

RELIGIONS, IDENTITIES AND POLICIES IN THE E-ENVIRONMENT OF SERBIAN ACADEMIC LIBRARIANSHIP

Abstract: *This paper is focused on the presence of materials on religions, identities and policies in Serbian academic librarianship. The theoretical framework of this paper is library and information one. The scope of the paper is to give a realistic insight into the collections of Serbian academic libraries to the potential users whose interests are expressed particularly in the domain of religions, identities and policies. The author of this paper has published several articles in the field of qualitative and quantitative methods in librarianship.*

High number of Serbian academic libraries are members of COBISS (Cooperative On-line Bibliographic System & Services). Except that, as we live in a globalizing society, numerous doctoral dissertations defended in Europe, which are focused on religions, identities, and policies are available on the European Portal of E-theses DART (Digital Access to Research Theses). They are in free access, written mostly in the language of the state they were defended in. Open repositories offer professional and scientific materials which can be useful to library users for their professional development. The universities of Serbia contribute to the content of some open repositories. It is not possible to separate the problem of retrieving databases from the nature of professional cataloguing and classification of library materials. Bibliographic descriptions in the academic libraries – members of the COBISS system - are being composed using the material at hand. It means that each bibliographic description is composed academically. The references in Serbian academic librarianship are in accordance with the national and international standards for bibliographic description of library materials, adopted by the IFLA (International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions). Subject cataloguing of library materials in the COBISS system is being realized following the UDC e. g. Universal Decimal Classification.

Keywords: *religions, identities, policies, academic librarianship, Serbia.*

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RELIGIJE, IDENTITETI I POLITIKE U E-OKRUŽENJU SRPSKOG AKADEMSKOG BIBLIOTEKARSTVA

Sažetak: *Ovaj rad je fokusiran na zastupljenost građe o religijama, identitetima i politikama u srpskom akademskom bibliotekarstvu. Teorijski okvir ovog rada je bibliotečko-informacioni. Glavni cilj rada jeste da pruži realističan uvid u fondove srpskog akademskog bibliotekarstva potencijalnim korisnicima čija su interesovanja izražena naročito u domenu religija, identiteta i politika. Autorka ovog rada objavila je nekolicinu članaka u polju kvalitativnih i kvantitativnih metoda u bibliotekarstvu.*

Visok broj srpskih akademskih biblioteka jeste učlanjeno u COBISS (Kooperativni On-lajn bibliografski sistem & servisi). Osim toga, kako živimo u globalizovanom društvu, brojne doktorske disertacije odbranjene u Evropi, koje su fokusirane na religije, identitete i politike jesu dostupne na Evropskom portalu e-teza DART (Digitalni pristup istraživačkim tezama). One su u slobodnom pristupu, napisane uglavnom na jeziku države u kojoj su branjene. Otvoreni repozitorijumi nude stručnu i naučnu građu koja može da bude korisna bibliotečkim čitaocima za njihov profesionalni razvoj. Univerziteti Srbije doprinose sadržaju nekih otvorenih repozitorijuma. Nije moguće odvojiti problem pretraživanja baza podataka od prirode stručne katalogizacije i klasifikacije bibliotečke građe. Bibliografski opisi u akademskim bibliotekama – članicama sistema COBISS sastavljaju se sa materijalom u ruci. To znači da je svaki bibliografski opis sastavljen na stručan način. Reference u srpskom akademskom bibliotekarstvu jesu u saglasnosti sa nacionalnim i međunarodnim standardima za bibliografski opis bibliotečke građe, koje je usvojila IFLA (Međunarodna federacija bibliotečkih udruženja i institucija). Predmetna obrada bibliotečke građe u sistemu COBISS realizuje se u skladu sa UDK tj. Univerzalnom decimalnom klasifikacijom.

