronbach’s Alpha (Alpha=0.880). Maximum = 25, minimum = 5, arithmetic mean = 13.84 (theoretic arithmetic mean = 15); these figures indicate unclear statements on the crimes committed in the 1990s.

out of two students agrees that Serbs are responsible for wars in Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosovo. The majority opts for the stance that “all nations” were responsible for wars, and about the same percentage of students accepts the argument that responsibility lies with political elites rather than with “people.”

**Table 6. Statements on the 1990s wars**

<i>Statements</i>	<i>I totally disagree/I disagree</i>	<i>I neither agree nor disagree</i>	<i>I fully agree/I agree</i>
As a nation, Serbs are responsible for the crimes committed in Croatia in the 1990s.	49.8%	36.2%	14.0%
As a nation, Serbs are responsible for the crimes committed in Bosnia-Herzegovina in the 1990s.	46.1%	35.5%	18.4%
As a nation, Serbs are responsible for the crimes committed in Kosovo in the 1990s.	51.3%	33.7%	15.0%
All nations are equally responsible for the war, rather than Serbs alone	13.6%	19.9%	66.4%
Political elites are to blame, not the people.	6.3%	30.1%	63.6%
Genocide against Bosniak population was committed in Srebrenica.	15.7%	46.1%	38.2%
Ratko Mladić and Radovan Karadžić are war criminals.	22.2%	46.6%	31.2%
I do not have enough information about the wars waged in the 1990s.	27.4%	24.7%	47.9%
Reconciliation between Serbs and Croats is possible.	30.1%	26.7%	43.2%
Reconciliation between Serbs and Bosniaks is possible.	21.1%	25.1%	53.8%
Reconciliation between Serbs and Albanians is possible.	54.3%	22.2%	23.5%

Answers to yet another question reflect the attitude towards nationalism – the question about Kosovo’s independence. The following table presents students’ responses.

Tabela 7. What is your stand on the status of Kosovo?

Kosovo is an independent state	11.9 %
Kosovo should remain within Serbia	53.1 %
Kosovo should be partitioned between Serbs and Albanians	9.7 %
I do not know	19.5 %
Something else	5.8 %

The highest percentage of interviewees (53) take that Kosovo should remain a part of Serbia, while almost 12 percent see it as an independent state. Out of 55 comments on the question, most frequent were the following: *Kosovo is not a state; Kosovo is Albanian, and Kosovo and Metohija*. The term *Metohija* was also added to Kosovo in the very questionnaire.

Such statements correspond to finding of public opinion surveys, including the one conducted in 2019: 71 percent of interviewees would oppose the government's possible decision to recognize Kosovo in return for the membership of EU.<sup>48</sup> A question posed to young interviewees in 2018 was differently termed – “Would you say Serbia would eventually recognize Kosovo's independence?” Almost one-fourth of interviewees take it would never recognize it as an independence state, while one-third of them thinks contrary. The survey demonstrated a correlation between the stance about “never recognizing” and the negative stand on the European Union.

Considering that they could not possibly recollect Serbia's warring past in the 1990s, the interviewees in the sample seem to hold a clear-cut view about the status of Kosovo. The number of their commentaries on the question itself testify not only of their involvement in the ongoing debate about “a national question” but also of the permanent symbolic significance of the myth of Kosovo. According to Skelzen Gashi, who analyzed the manner in which textbooks all over the region presented crucial events in the history of Kosovo, history textbooks for elementary and secondary schools in Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro, Albania and Serbia are telling quite different stories.<sup>49</sup> Accordingly, lessons touching on questions such as “Who were first settlers in the area?” are providing completely different answers, Serb's crimes against Albanians throughout history are not given a men-

48 Source: <https://kossev.info/istrazivanje-75-gradjana-srbije-bi-cin-priznanja-kosova-smatralo-izdajom/>

49 Source: [http://kfos.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/Historia\\_e\\_Kosoves\\_SHG\\_ENG.pdf](http://kfos.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/Historia_e_Kosoves_SHG_ENG.pdf)

tion in Serbian textbooks, the same as Albanians' crimes against Serbs in 1941–44 are elaborated in Serbian textbooks but not in those published in Kosovo and Albania.

Further on, the analysis shows that developments in Kosovo in 1989–98 were presented quite contradictorily. For instance, abolishment of Kosovo's autonomy is not given a mention in Serbian and Macedonian textbooks, while textbooks used in Albania and Montenegro "treat the issue superficially. For their part, textbooks published in Kosovo "elaborate it in detail," but distort historical facts.<sup>50</sup> Besides, not a single textbook in the region touches on Serbia's discrimination against Kosovo Albanians in the domains of economy, education and healthcare. Interpretations of historical facts as such are reasons for concern, says Gashi, as they are putting across hostile messages to future generation in the Balkan region.

"Historical consciousness is a major factor of a society's value-system" (Stojanović, 2010). In this context, ideas and notions that are construed about the "times past," especially about the Battle of Kosovo and its mythical significance, are becoming a major aspect of the manner in which young people see their society, themselves and others. However, this very picture about the past (ibid.) that predominates the public opinion is created according to the present needs or, to put it more precisely, to suit political elites. One should take into consideration, when it comes to the use of history, that it is possible to thoroughly change interpretations, but very "historical facts" as well" (ibid.) As of the late 1980s the war propaganda needed to radically distort notions about the past by replacing the idea of socialism with nationalistic ideology. "Ideological and psychological preparations for Yugoslav wars had change history to such extent as to have the old myth of brotherhood and unity and the new myth of eternal historical conflict between South Slav nations switch places." In other words, the propaganda badly needed a "fabricated history of conflicts that would justify the war that was under preparation" (Stojanović, 2010).

This ideology and denial of accountability for the 1990s wars are still actual. As it seems, new generations are uncritically accepting the knowledge they get from the educational system, rather than forming their own opinions. And now possibly could they form statements on the past different from those propagated through the educational system? Revisionism

50 Source: <https://javno.rs/istrazivanje/oprecne-verzije-istorije-kosova-u-balkanskim-udzbenicima>)

in textbooks is most dangerous, says historian Dubravka Stojanović, since education is the most vulnerable part of the system. Namely, contents of textbooks have been changed “literally overnight,” and the 1990s wars were included in history textbooks while they were still on.<sup>51</sup>

## Statements on Roma

The situation of the Roma community in Serbia is a very bad one. In the period 2005–15, from the very beginning of the Decade of Roma Inclusion, education was placed at the top of the list for improvement of the situation of Roma. The goals of the Decade were to have the problems in healthcare, housing and employment for members of the Roma community solved. As time went by, “the state” seemed to withdraw from strategic settlement of Roma problems, and leave the issue to project financing (Kasumović, 2018a). Because of the state’s “high-handed attitude towards finances” flowing into the country, the outcome of the Decade was assessed as barely successful, except partially in the domain of education (Miladinović, 2018).

Despite all the goals set during the Decade, Roma’s living conditions are still more than bad, which turns them into one of least privileged ethnic groups in the country (according to last census, there are 156,000 Roma in Serbia; unofficially the figure amounts to 500,000). The 2017 analysis of the position of Roma in Western Balkan countries quotes breaches of their fundamental rights, and obstructions they run into in the domains of healthcare, education, housing and employment. One of major preconditions for improving their situation is to ensure their education. According to the said analysis, Serbia is second on the list by the depth of the gap between Roma and non-Roma population. Although the rate of Roma children’s school enrollment is the highest in the Western Balkans, one out of six Roma children still remain outside the educational system. Therefore, as much as 65% of young Roma ages 18–21 have not finished elementary school. The deepest gap between Roma and non-Roma population compared with other Western Balkan countries is in the domain of higher and high education; just 1% of members of the Roma community have graduated from university. Beside, despite the fact that first generations of Roma admitted to the university after

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51 Source: <https://www.blic.rs/vesti/drustvo/dubravka-stojanovic-udzbenici-istorije-n sluze-obrazovanju-vec-predvojnicoj-obuci/krewbsh>

2005 have graduated long ago, just a small number of them have jobs, and even fewer have jobs suited to their qualifications. A considerable number of Roma have emigrated to the West (Kasumović, 2018a).

