

AN ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION FOR THE DEGREE DOCTOR OF  
PHILOSOPHY IN THE SCHOOL OF LIBRARY AND INFORMATION  
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Title: The Impact of the Network Society on the Professional Identity of Serbian Librarians

Abstract Approved: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Andrew J. M. Smith, Ph.D., Chair )

This case study is exploratory as it seeks to determine how Serbian librarians self-report their involvement in the global network society as defined by Castells and how they report this interaction as influencing their view of Serbian professional librarianship. The researcher took 2 study trips to Serbia to obtain background information on this topic. This qualitative study design used semi-structured questions to interview 13 informants via Skype about their experiences as a practicing librarian in Serbia. These informants included individuals that were males and females; that had varied educational backgrounds; varied job titles and experiences; and those who were just beginning their career; those that were mid-career; and those that were later career. Content analysis was utilized to connect themes found in interviews and themes suggested by the theory base. This study found that Serbian librarians communicate locally, regionally, and globally, both passively and actively, and also with varying degrees of collaboration. Informants shared many spheres of influence that helped them define their roles and goals in their professional practice. In many ways, informants

indicated identity building that extends Castell's concepts of legitimizing identity; resistance identity; and project identity. Likewise, the informants' focus on professional practice suggests similarities to Hicks' (2014) concepts of librarian professional identity.

Keywords: professional identity, global network society, Serbian librarianship

THE IMPACT OF THE NETWORK SOCIETY  
ON THE PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY OF SERBIAN LIBRARIANS

By

Amanda Harrison

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*“Both online, in real life, somewhere you, in Belgrade or Serbia, or in the world, you can bring something with you. You can use all ideas and suggestions to improve your science and improve your community. This is it.”*

*--Informant 8*

## Chapter 1: Introduction

The network society has created technological, political, and economic change in world institutions, relationships between individuals, and relationships between humans and institutions. As established organizations, libraries are just one more area in which these societal changes have upended traditional modes and manners of service. As Rubin (2016) notes:

The profession is now in the midst of a revolutionary--and for some, a disconcerting--change. The stable condition of the past is being replaced by a dynamic environment in which the content and function of libraries are being revised and modified by technological, political, and economic change. (p. 77)

Changes in libraries through different service models, different resource platforms, and changes in resource management have been heavily documented in library and information science (LIS) literature and result from changes in the way individuals access information. "The dramatic changes that have occurred in the past three decades have in some senses radically changed the way information and knowledge are acquired" (Rubin, 2016, p. 75).

### Research Problem

The librarian profession continues to grapple with how to integrate the changes in professional identity that come with a global networked society. Examples of these arguments about librarianship include the dual priorities of library science versus information science, the attainment of standards for accreditation, the evolution of course content and learning outcomes, and the change in values and perceptions in the field. While the profession shares the rich historical framework of librarianship, the professionals working within the field may embrace a wide range of values, influences, and principles that help shape their personal professional identity. Although Gorman (2015) may argue that our values of service, intellectual freedom,

equity of access, service, literacy, privacy, and democracy endure, even these must exist in a changing cultural context. In the global network, “many of these changes are driven--or, at least, influenced by--technological innovation and many of them are entwined with others” (p. 3).

While Rubin and Gorman may have been referencing primarily the state of American libraries and librarians, librarians outside of America are also looking at professional identity in response to technological change. Stokić Simončić and Vučković (2014) emphasize the influences that have motivated the Serbian state and further iterate the influence of technology on professional identity, stating:

Libraries contribute to the building of personal and collective identities by preserving and passing on past, present, and future experiences and notions; on the other, librarianship itself faces the challenge to define its own professional identity during a time of turbulent technological and social change. (p. 285)

The purpose of this study is exploratory as it seeks to determine how Serbian librarians self-report their involvement in the global network society as defined by Castells and how they report this interaction as influencing their view of Serbian professional librarianship.

**Rationale.** Following this changing world, the professional identity of the librarian is in flux and its impact reverberates among the universities, the professional organizations, and within librarians. Castells’ (2010a) idea of a global network society provides a theoretical base for understanding how identity building has changed, as the demise of the state and other dominant institutions of society have given way to the formation of collective identities that exist in response to, rather than legitimized by, these modern forms of societal authority. Hansson (2010) provides support to Castells’ argument about identity in response to change, stating that the change in technology “should not be a problem in itself” to librarians’ professional identity

as they “have over several decades now learned how to respond to new and changing preferences in user behavior, both in terms of direct information searching and in the way in which they want to behave socially in the library” (p.71). However, Hansson continues his argument to state that the crisis in identity is linked instead to the definition of these new institutions such as the purely digital library and the changing need for library services in response to these technological changes. Specifically, he notes, “Organisational change tends to put a strain on professional roles and identities, especially as in our case, boundaries between different types of libraries seem to be diminishing” (p.55).

LIS literature has focused on how librarians could and should interact and conduct themselves within this new network society. Even Gorman’s (2015) book about enduring values exists in response to how the spirit of librarianship continues despite technological change. However, few areas of study consider how librarians themselves conceive of their own library identity and to what extent they report that the network society impacts this identity. One study on librarian professional identity was conducted in Serbia by Stokić Simončić and Vučković (2014) who offer one of these few glimpses into how Serbian librarians have developed their professional identity in the years since 1991, in terms of survival, change, and self-awareness in response to the challenges presented by the demise of the Serbian state. In addition, they consider how the modern professional identity of librarians offers opportunities to participate in professional organizations as one avenue for this growth along with initial librarian education. Indeed, they consider that, “Serbian librarians, who, during the second half of the twentieth century, failed to complete the process of professionalization of their activities, will continue to confront this problem in the future,” (p. 296). The progress by which Serbian librarians interact within the global network society, and how they report these effects on their professional

identity, is something that has not yet been explored. This study follows Stokić Simončić and Vučković's (2014) call "to develop a new discourse on librarianship in Serbia...so that librarians may have a voice in the processes of formal and public education and the acceleration of economic, scientific, and cultural growth" (p.284).

### **Theoretical Foundations**

This study is viewed through the lens of a radical structuralist paradigm in which the movement of information and technology facilitates and drives structural change and social movements without resorting to structural determinism. Castells (2010c) describes the network society as one that is influenced by "the globalization of economy, technology, and communication" (p. 343). In Castells' network society theory (2010a), he asserts that technology interacts with identity and social movements. Specifically, he notes that the formation of identity has changed from the modern period. Individuals used to construct their identity based on civil society, nationalist tendencies, ethnicities, or local territorial loyalties. Instead of these traditional identities, individuals are torn between fundamentalism, a defensive identity that seeks to preserve those structures which no longer hold sway or a resistance identity in response to the historical civil society structures. Individuals within the network society are subject to identity fragmentation. Even such long-standing identities as ethnicity are challenged either through integration into other cultural groups such as religion or nationalism, or they provide a more defensive posture through more localized, entrenched groups. "Between cultural communes, and self-defense territorial units, ethnic roots are twisted, divided, reprocessed, mixed, differentially stigmatized, or rewarded, according to a new logic of informationalization/globalization of cultures and economies that makes symbolic composites out of blurred identities" (p.63).

The nature of network society is that it is all encompassing and individuals cannot avoid being affected by it in some manner. One key feature of the network society is the movement of information as it is processed and organized through society via technologies. The movement of information to the global network is both linked to the way individuals identify themselves and to the way individuals think about one another. While information used to be heavily connected with a sense of place, the movement of information through increasing sophisticated channels; telegraph, telephone, fax, and the Internet has made location less important for the spread of ideas (Gleick, 2011). Thus Castells (2010b) maintains:

In a world of global flows of wealth, power, and images, the search for identity, collective or individual, ascribed or constructed, becomes the fundamental source of social meaning. This is not a new trend, since identity, and particularly religious and ethnic identity have been at the roots of meaning since the dawn of human society. Yet identity is becoming the main, and sometimes the only source of meaning in a historical period characterized by widespread de-structuring of organizations, de-legitimation of institutions, fading away of major social movements, and ephemeral cultural expression. People increasingly organize their meaning not around what they do but on the basis of what they are, or believe they are. (p. 3)

The identity that is influenced by the network society is both personal and collective. As Castells' (2010a) notes, individuals do not merely define their roles either in defense of or in response to institutions and structures within the society. These roles are created through negotiation between individuals and the organizations within which they find themselves. Identity, on the other hand, is a source of meaning making for individuals established through a

process of individuation. In addition, personal relationships may function to establish communities and negotiate personal role definition. As Hansson (2010) states, “it is important that librarians take control of the institution and develop it in accordance with professional tradition and ethical norms” (p. 99). Hansson continues to discuss the changing professional role of the librarian and the need for the “establishment of a relevant identity for libraries and librarianship in the future--globally and locally” (p.99). One way in which this role negotiation can take place is via the Internet in which the Internet functions as a ‘permanent agora’ (p.155) or an always available semi-public space where individuals can communicate and collaborate without being bound by locality and its subsequent rules and customs. Castells (2010b) continues in *The Rise of the Network Society* to consider the way individuals use the Internet to create relationships at a distance through asynchronous communications as it allows for “multiple memberships in partial communities” (p. 389).

Technological change has also fueled economic change, and this, too, has affected library science in many ways. Both Rubin and Castells reference economic change as part of this new network society. For Castells (2010c) this change is the instantaneous aspect of economic activity that takes place in real-time throughout the globe. Rubin (2016) considers the shift as part of the nature of information as something that is now a “recognized entity to be measured, evaluated, and priced” (p. 289). However, while information may be increasingly important, the role of the librarian as the gatekeeper to information has lessened. This shift may affect the values model that traditionally regarded the library as a unique repository of knowledge and put the librarian in a position of control. Gorman (2015) considered that this change to prioritize information over knowledge and speed and efficiency above all else had a negative impact on librarianship and librarian values in the 1980s. Rubin (2016) considered that this change led to



the rise of iSchools and information studies departments and the lack of practical library coursework curricula in LIS programs. He also noted that while the changes in the field alter and shape the roles that librarians play, it remains to be seen if these changing roles shape and affect a librarian's professional identities.

Rubin (2016) considered that the changes in library science came from the technological, economic, and political changes happening around the world. The current study takes place in Serbia, a country that has undergone many changes in identity in the recent past, primarily through political changes within the country. Serbian librarians are not unique in having undergone technology changes in the field of librarianship and changing expectations for professional librarianship. Serbia provides just one example of political upheaval and uncertainty in a globalized world. The political changes in Serbia have changed the name and boundaries of the country, changed the political framework that the country's government is based on, and altered the legal and regulatory frameworks within which LIS must operate. Serbians themselves are asking about these questions as Vraneš (2007) considers the

meaning of the concept of the information society and the role of libraries in the information society; the role of formal education and librarians' associations in developing freedom of access to information and the role of legal and statutory regulations along with international and local standards in achieving equal freedom of access to information" (p. 139).

As a state, the people have had many different models of political organization including parliamentary democracy, communist federation, and hostile occupation (Bolčić, 2016). Many of these political changes have resulted in stagnation in librarianship development in the country, as professional library organizations have been fragmented and collaborative relationships have

been broken (Stokić Simončić & Vučković, 2014). Therefore, Serbian librarians often look towards the models provided by the American Library Association (ALA) and International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) in addition to the Serbian Library Association (SLA) (Stošić, 2015; Trajković and Dunić, 2016). The intersection of identity and geopolitical changes in Serbia makes it an ideal place to study librarian identity within a global network. Through a case study of Serbia, we can gain insight into how librarians conceive and develop their professional identity in a sea of technological, economic, and political change. Also, this study explores how these global challenges impact the world of the professional librarian and those people and organizations who prepare, teach and support them. Librarians themselves may find it challenging to continue to advance and operate in a world that is undergoing so many changes. Developing a better understanding of the current relationship of the professional identity of the librarian and the network society can assist professional organizations to provide support librarians at any stage of their professional lives.

### **Significance of the Study**

An understanding of how Serbian librarians conceive their professional identity is pertinent to a better understanding of the profession as a whole. In addition, it provides a better knowledge base for organizations that exist to help librarians develop and define their profession, such as the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA), the American Library Association (ALA), and the Association for Library and Information Science Education (ALISE). As ALISE (2017) stated we must “chart a future that lays out the broader environment within which the field exists” referencing the increasingly international nature of librarianship (para. 1). In addition, IFLA noted the impact of globalization and changing information trends on the roles and expectations of librarians through their 2007 conference,

“Libraries without borders: Navigating towards global understanding” (International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions, 2008). As Hicks (2014) notes:

Understanding the professional identity of librarians provides insight into the professional problems and concerns of librarianship, what it means to be a librarian, and how librarians themselves construct their understanding of librarianship. Such insights have implications for understanding how librarians comprehend their roles and the services they offer and the cultural and social origins of professional decision-making. In addition, these observations can lead to the development of professionally appropriate solutions to relevant problems, which in turn influences librarians' relationships with their communities and client bases. (p. 252)

The concern of these professional organizations is global, but it takes a localized study approach to learn how individuals define their own professional identity. While some people may be truly ‘globalized’ and free of the pull of statism, Castells (2010) notes:

The proportion of ‘cosmopolitans,’ people who feel they are ‘citizens of the world,’ remains at barely 13 percent of people surveyed worldwide, as documented in this volume....territorial identity is a fundamental anchor of belonging that is not even lost in the rapid process of generalized urbanization we are now experiencing....When people need to expand their community, they refer to their nations, their islands in the global ocean of flows of capital, technology, and communication. (p. xxiii)

Castells offers a view of the network society that is both large scale: globalized in structure and creating even larger interdependencies as nations become increasingly network; and small scale,

increasingly influencing individual jobs, colleagues, lives, with meanings and roles that converge around this information access. “The rise of the network society and the growing power of identity are intertwined social processes that jointly define globalization, geopolitics, and social transformation in the early twenty-first century” (p. xvii). While this exploratory study is the first to consider the librarian professional identity under the guise of the network society, it, on a small scale illustrates the call for scholarship put forth by Stokić Simončić and Vučković (2014) to “place the development of Serbian librarianship with the context of development of librarianship as a whole” (p. 295).

### **Research Questions**

Following this call for scholarship this study seeks to better understand Serbian librarianship and the ways in which Serbian librarians interact in a global society. The central question of this study is, how do Serbian librarians self-report their involvement within the global network society and the impact this has on their practice of librarianship?