Ključne reči: *religije, identiteti, politike, akademsko bibliotekarstvo, Srbija.*

Introduction

We are inevitably facing the fact that the Christian world is devided. Nowadays when we live in the world of new technologies, in the World 3.0, that fact keeps following us contributing very much to the development of the events on the world political stage. New international economic order caused many changes in our environment. The integration and the desintegration changed the economic and political world panorama in comparison to the world in the period between two world wars. Despite the strategy of an open access which is developed due to the creative professionals who were removing obstacles which were being built during decades, even centuries, the Christian world is still devided. This world is, generally speaking, devided. Sciences remove the limits among the worlds which are devided because of different confessions.

The nature of the librarianship is international. It is being digitized. The degree of its automation differs from one library to another. Earlier libraries were

of a type 1.0. They were being used almost only for keeping books in their warehouses and using of the services in their reading rooms. It is in Serbia as well as elsewhere that reading rooms are being transformed in different ways.

In the following phase libraries 2.0 were being developed. It is in the phase 2.0 that professionals carry out many retrievals of data bases, connect computers into a network, improve Internet connections and search numerous web sites. The developing of e-catalogues was not an easy task at all. The exchange and the stream of bibliographic data was to be solved in a team through the collaboration with experts from South East Europe, particularly from IZUM e.g. The Institute of Scientific Information in Maribor (IZUM, 2021). The libraries got interconnected through the founding of the system COBISS.SR (Cooperative On-line Bibliographic System & Services in Serbia).

Libraries 3.0 are more progressive. They have the elements of an editing policy. These libraries follow a contemporary scientific thought more intensively. Their working process is more dynamic. It is being performed through the implementation of many new information solutions in the working process. Technological changes are not a surprise any longer because they became regularly present in the working process. Trainings are organized more often than in the previous phase of library development. Libraries are connected into their networks.

We all live and work in the epoch of an entrepreneurial learning. Libraries, particularly the academic ones, are getting adjusted to that fact. So, it should be always had in mind that libraries differ according to the type. The academic libraries are particularly challenging for real and potential readers because of the structure of their own collections which consist mostly of the professional and scientific materials. Library staff is very professional in the academic libraries. The structure of their members is specific. Libraries 3.0 are oriented towards user who is either physically present or works on-line. He relies on an academic librarian who is also physically present and ready to help users by giving instructions.

The process of the social transformation which still lasts in Serbia included the changes in diverse segments of human industry and in diverse spheres of human life. Serbia recognizes its own interest in the dialogue which is creative having in mind its own interest in becoming a member of the European Union. Undoubtedly Serbia has to find the solutions for its own difficulties alone.

Conflicts on a religious base may appear in every state. So, the examples of positive practice may be reliable for other states looking for solutions. The best solutions are to be found in the dialogue between state and legislative bodies, between confessional associations and also among the leaders of the confessional associations and their followers.

According to the Cambridge Dictionary religion is “the belief in and worship of a god or gods, or any such system of belief and worship” (Cambridge Dictionary, 2021). According to Albert Camus (Camus, 2021): “We address ourselves to

God only when we want to achieve something impossible. For something possible, people are sufficient to us.” In the postcommunist countries, there are open discussions on the confessions. The decades passed but confessions survived and still exist as something unseparable of men. Man was moving with his own confession as his own spiritual strength through his own life and history leaving traces particularly in the battles led by Crusaders as far as Christianity is concerned.

A country that got desintegrated, which changed its own name several times, whose inhabitants couldn't find information about the beginning of issuing biometrical passports with the real name of their state, find easily the strength in faith. The influence of mass media was very important for the creation of a real picture of themselves as well as of other people in their environment.