Inequalities between Roma children and their peers from other ethnic groups are manifest early in their lives – from pre-school onwards Roma have to cope with various forms of discrimination. NGOs dealing with Roma rights claim that some programs they have implemented (such as the work with pre-school children or pedagogic assistance) helped Roma boys and girls be better students to a certain extent.

Poverty is among main reasons why young Roma do not finish their schools. According to a regional survey, almost one half of Roma up to 24 years of age say that having finished elementary school they gave up further education because they could not afford transportation, textbooks, etc.

The problem of underage marriages is also among the reasons why Roma girls are giving up schooling. According to UNDP, 40% of Roma women in Serbia, ages 20–49, was married before turning 18 years, which means that is the case of one out of three Roma women.<sup>52</sup> UNDP report for 2017 quotes that only 9% of Roma women are employed, one out of two Roma women with jobs have no health or pension insurance, while 2 out of 3 have no funds of their own. “Patriarchy is still deep-rooted in the Roma community,” says activist Jasmina Drmaku.<sup>53</sup>

Roma are underprivileged in other social spheres as well. The employment rate among Roma population is pretty low. According to UNDP report for the year 2017, only 21% of Roma men and women had steady jobs. The number of jobless Roma women is four times bigger than the number of jobless Roman men. Financial dependence and the lack of education are major factors that keep patriarchy in the Roma community alive. Last but not least, scores of stereotypes about Roma are among the biggest obstacles to a higher employment rate within their community.

Racism is very much present in the bias against Roma. Here, however, we have a mixture of racist, ethnic and class stereotypes. Eriksen uses quotes in the term “race,” in order to indicate that it was construed; when one takes into consideration that various ethnic groups have intermingled throughout history, speaking about some “clear-cut borders between races

52 Source: [https://www.rs.undp.org/content/serbia/sr/home/presscenter/articles/2018/te\\_ak-polo\\_aj-roma-na-zapadnom-balkanu.html](https://www.rs.undp.org/content/serbia/sr/home/presscenter/articles/2018/te_ak-polo_aj-roma-na-zapadnom-balkanu.html)

53 Source: <https://www.bbc.com/serbian/lat/srbija-47851381>



is senseless” (Eriksen, 2004:19). Further on, no “serious” scientific theory has ever proved that different cultures can be explained by heredity (which is closest to the concept of racism). However, although “race” is not realistic in some “biological” sense, it exists as a cultural construct and actually affects certain groups of people.

Further on, borders between ethnicity and race are often blurred; therefore, while ethnically based ideologies stress out common origin of all members of a group, some ethnic groups can be “racified,” i.e. certain unchangeable traits ascribed to them. “New racism,” according to Eriksen, focuses on “cultural differences,” rather than heredity, but the goal remains the same – to justify social hierarchies. Societies prone to isolating culturally different groups of people, those who are not exactly fluent in a language the majority speaks and perceives them as “Others” because of their low economic status can make assimilation of groups that look “physically different” (which is also a cultural construct) pretty problematic. This is the case of the Roma community in Serbia, and a case of intermixed racism and class-based discrimination.

In Serbia, Roma were proclaimed a national minority in 2003. According to activists for Roma rights who often refer to “racism,” “as many as 70% of non-Roma population would never marry a Roma, over 50% would not want to have them in their families, while 30% of interviewees would hate having a Roma his/her superior at work. Such findings are worrisome as they lead towards racist attitudes.”<sup>54</sup>

This survey used six statements for making the scale of anti-Roma orientation (Table 12).

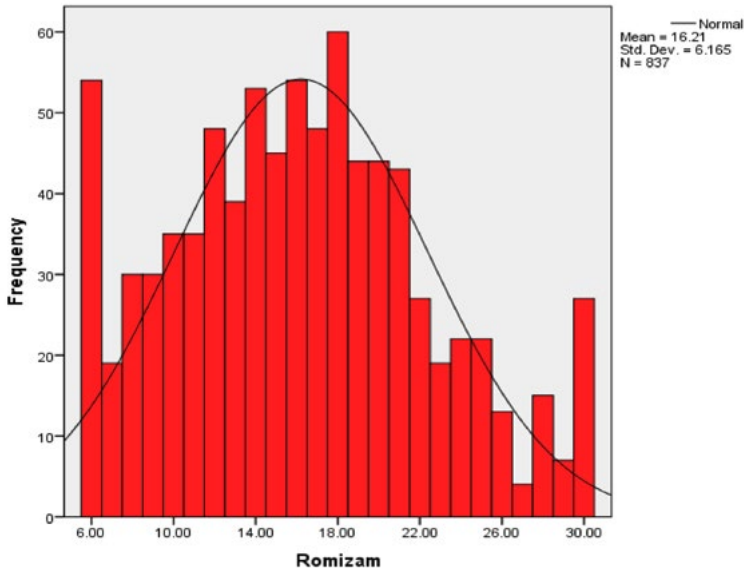
The scale of attitudes towards the Roma minority,<sup>55</sup> shows that 16% of interviewed students hold extreme views about Roma, 40% of views are moderate, while 40% tolerant.

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54 Source: <https://www.juznevesti.com/Drushtvo/Rasizam-prema-Romima-sve-prisutnji.sr.html>

55 The analysis of reliability proved a high value of Cronbach’s Alpha (Alpha=0.835). Maximum = 30, minimum = 6, arithmetic mean = 16.21, and theoretically arithmetic mean = 18.

Graph 10. Distribution of interviewees at the scale of attitudes towards Roma



**The scale comprises the following arguments:**

1. Roma are mentally less capable of learning.
2. Roma would not learn, they prefer street-begging.
3. Roma are simply too lazy to learn.
4. Roma are dirty by nature.
5. Roma would not work and that's why they are jobless.
6. Roma are bearing more children so as to use them in street-begging.

By comparing the average values of all the above-mentioned arguments with statements presented in the 2011 survey, we can see that interviewees are more tolerant now and less biased about Roma. In 2019, 71% of interviewees approve the argument that *Roma should be totally equal in a society*. The values indicating racism (*Roma are mentally less capable of learning; Roma are dirty by nature*) are lower at both scales, while the values indicative of “ethnic” stereotypes (*Roma would not learn, they would rather street-beg*) are higher, and hint at “biological racism.”

Table 8. Average values of statements on Roma (1–5)\*

Statements	2011	2019
Roma are in many ways discriminated against in our society.	3.29	3.44
Roma are mentally less capable of learning.	2.42	2.15
Roma often lack the conditions for learning at their homes, and that's why they are poor students.		3.56
Roma would not learn, they prefer street-begging.	3.19	2.94
Roma simply too lazy to learn.		2.84
I would share a bench with a Roma student.		3.77
Roma should be fully equal in a society.	3.64	4.06
Roma are dirty by nature.	2.74	2.24
Roma would not work, and that's why they are jobless.		3.00
Roma are bearing more children so as to use them in street-begging.	3.26	3.14
They are treated badly in my school (if there are Roma students in your school).		2.2
I am always standing up for them.	2.70	3.02

\* 1 = total disagreement; 5 – full agreement;

The difference between “racism” and “ethnic” stereotypes is evident in the findings at the scale that presents findings in percentages (Table 14). Accordingly, one student out of ten takes that Roma should not be equal with other citizens, the percentage itself indicating a considerable ethnic distance toward this minority group. Relatively high percentages of the statements such as *Roma would not work, they would rather street-beg* (36%) and *Roma would not work, and that's why they are jobless* (38%) indicate ethnic and social distance toward Roma. Such percentages also indicate the populist discourse about Roma, whereby their dire straits are justified by bio-logicistic and inherent characteristics of a vulnerable group. Although most students are not ill-disposed about Roma, 16% of them still hold highly radical statements about them, the former brimming with ethnic and racist stereotypes. Interestingly, as many as 62.5% of interviewees said they would share a bench with a Roma student – their stance being indicative of social distance toward Roma, like the one about living in the same neighborhood. This stand can

be interpreted as declaratively affirmative and politically correct, but not indicative of some substantial support for the community.