The sub questions are:

1. How do Serbian librarians define their roles and professional goals as librarians?
2. How do they describe their interactions with the global network society?
3. What spheres of influence do Serbian librarians report as important in defining their professional identity?
4. What effects do they report on their professional identity by their involvement in global networks?
5. What can the library profession learn about a global network society from Serbian librarians?

## **Definition of Terms**

This research study utilizes several terms that require definition.

**Global Network Society.** The global network society, hereafter known as the network society, is defined by Castells (2001) as “a society where the key social structures and activities are organized around electronically processed information networks” (para. 1). Characteristics of the network society include the use of information as a material which is acted on by technologies and the sheer pervasiveness of these technologies in daily life. These technologies do not exist in a vacuum, but are networked, flexible, and often interrelated. Thus, network society technologies are pervasive enough to impact individuals and their identity, both personally and professionally.

**Professional Identity.** Professional identity exists as a source of meaning-making, established through a process of individuation, and exists as a representation of the self within specific professional practices. Professional identity is a subset of personal identity. This study follows Giddens’ (1991) concept of identity as a source of meaning-making for individuals established through a process of individuation. In regards to the professional identity of an individual, more specifically, Hicks (2014) considers the definition of professional identity as, “a description, or representation, of the self within specific professional practices” (p. 252).

## **Chapter Summary**

This chapter has highlighted how the network society has altered previous local, national, and global structures through the movement of information on a massive scale as established in Castell’s theory. Libraries and librarians are also affected by these structural changes. Furthermore, Serbia is one country in which structural change has occurred rapidly at the political, economic, and technological levels over the past 30 years. As a result, this study

examines how Serbian librarians detail their professional identity and how they report their interactions within a global society. Understanding how Serbian librarians see themselves within a network society can help professional organizations better understand the challenges that librarians face with conceiving their professional identity and roles in today's changing information world.

Chapter two considers a brief history of the Serbian state and Serbian libraries and how these factors have impacted the current state of Serbian libraries. In addition, the professionalization of libraries in Serbia is examined along with international views of professional identity in librarianship. A more localized view of Serbian libraries and the impact of political upheaval on these libraries are also described. This chapter includes a further description of the network society theory by Castells and the impact of the network society on professional identity. A view of LIS professionalization and how network society impacts conclude this discussion through a review of the appropriate literature.

In chapter three the methods of this study are discussed. This chapter further explains the purpose of the study, the research questions, and the rationale for qualitative methods as well as examining the case study approach and the context of the study. Besides, the role of the researcher is considered and the process used to gain access to interview subjects in Serbia is described. Informant selection through purposive sampling is outlined and the process steps for gaining informed consent, data collection procedures, data processing, and data management are explained. In addition, this chapter explicates the areas of rigor and trustworthiness in relation to qualitative studies as explained by Wildemuth (2009) and Miles et al. (2014), including how to increase confirmability, dependability, credibility, and transferability. Finally, it considers the study limitations and the timeline for this research.

Chapter 4 considers the informants of the study and detailed findings as presented from the interview transcripts. Themes that emerged from the interviews include the role of the globalized society as seen through formal and informal professional connections, fellowships, conferences, and international travel, local conferences, and satellite meetings. The globalized society is also considered under the guise of local, regional and international collaborations. The importance of education and information about different times of education, coursework, and continuing education are considered. The chapter continues by discussing librarian roles in areas of programming, books and materials, management, and leadership. Information on the state of librarianship in Serbia concludes chapter 4.

Chapter 5 discusses the findings from the interview questions through the theoretical lens of Castells' global network theory. A summary of the informants is provided and a discussion of the researcher's role. Then the findings relevant to the central question and the five sub questions and the links to the theoretical base are considered. Finally, the chapter concludes with the limits of the study and suggestions for future research.

## Chapter 2: Literature Review

Understanding Serbian librarianship requires an overview of the history of the Serbian state and how the history of Serbian libraries has been impacted by historical conflict and the current challenging economic climate. Serbian librarianship has had a long and diverse history and currently encompasses a wide variety of institutions, such as academic libraries, public libraries, school libraries, special libraries, and the American Corners. The professionalization of libraries in Serbia has developed from changes in the educational requirements and has been increasingly defined in the literature. These changes mirror those internationally, as librarianship has grown and developed through education and 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> century scholarship. Furthermore, changes in political and economic identity from modern to post-modern and finally to the network society have changed librarians' professional identity through structural changes in identity building. These changes in identity can be traced through changes in professionalism, professional associations, and professional practice. The Serbian government has also impacted library services through laws that target library practice. In addition, other governments and governmental organizations such as the United States of America State Department and the governments of other countries, such as Russia, France, Spain, Germany, Norway, Italy, and China have impacted library services in Serbia through the creation and funding of separate libraries, reading rooms, and cultural centers (American Corner Belgrade, 2018; Goethe Institut Serbia, 2018; Instituto Cervantes, 2018; Institut Français, 2018; Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, 2018; Vraneš, 2017; Serbia.com, 2016; The Royal Norwegian Embassy, 2015). These changes in Serbia, from war, conflict, poverty, to an independent state, offer an opportunity to investigate and understand the global network society in a way that is not possible through the study of American librarians. The American library profession has indicated



a need for new and diverse voices to help the field better understand librarianship (ALISE, 2017; IFLA, 2008). Serbian librarians Stokić Simončić and Vučković (2014) have placed a call for further study of Serbian librarianship and professional identity. This study is ideally placed to answer both these calls to professional scholarship through interviews with Serbian librarians about how they conceive of their professional identity within a global network society.

### **A Brief History of the Future Serbian Territory from the Medieval Period to Today**

Librarian identity in modern day Serbia must consider the political and ethnic identity of the country at large not forgetting that as Russell-Omaljev (2016) notes, “In the complex game of identity politics, all sides use history for political ends” (p.221). The area that constitutes present day Serbia at the time of this study has historically been part of many political identities including, but not limited to, the Ottoman Empire, the Austro-Hungarian Empire, the State of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, and Yugoslavia and Serbia and Montenegro. This section considers a brief history of the Serbian state from the medieval period to the present through the lens of national and ethnic identities.

Any consideration of ethnic identity should include a definition of ethnicity. As Klemenčič and Žagar (2004) note, the definition of ethnicity in Europe is different than in the U.S., “In Europe it is traditionally defined not only with a common history, culture, ethnic identity, religion, and/or language, but also includes the traditional territory of settlement of a certain ethnic community,” (p. xvi). Furthermore, they consider that this concept of ‘sacred lands’ (p. xvi) is challenged by histories that present a consistently diverse region of the Balkans from the medieval period to the present day. However, the concept of autochthonous settlement as ‘sacred lands’ provides a better understanding of continued and modern-day conflict in the region. Autochthonous settlement refers to the indigenous, or original settlement of a group of

people. Self-identity is related to these interweaving concepts of political and ethnic identity as well:

In most environments, especially in local communities, ethnicity still plays a central role in political socialization and self-identification. Ethnic identities often remain the strongest collective identities in plural societies and have proven to be able, in specific circumstances, to override individual identities or other collective identities. (p. xvii)

Klemenčič & Žagar also define nationality, a related concept to ethnicity, as holding a slightly different meaning in its local context because in South Slavic languages the term “‘nation’ does not necessarily imply political statehood” (p. xvii). In addition, ‘nationality,’ is a term often used to describe ethnic groups living in original settlements, such as when the term ‘national minority’ (p. xviii) was replaced by term ‘nationality’ (p. xviii) for minority groups in order to recognize their status and rights within Yugoslavia even when they did not have political control over their own areas. These terms are specifically noted here because as Györe (2006), shares, “until the restoration of a Serbian state at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and thanks to migrations and changes in state borders, the Serbian people lived in the territory of several states: the Turkish and the Habsburg Empires, the Kingdom of Hungary, the Principality of Transylvania and the Venetian state” (p. 91).

Did ethnic conflicts drive the political changes that have long been a challenge for the Serbian (and former Yugoslavian) state? This point may be debated, but as Lampe (2000) notes by “1800 the territories that later became Yugoslavia had suffered even more warfare and forced migration, foreign intervention, and internal division than had their Mediterranean or Central European neighbors” (p. 9). While a consistently diverse area, Lampe (2000) notes that scholars

and journalists disagree about the evidence of ethnic conflict in the pre-1900 territory. Ethnic identity did lead to the emergence of different states, led by Serbs, Croats, Bosnians, and others in various regions.

These nations suffered incursions primarily by the Ottoman Empire from the east and Hapsburg Empire in the north and west, the latter transitioning to the Austro-Hungarian monarchy. Although the territories of political division were not exclusively limited to specific areas or ethnicities, the Ottoman Empire primarily conquered the future Serbia territory post-1354, or eastern Yugoslavia, whereas the Hapsburg Empire, primarily conquered the states of future Croatia and Slovenia, or western Yugoslavia (Klemenčič & Žagar, 2004). According to Lampe (2000), some territories held out longer than others. Areas of Bosnia, for example, struggled against the Hungarian empire but were not conquered until 1463, and Herzegovina not until 1483. Different styles of ruling, both between the Ottoman Empire and Austro-Hungarian Empire, but also within territories controlled by both empires, served to influence various levels of economic prosperity, religious tolerance, and military and political oppression.

The rule of the Ottoman Empire changed the ethnic composition of the Slavic territories. Colonization of the area brought in different groups including the Yuruks and Armenians from other areas of the Ottoman Empire. Other groups resettled in different areas, for example, Orthodox Christian groups who fled to the borderlands. This resettlement was in part due to the Ottoman Empire's encouragement, as it offered freedom from feudalism for those farmers who moved to the borderlands to provide defense for the empire. This practice was duplicated by the Hapsburg Empire, who also encouraged Orthodox Serbians to move to their borderlands to protect them from the Turks. Even though the middle ages in future Yugoslavia were marked primarily by movements of ethnic groups and political bodies, they created a lasting set of

myths and memories of common ethnic origins and ethnic kindred [that] survived and found their reflection in the emergence of the “Yugoslav idea” in the nineteenth century and were present (although often contested) throughout the existence of Yugoslav state(s) in the twentieth century. (Klemenčič & Žagar, 2004, p. 38)

In the early 19th century, Lampe (2000) identifies a ‘proto-Yugoslav’ (p. 40) concept called Illyrianism or the Illyrian movement. The Illyrian movement emphasized and embraced ethnic diversity within the territory of what would become Yugoslavia. In many cases, this movement was driven by a united desire to overthrow outside rule. Both a cultural movement and political one, ‘proto-Yugoslavs’ fought the Hungarians over the concept of rule in a common Slavic language, religious autonomy, and political representation. In addition, while the 1800s saw a rise in opposition to the Hungarian rule, it also saw the rise of revolts against the Ottoman Empire in Serbia. Protić (1989) notes that Serbian nation was the first to revolt against the Ottoman Empire in 1804. Klemenčič & Žagar (2004) relate that by the mid-1800s the concept of a great Serbia or a Great Croatia began to take hold; however, both the Turks and the Hungarians tried to exploit differences between the two ethnicities, Serbs and Croats, to provoke conflict.

The war between Serbia and the Ottoman Empire from 1876-78 resulted in the movement of different ethnicities between Serbia and Kosovo and helped determine the modern-day demographics of the latter (Klemenčič & Žagar, 2004). Protić (1989) notes that during this war, “about two million people changed their living spaces” (p.94). Klemenčič & Žagar consider that by the end of the 1900s the future ‘ethno-nations’ (p. 75) of Slovenes, Croats, Bosniaks, Serbs, Montenegrins, and Macedonians were established. However, both political, cultural, and

economic ties between these nations continued to grow, setting the stage for a future combined Yugoslavia (Klemenčič & Žagar, 2004).

War broke out in the Yugoslavian region when a group calling itself ‘Young Bosnians’ assassinated Archduke Francis Ferdinand to protest the Hapsburg takeover of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The subsequent declaration of war from Austria-Hungary on Serbia led many political groups to propose the idea of a united nation. However, ethnic conflicts were not nullified by the desire to create a united nation, as even the Serbian president, Nikola Pašić, was concerned that the increase in physical lands would lead to the creation of a country that was not majority Serb Orthodox (Klemenčič & Žagar, 2004). Ultimately, in 1918, an internal crisis in the Austro-Hungary monarchy resulted in a joint resolution that proclaimed that the people of Slovenes, Croats, and Serbs had the right to self-determination (Lampe, 2000). Klemenčič & Žagar (2004) report that the end of World War I brought increased outside support for a united Yugoslav nation in the wake of a broken Austro-Hungarian Empire.

However, while the region may have been uniting politically, it was rife with ethnic tensions, economic troubles, and leftover physical damage from World War I. Klemenčič & Žagar (2004) highlight how this united Yugoslavian country only named three ethnicities: Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes, omitting the Bosniaks, Macedonians, and Montenegrins. The Serbian nationals who dominated this new government enacting policies that resulted in strained relations with and within other ethnic territories absorbed by this nascent state. Economic troubles served to create further challenges, such as migration due to food shortages and high unemployment. In particular, the industry had been significantly damaged by World War I and had only just begun to rebound after the payment of war reparations to Serbia. In addition, Cveljo (1977) cites disparate conditions that existed across Yugoslavia during this time frame. In the south, where

the country had been under Turkish rule, only 27-37% of the population was literate. In areas that had been ruled by the Austro-Hungarian Empire, the population was more than 98% literate, while the rest of the country ranged from 54-58% literate. Ultimately, Klemenčič & Žagar (2004) note that Yugoslavia struggled through the period between the two world wars “unable to ensure the necessary political cohesion, which proved a fatal defect when the country was attacked and occupied in 1941” (p. 147).

World War II quickly divided the country of Yugoslavia. In March of 1941, the monarchy, which had signed the Axis Tripartite Pact, was overtaken by a coup and replaced with a new prime minister (Judah, 1997). Klemenčič & Žagar (2004) share how even though the new prime minister did not choose to reverse the monarch’s signature, in the Tripartite act, Hitler chose to attack Yugoslavia in April of 1941, defeating the country within the month. Yugoslavia was subsequently divided among Germany, Italy, Hungary, and Bulgaria. Ethnic cleansing in many areas led to the creation of armed resistance, but other groups chose instead to unite with occupying forces. The fighting that resulted between the many factions resulted in a Yugoslavian civil war. Not confined to the 1940s, “the issues of the civil war that took place in Yugoslavia during World War II became a burning political issue at the end of the twentieth century” (p.184).