What is particularly important is to acquaint other people with culture, tradition, faith and customs. It is the right way to decrease tension and make a community stronger. Making the organizational and union culture stronger in the epoch of entrepreneurship leads people towards better results of work. It is in every urban area that different confessional traditions can be noticed. Zorica Kuburić wrote in her article “The Role of Religion in Forming Identity and Social Distance”: “In a pluralist society, and there is less and less those who are confessionally homogenous, it is necessary to ensure at least a minimum of the freedom of faith. Faith freedoms are being derived from the wish to perform confessional obligations without any disturbance inside the faith system as outside a wider social community. The obligations of believers are double: obligations toward God and obligations towards man. As the first of them are hard to measure, we judge the religiousness on the base of the second ones. In order to answer the obligations and test his own morality, it is indispensable for a man to be free” (Kuburić, 2007; 169).

The situation in Serbia particularly during COVID-19, shows that there is no confessional community, either small or big which should be closed because of a certain inability to change a bigger one. There is no reason for them to form any spiritual *ghetto*. This dangerous virus COVID-19 didn't choose its own victims either after religious or political criterion. Medical staff in Serbia was dying while it was making efforts to save human lives. All people in Serbia, in its closer and wider environment, were being vaccinated in order to receive protection and avoid problems that the virus could have caused them sooner or later.

The nature of contemporary librarianship

Librarianship worldwide also implies that academic librarianship is confirmed as an international activity. It is an essential characteristic of its nature. During the contemporary wave of technical progress and globalization, the academic librarianship of Serbia has its true contribution to the development of

science, culture, and arts. Nowadays, much more than earlier, knowledge has become freely available, and the opinions of experts from diverse geographic zones and linguistic areas are getting interconnected. Librarianship almost like music, becomes a necessary precondition to every individual on his own way toward a better understanding of himself, his own environment, his future profession and present work in all the fields of human creative activity.

The insistence on the maintaining of cultural heritage has its own justification, particularly in the cultural and historical past of Serbian people having in mind a huge number of battles that occurred on its own ground. The continuity of religion as well as the protection of the cultural identity are a true indispensability but it shows also that the thought of people is being spread out inside a regional frame. The globalization is a phenomenon where a thought, generally speaking, gets adjusted to the international streams. It gets developed and enriched by what it recognizes as useful in the domain of scientific-technical progress and cultural development. There is a strong connection between the process of globalizing and Serbian academic libraries' activity.

About data bases

The databases in Serbian academic librarianship are different. In this paper, I will be focused on databases in the system COBISS.SR (Cooperative Online System & Services in Serbia). COBISS system is being implemented in the following countries of ex-Yugoslavia: Slovenia, Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Macedonia. All libraries in Serbia are not included in the COBISS.SR system. So, there are other academic libraries out of that network. However, there are also public libraries included in the system COBISS.SR because they have noticed the advantages of it. The Institute of Information Sciences in Maribor e.g. IZUM develops the *culture* of COBISS in the Balkan area.

The development of COBISS gives libraries the opportunities for more efficient work in this interconnected society. The cataloguing and classification of library materials are being performed in this system faster because of the possibility of overtaking bibliographic descriptions from a cumulative database into a local database. So, there is a cumulative e-catalogue except for individual e-catalogues.

Library materials are being catalogued with a work in hands e.g. *de visu*. The bibliographic descriptions are therefore authentic. All library materials are to be catalogued and classified in such a way that professionals may see each library unit. Bibliographic descriptions of books, articles, and other forms of library materials are being composed in accordance with national standards. These national standards are in accordance with the international standards adopted by the IFLA (The International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions).

The “Svetozar Marković” University Library in Belgrade is the central one at the University of Belgrade. It acquires literature in Serbian and foreign languages usually through the system of compulsory copy, purchasing, gifts, or exchange. This library is scientific. Its collections contain materials in humanities and social sciences, biomedicine, and technical sciences as well as multidisciplinary materials which are getting more and more numerous in the last decade. Having in mind the topic about religions, identities and policies in the databases of Serbian academic librarianship, it shouldn't be forgotten that the academic libraries of Serbia are not interconnected just due to the network but also due to SALA (Serbian Academic Library Association) (ZBUS, 2021).