**Table 9. Percentages of stereotyped stands on Roma**

<i>Statements</i>	<i>I totally disagree + I disagree</i>	<i>I neither agree not disagree</i>	<i>I fully agree + I agree</i>
Roma are in many ways discriminated against in our society.	24.6%	20.1%	55.4%
Roma are mentally less capable of learning.	64.4%	17.2%	18.5%
Roma often lack the conditions for learning at their homes, and that's why they are poor students.	20.4%	20.4%	59.1%
Roma would not learn, they prefer street-begging.	38.0%	26.0%	36.0%
Roma simply too lazy to learn.	42.6%	27.4%	30.1%
I would share a bench with a Roma student.	18.4%	19.2%	62.5%
Roma should be fully equal in a society.	11.0%	17.9%	71.1%
Roma are dirty by nature.	59.8%	21.3%	18.8%
Roma would not work, and that's why they are jobless.	35.6%	26.4%	38.0%
Roma are bearing more children so as to use them in street-begging.	29.7%	28.7%	41.6%
They are treated badly in my school (if there are Roma students in your school).	56.6%	28.9%	14.5%
I am always standing up for them.	24.9%	45.9%	29.2%

## An analysis of statements on LGBTQ population

Although the term homophobia is originally defined as fear of homosexuality (Weinbergh, 1994), it also implies both hostility and hatred, and can change its contents depending on times and contexts. American author Gregory Herek was especially dealing with homophobia and sexual prejudices. Social groups are creating social categories, whereby they define certain social sub-groups, either racial, class, gender-based, etc. Predelections as such as so deep-rooted that they are seen as something “natural,” rather than products of social interactions. Sexual orientation is among these categories. In Western societies there are two, more or less mutually exclusive categories of sexual orientations – heterosexual and homosexual, including somewhat silent assent to an individual’s bisexuality and asexuality (Herek, 2004).

Since stereotypes about LGBTQ<sup>56</sup> persons directly depend on contexts and political treatment of marginalized groups, participants in the survey conducted in 2011 were answering queries about LGBTQ population in a more unstable social atmosphere than it is today; the said circumstance was mirrored in the findings. Namely, the first Pride in Serbia was staged a year earlier, in 2010.<sup>57</sup> It was accompanied by scenes of brutality and street violence. The government had failed to react “preventively,” said many, the more so since too many right-wing assaults at members of this vulnerable group and homophobic statements had permeated the public space prior to the parade (Radio Free Europe, 2010). Belgrade was practically demolished during the parade, buses and cars were set on fire, seats of liberal political parties were attacked, and a barrack in a Roma settlement was burned down while 5,000 police officers were protecting the Pride. According to some estimates, about 6,000 neo-Nazis, nationalists and football fans were cruising the streets of Belgrade (Petakov, 2017). Ever since, less police

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56 The notion refers to lesbians, gays, bisexual person, trans and queer persons.

57 Following the violence that broke out in 2001 (when participants were brutally beaten by clero-fascist groups in the very center of the city) the Pride was banned in 2009 only to be staged in 2010. It was once again accompanied by violence and mass protests of ultra-rightist organizations. Prides have become regular only after 2014.

officers have been guarding Prides, visibility of queer persons has grown,<sup>58</sup> same-sex partnerships have been recognized in the region, and provided the opportunity for parenthood. However, many fundamental rights of non-heterosexual persons are still jeopardized, such as the right to protection against violence and the right to changed IDs for trans persons. The right to marriage and family life is still far from being legalized, and statements on LGBTQ persons<sup>59</sup> are still brimming with bias, especially about the right to parenthood for LGBTQ persons.

Though the media have been paying more attention to the problems of LGBTQ population over past years – also because of Ana Brnabić’s premiership – the population still remains rather invisible and copes with discrimination by political leaderships. Namely, appointment of a woman who has outed herself as lesbian barely contributed to the situation of non-heterosexual persons – their same-sex partnerships are still not allowed to be registered, they cannot adopt children, while only heterosexual persons are entitled to AI. Lesbians who want to have their own babies have to travel abroad for AI in sperm banks or exercise their right to parenthood in some informal way when one of the two partners remain invisible as a mother. Symbolically and actually, the fact that Serbia has a lesbian premier who lives in a same-sex partnership and whose partner has exercised her right to parenthood via AI does not mean much to “ordinary” people from LGBTQ population.

How does such situation of LGBTQ population affect “non-straight” teenagers as the vulnerable sub-group, but also generations that would rather stay in their mother country, and have their partnerships and families recognized by the law? LGBTQ population are most discriminated against in the domain of marital and family life. The main purpose of a draft law on same-sex partnerships – shelved for years waiting to parliamentary consideration – is to ensure some basic rights to persons living in same-sex partnerships:

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58 Queer is an “umbrella” term denoting persons who do not identify themselves within heterosexual norms or within gender binary; it can also denote heterosexual persons who do not fit into hetero-normative frames. .

59 According to public opinion polls conducted in 2010, 67% citizens of Serbia take that homosexuality is a disease, and 56% see it as a threat to the society (<http://gsa.org.rs/wp-content/uploads/2012/03/Istrazivanje-Predrasude-Na-Videlo-2010-GSA.pdf>). Findings in 2014 show that one citizen out of two sees homosexuality as a disease, and more than 80% of them would not want gays or lesbians in their families. (<http://socijalnoukljucivanje.gov.rs/rs/objavljen-godisnji-izvestaj-poverenika-za-zastituvopravnosti-za-2014-godinu>).

e.g. to be able to visit his/her partner in hospital (which they cannot as they are not recognized as members of family), shared property, inheritance, alimony, social and healthcare insurance, etc.

As for Serbia's legislation, the Constitution does not provide the notion of "sexual orientation,"<sup>60</sup> but does provide the foundation for bylaws containing explicit formulations.<sup>61</sup> Apart from legislation pertinent to courts of law, there are two independent regulatory bodies – the commissioner for protection of equality and the commissioner for the protection of citizens' rights – that are also tasked with supervising the exercise of rights of LGBTQ population. However, although Serbia's is one of the biggest LGBTQ community in the region, the problem of its legal recognition is still alarming (such as in the case of AI procedure or IDs for trans persons). Further on, Serbia's legislation has no provision against indirect discrimination (not getting job for being gay); such persons are usually discriminated again in a round-about way, for some "neutral" reasons, although the actual one is their sexual orientation.

Article 21 of the Anti-Discrimination Law has two major paragraphs: "Sexual orientation is a matter of privacy and no one shall be made to publicly declare his/her sexual orientation;" and "Everyone shall have the right to declare his/her sexual orientation, and every discriminatory action caused by it shall be forbidden."<sup>62</sup> The law is important because it protects individual right to privacy, given that visibility is among major dimensions of LGBTQ person's everyday life (Radoman, 2019).

As for trans persons, they have to cope with numbers of difficulties when it comes to legal recognition of their gender identity – the issue that has not been regulated in Serbia up to now; the very discrepancy between their gender identity and information in all of their IDs complicates all the spheres of their everyday life – their position in the labor market, in the

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60 Serbia's Constitution provides equality to everyone and equal protection against discrimination. This is the basic provision for bylaws banning discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation.

61 Apart from the Criminal Law many other laws related to LGBTQ population have been passed up to now: Law against Discrimination, Law on Gender Equality, Labor Law, Law on Professional Rehabilitation and Employment of Persons with Disabilities, Law on Higher Education, Law on the Youth, Law on Social Protection, Broadcasting Law and Law on Public Information, etc. (For more information see: Labris, 2017.