In 1945, the second Yugoslavia, the Federal People’s Republic of Yugoslavia, was created (Lampe, 2000). Klemenčič & Žagar (2004) note that the government attempted to solve the problem of ethnic nationalism within Yugoslavia by acknowledging the diversity of the nation and establishing ethnic equality. However, while the concept of diversity was acknowledged, the state “failed to establish and develop adequate, formal mechanisms and institutions within the political system for the prevention, management, and resolution of ethnic

and other escalated social conflicts” (p. 266). During the cold war, Yugoslavia occupied a unique position. While the ruling party leadership was resolutely communist, the state itself ran independently of the Soviet Union and instead relied on relationships with the Western countries to secure certain border regions. The death of Tito in 1980 led to increased tension among ethnic groups and, with the country in debt over 20 billion dollars to external creditors, the 1980s started in a state of unrest (Klemenčič & Žagar, 2004).

While in 1981 the country’s leaders attempted to establish economic reforms, they were unable to make the changes necessary to both pay down debt and keep the country stable. By March of 1981, Kosovo, one of the areas greatly hit by economic difficulty, also experienced ethnic unrest. Although measures were put in place in order to achieve economic stabilization, many areas were brought to the brink of financial collapse. Different politicians called for either centralization or decentralization of political forces, making it difficult for any strong reforms to be enacted. While the Serbian people, who held an ethnic majority in almost the entire state of Yugoslavia, and a very strong majority in government positions, wished to keep a centralized Yugoslavia, ethnic tensions continued throughout the decade. The rise to power of Slobodan Milošević in 1989 led to increased centralization of the Yugoslavian state and subsequent political reforms that reduced the rights of the autonomous provinces of Kosovo and Vojvodina (Klemenčič & Žagar, 2004). In addition:

An important part of his new agenda was the reconstitution of the dominant state discourses of the previous forty-seven years of “Yugoslav Nationality” in which the main ideological repertoire was cooperation and consanguinity between the people of the Balkans. (Russell-Omaljev, 2016, p.63)

Bolčić (2016) summarizes the viewpoint of numerous writers to note that, “Some analysts of post-1945 developments in Serbia are inclined to say that, except for some successful years, former Yugoslavia (Serbia being part of that state), has been in *permanent crisis*” (p. 32, emphasis in original). Bolčić continues to frame three points that coalesced in the 1980s to create this state of permanent crisis, namely political, economic, and social crises that led to the dissolution of Yugoslavia in the 1990s. The political crisis was likely linked to the economic crisis as the controlling Yugoslav Communist Party was unable to handle the rapid inflation, high unemployment rate, and steady drop in Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in the 1980s. At the start of the 1990s, increased tension led to the fall of the Socialist Federalist Republic of Yugoslavia as the League of Communists of Yugoslavia delegation of January 1990 was dissolved without solid political or economic reforms. By the end of 1990, Slovenia voted for independence from the Yugoslavian state and Croatia tried to break from Yugoslavia as well. However, the political situation remained complicated, with Serbs residing in Croatia declaring their independence from the self-declared Croatian state. The armed conflict in March of 1991 began, leading to an eventual refugee crisis and ethnic cleansing as war broke out in Slovenia and spread to Croatia, Bosnia, Serbia, and Kosovo (Lucarelli, 2000). As the war continued, the Serbia and Montenegro portions of Yugoslavia formed the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in 1992. The Dayton Agreement of 1995 brought limited peace to the region (Klemenčič & Žagar, 2004). However, the continued economic crisis led to a social crisis “characterized by serious social cleavages, social disintegration, and inter-ethnic conflicts” (Bolčić, 2016, p. 32).

After the Dayton agreement, the problem of Kosovo continued for Yugoslavia. While Milošević wished to retain control over the autonomous region of Kosovo, that sentiment was not shared by many of the ethnic Albanians in Kosovo. Fighting continued in Kosovo and



Milošević was given an ultimatum in 1998 by the UN Security Council to stop the continued violence. NATO began airstrikes in Serbia in March 1999, until a June 1999 UN Security Council resolution formally established peacekeeping troops in Kosovo and helped the area rebuild its political organizations. However, some skirmishes in the region continued by those who still held antagonistic views against rival ethnic groups. While some fighting continued, the official war was over, and Milošević suffered in popularity as a result, which led to his political defeat in 2000. In 2002, the Belgrade Agreement led to the change in name to the state of Serbia-Montenegro (Klemenčič & Žagar, 2004). However, by 2006 Montenegro had declared independence, and in 2008 Kosovo declared independence from the Serbian state. While the former may have separated peacefully, the contentious declaration of independence of Kosovo is a continuing problem for the Serbian state. Only since 2013 have relations between the two countries began to normalize in a political sense. Serbian leadership under President Vučić has promoted a goal of European Union by 2025 (Central Intelligence Agency, 2018). However, Serbia is required to recognize Kosovo's independence to join the European Union (Radeljic, 2013).

### **Library History in Serbia**

Library history in Serbia begins in the medieval period, when libraries in monasteries, private collectors, aristocrats and royal courts collected printed books beginning in the 13<sup>th</sup> century (Stokic Simončić, 2011). Peć Monastery is one such location, a UNESCO heritage site that contains 113 manuscripts from the 13<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> centuries. Some books from this location were taken to establish the Patriarchate Library in 1706, making this Belgrade's oldest library. Other monastery libraries were also established in the medieval times including those at Gračanica

monastery and Visoki Dečani monastery. Manuscripts from these libraries now reside at the National Library of Serbia at Belgrade (Stokic Simončić & Vukadinović, 2009).

The 1800s saw a cultural awakening of nationalistic ideals for the Serbian people, and also the other ethnic identities within the region (Klemenčič & Žagar, 2004). This period, which followed the Enlightenment, saw the arrival of literary societies to help further develop a Serbian culture (Matica Srpska Library, 2015). In 1808 the Belgrade Higher School was established which became the University of Belgrade in 1905 (Nikolić, 2017). In 1826, Matica Srpska was founded in Pest (Hungary),<sup>1</sup> although it later moved to Novi Sad (Serbia). Originally, Matica Srpska was a literary society formed to help develop Serbian culture. However, in 1838, Jovan Djordjević established the Library of Matica Srpska which offered space as a repository for all Serbian books (Matica Srpska Library, 2015). Six years earlier, in 1832, the National Library of Serbia was founded as a book depository that continued to grow and develop over time into the National Library (Injac, 2011). Later, the University of Zagreb was founded in Croatia in 1874 (Klemenčič & Žagar, 2004).

In the period between the World Wars, libraries and library associations in Yugoslavia grew and became more organized. In 1920, Andrew Carnegie gave half the money for the building that became the library “Svetozar Marković,” the main library of the University of Belgrade, the other half being provided by the Serbian government (University Library "Svetozar Marković," 2014). Staff in these university libraries were primarily appointed by government officials. In 1928, a professional examination was added to the requirements for an appointment to the National Library in Belgrade. In 1929, university libraries in Zagreb (Croatia) and

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<sup>1</sup> Cities are noted in their current country of placement, although in the events described they may have been located in another political entity.

Belgrade (Serbia) also began to require library examinations, and in 1931 state libraries also required exams for professional positions. However, even though exams were required for these positions before 1945 only in-service training was available (Cveljo, 1977).

In the period from 1929-1940, library associations became a part of Yugoslavian librarianship and the first governmental regulations on librarianship began to be enacted (Cveljo, 1977). The Association of Librarians in Yugoslavia was created by two librarians at “Svetozar Marković” at the suggestion of the Vice-Director of the University Library in Prague. At a librarian’s conference in Belgrade in 1929 individuals from three university libraries agreed an association should be organized. The Association of Librarians in Yugoslavia was formalized in 1930 and this group later joined IFLA. Other library organizations, such as the Croatian Library Association were created as a separate entity during this decade. During this same time, a *Law on Public Libraries* was created by the Serbian Ministry of Education that was about regulating library activities and personnel, although it was never enacted.

World War II was a difficult time for Serbia, as a whole, and libraries were no exception. During the war the National Library burned completely to the ground. Although everything had been packed and stored for shipment to a safe location, the library was destroyed before the removal of materials could occur. The burned remains of manuscripts form a display in the new National Library (Injac, 2011).

The period after World War II was a strong one for librarianship in Yugoslavia. There was an increase in public libraries, formal university library training, and library associations. Cveljo (1977) notes how in 1945, a “public library movement” (p. 335) began the education of local people and many libraries were built; however, they were poorly funded and often ran by untrained staff. This led, initially, to the creation of short-term coursework for librarians in the

period between 1945 and 1948. Stokić Simončić & Vučković (2014) note the strength of this library movement as by 1948, “there were 9,772 public libraries in Yugoslavia, of which 3,335 were in Serbia, which held a total of 1,250,245 books and supported 631,181 documented readers” (p. 286). This increase was in part related to attempts to create a modern state-run educational system in the period between 1948 and 1960. To further support these new librarians, the Secondary School for Librarianship in Belgrade was created in 1948 and the Union of Associations of Librarians of Yugoslavia was created in 1949 (Cveljo, 1977). Vraneš (2008) notes that by 1950, the three-year secondary school for library training in Belgrade transitioned into a four-year secondary school. In addition, the University of Belgrade continued its leadership in library studies by establishing a University Education of Library Personnel. This program was open for only a few years before the Faculty of Philology of the University of Belgrade made the program a four-semester interdisciplinary one.

Cveljo (1977) notes that the period of the 1950s in libraries was characterized by decentralization from the government that affected the management and running of many types of institutions including libraries. The increased importance of the education of library personnel came from this decentralization process. During the 1960s there was the creation of a post-graduate program for library science at Zagreb (Croatia) and at the University of Belgrade (Cveljo, 1977; Vraneš & Marković, 2014). In 1962 there was the creation of the Union of National Libraries of Yugoslavia (Cveljo, 1977). During this time, professional organizations and the first federal laws on library standards and activities were also created (Stokić Simončić & Vučković, 2014).

Changes in the library world were not only the result of political changes but also of modernization. From 1948 to 1990, “The country was modernizing rapidly and opening itself to

Western values and influences, which created the preconditions for the later modernization of librarianship as well as the creation of new, professional library standards” (Stokić Simončić & Vučković, 2014, p. 285). During this time the first library conference in the country was organized by the University of Belgrade in 1972 (Vraneš, personal communication, April 13<sup>th</sup>, 2020).

From 1971 to 1991 new common standards were created for library education (Stokić Simončić & Vučković, 2014). An organization of library positions in a three-tiered classification system included lower, middle, and higher. The lower classification included the ranks of technical assistant; middle, the rank of library assistant; and higher, the rank of Senior Library Assistant, Librarian, and Senior Librarian (Cveljo, 1977). In 1990, Vraneš (2008) notes that the interdisciplinary program created by the Faculty of Philology transitioned into an official establishment of a Department of Library and Information Sciences in 1990. This transition to a true LIS department included meetings to discuss appropriate curricula and the addition of information science to the curriculum. Furthermore, the adopted framework from the Bologna declaration helped develop a curriculum for Serbian librarianship within the field of European expectations and provided a globalized perspective on the profession. New networks including public and national libraries were created during this time and increased modernization was implemented, such as the use of computer equipment which enhanced library functionality. Digital cataloging such as Cooperative Online Bibliographic System & Systems (COBISS) functioned as a central system across the region until the breakup of Yugoslavia in 1991 (Stokić Simončić & Vučković, 2014).

## **The Impact of War on Library Services and Changing Library Expectations**

The civil war associated with the breakup of Yugoslavia destroyed both religious institutions and cultural sites (Alentejo, 2015). One library, the National and University Library of Bosnia and Herzegovina was burned in August 1992 (Stokić Simončić & Vučković, 2014). Later, the post-war scenario highlighted the need for librarians to preserve their heritage and culture after war and destruction (Alentejo, 2015; Hibert & Madacki, 2011). Indeed, Alentejo (2015) also notes that cultural destruction was not merely a library concern as a number of global conventions were organized in order to help preserve and maintain cultural property on an international level and not just in Yugoslavia. These included the Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and National Heritage in 1972 and Recommendation on the Safeguarding of Traditional Culture and Folklore of 1989 and the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity.

However, the Yugoslavian civil war broke up the globalized relationships and cooperation that had been established in the previous years. Vraneš (2008) relates that former relationships between librarians who had previously been colleagues were broken and those librarians who had taken part in such conferences as the 10th Assembly of the Association of the Societies of the Librarians of Yugoslavia in Opatija, 1984, and the 11th Assembly in Ohrid in 1986 and the Second, Inter-Department Meeting of Professors of Library Science in Belgrade 1988, had to develop independent associations after the events of the 1990s. Furthermore, the library science educational departments of the former Yugoslavia, located in Ljubljana (Slovenia), Zagreb (Croatia), Sarajevo (Bosnia and Herzegovina), Belgrade (Serbia) and Novi Sad (Serbia), having been established together and on similar principles, continued to operate after the 1990s but did so independently.

Stokić Simončić & Vučković (2014) note that the war years saw difficulties for libraries in Serbia. In addition to the end of previously collaborative relationships, the interlibrary exchanges and collaborative cataloging efforts were also ended. While the Institute of Information Science (IZUM) in Maribor (Slovenia) had hosted a database of bibliographic cataloging of over half a million records in 1992, this program ceased and was not re-established until 2003 through the database COBIB.SR. This universal catalog was only a part of the challenges identified in the region as in 1993, over “eighty bilateral agreements on cultural, technical, and scientific cooperation were suspended” (p. 289). In addition, library purchasing was reduced to zero in 1993, according to records kept by the National Library of Serbia.

The civil war in Serbia had paused modernization in that country, had halted library purchasing and had fragmented library relationships. As Stokić Simončić & Vučković (2014) note, the years of 1991-2011 saw the collapse of the library program in the region. This broken system of professional organization and collegiality made the American and European frameworks a more viable opportunity as Serbia began to reconstruct from the ground up. In addition, Vraneš et al. (2005) highlight that recognition of the globalizing world and an increased recognition of the need to support information technologies in underdeveloped countries. These changes were led by such leaders as the General Conference of UNESCO in 2001, IFLA in the 69th Congress in 2003, and the European Union (EU) through the initiative i2010.

### **Modern Serbia**

Bolčić (2016) reports that present-day Serbia continues to undergo a socio-economic crisis, high unemployment rate, and multiple ideological pulls in a post-socialist state transformation. In response to these challenges, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) (2017) described how they provided immediate funds for lending in exchange for structural adjustments.