The academic libraries of Serbia maintain the culture of open access and show it in practice. Besides that, academic libraries are included in the process of globalization due to their everyday work in *cataloguing* and *classification* of materials. It influences not only the work of librarians but also the quality of the entire research work in the Serbian academic community on different levels – from the students of basic studies and postgraduates to the students of doctoral and postdoctoral studies, scientific collaborators of different ranks, etc.

Literature about *religion, identities, and policies* is being catalogued and classified in accordance with the international standards for bibliographic description of library materials so that references from that domain are retrievable through OPAC which means Online Public Access Catalogue. Except for e-catalogues, real and potential users of Serbian academic librarianship may freely access The Digital Repository of the University of Belgrade – PHAIDRA (Permanent Hosting, Archiving and Indexing of Digital Resources and Assets). It is the open repository for the uploading of doctoral dissertations defended at the University of Belgrade. These doctoral dissertations are freely available in full text.

Users may also freely access the doctoral dissertations defended at the University of Niš or the University of Kragujevac. So, there is an open repository of PHAIDRA at the University of Niš as well as an open repository of PHAIDRA at the University of Kragujevac. All three PHAIDRA's maintain the culture of open access. They are being regularly completed by new, successfully defended theses in full text.

Religions, identities and policies in the databases of Serbian academic librarianship

The work with a book on hand implies the indispensability not only to catalogue but also to classify and check the reference. The subject cataloguing of materials in the system COBISS.SR is being performed in such a way that each library unit should receive: a topic determinant and subdeterminant, geographic determinant, time determinant and formal determinant. The geographic and time

determinants can be neglected if the work is not strictly focused on a certain location and period.

Universal Decimal Classification is being used for the classification of library units in the system COBISS.SR. So, UDC as the artificial language – the language of numbers is being used to describe the content of work which can be published in the form of a book, an article, etc. Users mostly retrieve e-catalogue using a key word or a combination of key words in order to formulate an inquiry on the computer.

Having in mind all that's already mentioned in this paper, the author of this article realized the retrieval of the cumulative catalogue COBISS.SR in August 2024. The results show that 70,5% of the total number of bibliographic descriptions discovered for the inquiry about religions, identities and policies was in Serbian, 28% of the total number of these references was in English and only 1,5% was in some other languages. Therefore, we may say that the highest number of library units that were catalogued was in Serbian. It doesn't mean that other titles are less important. This data is not a surprise because Serbian is the mother tongue of the majority of citizens who live in Serbia. Such a linguistic structure of materials shows that a cumulative database is diversified as far as the language of publication is concerned. However, it would be exaggerated to say that the same database is Serbocentric although the library units in Serbian are dominant in the case of this retrieval.

A printed form as a traditional one is a long-lasting one. It is the same very form of those works that Johann Wolfgang von Goethe and Friedrich Schiller, Denis Diderot and Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Pierre de Beaumarchais, and Sir Walter Scott used to read sitting in a park during lovely weather. That form is very practical for citing and very demanded in the practice of Serbian academic librarianship from earlier centuries until nowadays. In the domain of the development of scientific thought, e-books are being published and becoming more and more important in World 3.0. Well-informed experts do not neglect the development of scientific thought, particularly if they need to follow historical intellectual achievements in their professional field in order to cite and revitalize that way, partly at least, the work of ancient minds.

Nowadays the retrievals in Serbian academic librarianship as in other countries are not as personalized as earlier. It means that the retrievals of databases e.g. the retrievals of e-catalogues are usually being carried out using key words. So, the using of authors' names and surnames is not as frequent as it used to be. Topic retrievals occur more and more often which means that users are interested also in all other sources of knowledge except compulsory textbooks. This refers also to the retrievals in the domain of religions, identities and policies. Some other retrievals rely on the criteria such as authors' name and surname, title, year of edition, etc. Of course, it is still possible to use these criteria from a technical point of view for any retrieval, but it is less present in practice. E-catalogues

are more interactive nowadays than earlier. Users may receive more information concerning topic retrievals and concerning the content of the database. Wherever it is possible, academic librarians in COBISS.SR assign a hyperlink to make a unit closer to readers if the work is to be freely available due to the advantages of new technologies.