62 [http://www.paragraf.rs/propisi/zakon\\_o\\_zabrani\\_diskriminacije.html](http://www.paragraf.rs/propisi/zakon_o_zabrani_diskriminacije.html).

process of applying for a job and in health insurance. All in all, they are constantly discriminated against since they have no access to IDs suited to their “new” gender, and the fact that they are not entitled to have their IDs changed (including name, gender and personal identity number) deprives them of their basic human rights. New documents can be issued only to trans persons who have surgically changed their gender at birth. The rest – those who have not made their final decisions yet, cannot afford surgeries and complicated medical procedures and have some other reasons not to undergo a total change of personality – simply cannot do anything about IDs that have been originally issued to them.

Further on, the way trans persons are perceived in the society statements in the way of their social integration. Namely, the society expects a person’s gender identity and gender declaration to correspond to his/her biological gender and stereotypical gender role. In Serbia, trans persons are exposed to various forms of violence and the hostility that exceeds that for the lesbian and gay population. Barely any survey about transphobia<sup>63</sup> has been conducted, since the problem of trans identity is not considered as important as sexual orientation. “Various public opinion polls cover the issue of trans person at a declarative level only, while the very questionnaires used never touch on them explicitly” (Radoman, 2019, thesis). This is why the survey presented here presents interviewees with only two choices to make (“I support trans persons’s right to gender change” and “Trans persons are as worthy of and stable for parenthood as all the rest.”).

In most cases violence against LGBTQ persons either remains “invisible,” inadequately punished or officially not seen as a crime and registered as such. Information about such assaults are usually publicized in reports by non-governmental organizations or surveys they conduct. Findings of the survey the Rainbow (Duga) Association and the Social Care Center “St. Sava” conducted on a sample of 70 interviewees show that 64.3 percent of LGBT persons experienced some form of violence; psychological violence takes the first place (47.4 percent), physical the second (39.5 percent). Numbers of

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63 “Trans-phobia denotes fear of, hatred and disgust for, and discrimination against persons whose actual or perceived gender declaration does not correspond to social expectations of a person’s gender. Basic characteristics of trans-phobia are non-recognition and denial of a person’s perception and declaration of his/her gender identity (“Trans persons in Serbia: an analysis of situation and a draft legal solution,” 2015:4).



LGBT persons (32.5 percent) have been subjected to violence for years in a row (“Family violence against LGBT persons in Serbia,” 207). LGBT victims of violence usually do not report to the police out of fear that they would thus declare their orientation. Besides, most people trust not institutions – either the police or prosecution – which means that LGBTQ persons inadequately protected, violence against them invisible in their communities and can barely rely on anyone (Radoman, 2017).

Quite often LGBTQ persons cannot seek safe haven with their families; on the contrary, they are victims of their families, threatened by family members and relatives, exposed to attempts at “turning them into normal persons” or enforceable medical treatment, expelled from their homes, etc. (Mršević, 2015). Violence against LGBTQ children usually does not end in their families; it is followed by various forms of stigmatization, in classrooms, among their peers, at work and in other spheres of everyday life. Lack of protection in primary families often triggers of alcoholism, drug abuse and socially unacceptable behaviors and health problems. The status of LGBTQ persons within their own families is a problem per se given that their own parents have to cope with homophobia – personal, subjective on the one hand, and external and social on the other. In Serbia, such parents are mostly concerned with the physical safety of their children (Mršević, 2015).

To end with, it has to be noted that LGBTQ persons are struggling for their fundamental rights against the backdrop of institutions that have been barely punishing hate speech for years and in the society without laws on same-sex partnerships. With this in mind, homophobic views of young interviewees, evident in the surveys conducted up to now, do not come as a surprise. The findings of the 2015 survey show that only one-fourth of younger interviewees see persons of different sexual orientation as “acceptable” to a certain extent (one-fifth of them is “neutral” while as many as 54 percent think badly about lesbians and gays). Further on, young people are (mostly) distancing themselves from LGBTQ persons<sup>64</sup> (the study uses term “homosexuals,” Tomanović, Stanojević, 2015: 74). Authors of the said study say in conclusion, “Apart from ethnic, the greatest distance is on people of different

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64 According to the study, young people in Serbia do not differ much from their peers throughout the region. “The smallest distance is on students and pensioners, but then it is greater and greater on persons of different ethnic origin only to culminate on the issue of homosexuals.” (Tomanović et al. 2015: 84). The situation has barely changed when compared with the findings of the 2011 survey.

sexual orientation” (Tomanović, Stanojević, 2015: 84). Such information is a major indicator of the state of affairs in Serbia when it comes to attitudes towards LGBTQ population.

The findings of the surveys on homophobia among the youth does not come as surprise. The one conducted in 2015 shows that only one-fourth of young interviewees see persons of different sexual orientation as “acceptable to a certain extent” (one-fifth are neutral about it, while as many as 54% of them holds negative statements on lesbians and gays). Young people are also manifesting the biggest social distance toward LGBT persons<sup>65</sup> (the study quoted uses the term “homosexuals,” Tomanović, Stanojević, 2015: 74). Such findings speak for themselves about the situation of LGBTQ population and the way they are treated in Serbia.

From a psychological point of view, homophobia is a form of defensive fear – a person’s negative statements are actually defensive in the situations when that person identifies an analogy between a homosexual person and his/her inner, unconscious conflict over and uncertainty about his/her own gender or sexual orientation. Inner conflicts are expressed through hostility. In this study the term homophobia is used in a larger sense so that it comprises a social dimension – ideologically hued bias and animosity.

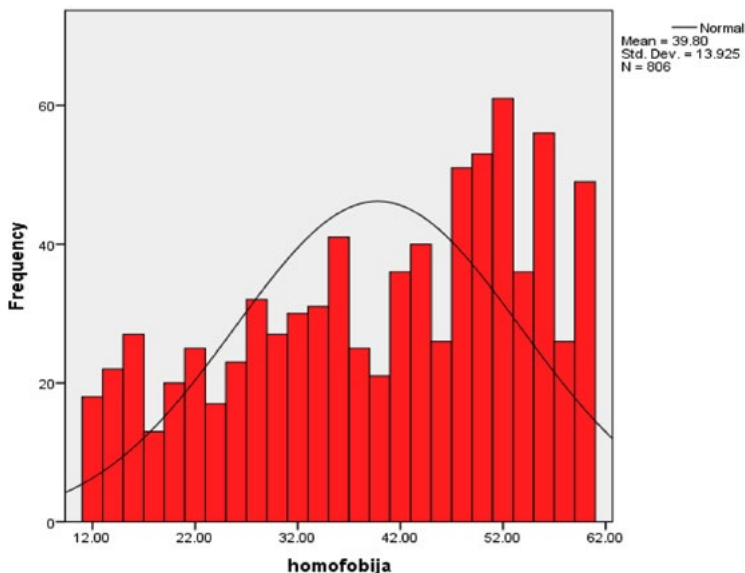
In this survey the scale of homophobia is made operational by 12 statements covering the dimension of “homophobia” and its relationship with inner (un)acceptance of LGBTQ persons, and social distance toward them (“I would share a bench with someone who is gay or lesbian;” “They have my full support and understanding”), the dimension of “stereotypes” (“I think they are sick;” “Having sex with a person of the same sex as one’s own is abnormal”), and the dimension of social acceptance of LGBT partnerships – legal recognition, marriage and child adoption.

Findings presented on the scale of homophobia<sup>66</sup> testify of strong homophobia among the youth.

65 Young people in Serbia do not differ much from their peers in the region. “The smallest social distance is towards students and pensioners, but it takes an upward curve toward persons of some other ethnicity and culminates toward homosexual” (Tomanović et al. 2015: 84). The situation has barely changed for the better when compared with findings of the survey conducted in 2011.

66 The analysis of reliability proved a good value of Kronbach’s Alpha (Alpha=0.927). Maximum = 60, minimum = 12, arithmetical mean = 39.80; a curve towards nationalism – theoretically arithmetical mean = 36.