This money, provided after a review of Serbia's economic performance by the IMF, represented the continuation of a significant financial relationship between the IMF and Serbia. However, Bolčić (2016) stated concern that the reversal of the country's economic policies from a socialist to a capitalist structure ignored the impact of the post-1990 economic policies on current-day Serbia. Specifically, he highlights that the change in the Serbian economic order from a socialist ideal to one that is more modern capitalist does not resolve economic problems. In the library realm, Trajković & Dunić, (2016) note that economic troubles, from wherever they may emerge, impact both the library and education sectors. While teachers and librarians may wish to embrace new technologies and new ways of teaching and learning, they are often hindered by economic struggles and lack of technological access. However, Kožul (2017) finds that the Serbian government does see the need for a more media-literate Serbian population in advance of a potential EU bid.

### **Serbian Librarianship**

Many types of libraries in Serbia are found, when translated, to have similar names to those of libraries in the United States. However, it is worthwhile to consider how they define themselves and address their roles, in preparation for considering the role of the librarians who run them. This section considers the academic, public, school, special libraries, which themselves contain many different types of libraries, as well as the American Corners program of the US State Department.

### **National Libraries**

The National Library of Serbia exists at the oldest cultural institution of Serbia. Established initially in 1832, a new law in 1919 established the library as the central state library with the rights of obligatory copy, which means the library receives a copy of every book



published in the country. With recent political changes this law is limited to the country of Serbia. The *Library Law*, the *Law on Cultural Heritage*, and the *Law on publishing* help the National Library of Serbia maintain the literary and cultural heritage of the country (Injac, 2011). Injac notes the library maintains a Bibliography of Serbia that “records the entire publishing production with the Republic of Serbia” (Injac, 2011, p.4). In addition to physical copies, the library has a digital collection as well, the Digital National Library of Serbia, established in 2003. The National Library provides leadership for other libraries in the country. One area of this leadership is the Virtual Library of Serbia (VLS) that established a national union catalog in 2003, between the holdings of the National Library of Serbia, Library of Matica Srpska, University Library ‘Svetozar Markovic’ and the Belgrade and Yugoslav Bibliographic and Information Institute (2011). Between the years 2005 to 2009 this catalog was expanded to work with COBISS. The National Library also is the coordinating organization for *Konzorcijum biblioteka Srbije za objedinjenu nabavku*, (KOBSON) and SCIndeks, the Serbian national citation index. In addition, the library serves as an important member of the National Center for Digitization (Injac, 2011).

The National Library also offers training for librarians on its programs and assistance in getting libraries connected to shared databases. In particular, Injac (2011) shares the responsibilities of the National Library due to the *Library Law*, for all of Serbian libraries as explained, “management of the library register, management of the catalogues of library material, professional assistance to libraries, supervising of library professional work, encourage, staff professional education in order to manage library work, monitoring and surveying the situation, needs and conditions of work within the library activities, and suggesting measures for the improvement of library activities and their execution” (p.12). The National Library shares

some of these responsibilities with other central libraries, for example, the Library of Matica Srpska manages the libraries in Vojvodina, library 'Svetozar Markovic' manages the libraries of universities, faculties, high schools and scientific research institutes, in central Serbia.

### **Academic Libraries**

Faculty libraries and librarians have numerous roles in the university, including: developing an understanding on the need for intellectual freedom and free access to information; teaching on the legal and ethical issues of information access; teaching about the use of research and the ethical ramifications of the pursuit of knowledge; defining the library and its role with regard to the definition of individual and collective freedom and the role of freedom, information, and knowledge within a society. In addition, academic librarians provide access to digital and e-content, collaborate with education faculty, and assist society moving into the "digital commons" (Vraneš, 2017, p. 496).

Academic librarians in Serbia collaborate with sources both inside and outside the university. Vraneš (2017) notes examples of current academic library partnerships include the donations of books and materials to the Library of the Department of Library and Information Science by the US Embassy and online access to the virtual reading room of the Russian State Library. Besides, Savić (2016) shares that academic libraries in Serbia provide coordination for COBISS, the shared cataloging system that was established in 1987.

While one of the roles of academic libraries is also to provide content, some, such as the American librarian and scholar Lewis (2007), considers that "given the new Internet tools and the explosive growth of digital content available on the Web, it is now not entirely clear what an academic library should be" (p.418). Vraneš (2017) provides one answer to this question as in Serbia there is an increased emphasis on the librarian as teacher and facilitator of digital content.

In addition, librarians participate in the creation of digital knowledge through such programs as the digital memory institution created by the Museum of the Faculty of Philology at the University of Belgrade and such EU initiatives as Europeana (2018).

### **Public Libraries**

Public libraries (*narodne biblioteke*) in Serbia provide a variety of roles, including both the traditional and modern. As Tanasijević (2014) notes, “Public libraries are the guardians of local traditions, and at the same time modern institutions that are developing in accordance with the development of the world and in accordance with the needs of the local population” (p. 3). Part of the modern approach includes librarians providing training in ICT (information and communication technologies) (Tanasijević, 2014). As Vučković (2003) notes as purveyors of public knowledge, public libraries are involved in developing an economically and culturally advanced populace (as cited in Bade, 2013). Many public libraries also offer programming and resources that enhance local culture, such as the City International Library in Novi Sad. This branch named after Anica Savić Rebac, is partnered with 12 different cultural centers, many outside of Serbia proper (Novi Sad City Library, 2017). Other programming is geared towards a specific audience, or user group, such as children’s programming that extends more formal education and emphasizes imagination and creativity (Đjordjević & Brkić, n.d.). In addition, some public libraries provide agricultural information such as the AgroLib-Ja, part of the libraries in Jagodina, Serbia (Tanasijević, 2014).

### **School Libraries**

School libraries (*školske biblioteke*) are often identified as places for training students to be digitally literate knowledge workers. In 2000, the Group of Eight (G8) heads of government adopted the Okinawa Charter on a Global Information Society that emphasized the need for both

IT access and training: identifying both schools and libraries as one area in which this training might occur (G8 Heads of Government, 2000). These charters codified the realization noted later by Castells (2010a) that there was, “the eventual realization of the productivity potential contained in the mature industrial economy because of the shift toward a technological paradigm based on information technologies” (p. 99). Seventeen years after the Okinawa Charter, Kožul (2017) notes that school libraries in Serbia could offer more resources for teaching media literacy to students, as now schools only teach about media literacy to students who have chosen Civil Education as a subject in their high school fourth grade courses. However, progress has been made in this area. New programs for teachers and librarians have begun to emerge in recent years that offer media and culture classes for those educators who may teach these subjects to children. In addition, new programs include professional development seminars, both mandatory and non-mandatory courses for teachers and school librarians in Media Design, Education for the Media, Media Pedagogy, and Media Literacy. These courses take place in various cities in Serbia including Novi Sad, Užice, Jagodina, Belgrade, Kruševac, and Niš. The majority of these courses were created post-2005 (Kožul, 2017).

However, while some school libraries are making progress by establishing new programming, other school librarian positions are being cut. Pejović, Duković, and Jevtić (2019) note that the number of librarians in Serbian elementary schools was cut in 2015 and in 2018 at the secondary level due to changes in regulations by the Ministry of Education, Science, and Technological Development. These regulations stipulate the number of librarian positions per school depending on the number of classes. In many cases, smaller schools employ less than a full-time librarian.

## Special Libraries

A large range of different types of libraries, including government, health libraries, cultural libraries (those within museums or other cultural institutions), and commercial libraries are grouped together in U.S. terminology. While the term "special libraries" is used in Serbia, it is not used as an official classification of libraries, for special libraries in Serbia are called “special library, expert library, INDOK centre, INDOK service, documentation service” (Mitrić, 2009, p. 29a). Mitrić also suggests that library circumstance matters more than the thematic discipline and makes the following suggestions for categorization:

Special libraries within scientific and research organizations; special libraries within institutions of culture; special libraries within state bodies; special libraries within the institutions of health and social protection; special libraries within economic entities (companies) of different activities; special libraries within organizations that represent different forms of associations of citizens (associations and other Non-Governmental Organization, (NGO), endowment funds and foundations, political organizations; and special libraries within other organizations. (p. 32a)

These categorizations are different than the 2008 IFLA thematic areas for special libraries (based on theme rather than placement of organization) (Mitrić, 2009). Note that archives in Serbia are not included in with libraries, but have their own separate organization and system, discussed below.

***Government libraries.*** Government libraries in Serbia are classified “not only by their status within the parent organization but also by their holdings, where official publications of governmental bodies prevail” (Mitrić, 2009, p. 36a). Many of these libraries are registered by the

Central Register of the National Library of Serbia and total 32; however, many smaller libraries have not been registered. Some types of government libraries include those within large legislative or state bodies, such as the Library of the National Assembly of Serbia and the Library of the City Assembly of Novi Sad. Other libraries include those within organizations such as the Flight Control agency and the libraries within police forces or armies (Mitrić, 2009).

**Health libraries.** Health and social care libraries are housed within health institutions including veterinary institutions. Thirty-one special libraries of this type exist in Serbia. Unlike other special libraries, their existence is not required by law but is considered as necessary by the institution and local patrons (Mitrić, 2009). The Association of Research Librarians, or *Sekcija bibliotekara i knjižničara*, while not exclusively supporting health libraries and research institutions, is one professional association that was created to address the unique concerns with managing the scientific databases, encouraging scientific research, and provides advocacy for librarians in these institutions (Ivkovic, Rožić & Turk, 2016; Zajednice instituta Srbije, 2018.)

**Commercial libraries.** Commercial libraries include those within either privately-owned or state-owned companies. Often these types of libraries house registrations, patents, or other types of technical information. In some companies, changes in stature, such as the privatization of a company that was previously state-owned, have placed these libraries in a precarious position. As Mitrić (2009) reports, the majority of libraries located in a commercial setting are found in the processing industry. Examples of commercial libraries include the archive and library of the National Bank of Serbia which includes information from the inception of the National Bank in 1884 to the present (National Bank of Serbia, 2018). A related type of library includes those within Non-Governmental Organizations such as the Library of the Astronomical Society and the Library of the Association of Jewish Municipalities (Mitrić, 2009).

*American Spaces.* The American Corners, as the American Spaces in Serbia are termed, are operated by the U.S. Department of State Bureau of International Information Programs (Dunnett, 2017). The Office of American Spaces through the U.S. Embassy operates eight American Corners in Serbia that are open to all Serbian people. Serbia is not unique in housing these types of libraries, as the American Embassy notes (2017), 400 American Spaces exist around the world. Different types of American Spaces exist including those that are owned and operated by the U.S. Government and those that are partnerships with local organizations. American Centers are one type of government-owned and operated program facility that is overseen by the embassy and employees contracted by the embassy. These centers often work in partnership with American Spaces throughout the country. The American Spaces can consist of several different named entities: such as American Corners, Binational Centers, or American Shelves. These three different partnership types are defined by their governance and funding. For example, the American Corners partnerships are a collaboration between the U.S. Embassy and the host country institutions. In these collaborations, the host country provides the physical space and staff, while professional development, technology, technology support, and media are provided by the U.S. Embassy. Around the world, American Corners go by a variety of names, such as Lincoln Corners, Learning Centers, among other names, but in Serbia, the American Spaces are all called American Corners and are collaborations between the Embassy and local libraries or cultural institutions.

Programming goals for the American Corners include a set of five core priorities: workshops on English Language Learning (ELL); information on the United States; cultural programming; preparation for education study in the U.S.; and engagement with the U.S. government exchange program (US Embassy, 2017). Also, Dunnett (2017) sees new priorities

for the American Spaces to provide access to technology that can enhance networking, access to programming, and other types of experiences. Overall, these programs and initiatives seek to fulfill the goal of the American corners which is, “to achieve U.S. bilateral and global foreign policy goals” (p. 4). In addition to these programs, Corners may offer specialized types of learning, such as Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) or makerspace programming (US Embassy, 2017).

### **Archives**

Archives are related to special libraries but fulfill a slightly different cultural niche. In some cases, these are archives that are more general, in other cases more specialized depending on their location and founder (Mitrić, 2009). The operation of archives is established by the Cultural Heritage Protection Law and, with a few exceptions, the archives are financed by the Ministry of Culture (European Holocaust Research Infrastructure, 2015). Archives follow certain rules established by the Serbian state such as the

Protection of the Archival materials on the territory of the Republic of Serbia is performed by the Archival Network, with the Archives of Serbia, as the central institution of protection. The Archival Network was organized by territorial principle and according to the Decision on determining the territory of Archives (Official Gazette RS, no. 7 / 96) consisting of a total of 38 archives. (Mitrić, 2009, p. 36a).

Some examples of archives include the Archives of Yugoslavia which holds documents created during the Federal People’s Republic of Yugoslavia and the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and the Diplomatic Archive of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Lazić, 2017; Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia, 2012; Archives of Yugoslavia, 2008). Other



archives are broader in scope, such as the Historical Archives of Belgrade or the National Archives of Serbia (Mitrić, 2009).

### **Scholarship on Professionalization of Librarianship and Librarian Identities in Serbia**

Professionalization is related to the professional education training provided to and required for librarians. As Stokić Simončić and Vučković (2014) note, professional library training is not required for all library positions in Serbia and many librarians are recruited from other professional fields, such as education. Rather, librarians in Serbia look to European and American models of librarianship and education to further development. Historically, the professional training of librarians through the university has been organized in Serbia but also has often followed international models. As Vraneš (2007) notes, a librarian's education should be based on the eight values related by Michael Gorman such as stewardship, service, intellectual freedom, rationalism, literacy, and learning, equity of access, privacy and democracy (p. 141). Furthermore, according to Stokić Simončić & Vučković (2014), teaching at the University of Belgrade Library and Information Sciences has followed the Bologna criteria process, starting in the 2006-2007 academic year with full accreditation received in 2010. In 2005-2006 the Faculty of Education in Sombor started training school librarians; in 1990, the Department of Library and Information Science at Belgrade changed their two-year program into a full four-year program. "International influences have, therefore, actively shaped Serbian librarianship as well as the professional organization of work with Serbian librarians and related library associations" (p. 286). Other researchers have also talked about the values of librarianship within Serbia while citing American or other international sources. For example, Trajković and Dunić (2016) offer insight to the Serbian viewpoint regarding the role of the librarian, citing a number of American sources including the book *Future Libraries: Dreams, Madness, and Reality* published by ALA

in 1995. Trajković and Dunić summarize these four ideals from this publication as follows, service to humanity; the importance of knowledge and understanding versus just data and information; a focus on ethics with regards to physical access and intellectual freedom; and awareness and reflection on the mission and purpose of the library. In these ideals, they note that libraries have not changed their essential purpose and values; rather the ways in which they reach these goals may change in process and task selection. A more Serbian viewpoint might be offered by the Serbian Library Association (SLA) (2016) which publishes a journal that provides Serbian library professionals with a means of professional dialogue. *Bibliotekar*, the journal published by the SLA, was restarted in 2007 after almost a decade of hiatus between 1996 and 2007.