Organization of knowledge about religion, identities and policy

In the practice of Serbian academic libraries which belong to the network COBISS.SR, bibliographic descriptions are being composed in a standardized way although there are certain differences in the working process from one library to another. Each library has certain internal rules of work. However, it is important for librarians to be informed about them and their changes in time as well as to implement such rules in cataloguing library materials. It is important also because bibliographic descriptions should have almost identical quality in practice as they are freely available through OPAC.

What library units receive except determinants, are UDC numbers. Several UDC numbers can be assigned to each library unit. For each library unit including those which refer to religions, identities and policies, one to three UDC numbers can be assigned in the University Library "Svetozar Marković" in Belgrade.

It is in the framework of COBISS that two UDC numbers exist. They are:

1. *UDC number for retrieval* which is shorter and simple. It is not being composed by combining several basic numbers, generally speaking, and
2. *UDC number* which can be complex.

UDC number (not *UDC number for retrieval*) is developed and it consists of two or more numbers connected by symbols that describe the relation among them. UDC number formed in that way is to be completed by using the auxiliary number for location and the auxiliary number for time. Besides that, an auxiliary number for the form of the publication can be also used to complete the forming of the final UDC number. So, for example, the auxiliary number for Serbia as a geographic location is within the brackets (497.11). For Croatia, that number is (497.5).

As an example, a book of papers may be chosen. It is edited by Milan Tripković. Its title is *Religija u multikulturnom društvu* (Religion in a multicultural society). Topic determinants in COBISS.SR for this book are as follows:

- Religion – Multicultural society – Book of papers
- Religious tolerance – Countries in transition – Books of papers
- National identity – Countries in transition – Books of papers
- Ideology – Religion – Countries in transition – Books of papers
- Religious organization – Sociological point of view – Books of papers

Religion teaching – Education – Books of papers.

An auxiliary number (082) is assigned for the form of this publication, and it shows that this library unit is a book of papers. All conference proceedings have this same auxiliary number (082). An auxiliary number (4-664) is assigned because of the geographic location and shows that the work refers to developing countries. It is in the practice of the “Svetozar Marković” University Library that more than three UDC numbers are not being assigned for the same work except if the work is particularly multidisciplinary.

The convergence of library documents on the web

One of the main characteristics of the contemporary period is the fact that there is an obvious inflow of documents in diverse formats to World Wide Web sites. Such a convergence of documents in PDF, in the form of PowerPoint files and Word documents, is present in the case of many organizational and institutional sites. This phenomenon is particularly present on professional portals which can be also created as a combination of scientific and professional content. Bibliographic description can be of a medium or an optimum length having in mind the international standards adopted by the IFLA (International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions). These are the formats references appear in for library units, generally speaking, and therefore also for the monographs and articles that refer to religion, identities and policy. The PowerPoint presentations are usually composed with hyperlinks as well as with key words accentuated using another color. In all these cases copyrights are to be respected because there is an opportunity to cite a professional or another source even on a slide. Professional practice differs in a way from one individual to another. There is always a possibility and an obligation to cite the resources in a paper form.

A librarian who catalogues a work in the domain of religion is usually exempted from sound events and focused on the work he performs because he has to recognize connections among different phenomena. He tends to discover their causes and consequences as well as to describe them in COBISS using adequate determinants, subdeterminants, as well as classification numbers. There is a difference between a key word and a topic determinant. A key word is an inquiry that a user formulates in the process of retrieving an e-catalogue. It is being typed out in his mother tongue using also a professional terminology. A topic determinant or a subject heading is a term assigned to a reference describing a real library unit by an academic librarian which means by a professional, not by a library user. In the case of a public library, it would be another librarian.