Graph 11. Distribution of interviewees on the scale of homophobia



**The scale comprises the following statements:**

1. I treat them as comrades.
2. I would share a bench with someone who is gay or lesbian.
3. Having sex with a person of the same sex as one's own is abnormal.
4. They have my full support and understanding.
5. I think they are sick.
6. They are too pretentious.
7. I support trans persons' right to gender change.
8. Gays and lesbians should be entitled to marriage.
9. Lesbian couples should be entitled to child adoption.
10. Gay couples should be entitled to child adoption.
11. The movement for the rights of gays operates against interests of Serbia.
12. Trans persons are as worthy of parenthood and as stable as parents as all the rest.

The scale shows that only 24% of secondary school students stand for LGBT rights, 31% are moderately homophobic, while 44% are homophobic (Graph 12). Girls manifest more tolerance than boys.<sup>67</sup> According to some international studies men and women think differently about homosexuality, and that their statements depend on how they see gays and lesbians – their

<sup>67</sup> The t-test shows a statistically significant gender-based difference ( $t = 12.30$ ,  $df = 800.90$ ,  $p = .00$ ). The average score for men = 45.48,  $SD = 12.02$ , while for women = 34.42, a  $SD = 13.46$ .

statements, as a rule, are more negative about men (Kite, Whitley, 1998). Many reasons why such gender-based attitude are quoted – from different expectations of gender roles, different defensive mechanisms related to homosexuality, unequal opportunities for interpersonal contacts with gays and lesbians, etc. (Gentry, 1987; Herek, Capitanio, 1999).<sup>68</sup>

Findings of a place's influence on the degree of homophobia show that interviewees from Novi Pazar, those professing Islam, are more homophobic than their peers from other towns.<sup>69</sup> Though the Serbian Orthodox Church is among “the strongest opponents of all manifestations of non-heterosexuality” (Jovanović, 2016:91) and the one that silently tolerates the use of violence at manifestations that promote LGBTQ rights, the Islamic Religious Community, being traditional, is also against any manifestation of “homosexuality.” Some earlier statements by Islamic muftis in Serbia, as well as incidents accompanying recently the first Pride staged in Sarajevo, testify of more than evident homophobia within the Islamic Community.<sup>70</sup> The later called the Pride “a deadly sin,” while several Muslim organizations argued that the Pride undermines traditional values of Bosniak Muslims.<sup>71</sup> Though some general stance of Islam about homosexuality is hard to determine, it has to be noted that sharia ban homosexuality – it is punished by jail or death sentence like in Saudi Arabia and Iran. On the other hand, homosexual relations are legal in Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosovo. The 2009 the Gallup poll shows that European Muslims oppose homosexuality – in France, 35% of Muslim see it as “morally acceptable” (vis-à-vis 38% of general population holding such statements), in Germany, 19% of Muslims vis-à-vis 68% of general population, while no Muslim in Great Britain sees

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68 (Radoman, 2013; Tomanović, Stanojević, 2015).

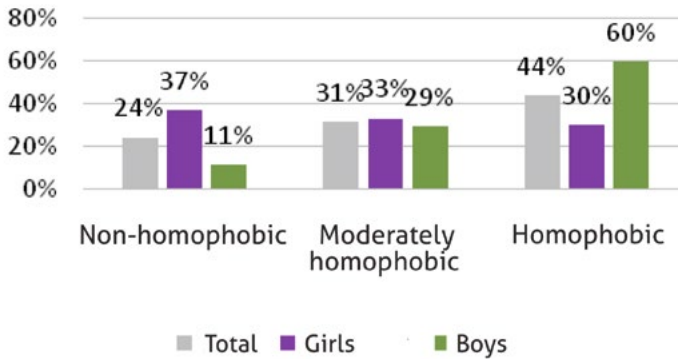
69 Brown-Forsythe test of difference between towns  $F(4, 650.47) = 24.9$ ,  $\text{sig} = 0.0$ ); according to comparisons between Novi Pazar and other towns in Serbia by Post Hoc Games-Howell test,  $\text{Sig} = .000$ , Novi Pazar ( $M = 47.72$ ,  $SD = 9.81$ ), Beograd ( $M = 36.71$ ,  $SD = 14.11$ ), Novi Sad ( $M = 34.95$ ,  $SD = 13.57$ ), Niš ( $M = 40.15$ ,  $SD = 13.50$ ), Kragujevac ( $M = 36.71$ ,  $SD = 15.06$ ).

70 Source: <http://gsa.org.rs/2012/04/muamer-zukoric-o-upitniku-gsa/>

71 <https://www.blic.rs/vesti/svet/burno-u-sarajevu-pred-prvu-paraduponosu-islamska-i-katolicka-crkva-zestoko-osudile/10gg4c2>

it as “morally acceptable (unlike 58% of general population).<sup>72</sup> The latter was testified by the findings a survey conducted in Great Britain in 2016.

Graph 12. **Gender-based distribution of answers on the scale of homophobia**



The following table presents the average values of some stands, compared with those derived from the 2011 survey.<sup>73</sup>

<sup>72</sup> Gallup, 2009: 31, [https://archivio.olir.it/areetematiche/pagine/documents/News\\_2150\\_Gallup2009.pdf](https://archivio.olir.it/areetematiche/pagine/documents/News_2150_Gallup2009.pdf)

<sup>73</sup> The table presents the values of all 2019 stands and the values of the identical stands in the 2011 survey.

Table 10. Average values of the statements indicative of homophobia (1–5)\*

Statements	2011	2019
I treat them as comrades.	2.80	3.21
I would share a bench with someone who is gay or lesbian.	2.64	3.07
Having sex with a person of the same sex as one's own is abnormal.	/	3.71
They have my full support and understanding.	2.36	2.42
I think they are sick.	3.06	3.09
They deserve a good trash.	2.39	2.28
They are too pretentious.	2.66	3.00
They should be suspended from school.	2.34	2.19
I support trans persons' right to gender change.	/	2.29
Gays and lesbians should be entitled to marriage.	2.13	2.37
Lesbian couples should be entitled to child adoption.	/	2.44
Gay couples should be entitled to child adoption.	1.98**	2.29
The movement for the rights of gays operates against interests of Serbia.	2.86	2.85
Trans persons are as worthy of parenthood and as stable as parents as all the rest.	/	2.44

\* 1 = total disagreement; 5 = full agreement.

\*\*The value relates to the stand "Gay couples should be entitled to child adoption."

The table shows that the average values of the positive stands, when compared with those in 2011, have increased. The values of negatively formulated stands are lower, which may lead to the conclusion that today's young people are more tolerant but still homophobic to a considerable extent; this corresponds to the initial hypothesis about a decrease in homophobic views in the period of 8 years in which the Pride Parades were staged, and LGBTQ persons more visible in everyday life.

Comparing the findings in 2019 one cannot but be concerned with a higher percentage of secondary school students saying yes to the statements such as "Having sex with a person of the same sex as one's own is abnormal" (62.5%), "I think they are sick" (44.9%), "They deserve a good trash" (24.7%) and "They are too pretentious" (36.3%). Arguments as such testify of standard stereotypes about homosexuality that is identified with a disease and abnormality. Public opinion polls also show that almost 50% of citizens

take that homosexuality is a disease. The table shows that this value is almost the same as it was 8 years ago, and that somewhat smaller percentage of students think that LGBTQ persons “deserve a good trash,” although the percentage itself is too high – today, one out of three students sees violence against lesbians and gays as quite legitimate.

However, not even the percentage of those expressing “acceptance” is not to be neglected. Students are saying yes to the statement “*I treat them as comrades*” (47.3%) and “*I would share a bench with someone who is gay or lesbian*” (46.6%).