Other authors have more specifically explored the former Yugoslavian context and the concept of librarian' identities. For example, Hibert and Madacki (2011) proffered a challenge to the professional librarian role in the post war-torn country. Specifically, they call on librarians to resist being apolitical and to instead take on a professional responsibility to “collect, preserve, disseminate and interpret information essential to resist dehumanization of society” (p. 199). In particular, they note that discourse ethics offers a method for studying and resolving the multiple challenges of distinct ethnic identities and the physical destruction in the breakup of Yugoslavia and offers a way to consider how librarians incorporate a number of different identities in addition to their professional one (Hibert & Madacki, 2011).

### **Scholarship on Professional Identity in Librarianship**

International scholarship about the professional identity of librarians has varied from both theoretical to practical and from specific to general. While many of the theoretical approaches to professional identity consider the need for librarians to examine their roles critically, this is an

area of scholarship that hasn't been considered as much as many theorists would like, "Professionals may not analyze the social dynamics (and I include political dynamics here) of their communities and their own roles in society. In terms borrowed from Bourdieu, librarians tend to be unaware of their own habitus" (Budd, 2003, p. 30). In some cases, the view is internal, such as Budd suggests, in other cases scholars consider that librarians need a wider view. Both Wiegand (1999) and then Radford (2003) share that Library and Information Sciences (LIS) needs to look outside the LIS discipline and the restrictive 'discursive formation' that it has imposed upon itself. Discursive formation is a term from Foucault's *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (1969) that identifies the patterns or themes found in verbal and written communication.

Other studies consider the relationship of librarian identity to the concept of librarianship. As Hansson (2010) notes, librarianship has developed over a long period of time and therefore, like other professions, has a strong "normative structure both for the organization and behavior among its members" (p.2). The construction of individual personal identity through the internalization of a broader societal role concept is considered by Castells (2010a), "Roles ....are defined by norms structured by the institutions and organizations of society. Their relative weight in influencing people's behavior depends upon negotiations and arrangements between individuals and these institutions and organizations" (p. 7). Castells considers three different types of identity building including legitimizing identity; resistance identity; and project identity. Legitimizing identity occurs in those identities that are connected and supported by dominant institutions. However, legitimizing identity that was inherited from past social structures and past political nation-states is under crisis in all areas, Serbia included. Resistance identity occurs in individuals that are opposed or devalued by societal institutions or customs and may form

communities of resistance. A resistance identity may exist in Serbian librarians as a response to the dissolution of one of the many Serbian states or changes in the legitimacy of librarianship. As Castells notes, resistance identity can become more individualized or more communal depending on if individuals find a sense of power within the de-legitimization of traditional power structures. Resistance identities can lead to project identity in individuals when they “build a new identity that redefines their position in society and, by so doing, seek the transformation of overall social structure” (p. 8). While Castells’ concepts of identity formation are, on the surface, possible in a local, fixed context, following the theoretical concepts highlighted by Giddens in *Modernity and Self Identity* the globalizing concepts under the network society disrupt the concepts of local and global that traditionally influenced the social order. Hansson (2010) considers both Castells’ and Giddens’ theories and the relationship between a societal change to an information society and its impact on library and information science. In this volume, Hansson notes that Castells provides a “revolutionary view of social development” while Giddens is more conservative in his approach yet still considers how libraries exist in a world changed by network technologies. In addition, Castells (2010a) considers that the globalized cultural communes are both “fading away of the nation-state <as> the main source of legitimacy” (p. 70) and making identities based on the institutions of civil society, legitimizing identity, into a state of crisis. Also, he notes that the other two sets of identity, resistance and project identity, increasingly operate through the concept of the cultural communes. The relationship of this identity formation circles back to the relationship of individual librarian identity and its relationship to the concept of librarianship. In particular, “cultural communes display little internal differentiation. Indeed, their strength, and their ability to provide refuge, solace, certainty, and protection, comes precisely from their communal character, from their

collective responsibility, canceling individual projects” (p. 70). While on the surface this seems a repeat of Giddens’ (1991) concept of the local and global dialectic, Castells (2010a) refines this conversation, defining how the global cultural communes allow for the creation of identity that is not limited to the space of place.

As Castells (2010a) notes, identity always exists in a plurality, separate from roles and subject to individuation. Professional identity encompasses just one portion of a person’s identity. This dissertation adopts the definition of professional identity as noted by Hicks (2014) in which professional identity exists, “as a description, or representation, of the self within specific professional practices” (p. 252). In researching Canadian libraries Hicks identified five different repertoires that came up in a study about professional identity--service, change, professionalism, library-as-place, insider/outsider. Overall, the literature about professional identity of librarians often emphasizes outside viewpoints over those of librarians thus considering the professional “image, status or reputation of librarianship” rather than offering a view to professional identity in and of, itself (p. 253).

### **Changes in the Profession**

Librarians within Serbia are not immune to the changes happening internationally within librarianship and they are not unique in seeing that libraries must respond to the challenges of the network society. Libraries exist as just one entity within, “a world in which the blessings and afflictions of technology pervade our lives” (Gorman, 2015, p. 3). Both Hicks (2014) and Stokić Simončić and Vučković (2014) examined the changes in technology as related to challenges in the professional identity of librarians. In addition, Hicks (2014) expands on the semiotic movement from library science to library and information science. Furthermore, she highlights how the service role, long considered an essential part of librarianship was being re-framed to

navigate changes in ICT both to provide services to patrons and to become a leader in this movement as “information experts” (p. 260). Finally, service is further defined as something that “is a way to give the professional relevance and value in the face of change” (Hicks, 2014, p. 262). In Serbia, the changes in ICT hold an even further significance as “the need to catch up with the developed world meant that these processes <automation, digitization, and Web 2.0> have been taking place almost simultaneously and intensely” (Stokić Simončić & Vučković, 2014, p. 291). Castells (2010a) illustrates how this type of information technological innovation has occurred in such cluster breakthroughs in which the technology, skills, and users combine to create a technological revolution. Stokić Simončić and Vučković (2014) note that this revolution has led Serbian librarians to both provide their traditional services in a more technologically adapted format such as through digitization projects and to branch out to new forms of service such as training their users in both using these digital resources specifically and in information literacy in general.

### **Professionalism**

Both Hicks (2014) and Stokić Simončić and Vučković (2014) speak of professionalism in librarianship, the former of Canadian libraries; the latter, Serbian. They both strongly tie professionalism to core values, training, and image. Hicks links professionalism to service values and including service as a key core value that librarians perform through providing service, technological expertise, and links to information. Stokić Simončić and Vučković illustrate many of the same features of professionalization that are mentioned in Hicks: the higher education training of the librarian, core values, a code of ethics, and a user minded focus. A few additional areas are mentioned such as professional associations and legal frameworks, but the authors’ lament that the image of librarians is not one of a ‘publicly recognized profession’ as it does not

always require higher education training (p. 293). Indeed, many practicing Serbian librarians were hired into libraries from other professions (Stokić Simončić & Vučković, 2014).

Both Hicks (2014) and Stokić Simončić and Vučković (2014) relate to the role of the library as place; albeit in very different ways. Hicks (2014) notes that librarians often identify strongly with the place of their library and report that they want people to know they are from the library. Serbian authors, Stokić Simončić and Vučković (2014), and Bosnian authors, Hibert and Madacki (2011), consider the library as place more as a concept of survival, both of war, but also of economic crisis, hyperinflation, and lack of national support.

### **Professional Organizations**

The connectivity in a network society allows those in LIS to make colleagues of and connections with those who may share the same interest but not work in the same building, “A virtual community....is generally understood as a self-defined electronic network of interactive communication organized around a shared interest or purpose, although sometimes communication becomes the goal in itself” (Castells, 2010b, p. 386). While the network society has made connectivity an essential part of the profession, the movement of ideas has long been a part of Serbian librarianship. After World War II European and international views and standards of librarianship influenced Serbian librarianship and library associations (Stokić Simončić & Vučković, 2014, p. 285). Later:

The orientation toward European integration brought a new concept of organization and communication to Serbian society. Serbian librarians, who at that time did not have a strong professional organization and clearly denied status of the profession, nor even the minimum of necessary visibility in society, had a reason to take this general European framework as a great opportunity. (p. 291)

Furthermore, the network society has not negated the need for professional organizations. For example, the Serbian Association of School Librarians was only just established in 2006 (Pejović et al., n.d.).

Professional associations may also prioritize different types of practice or values in librarianship. Stošić (2015) notes that the IFLA manifesto 2008 on *Transparency, Good Governance, and Freedom from Corruption* influenced Serbian libraries. One of the challenges related to the manifesto was its emphasis on the freedom of information. Libraries were challenged to support patrons who were interested in inquiring about information, but if such information was not typically available libraries were to work with governments to enact information transparency laws. Serbia received funding from IFLA in order to organize numerous lectures on the need for a less corrupt government. These measures allowed libraries in Serbia not only to inform citizens of their rights to know information but also to influence government officials as well through their emphasis on anti-corruption.

International donors and organizations impact the physical body and collection of the libraries. While we often think of international influences as a new phenomenon, the trend of international donors started early, such as when Andrew Carnegie gave \$100,000 to the Serbia government to establish the "Svetozar Marković" (University Library "Svetozar Marković," 2014) after the great destruction of Belgrade during World War I. In another case, the publishing house CLIO (Chelsea, London, Islington, and Office) paid for a program in Serbian high schools called "Internet-Transforming School Libraries" (Divina, Velez, Michel, 2017).

In one case, a Serbian library offered a level of service to their users that were recognized internationally and provided with funding after the fact to continue. The Agricultural libraries in Jagodina (Serbia), (AgroLib-Ja) introduced in 2010 with five rural libraries for farmers that



provided them with an ‘information, communication and educational hub’ (Tanasijević, 2014). The library was awarded in 2012 by NGO Beyond Access in the category Economic Opportunity, by the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) in the 2013 Project Prize for excellence in Access to Knowledge and Information, and *Erste österreichische Spar-Casse* ERSTE Foundation Honorary Award for Social Integration 2013, and in 2014 by ALA for an innovative international project (Tanasijević, 2014).

### **Professional Practice**

Other types of professional organizations are those which serve to coordinate library work, through shared cataloging and information access such as KoBSON, the Serbian Library Consortium for Coordinated Acquisition, and (COBISS,) the shared library catalog system. Of the latter, 70% of libraries in Serbia took part (Mitrić, 2009). Other organizations housed outside of Serbia proper also serve to assist Serbian libraries, such as Electronic Information for Libraries (EIFL) and Online Computer Library Center (OCLC), (EIFL, 2020; OCLC, 2020).

### **Role of Government and its Relationship to the Library**

We can easily discount the role of the government and its relationship to the library. However, governments often provide a vital source of funding to libraries (Mitrić, 2009), but the post-war years in Serbia offered significant economic challenges to libraries because of the lack of government funding (Stokić Simončić & Vučković, 2014). The current 2014-2016 economic crisis has also provided a challenge to Serbian society (Bolčić, 2016). Regardless of current or continuous crises, governments have an incentive to develop the sciences, information technologies, and production of knowledge within their boundaries (Vraneš, et al., 2005). In addition, Ham and Cha (2009) note that “most national policy documents assume that a well-trained labor force equipped with ICT literacy is indispensable to national development and

individual self-actualization in the “knowledge-based” global economy of the new “information age” (p. 538). Even though we may consider that governments do not have the same power in the network society, they still fulfill a role in countries where public programs such as libraries depend on government funding:

In a parallel development, social movements and geopolitical strategies became largely global so as to act on the global sources of power, while the institutions of the nation-state inherited from the Modern Age and from the industrial society gradually lost their capacity to control and regulate global flows of wealth and information. (Castells, 2010, p. xviii)

Whatever the power governments possess, the role of government does not serve merely as a funder of the library. In many cases, libraries are seen in two polarizing ways, “thus, the library has been socially accepted in extremes: most frequently as a silkworm’s placid cocoon, but also as an undesirable caterpillar slowly but resolutely nibbling at the tissue of the political leaf” (Vraneš, 2007, p. 139). In addition, libraries are affected by both the government and the people’s input which influences laws of copyright, freedom of opinion and expression, and the freedom of access to knowledge (Vraneš et al., 2005).

In some nation-states, governments provide an even further set of regulations for libraries, such as the former Yugoslavia and present-day Serbia. Mitrić (2009) offers several types of standards and laws that define types of libraries, and those that require libraries, such as the *Official Gazette of Republic of Serbia no 21/95* that states that in some types of institutions that govern an area of culture “is an obligation of an institution to have a library found within the *Regulation on closer conditions for the beginning of the work and performing activities of institutions for protection of cultural goods*” (Official Gazette of RS, no 21/95) (Mitrić, 2009,

34a). In some cases, these regulations also determine the source of funding. For example, regional museums are financed under the obligation of the Founder of the Museum: "the municipality, several municipalities together, of the city or province" (Mitrić, 2009, p. 35a). However, the libraries linked to the national museums (11 in total), are financed by the ministry of culture and while many smaller libraries are also financed by the national Serbian budget or a local city budget (Mitrić, 2009). These types of regulations and funding serve to provide a level of understanding about the stakeholders for which libraries serve to provide service for and to whom they are accountable.

### **Digital Libraries with International Connection**

While libraries are influenced by their local governments, they are often influenced as well by their international partners. Libraries with digitization or digital services are more likely to have shared catalogs, projects, or programs. The National Library of Serbia's integration of digital collections was part of the European Library project (2005) and the World Digital Library Project (2008) (Stokić Simončić & Vučković, 2014). The Virtual Library of Serbia (VLS) began by integrating library systems, services, and catalog. Four main centers were involved in the first phase: National Library of Serbia (Belgrade); University Library 'Svetozar Marković' (Belgrade); Library of Matica Srpska (Novi Sad) and Yugoslav Bibliographical Institute (YUBIN, Belgrade). The second and third phases planned to include university libraries, faculty libraries, and public libraries. This program included education for the librarians taking part in the program through Biblioteka +. This membership ensures their integration in a program to:

Promote a Europe-wide exchange of knowledge, experience, and good practice within and between the policymaking and professional communities responsible for public libraries in 26 member states and candidate countries and--through the

Public Libraries Mobilizing Advanced Networks (PULMAN-XT) extension project--a further ten neighboring countries. (Davies, 2003a, p. 151)

Serbia joined in membership to the PULMAN-XT thematic network in June of 2002 (Davies, 2003b).