Even in the period of Egyptian pharaohs, Ancient Greece and Ancient Rome, many units in different areas of human activity were to be collected, classified, and organized according to certain criteria. People have always wished to create

an order there where chaos potentially existed. Contemporary catalogues are unimaginable without a classification number. It was previously the case also with traditional or paper catalogues.

Digital humanities and the maintenance of cultural identity

The Serbian academic community makes efforts to realize activities necessary to maintain the cultural heritage of people in accordance with the standards and normative acts. From that point of view, it would be useful to mention the activities of the Faculty of Philology in Belgrade which was the organizer of an international meeting about digital humanities and the Slavonic cultural heritage. The author of this article you are reading now presented the paper about Marco Polo in the digital environment of Serbian academic librarianship (Župan, 2019; 82). She had in mind the importance of this great travel writer for spreading European views about world achievements as well as the importance of the Silk Road because it connected the Holy Roman Empire and the Far East. Such a long road was also the road of connecting different civilizations and religions which strengthened the friendship through music and dance, trade and many other activities that life inevitably imposed on human beings. It is in such a way that a favorable atmosphere was created for further development of collaboration and informal integration in the domain of foreign trade. The events on the Silk Road have been happening for centuries and they still happen. Such events were a precondition for a Euro-Asian integration of economic nature which becomes more and more obvious nowadays. However, the conflict between Russia and Ukraine made the situation more difficult and dangerous.

Conclusion

In the contemporary Serbian academic librarianship, there are materials about religion, identities and policies in different languages and in diverse forms. These library materials are being catalogued in accordance with international standards for the professional cataloguing of library materials. The standards used for such a work are adopted by the IFLA (*International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions*). The bibliographic descriptions are not only catalogued but also classified and controlled in the case of monographies but also in the case of articles and other forms of published works.

The classification of materials in the system of UDC (Universal Decimal Classification) makes the retrieval of e-catalogues easier and more professional. It refers to the use of local databases as well as the cumulative ones. The classification numbers are being assigned from the menu visible for an academic librarian in the system COBISS.SR. This artificial language which is the language of

numbers, in UDC, is being used to describe the content of a work. However, a topic determinant is also to be used as well as a topic subdeterminant, a geographic subdeterminant, a time subdeterminant and a subdeterminant for describing the form of a work. These determinants orient a library user towards all professional segments he may find literature in if we have in mind his inquiry. It is in such a way that his retrieval becomes more diversified including the retrievals in the domain of *religions, identities, policies*, etc. This contributes even to a better use of library collections.

Serbia contributed to the Portal DART due to its open repositories PHAIDRA which belong to the University of Belgrade, the University of Kragujevac and the University of Niš. The lack of literature can be compensated by the retrieval of the e-journals with the articles in full text as well as through the use of an inter-library loan service with abroad. These services have been used by readers in the "Svetozar Marković" University Library in Belgrade very long.

Although divided, Christianity and other religions survive and live in the epoch of globalizing through the digitization of cultural and scientific heritage even under the threat of such a virus as COVID-19. The digitization of middle-aged manuscripts has particular relevance in contemporary academic librarianship and wider - in modern society. As the pages inevitably rot away under the influence of microorganisms, it is extremely significant to protect cultural heritage. Monographies about religion belong to such a group of works that are to be protected.

A high number of works is planned for the process of digitization. Manuscripts as well as successfully defended doctoral dissertations are to be digitized due to the implementation of new technologies in the academic librarianship of Serbia. That is also a way to contribute to the interconnection of cultures, religions, and scientific achievements through the nature of the works uploaded in PHAIDRA. It is also a way to contribute to the integration of knowledge from a global point of view. A work in accordance with the international standards makes the cohesion among the academic librarians from different geographic areas stronger.

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