Statements on trans persons are more negative than those on gays and lesbians. Out of all answers, 21% of students support trans person’s right to gender change, while 60% are against; the latter indicates that they are rather unaware about trans experience.<sup>74</sup> Further on, 23% support the statement “*Trans persons are as worthy of parenthood and as stable as parent as all the rest,*” while 50% deny it. And yet, the latter percentage is rather low when compared with other two categories – lesbian and gay couples right to parenthood (29% say yes to lesbian couples, and 25.8% for gays). The comparison between the statements related to gays and those to lesbians testifies of social stereotype about women-lesbians as more fit for parenthood than gay men – which corresponds to the stereotype about motherhood as women’s “natural” role.

Taken as a whole, the scale shows that students are strongly homophobic; this mirrors the overall situation in the society – for, after more than three decades of the movement for promotion of the rights of sexual minorities, no major institutional change has taken place, while social mindset has been changing at snail’s pace. This percentage does not prove the initial hypothesis a decrease in homophobia since 2011 (actually, its degree is just mildly lower).

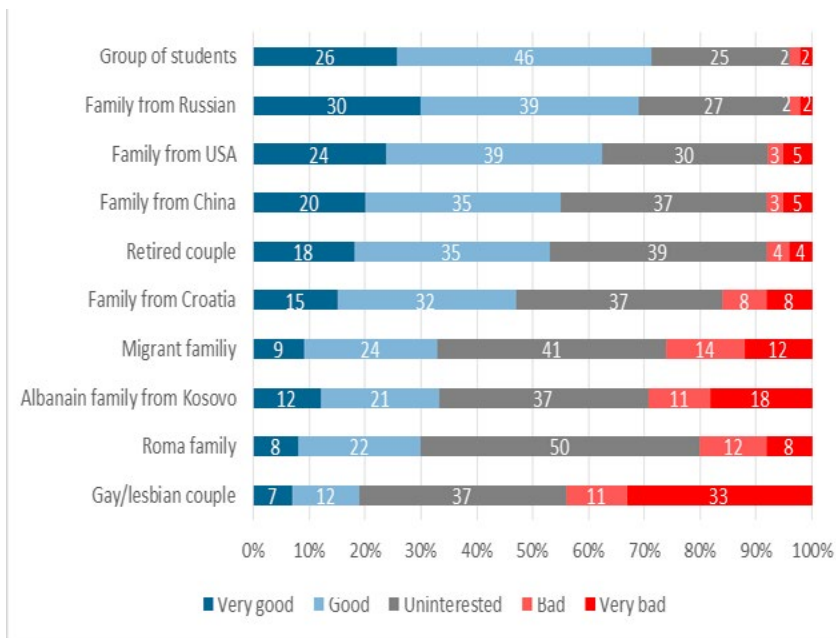
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74 A footnote in the questionnaire provided an explanation about trans persons to avoid misunderstanding of the term.

## Social distance and the young

A separate scale was formed – apart from those for assessing nationalism, patriarchy and homophobia – in order to determine the youth's social distance toward different categories of people vis-à-vis sexual orientation, ethnicity and origin, age and social standing.<sup>75</sup> Questions the students were asked to answer were as follows: *How would you feel should some of the following persons or families move into your neighborhood?* Findings are presented in the graph below.

Graph 13. Social distance toward different categories of people (%)



Presented in percentages, the findings show that most welcome would be groups of students (72%), then families from Russia (69%) and those from US (63%), while most unwelcome would be gay and lesbian couples (19% would welcome them, while 44% would not like them in their neighborhood),

<sup>75</sup> The questionnaire included a somewhat modified scale used in the survey of the youth conducted in 2015 (Tomanović, Stanojević, 2015).

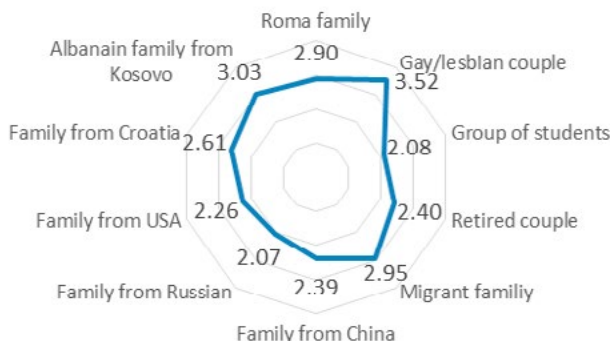


Albanian families from Kosovo (29%), Roma families (20%) and migrants (26%).

The acceptability of student population was probably to be expected among secondary school student, small difference in their age and no noticeable marks of difference. Russian citizens are also acceptable to them, probably due to traditional stereotypes about Russians as a friendly nation. Then, one student out of two would welcome a Chinese family and a retired couple in his/her neighborhood (social distance toward both categories is 8%). Distance toward a Croatian family is bigger – 16% of students would not be at ease or be quite anxious about having them in their neighborhood; but, then, one student out of two would welcome this ethnic group.

The findings presented in the next graph show that the social distance is the biggest toward gay and lesbian population.

Graph 14. Social distance by average values



Students mostly distrust gay and lesbian population, which corresponds to the findings on the scale of homophobia. Their attitude towards this segment of population derives from their socio-demographic traits. Namely, in all cases girls' statements are more tolerant than boys', expressing smaller social distance toward all categories.<sup>76</sup> The influence of religion is also strong; students professing Islam manifest by far biggest distance toward

<sup>76</sup> The findings of the t-test show a statistically significant gender-based difference ( $t = 8.33, df = 787, p = .00$ ). The average score for males is  $M = 3.89, SD = 1.11$ , while for females  $M = 3.12, SD = 1.27$ .

gay/lesbian couples than their Eastern Orthodox peers or atheists. Other scales used in this survey have proved it.

Social distance toward Roma population is also rather big; one student out of five would tolerate Roma in his/her neighborhood<sup>77</sup>, while one half of interviewees manifest “disinterestness,” which can be interpreted as undefined attitude or keeping one’s stance to oneself. Only 30% of students would welcome Roma in their neighborhood. The social distance toward an Albanian family living next door can be ascribed to the distrust in Albanians that has been generated for long. Given that migrants are occasionally presented in stereotyped ways, higher crime rate, and violent incidents committed by migrants, it comes not as surprise that 26% students manifest social distance towards them. The influence of religion on attitudes towards settlement of migrant families was subjected to one-factor analysis of variance. As it turned out, Muslim students are more tolerant about migrants than the rest.<sup>78</sup> This finding can be explained by Muslims’ status as a minority in Serbia (they make up 3 percent of all population), their identification with migrant as refugees, as well as religion-based solidarity.<sup>79</sup>

Findings about social distance among secondary school students are comparable to the 2015 survey of the youth, and findings of the two surveys are rather similar. Namely, the one conducted in 2015 also shows the biggest social distance toward “homosexual” population, a family of asylum-seekers and a Roma family, a somewhat bigger distance toward a family from Croatia, while the highest acceptance of a group of students, a family from Russian and then a retired couple (Tomanović, Stanojević, 2015: 75). It is interesting to note the difference between the two surveys in social distance toward ethnic groups; the one in 2015 shows that 7 percent of the youth would not welcome an emigrant family from Kosovo in their neighborhood

77 The findings of the t-test show a statistically significant gender-based difference ( $t = 7.52$ ,  $df = 774$ ,  $p = .00$ ). The average score among males is 3.12,  $SD = 0.98$ , while for females  $M = 2.65$ ,  $SD = 0.92$ . Eta quadrangle amounts to 0.07, which indicates a strong influence of gender variable on having a Roma family in neighborhood.

78 A statistically significant difference at the level  $p < 0.05$ , by Levene Statistic test  $F(7, 754) = 7.2$ ,  $p = 0.0$ . Comparisons made with the use of Post Hoc Test Tukey HSD show considerably higher values among Eastern Orthodox students than among atheists or Muslims, i.e. students professing Eastern Orthodoxy are more tolerant about the settlement of migrant families than atheists and Muslims in the sample.