### **Castell's Theory of a Network Society**

Serbian libraries operate under a network society as theorized by Castells (2010b). The network society is, "a society where the key social structures and activities are organized around electronically processed information networks" (Castells, 2001, para. 1). The network society features five characteristics. The first is that information is a raw material and technologies act on this information. The second is the "pervasiveness of effects of new technologies" (Castells, 2010b, p. 70). The third feature is that the "networking logic of any system or set of relationships using these new information technologies. The morphology ...increasing complexity of interaction and to unpredictable patterns of development arising from the creative power of such interaction" (Castells, 2010, p. 70). The fourth feature is that information technology is based on flexibility which has profound impacts on organizations and institutions. The use of communication allows pieces of organizations to be fundamentally rewritten. And finally, the "growing convergence of specific technologies into a highly integrated system" (Castells, 2010 p. 71). This telecommunications power, previously dependent on chips, electronic software, coding, and decoding is now increasingly interrelated. Our limits in technology and what it can obtain now seem less to be defined by the limitations within the technology, itself, but by "comprehensiveness, complexity, and networking" (p. 76).

**Space of place vs space of flows.** Another feature of Castells' network society theory is the space of place versus the space of flows. The space of flows is a new organization of

communication and transportation that is global, digital, and networked (Williams & Durrance, 2010). As Castells (2010a) states in contrast to a society previously coordinated by spaces now, “our society is constructed around flows: flows of capital, flows of information, flows of technology, flows of organizational interaction, flows of images, sounds, and symbols” (p. 442). In addition, he notes that it is not enough to consider these flows as a feature of our society, in fact, they persist in a way that influences many features of daily life such as economics, politics, and the social. Examples of the structure that build the space of flows include the computer and technology systems that transport communication across networks, nodes within the network, the organization of the network and information by what he terms social actors or managerial elites.

Libraries offer a unique location in both as they are spatial, dynamic, physical places, full of social practices navigated by people who are themselves constructing meaning, such as the space of place. Williams & Durrance (2010) consider that in many cases the “spaces of place ...are threatened, because they are mostly bypassed, by the space of flows” (p. 2). However, libraries may be one type of node within the network that links individuals to the digital world. In addition, libraries illuminate how information access moved from the space of place to the digital realm in their review of community informatics. Community informatics and community information files were created in the 1970s, to help patrons navigate social services within their community. These programs began to move online in the 1990s and the libraries that created these networks became community hubs for local information. In practice, libraries facilitate the space of flows by organizing information, providing access to the network, and connecting to the global community.

While the network society is not always considered in light of LIS professional identities or individualization, globalization is a concern that has been examined more often in the library

literature. Trifu (2010) considered the concept of globalization and how it influences the way libraries and marketing activities are promoted. Library identity, conceived through marketing the journal *Philobiblon* has a strong sense of future, integrating concepts of library institutions, traditions, the user base, and future challenges.

Globalization implies, demands and imposes, without doubt, on one hand high level and detailed standardizations and all kind of uniformizations. On the other hand, it also offers a huge reservoir of individualized experiences, which, by its means, can be communicated, shared, assumed, validated and developed on an unprecedented level, and which can fertilize one another, from partner to partner and even on a global level. (p.442)

Marketing can be related to personal identity as it represents an idealized version of what exists and provides a way to create an ideal character or persona that it wishes to emulate. In particular, this journal has established as a criterion, “a way and a chance for ‘encounters’ in the authentic and transdisciplinary communion of globalization (Trifu, 2010, p. 448). Hibert and Madacki (2011) offer a different distinctive view of globalization as ‘symbolic imperialism’ which introduces postmodern, consumer culture as a means for reaching universal political goals and engages in “processes of repolitization of identities as prerequisite for homogenizing separate cultural identities which are simultaneously lines of exclusion and subjugation” (p. 195)

**Relationship between network society and information society.** The global information society consists of, “powerfully developed sciences, information technologies impacting on our lives, economic development and the production of knowledge” (Vraneš, et al., 2005). Namely, the global information society moves information from the space of place to the space of flows (Castells, 2010). Castells (2009) calls ‘a digital network of communication’ (p. 4)

in which power relationships are not limited to formal, institutionalized ones, the space of place, but are instead interconnected to ‘horizontal networks of interactive communication’ (p. 6) the place of flows. If the network society is synonymous with the “changing media environment,” it also provides a driving force for librarians and others within the Serbian environment to increase the rate of media literacy within the country (Kožul, 2017, p. 3). Kožul offers by means of explanation that the changing media environment drives a need for media literacy as the “penetration of new communication technologies and digitization that encouraged new research projects in media studies, cultural studies, audience studies and the growing recognition of the broader social needs and rights of children” (p. 3). As Trajković and Dunić (2016) note, “The role of librarians is re-branded to reflect their expertise as curators of content and reliable navigators in an ever-growing ocean of information--in any format they might exist” (p. 105). In addition,

UNESCO’s proposals in the Declaration of Principles and the Plan of Action are based on its specific mandate. This mandate leads UNESCO to promote the concept of knowledge societies rather than that of a global information society since enhancing information flows alone is not sufficient to grasp the opportunities for development that are offered by the knowledge society. (Vraneš, et al., 2005, p. 102)

**Use of the theory of a network society in LIS.** While the theory of a network society is popular in sociology, it is not considered with any frequency in the Library and Information Science literature. Search for ‘network society’ and library in LISTA comes up with 17 results from 2001 to 2017. While a global society is not only a European, African, or outside of American view, it may be that other areas recognize this as a need more than scholars in

America. Two times the number of articles referencing a global society come from sources outside of North America.

Concepts considered in LIS network society do not all encompass formal network society theory but in many cases, consider only the concept of new digital individuals, new digital resources, or competing for competition with the Internet or Google. For example, Einasto (2015) asked: how does the library provide a democratic, communicative third space in the age of digital access? The researchers referencing seriously the theory of a network society as provided by Castells focus their attention primarily on the ubiquity of information in the network society. The change is not merely in the quantity of information provided, but in the speed in which it is delivered and the way that the Internet has redefined who can share information with whom and to what degree of magnitude. Swindells (2005) offers a solution to the new information-rich reality by defining the differences between 'physical access' and 'intellectual access' (2005, p. 2). While physical access is defined by the sheer ability to access the Internet, intellectual access comes in the processes needed in order to find the relevant information to the problem at hand. In addition, he offers the solution of value-added services provided by libraries through organization, curation, and classification schemes that both globally and locally offer resources to a population that can provide, "a new vision for library reference services, calling for a multifaceted and multimodal approach that can meet the demands of the online environment without abandoning the real advantages of the physical library (2005, p. 11). Fyffe (2002) is another scholar who considered the network society and how economic and business concerns shape the world of scholarly communication in academic journals, a concern that many academic libraries face currently as they seek to preserve digital information as well as stay current in scholarly publishing and trends.



### **Institutionalized power structures and their changing role in a network society.**

Libraries represent one type of institutional power structure within societies. As Budd (2008) admits, libraries are not the power (the state), but they are instead “an agency of the state” (p.183). Notably, libraries cannot ignore the power structures evident in their model and “we should--through collections and access to information, services, and place--provide the means by which the tension can be discussed.” (p. 183). Although network society theory has not been considered at length in LIS, it is likely that institutionalized power structures of all types will be undergoing changing roles in a network society. Budd quotes J.E. McGuire and Barbara Tuchanska in “examination of the library in its cultural role enables us to see that it is ‘comprised of the visible elements of intellectual fields; but it also includes hidden and often unarticulated assumptions embedded in institutions, practices, and social relations’ ” (22, p. 43) (Budd, 2003, p. 31).

Budd (2008) also notes that this tension should be discussed within the library as well, for the dialogue must consider the transition of libraries to the model of 2.0, or the knowledge society. As Vraneš (2005) notes, a knowledge society differs from an information society in the following ways. An information society relies on information infrastructure through the application of information technologies and the freedom of information, while a knowledge society expands upon an information society by providing for “cultural diversity, equal access to education, universal access to information (in the public domain), and freedom of expression” (p.102-103). Sanchez Vanderkast (2013) follows up on Swindell’s concept of information literacy in both multi-literate and digital-literate forms as a method for revitalizing the library role in a network society, while also advancing the concept of influence on informational policy. He also considers the concept of power and the relationship between power and the relationship

between libraries, the network society, and concepts of power.

Additionally, booming digital technologies are transforming the way power is conceived. Power shapes include: instrumental power that shapes human behaviors by manipulating the material world via physical force; structural power that shapes human behaviors manipulating the social world via rules and institutions; and symbolic power that shapes human behaviors by manipulating the material, social, symbolic worlds via ideas, words and images and also, informational power that shapes human behaviors by manipulating the informational bases of instrumental, structural, and symbolic power. (p. 81)

As Stokić Simončić & Vučković note (2014)

The model that American libraries, for example, offer to the total corpus of world librarianship today is based on the acceptance of the knowledge society as the new social paradigm, on the development of the concept of library as a learning organization, and on the strengthening of all modes of public relations. In Serbian librarianship, however, on the basis of numerous indicators, we can unfortunately speak about fragmentation and division. On the one hand, the wider community does not recognize the library as a key institution of the knowledge society; as a result, the state, in its strategic documents, does not give a significant role to libraries. (p. 295)

Regardless of the role given to libraries by the state, it is clear digital media and the increasingly digitized archives available through the many Serbian libraries working with COBISS offer a new model of library service to patrons from increasingly far flung corners of the world-wide web (Vraneš, Marković & Mariokov, 2017). The digital technologies not only change the

expectations of library services but also introduce the library into the space of flows. In addition, they alter the traditional gatekeeping power held by the physical library space.

**Potential impact of network society's impact on LIS professionalization?** Castells' (2010a) shares that in the network society,

Roles...are defined by norms structured by institutions and organizations of society. Their relative weight in influencing people's behavior depends upon negotiations and arrangements between individuals and these institutions and organizations. Identities are sources of meaning for the actors themselves, and by themselves, constructed through a process of individuation. (pp. 6-7)

“Although, as I will argue below, identities can also be originated from dominant institutions, they become identities only when and if social actors internalize them, and construct their meaning around this internationalization” (Castells, 2010a, p. 7). In his conversation on identity construction Castells defines three forms of identity building: legitimizing, resistance identity, project identity (p. 8) that Serbian librarians might engage in.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter has considered how the changes in the Serbian state have influenced the development of Serbian libraries. In addition, the current economic climate makes it difficult for Serbian libraries to continue to develop and take their place in the network society. The changes in educational requirements for librarians were considered, including the international models that have helped define the values and professional goals for Serbian librarians in the past. International views on librarianship were also considered and related to Castells' theory of identity building. Professionalization of librarianship through the Serbian Library Association and its impact on professional practice was also considered. Finally, Castells' theory of a

network society was discussed and links were made between his view of the space of place and the space of flows, the network society, the information society and Library and Information Sciences. The impact of this theory on current LIS scholarship was considered and leads us to the current state of scholarship and the method for this particular research study.

### **Chapter 3: Methods**

The purpose of this study is exploratory as it seeks to determine how Serbian librarians self-report their involvement in the global network society as defined by Castells and how they report this interaction as influencing their view of Serbian professional librarianship. The case study approach followed research guidelines put forth by Yin (2014) and Wildemuth (2009) and investigated these librarians' professional practice and their self-reported influences by obtaining and analyzing interview data. This research explored how librarians themselves perceived librarianship, a topic that cannot easily be described via observational or quantitative data. Finally, the rigor and validity of the study were enhanced by following systematic procedures suggested by the above-mentioned authors and outlined below.

#### **Research Questions**

The central question of this study is, how do Serbian librarians self-report their involvement within the global network society and the impact this has on their practice of librarianship?

The sub-questions are:

6. How do Serbian librarians define their roles and professional goals as librarians?
7. How do they describe their interactions with the global network society?
8. What spheres of influence do Serbian librarians report as important in defining their professional identity?
9. What effects do they report on their professional identity by their involvement in global networks?
10. What can the library profession learn about a global network society from Serbian librarians?

## **Rationale for Qualitative Methods**

As Miles et al. (2014) note, qualitative methods are ideal for studying real world behavior as they offer opportunities to explore this behavior in a social and historical context.

Qualitatively designed research offers opportunities to focus on a very specific case bounded within a local context. Qualitative data can explore the meanings people find within their own lives in a way that quantitative data is less able to reveal. While researchers who study through quantitative data may find answers to that which they seek, “good qualitative data are more likely to lead to serendipitous findings and new integrations; they help researchers to get beyond initial conceptions and to generate or revise conceptual frameworks” (p. 1).

**Case study approach.** This exploratory study followed a case study approach to explore in-depth the global network activities of practicing librarians. As Wildemuth (2009) notes, case studies are suitable for exploratory studies and the “investigator should have a receptive attitude toward exploration” (p. 52). Case studies allow the researcher to examine the social life of subjects and the way these individuals construct the meanings and interpretations of their reality (Powell & Connaway, 2004). In addition, case studies are often used for research questions that ask how or why a contemporary event occurs or is occurring (Yin, 2014). Designing this case study involved three steps outlined by Wildemuth (2009): identifying the unit of analysis; selecting a case; and identifying the data. In this study, the unit of analysis was each individual librarian and as a whole, these people will offer multiple perspectives on the role of the librarian within Serbia.

## **Role of the Researcher**

My role as a researcher in this study was to gain information on this topic while adhering to ethical guidelines and recommended qualitative research procedures. In this study,

information was gathered through semi-structured interviews. My role was to conduct the interviews and facilitate the discussion through guided questioning. Besides, I also transcribed the interviews, coded the themes, and sought the patterns within the data, thereby identifying the links between theory and the data. This study followed the ethical guidelines for interviewing individuals such as those set for by the Emporia State University Institutional Review Board (Emporia State University, 2018).