79 Despite the fact that migrants from the Middle East make up a heterogeneous group by origin and Islamic “current.”

(which was probably interpreted as if it was about a “Serbian” family), while this survey included “an Albanian family from Kosovo” toward which the distance was by far bigger – as many as 26% interviewees in the sample would not want to see them as their next-door neighbors. This difference clearly speaks about ethnic distance toward Albanians, and testifies the findings of other surveys (Popadić, et.al. 2019).

The survey conducted in 2019 on a sample of young people aged 14–29 shows that ethnic and social distance toward refugees, Roma families and persons of non-heterosexual orientation is bigger among young interviewees (Popadić et. al., 2019). In this sense, the findings of this survey can also indicate how social inequalities and public discourses about ethnic minorities and different groups of people can be reflected on the youth, but does not indicate that their statements are fixed and unchangeable as times goes by.

## Statements on environmental protection

Serbia’s Ministry for Environmental Protection was established in 2017 in the course of accession negotiations with EU on the Chapter 27. From the very start the Ministry officials warned about problems the institution would be faced with such as investment, the need for more employees and the fact that it would take more than 20 years at least 10 million euros for Serbia to reach European standards.<sup>80</sup> “Ecological disasters such as dramatical air pollution in several towns in Serbia are closely connected with structural managements, investments and subsidies at national and local level. In 2016 the Republic of Serbia set aside 0.5% of GDP for environmental protection, while EU member-states are spending on it 2% of GDP on average. Obviously, “environmental protection policy is not high on the government’s agenda.”<sup>81</sup> According to media stories, as of October 2019 Belgrade had been the most air polluted capital in the world several times.

Citizens of other towns had also been exposed to hazardous air pollution (Niš, Užice, Valjevo, Kragujevac, Kosjerić). Speaking about the region, Sarajevo, Skopje and Sofia had also been among ten most polluted cities. However, while the authorities of some cities in the region had taken

<sup>80</sup> <https://www.glasamerike.net/a/ministarstvo-zivotne-sredine-osnovano-u-pravom-trenutku/3930688.html>

<sup>81</sup> Source: [https://rs.boell.org/sites/default/files/izvestaj\\_k27\\_2018\\_web.pdf](https://rs.boell.org/sites/default/files/izvestaj_k27_2018_web.pdf)

measures against air pollution from time to time, for months had Serbia's officials denying any air pollution and failing to keep citizens properly posted.<sup>82</sup>

According to them, high air pollution in Belgrade is caused by traffic, heating, waste burning in the Vinča landfill<sup>83</sup> and farmland (fields), as well as meteorological conditions. The traffic situation is certainly one of the main factors pointing to the connection between the city's disposal of budgetary funds and environmental issues. Namely, we are witnesses that the capital city's public transportation system has been destroyed over the years,<sup>84</sup> so that many people use their own cars. However, due to a low standard of living, those are mostly second-hand cars with lower environmental standards (Momčilović, 2019). At the same time, the increasing number of cars on the streets causes greater congestion, slows down overall traffic and increases air pollution.

In addition, the "Let's Not Drown Belgrade" Initiative, which continuously publicizes the relevant data and stages environmental protests, has informed the public that Belgrade's authorities plan to solve the waste management problem by building an incineration plant at the Vinča landfill site and thus adversely affect air quality still further. The harmful impact of this project is confirmed by the fact that the European Investment Bank has refused to finance it as being contrary to the standards to which Serbia has committed itself in the process of accession to the European Union.<sup>85</sup>

However, other problems relating to environmental protection are also far from being solved. Water quality is one of the most demanding issues in

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82 Since October, the official representatives of the relevant institutions have been claiming that citizens "should not believe the data obtained from "foreign websites" (it is a question of the *Air Visual* website that monitors air quality at the global level) and that the measurement "methodology" is not known. Source: <http://www.rts.rs/page/stories/ci/story/124/drustvo/3708382/da-li-je-u-beogradu-najzagadjeniji-vazduh-na-svetu.html>.

83 Source: <https://nedavimobeograd.rs/deponija-u-vinci-ponovo-gori-a-vlast-cuti-na-ogromno-zagadjenje-vazduha/>

84 The privatization of public transportation in Serbia has led to a decrease in the number of vehicles, declining quality of the public transportation system and abolition of certain public transportation routes. On the other hand, private investors (BusPlus Company), which conclude deals with the government, state, have increased ticket prices. Thus, the costs of public transportation are borne by citizens and profits go to private companies (Source: <https://www.masina.rs/?p=7017>).

85 Source: <https://nedavimobeograd.rs/evropska-investiciona-banka-potvrdila-spalionica-u-vinci-protivna-pristupanju-srbije-eu/>

the EU accession process, but there are no indications that the Government has decided to tackle it more seriously. The main problems include a “low percentage of wastewater treatment, poor control of groundwater use, poor control of river sediment use, unlicensed construction on waterlands and uncontrolled construction of small hydropower plants”.<sup>86</sup>

Environmental pollution problems in Serbia are derived from obsolete technologies and equipment, as well as low energy and raw materials efficiency, which are the consequences of inadequate investments in the improvement of the existing situation. Therefore, it will be necessary that companies “reconstruct or innovate the existing technological processes, and introduce the best available techniques and best environmental practices”.<sup>87</sup>

According to the available data, most of the municipal waste in Serbia is deposited in landfills (which should be the last waste management solution), while only 3% of municipal waste is recycled (2016 data). In order to meet the relevant European standards, the country should be able to recycle 50% of municipal waste by 2020 and deposit less than 10% in landfills by 2035.<sup>88</sup> These standards could be met should special measures be applied, including a deposit-refund system for packaging (cans and PET packaging), which would boost the recycling of this type of waste, but there is no guarantee that such a system would function (i.e. whether sellers would pay a particular amount of money to buyers who return packaging). One compulsory measure, which is part of the solution to the municipal waste problem, anticipates the primary distribution of special containers to households. According to some estimates, the consequence of non-existent waste recycling is that the vast amounts of otherwise recyclable plastic waste (c. 50,000 tons of plastic packaging) end up in landfills together with municipal waste (ibid.).

In view of these data, the question posed in the survey was whether the interviewees and their household members participate in recycling (paper, glass, plastic). The answers to this question show that 20% of households participate in recycling and 26% do not; at the same time, 53% of secondary school students said that they would participate in recycling should certain conditions be met (e.g. if there are recycling bins). This indicative question

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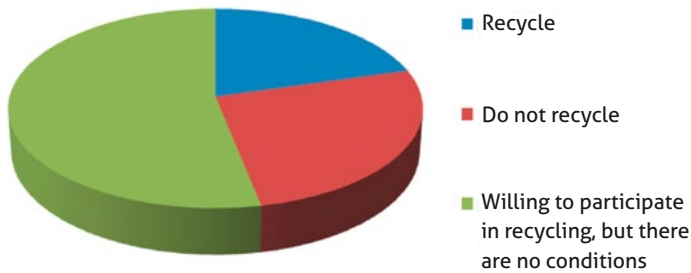
86 Source: [https://rs.boell.org/sites/default/files/izvestaj\\_k27\\_2018\\_web.pdf](https://rs.boell.org/sites/default/files/izvestaj_k27_2018_web.pdf)

87 [https://rs.boell.org/sites/default/files/izvestaj\\_k27\\_2018\\_web.pdf](https://rs.boell.org/sites/default/files/izvestaj_k27_2018_web.pdf)

88 Source: <https://balkangreenenergynews.com/rs/upravljanje-otpodom-u-srbiji-problemi-izazovi-i-moguca-resenja/>

points to the systemic problem of (not) solving the waste issue in the country where individuals are probably willing to participate in recycling, but there are no conditions that should be provided by the government.

Answers to the question. **Do you and your household sometimes recycle waste (paper, plastic, glass, ...)?**



To that end, environmental activism should be directed toward structural problems. The question that arises here is to what extent individual solutions and personal choices can have an influence on climate change when it is necessary to change government policies that are geared towards the interests of capital rather than investments in environmental protection and the implementation of the appropriate measures.<sup>89</sup>

The following data on secondary school students' statements show the extent to which they are aware of the problems facing their towns in solving municipal issues and issues concerning environmental threats.