### **Gaining Access**

Emporia State University has a long-established relationship with the Faculty of Philology at the University of Belgrade, where the library science program is housed and with the American Corners program of the U.S. State Department through which institutions I was able to gain access to many libraries and librarians in Serbia who comprised the informant pool of this study. In addition, my dissertation committee consists of Dr. Aleksandra Vraneš who has taught at the University of Belgrade since 1985 and was one of the professors for many of my interview subjects. Secondly, my dissertation chair, Dr. Andrew Smith, has traveled extensively in the country of Serbia over the past nine years and has organized annual visits to Serbia by Emporia State University students through many of these libraries. He has also forged professional relationships with many of the librarians who work at these institutions. Both of these esteemed professors assisted with introductions to the proposed interview subjects and the long association of Emporia State University with the University of Belgrade provided additional credibility to this researcher and the proposed study. In addition, I worked with other contacts that came through the United States Embassy. During my visits to Serbia in the fall of 2014 and the summer of 2018, I had an opportunity to make valuable professional contacts in the country and learn about the history of Serbia. The first consideration of this topic came during my visit in

the fall of 2014 while I listened to Serbian librarians describe their profession and their view of Serbia and librarianship in today's world. During the most recent visit, I was able to meet with a diverse group of librarians and talk with them about my proposed study and interest in Serbia. I was able to gauge their interest in the project and informally invite them to participate in my study. I formally invited interested informants to be interviewed via Skype interviews during the spring semester of 2019 and I completed interviews from January to May 2019.

### **Study Population**

I interviewed a range of individuals within the targeted population using purposive sampling to select informants to provide a varied perspective on librarianship in Serbia (Bryman, 2012). Purposive sampling was an appropriate method for this study as the interviews rely on special population selection. Individuals were invited to participate from a variety of institutions including archives, special libraries, academic libraries, public libraries, school libraries, and the American Corners. In addition to selecting by institution, I included librarians who have come to librarianship through university training and others who became librarians by taking the National Library exam without taking university coursework. This sample purposefully included both male and female librarians, younger and older librarians, within a range of 5 to 20 years of experience in libraries. Since the focus is on practicing librarians, those librarians without formal library training have not been excluded, rather, informants were selected from those working in a formal library position. Purposively choosing sites and informants allowed for many categories of information and varieties in the types of information collected (Wildemuth, 2009). Therefore, the analysis was able to triangulate information shared by multiple informants in different locations.



In summary, as noted in Tables 1 and 2, this study includes results from 13 practicing librarians. Four of the librarians interviewed were male, nine of them female. Seven librarians received alternative certification to be eligible to work in the library field. Six librarians have or are working towards graduate-level degrees in Library and Information Science. Participants varied in their level of experience and years working in the field of librarianship. One participant was in the first five years of working as a librarian. Eight participants fell into the 6-14 year category of experience, four participants had been working 15 or more years in librarianship.

### **Protection of Human Participants**

During this study, I followed the rules for studying human subjects and completed the Emporia State University IRB process. I received IRB approval on December 17<sup>th</sup>, 2018. Informed consent provides a vital check to researchers wishing to work with human subjects and helps to ensure that informants are adequately informed, the study's procedures are adequately established, and informant privacy is maintained. The IRB approval process serves to protect informant rights and interests (Emporia State University, 2018).

Informants were given copies in English of informed consent procedures several days in advance of the interview. They were given this form in advance so that they were able to review it and ask questions before the interview. Librarians who indicated a willingness to take part in interviews were sent the formal invitations via email and informed consent paperwork in the spring of 2019. They also had the option of discussing the research, in Serbian, with one of my committee members, Prof. Aleksandra Vraneš, should they have wished this option before signing the consent form. The paperwork and interviews with librarians in Serbia were entirely conducted in English, therefore librarians self-selected themselves based on their comfort with

using the English language. The use of English was appropriate in this situation because I am personally not fluent in the Serbian language. Also, English is taught in Serbian schools starting at the 1st grade, and professional librarians in Serbia, in general, demonstrate a high level of English language competence. In addition, guest lectures and special talks in the Library and Information Sciences department of the University of Belgrade are often conducted in English. Librarians at the American Corners are required to know English to conduct programming in English. Finally, Serbian librarians often need to communicate in English in order to participate in the global networking (A. Smith, personal communication, March 28, 2018). Some evidence of this is available in the Serbian Library Association's 2018 call for papers to the IFLA discussion group that is available in English (Trifunović, 2018).

The consent forms were stored via a password-protected format. The consent form indicated that these interviews were being conducted to obtain information for my dissertation and that the information may be used for the publication of scholarly journal articles arising from this dissertation work. Informed consent papers are kept for a time frame of three years until they will be destroyed according to the procedures set out by the Emporia State Institutional Review Board (Emporia State University, 2018).

### **Interview Protocol**

Interview sessions were conducted via Skype with individuals who consented to participate. Skype exists as an online video chat calling program that connects people who both have a free Skype account. The advantages to Skype are the free service, the chance to both see and hear informants and the ability for the program to work seamlessly with screen capture technology. For many of the informants, having met individuals in their natural environment allowed for some relationship building to occur and led to more in-depth questioning as local

context clues have already offered suggestions regarding each informant's participation in a global network. Skype meetings allowed for interviews to take place at a time and location of convenience to the interviewee even if finding a suitable time often proved challenging due to the time difference. The interviews were conducted one at a time, by myself, via this online platform. During the time we met in Serbia, many potential informants had already given informal indication that they would be interested in this study and expressed no reservations about using Skype to conduct international calls. Using Skype was not problematic for the majority of informants. Two informants wished to answer questions via email instead, and the interviews were conducted through writing. Two other informants were fine with conducting the interview via Skype but wished to only use the audio feature rather than the audio/video calling. One interviewee mentioned the reason for this was that she was concerned that the video would use too much bandwidth at her location. The majority of interviews were recorded using screen capture on a computer, with files being transferred to a secured hard drive upon interview completion. The Skype interviews ranged from 28 minutes to 65 minutes and were on average 44 minutes apiece. The questions used to guide the semi-structured interviews are available in Table 3. They were recorded using voice recording technology on my phone and computer resulting in two recordings of each interview to provide a backup in case of equipment failure. The interviews were transcribed at the time of the interview and later the transcriptions were improved by multiple reviews of the recorded files.

In the dissertation, identities have been kept confidential by identification through a number, while omitting names, locations, and other identifying details such as exact job descriptions and titles. The use of this data management helps assure informant privacy even in the case of a research audit. While I provided some description of each informant, in order to

provide relevant context, I did not link specific descriptions that may lead to the identification of the individual librarians. In addition, only those details essential to the study have been shared so as to keep the identities of specific librarians confidential.

### **Data Collection**

Data was collected via semi-structured interviews with practicing librarians in Serbia, of varying levels of professional training. Yin (2014) notes that the semi-structured interview allows for a line of questioning that is more fluid and follows a more conversational style than rigid questioning. The format allows for basic, initial questioning with follow up questions posed by the researcher in order to guide the discussion in a new manner or elicit clarifying details. Galletta (2013) considers these first questions as an opening segment that offers a chance to develop a rapport with the interviewee: open with broad questions that allow the interviewee to provide his/her experience; use follow up or clarification questions; or take notes so clarification can be done later; use probing questions to guide the interview towards answers that will enhance your knowledge of the research topic. The middle section of the semi-structured interview is drawn from both the theoretical background of the study and what has been revealed in the opening section of the interview. Questions become more specific as they both reference the study's research question and they may loop back to the previous narrative provided by the interviewee. Clarification questions may be used to follow up with these further revelations. Finally, questions may be posed to allow the informant to make meaning on their experience with the research topic. The final segment of the interview laid out by Galletta follows both the broad, opening questions and the more specific 'theory-laden' (p. 51) questions of the middle segment. The final segment builds on these previous two areas and is a space where the interviewer may be able to carefully probe further topics that may provide further detail. The

semi-structured interview process allows for a relaxed conversation which can provide the “rich, thick description” characteristic of qualitative research (Creswell, 2014, p. 202). Yin (2014) sees the benefit in semi-structured questioning in that essential questions still exist in order to guide the discussion, but they can be considered or phrased in a more conversational manner that may be less off-putting to the interviewee. These questions may help the interviewer guide the interviewee to more introspective thinking on a particular topic and allow expansion on a simple topic. This allows the researcher to improve the quality of the data set for later coding and contextualization. In addition, a benefit of choosing the semi-structured interview is that individuals have differing world views and the researcher is able “to elicit information on their research topics from each subject’s loosely structured interview guide” (Wildemuth, 2009, p. 233).

### **Data Management**

Data management of the interview files was essential in ensuring a successful research process. The total transcribed interview files exceeded 70 pages of single-spaced interviews. Two files of each interview were organized in a data management system the first was the voice capture that was taken via the computer of the Skype call, and the second was a voice file that was recorded on the backup digital voice recorder. These files from both the computer and digital voice recorder were password secured and the files saved on a secure, password-protected hard drive and backed up shortly after the completion of the interview on an online cloud server system that was also password-protected. Once the files were transferred to a password-protected hard drive, and backup copies created, they were deleted from the voice recorder. Using password protection was essential to preserving individual privacy and adheres to research

protocol norms. Having backup copies of this vital information was ensured to prevent computer errors or hard-drive malfunctions to result in potential research-ending mishaps.

Files were managed by a specific file naming procedure that was based on date rather than individual names in order to provide a further layer of anonymization. While this study planned on the possibility that informants may be unwilling to be recorded, this was not a scenario that was encountered. However, typed notes, written during the interview process became essential for the one interview in which both recording devices failed. In this case, the notes provided an alternative method of interview documentation and these notes were also named according to the above procedure. The recordings of the interviews and typed notes are to be kept in the password-protected hard drive and cloud backup system until the dissertation study is finally approved. Interview transcripts, recordings, and informed consent papers are kept for a time frame of three years until they are destroyed according to the procedures set out by the Emporia State Institutional Review Board (Emporia State University, 2018).

**Research journal.** In addition to typed notes, a typed research journal served to collect extra notes from interviews and provided an immediate place for the researcher to record any immediate thoughts, impressions, or relevant contexts after the interviews have taken place. I began a research journal during my travels to Serbia in June of 2018 and continuation of this journal through the present day provided me with an additional resource as I developed themes and conclusions from my interviews. In many cases, the information I learned from interviews was a continuation of information that I had noted in my research journal. In other cases, notes I had taken during my trips in Serbia gave me suggestions for questions to ask or areas to probe further during interviews. Furthermore, this journal served both as a memory check and also as an additional data source for reflection and immediate consideration of the codes and theory base

that this study is designed upon. As Wildemuth (2009) suggests, taking notes and developing codes and themes early on helps develop a more standardized process of research. Research notes also provided a method for an additional research audit by my committee for dependability if necessary.

### **Data Processing and Analysis**

Interviews were recorded, transcribed, and analyzed according to appropriate directed content analysis procedures. The theory and other relevant research findings suggested initial coding themes. During the analysis, further themes emerged that enhanced the original coded responses. The directed content analysis connected the themes, elaborated on Castell's theory, and extended the conceptual framework (Wildemuth, 2009).

The steps used for this content analysis are those provided by Wildemuth (2009) and include: prepare the data; define the unit of analysis; develop categories and a coding scheme; test your coding scheme on a sample of text; code all the text; assess your coding consistency; draw conclusions from the coded data; and report your methods and findings.

1. Prepare the data by transcribing it into text through typing into an online document form. A complete transcript, while being the most time-consuming process, also serves to provide the most information for future reference.

2. The definition of the unit of analysis helps determine what themes will be used in coding. In qualitative content analysis, the unit of study includes "individual themes as the unit for analysis, rather than the physical linguistic units (e.g., word, sentence, or paragraph) most often used in quantitative content analysis" (p. 310). Therefore, following Wildemuth (2009) I used themes as the coding unit and looked for its expression in any linguistic unit throughout the

document. Coding themes coming from the theory base, such as Castells' theory of a network society, were my initial exploration.

3. Develop categories and coding scheme. The coding scheme may come from the transcript data, the theoretical base for this project, or related studies. Coding themes may fall under one or more categories. Galletta (2013) provides a set of categories that are particularly relevant for this study. While coding themes are still considered, the levels of analysis consider also the historical and sociopolitical context, the structural conditions, and the relational context that shape the variables of interest.

4. Testing the coding scheme on a portion of the text early in the analysis process.

5. Code of all the relevant text.

6. Check coding consistency and rereading the relevant data to ensure that if codes were added later in coding that the first analyzed data was also considered with all the codes in mind. In addition, rereading the data allows for items that were missed earlier due to fatigue or carelessness.

7. Begin the process of drawing conclusions from the coded data. In addition, at this point exploring the categories, identifying the patterns between them, and cross comparing data is essential.

8. Report the methods and findings of the analysis including method and process.

### **Rigor or Trustworthiness**

Wildemuth (2009) highlights that the rigor or trustworthiness in a qualitative research study relates to the confirmability, dependability, credibility, and transferability of the study to other contexts. Other researchers such as Miles et al. (2014) consider these features to be part of the validity of the study, while also recognizing that this term has been contested. Specifically,



they and Wildemuth, highlight these features that relate specifically to qualitative studies and rely heavily on the researcher as an interpreter. Incorporating strategies to ensure validity of information is an essential part of the qualitative design process.

**Confirmability.** Confirmability relates to the study itself and the evaluation that other researchers might have on the study results. If outside researchers agree that the study results follow from the relevant data, then the study has confirmability or external reliability (Miles et al., 2014). In addition, they share several steps that increase the confirmability of a particular study:

1. The researcher has provided explicit detailing of the study's methodology.
2. A sequential discussion has been shared of the procedures used to collect, code, summarize and display data.
3. Conclusions provided are linked to the specific data.
4. Detailed records have been kept of the methodology used.
5. The background of the researcher is comprehensive in scope and cognizant of personal bias and affect.
6. Negative or competing information has been recorded and examined in light of conclusions.
7. The data has been saved for future audits in the time frame suggested by the sponsoring institution.

**Dependability.** Dependability is a related concept and considers how researchers respond to the context of their study and their consistency in dealing with the data. Several of the steps Miles et al. (2014) relate for dependability echo back to those that help provide confirmability to

the study. In addition, they add the following steps for the researcher to consider when looking for a dependable study.