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<sup>89</sup> The data from the Carbon Majors Report show that just 100 companies have been responsible for 71% of the world's greenhouse gas emissions since 1988. Source: <https://www.cdp.net/en/articles/media/new-report-shows-just-100-companies-are-source-of-over-70-of-emissions>.

Table 11. Environmental quality – interviewees' statements:

<i>Statement</i>	<i>I totally disagree + I disagree</i>	<i>I neither agree nor disagree</i>	<i>I fully agree + I agree</i>
My town has serious municipal problems that are not solved.	9.4%	20.8%	69.8%
Environmental quality in my town is satisfactory.	38.2%	30.0%	31.8%
In my town there is a high pollution health risk.	28.7%	26.0%	45.3%

The findings show that most interviewees (70%) hold that their town has serious municipal problems that are not solved; nearly 40% hold that environmental quality in their town is not satisfactory, while 45% hold that there is a “high pollution health risk”. Consequently, the interviewees’ stand is such that it can be said that there are significant threats to health and the environment in all towns.

The findings from the table below also illustrate young people’s statements on Serbia’s role in solving the climate change problem. On the basis of these findings we can see that the majority of secondary school students hold that Serbia should join and contribute to the global fight against climate change (nearly 80 percent of interviewees agree with this stand). One-third also holds that climate change has been caused by wealthy developed countries and not by Serbia, while 35 percent of interviewees do not agree with this stand. These data point to secondary school students’ awareness about climate change problems facing the country and the rest of the world.

Tabela 12. **Statements on climate change**

<i>Statement</i>	<i>I totally disagree + I disagree</i>	<i>I neither agree nor disagree</i>	<i>I fully agree + I agree</i>
Climate change has been caused by human action.	11.5%	17.8%	70.7%
Climate change has been caused by wealthy developed countries and not by Serbia.	34.6%	33.7%	31.7%
Every country has the right to develop economically and decide on its natural resources completely independently.	17.8%	20.7%	61.5%
Like all other countries, Serbia should also contribute to the global fight against climate change.	4.4%	17.7%	77.9%
I am sufficiently informed about the environmental situation in Serbia via media.	44.0%	30.6%	25.4%

The earlier surveys of youth activism show that young people are increasingly shifting away from *mainstream* politics, while at the same time adopting new forms of political expression such as environmental activism (which implies participation in public gatherings, lectures and educational workshops dedicated to environmental protection issues, as well as the submission of petitions, participation in protests and making donations to organizations for environmental protection (Vukelić, Stanojević, 2012). More recent surveys of youth political activism (Popadić et al., 2019) also testify that young people are not interested in *mainstream* politics. The question that arises here is whether increasing attention devoted to environmental issues will have an influence on young people's greater mobilization around these issues because, as stated in some studies (Furlong, 2009), environmental and animal rights movements are becoming increasingly popular among young people.



# Conclusion

The survey of the value orientations of secondary school students in Serbia has attempted to point to some contextual facts associated with the strengthening of stereotypes on ethnic, social and gender grounds. In addition, it has aimed at inquiring whether some statements of secondary school students have changed in comparison with the 2011 survey. It might be said that the social circumstances and political context in which young people live, reflect the values they stand for. Namely, the sources of secondary school students' values should be sought not only in symbolic reproduction and discourses promoted by the media and political parties, but also in the material circumstances in which we live.

The polls conducted among the students in Serbia show that more than half of them have to work and study at the same time in order to cover the costs of very expensive studies and living. The survey about young people conducted by the Institute for Sociological Studies, Faculty of Philosophy in Belgrade, presents very disappointing findings – more than half of young people in Serbia, aged 19–35, still live with their parents, while 37.5% of them have no income. At the same time, the official statistics show a decrease in the rate of unemployment in the country. However, this is due to the fact that in 2016, for example, the country recorded the highest increase in the employment of persons aged 65 and over (35%) and young people aged 15–19 (27%). “The mentioned trend can be explained by mounting poverty that limits young people’s access to education and the opportunity given to low-income retirees to meet their existential needs” (Bradaš, 2017). These findings show that today we have widespread poverty among young people. In addition, more recent surveys show that in 2018 only 16% of young people had permanent jobs; 29% had temporary jobs and 55% were unemployed (jobless and passively unemployed) (Popadić. et al. 2019). Such a poor economic status of the younger population can be improved by structural changes, including labor market changes, employment increase, different housing policies and better access to education for youth from socially deprived families.

Such social conditions, poverty and low living standards, coupled with the stereotypes generated from above, provide fertile ground for the

reproduction of stereotypes and traditional value orientations. The institutional framework with the current normative solutions, adoption of a set of restrictive neoliberal laws and non-existence of the laws that would adequately protect certain groups (such as LGBTQ persons), have impact on young people's value orientations.

What is shown in a longitudinal perspective is that young people's statements are now less traditional on the scales of patriarchy, homophobia, abortion and Roma. In that sense, the survey hypotheses have been confirmed, with the exception of the statements on the scale of homophobia where it has been expected that in 2019 secondary school students will show greater tolerance toward LGBT persons. Consequently, when the findings for the period 2011–2019 are observed, it can be concluded that they point to the decline of traditionalist values. In value terms, this "improvement" is still not compatible with the influence of "context", changes in the normative framework, rise to power of the representatives of the political establishment from the period of ethnic conflicts and extreme violations of human rights, unresolved "national" questions like the status of Kosovo, and generally systemic changes associated with the country's neoliberal policies that enhance social inequalities. This value difference relating to systemic changes probably points to broader "modernization" processes, which have an influence on young people and are not only confined to Serbia's territory. However, when we observe only the 2019 findings, we can note that the value orientations still reflect a significant degree of traditionalism.

An analysis has shown that the patriarchy of secondary school students has mildly declined in comparison with their statements in 2011 and that in 2019 they are more inclined towards a "non-patriarchal" value orientation or, better said, equality in relationships between men and women (44% of secondary school students support the statements towards gender equality). What is worrisome, however, is the statement that women should be beaten from time to time. Such a statement is supported by 8% of secondary school students and is similar to the 2011 survey finding. The statement on abortion is also negative – 45.4% of interviewees hold that it is a "sin", which points to the influence of religious discourse (of the Serbian Orthodox Church and Islam, as well as the introduction of religious education into schools because it is a question of the first generations having religious education as an elective subject).

The most conservative secondary school students' statements in this survey are those on LGBTQ people. On the scale of homophobia, 44% of secondary school students can be qualified as "homophobic", while the percentage of those supporting certain statements clearly illustrates this conclusion: *I think that they are sick* (44,9%), *They deserve a beating* (24,7%). As already mentioned, this percentage does not confirm the initial hypothesis of the survey about a greater decline in the value of homophobia in the society (average values in the 2011 and 2019 statements point only to a mild decline in homophobia). On the one hand, this points to a slow change in value orientations and, on the other hand, to the context in which there is no sufficient institutional support for LGBTQ persons. Namely, in Serbia it is not possible to register same-sex unions; there is no Law on Gender Identity, while the right to artificial insemination is also restricted.

As for their statements on nationalism, secondary school students are mildly inclined to nationalism when organic nationalism is in question, whereby we can say that 32 percent of them have pronounced nationalist beliefs. As for the scale of ethnocentric nationalism, which measures more specific intranational relations, we can state that their statements are "moderate". All statements show that girls have less pronounced nationalist beliefs than boys. As for religion, the findings show that secondary school students in Novi Pazar are more conservative, patriarchal and homophobic, which is attributed to a high percentage of those belonging to the "Muslim" confession of faith in this town. The least traditional secondary school students on all scales are those who declare themselves as "atheists".

The social distance scale confirms that secondary school students manifest the greatest distance towards gay and lesbian people, and then towards ethnic minorities, Albanians and Roma, as well as migrants, which points to the existence of ethnic stereotypes among young people.

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