1. The main research questions are clear and the study is designed to answer these questions.
2. The role of the researcher in this study has been described and his or her status within the study site has been considered.
3. The results are consistent across different levels of data, such as between informants, different contexts, etc.
4. The research paradigm and its connection to the theory has been specifically described.
5. The data has been collected in a manner appropriate to answering the research question.
6. Peer and member reviews have been put into place to check for errors and bias.
7. The results of the data show some natural triangulation.

**Credibility.** Credibility, on the other hand, “evaluates the validity of a researcher’s reconstruction of a social reality” (Wildemuth, 2009, p. 315). Several factors serve to enhance the credibility of a particular study such as length of time within the field, triangulation, ‘negative case analysis’ comparison of interpretations with raw data, peer debriefing and member checking. Informal member checks were done during the interview, when necessary for clarification, by restating information to an interviewee to further clarify and understand information that has been shared. A more formal member check was done, by referring back to 2 of the informants with some of the codes and themes to reduce ambiguity as results were compiled. As mentioned by Miles et al. (2014), “Study products are sometimes fed back to

informants ... as a way of providing member checks on the accuracy of descriptions, explanations, and interpretations” (p. 58). In addition, my dissertation committee member, Dr. Aleksandra Vraneš provided an evaluative view of the dissertation as a whole. Triangulation was considered across interviews when specific codes and themes emerge from three or more different individuals. As a leader within librarianship in Serbia, she was a key reader in determining that conclusions, contexts, and assumptions I make in my writing were not inappropriate to the cultural milieu of Serbia. As Creswell (2014) suggests any information that contradicts the codes and themes should also be presented in order to provide a fuller picture of reality. In addition, a peer debriefing took into consideration the accuracy of the writing through the review of this research by my dissertation committee.

**Transferability.** Transferability relates to the ability of the conclusion and results of one study to be applied to a similar study in a different context. While researchers are understandably interested in whether their research can be transferred, it is ultimately the decision of future researchers whether this particular research report can be transferred to this new case. The role of the researcher in this report is to provide enough data and context that other researchers can make their own judgment about the transferability of the study to their own work (Wildemuth, 2009).

### **Limitations and Scope**

The purpose of this study is exploratory as it seeks to determine how Serbian librarians self-report their involvement in the global network society as defined by Castells and how they report this interaction as influencing their view of Serbian professional librarianship. This study searched for patterns, identified codes, and contextualized perceptions. However, we cannot assume that while some Serbian librarians have shared personal perspectives about their own

professional identity that these perspectives are shared universally or unequivocally for all librarians in the country. While I used purposeful sampling to select a diverse selection of individuals working in Serbian librarianship, the small sample size means that this group is only a small portion of the total possible librarians in Serbia. Serbian librarianship, like all other topics, is multifaceted and complex. The idea for this study was to follow up with the call for scholarship suggested by Simončić and Vučković (2014) regarding the “contemporary discourse of librarians in Serbia” (p. 295). In addition, like all cross-cultural studies, the methods, emphasis, and selections I have made are my own and likely reflect my values and attitudes. Researcher constraints included both time limitations to the study both on my own part and that of the informants. Some potential informants chose not to participate because many reasons which may have included their personal time limitations, disinterest, or lack of comfort in conversing in English. In addition, the difference in culture, gender, or other status may have led study informants to feel less than free in talking about their personal values or identities.

### **Researcher Bias**

The role of the researcher in this study was to accurately collect, transcribe, and report on patterns in the data provided by interview subjects. As Creswell (2014) notes it is important for the researcher not to let his/her background influence the emergence of codes and themes. Therefore, my analysis of the information presented here in the final document has, as much as possible, contained clear, self-reflective consideration of how the, “interpretation of the findings is shaped by their background, such as their gender, culture, history, and socioeconomic origin” (p. 202).

I have been a school librarian for 11 years, 4 in Chicago, Illinois, 2 in St. Louis, Missouri, and 6 years in McPherson, KS, all within the United States of America. During this time period,

I have had a chance to work with a variety of different libraries in different institutions and have been subject to a wide variety of opinions about librarian identity. After working as a librarian for 6 years, I was formally trained by earning a Masters of Library Science through Emporia State University from 2012 to 2014. My experience as working as a librarian for many years without having been trained undoubtedly shapes some of my view of librarian professional identity. Through Emporia State I had the opportunity to travel to Serbia in the fall of 2014 and in the summer of 2018. My original travel coincided with the first coursework of the Ph.D. program at Emporia State University. It was at this time that I became interested in international approaches to librarianship and how this type of study could inform our own understanding of librarianship within America. I understand that since I am not a Serbian national that elements of nuance, cultural differences, and perceived values may have hindered my ability to study this group. Therefore, I relied heavily on the informants themselves to provide the context for their own stories. In addition, having Dr. Vraneš on my committee has provided the necessary research audit for bias. In addition, by following the recommended procedures for qualitative studies I am determined that the study is being conducted properly and I have reduced researcher bias as much as possible and reduced study limitations.

### **Timeline**

The introduction, literature review, and methodology chapters of this dissertation were written during August 2017 to October 2018. During June of 2018 I made an exploratory visit to Serbia in order to meet with my committee members and make professional connections. During this time, I generated a list of individuals who could be interviewed and those individuals were informally solicited. The dissertation defense for this study was completed November 2018. I secured IRB approval through Emporia State University in December of 2018. Interviews for

this research were conducted from January to May 2019. Data analysis, coding, and writing up the formal dissertation were conducted from May to July 2019, with a formal dissertation defense proposed for April 2020.

### **Chapter Summary**

This case study explored a small number of purposively selected Serbian librarians who were asked about their personal values and identities related to librarianship and what they report to be the source of these values. Through this research, we can achieve a better understanding of the national character of Serbian librarianship and if the networked world provides an impact on their view of librarianship or not. In addition, we were able to see to what extent librarians in Serbia network outside of the country and how important they report this influence to be to their daily practice. Other influences were also explored and their relationship to the networked world examined, offering us a unique perspective of Serbian librarianship in 2019.

## Chapter 4: Findings

This chapter starts with the information that I learned during the interviews that pertained to the individuals specifically. To protect their identity, each informant is referred to in the order in which they were interviewed. While I reference their places of work, the exact timeline of their work experience has been kept out of the report in order to provide some anonymity. Additional information about each informant, including education and years in librarianship, can be found in Table 1. A summary of all the informants is located in Table 2. The end of the chapter discusses the themes that emerged from these interviews. Globalization and its impact on librarians are considered through the realm of formal and informal connections, experience with fellowships, conferences, and international travel, the role of local conferences and meetings, local and regional satellite meetings of international organizations, the importance of bringing back information from International Conferences to librarians in Serbia, and ways in which local, regional, and international collaborations are fostered. In addition, this chapter examines how informants highlighted the importance of staying current in global trends and how they connect globally. Other themes include librarian education, continued education, librarian roles, leadership and traits. Finally, specific highlights about Serbian librarianship are considered including the informants' view on the status of librarians in Serbia, the hiring freeze, and job fulfillment.

### Informants

The informants are librarians from Serbia of various ages and experience with working in libraries. The informant pool was comprised of four males and nine females with between five to 20 years of experience of working in libraries. Seven of the informants had a university degree in another field and entered librarianship through an alternative route. Six of the informants

received either a bachelor's degree or master's degree in Library and Information Science. One informant was currently pursuing a Ph.D. in the field. Alternative degrees included the field of foreign language and literatures, Serbian language and literature, History, and Classical Studies. Nine informants practiced librarianship in the city of Belgrade and surrounding suburbs, and four informants worked in the city of Novi Sad in Serbia. Several informants mentioned growing up in smaller towns outside of these metro hubs and finding their library experience as a child notable to leading them to the profession. Their past and current positions comprised a wide range of librarian roles including, special collections, American Corners directors and librarians, public librarians, children's librarians, foreign language librarians, academic librarians, library managers, library clerk positions, catalogers, school librarians, and archivists.

**Informant 1.** Informant 1 was a man who has been working in libraries for approximately 10 years at such places as the faculty library at a university, a National library, and an American Corner. When asked about the background that led him librarianship, he shared,

Personally, my first love was libraries and I am from one smaller town in Serbia and library was say the only window into the world, the public library there. I started going and became a member when I was 7 or 8 years old.

However, he did not immediately begin to study librarianship when he arrived at the University of Belgrade. Instead he started in the sociology department and applied for the library and information science department after his 2nd year. At the University of Belgrade, the library and information science department is part of the Faculty of Philology. Ultimately, he graduated from the faculty of philology and then continued on to complete a Master's degree in librarianship, studying for a total of five years. His generation was the last at the University to



complete the library and information science before the change to the Bologna system. He currently works as an academic librarian.

As a practitioner, Informant 1 has had a diverse range of experiences such the International Visitor's Leadership program in 2013 and in 2016 was a visiting scholar in an international library association-sponsored professional program in the United States.

The fellowship in 2016 that led him to the United States was as he said, "That was great opportunity for me to see and to be involved in American librarianship." These experiences helped him expand his view of librarianship and led to leadership opportunities:

So, I stayed in the United States for 1 month. I was in Columbus, I don't know how to describe it. That thing really moved me, first of all I got some kind of respect from other colleagues because it is not so easy to get there. And after that I wrote a couple of articles, and I hold a couple of presentations and lecture about it.

**Informant 2.** Informant 2 has worked in the Belgrade City Library system for 20 years including in the serials department, a lending department, as a reference librarian, and as manager of multiple branch libraries. He considered that:

It is great to be, it is honor to be a librarian in Serbia, it is not much paid, well paid. That is the other question. But yes, it is in the occasion to be in some old buildings, university buildings and maybe some public libraries and it is nice to be with other people of your sort, how do you say also between modern technologies between old and rare books, magazines, and some special occasions.

While in high school he was more oriented to the natural sciences, but he shifted directions in college to join the faculty of philology. "There was special department that was new

department that consisted of natural and social sciences in one. That mix of two different types of sciences was on faculty of philology of Belgrade two decades ago.” His initial education consisted of a bachelor’s and then master’s degree in the faculty of Philology. Now he is completing his Ph.D. in the field of library and information science, focusing on “digitization as a method of preserving cultural heritage.” While he expressed that he enjoyed his job and was loyal to his department and organization, he was looking towards the future, “I want to be on faculty.” He continued, “When we met, in a way, I am helping the faculty, it was not a classical lecture, but a way to teach students from abroad or from our country.”

Informant 2 has had a wide range of library experiences although in the latter’s case this was all within the Belgrade City Library system. However, his wide range of experiences illustrate how different positions within the same branch, or positions across the library system, vary greatly. As a librarian in a lending department or reading room, the work is primarily with users. “I work firstly in a lending department. So different type of work is dealing with users at that level.” However, other positions spend very little time with end users. For example, as a manager:

I went for a manager on a municipality library it was another type of job. Where you don’t deal with users anymore, you don’t see users, you don’t feel books anyway, adjust economics on paper, digits and numbers, how to provide, I don’t know, printers somewhere on the other part of time when problems come, the leaking from rain, this is the other type, managerial work.

Other jobs are more of a mix of the two, “Here in my department is dealing with users, seeing them, working with them and also being in charge of some processes. Old and rare books, materials, what to digitize and what to preserve according to some laws here.”

**Informant 3.** Informant 3 is a librarian at a National Library and has been a librarian for 20 years:

I think I am lucky to work in a big library (which functions as a national library) because I have opportunity to advance in my profession, I am free to make some decisions in the domain of what I do, I meet some interesting people, from Serbia and abroad.

Informant 3 did not initially go to school in order to be a librarian. Instead, she completed coursework in foreign language and literature and used that background to get a job at the library. Her background helped in cataloging books from foreign languages. In addition to this work she also works at the Reference Desk. She made note that in many cases her job position is based on the fact that she works in a large library where many tasks are heavily specialized:

I think there is a difference if you are librarian in a big library and a small one, national or public. Here, in <National> Library the work is separated, there are a lot of departments. In small libraries, librarians do everything: acquisition, cataloging, reference.

**Informant 4.** Informant 4 has worked in a national library of Serbia since 2010 in the special collections department and as the head of Cartographic Collections. She came to the library after having completed a master's degree from the faculty of philology in Library and Information Sciences. She mentioned a wide variety of jobs that happen at the National Library and also within her department.

Because we have a department for each collection we have all kinds of librarian jobs that one can do from working with users specifically with the

researchers who want your help to find some items they are coming usually with some subjects and things they are working on so I'm helping them.

In addition to working with users, she also mentioned other activities. "Because we are special collections department so we are asked to prepare some exhibitions, different types of presentations and research." Of course, completing many different types of jobs can be challenging and she noted:

I think this is not some very good position because you cannot do everything good enough or not just good enough, but enough. Because you have to do every day you have to do lots of different kinds of jobs which is not easy and not too good for the collection.

**Informant 5.** Informant 5 currently works as a Senior Librarian at Acquisition and Exchange Department at a National library. Informant 5 has worked for 16 years, having previously been employed as a teacher. She mentioned that although she did not initially go to school to be a librarian:

Today, I am glad that I work here, in a library. Actually, I worked a few years as a teacher in the beginning, but when I got the job in the library I stayed there, without the intention of moving anywhere.

She noted that as a teen:

I made a complete list of books that we possessed in our home. We had a large amount of books, and I just wanted to have them all listed, so that we could easily see what we actually had. I was completely unaware that I made a rudimentary author catalog.

Of note, she wanted to share that she enjoys her job, saying, “Of course, many things depend on one’s temperament and personal affinities, but in this age of rush, I am personally very satisfied that have a job that is not stressful. Being a librarian has its beauty.”

**Informant 6.** Informant 6 has worked at an academic library for 5 years and came to the library after having been asked to work there as a translator for a conference, having completed an English degree. She also volunteered for a short time at the library before she began there. She continues to do translation for the library in addition to other projects:

Sometimes I hold these professional development courses, sometimes we organize conferences, roundtables and activities that are related to audience. But not every day is the same. I work in a team with a couple of colleagues. There are four or five of us, it depends on who is at the library. We sometimes write projects, administer these projects and all different types of things.

Although she did not originally go to school for librarianship, she appreciates its potential for helping people:

So, I really, I think that everything you do in the library is kind of, can become valuable in some way or useful in some way if it is not used at this current point it will be found by someone and used by someone. When you work in the library you can always help someone people come here to get all kinds of information and you never know who will appear and you can help people in many different ways. Librarians are not just people who give information, but they are some kind of guides for people who can get some kind of knowledge, but they can also can be some kind of social workers, psychotherapist they are acting like teachers, they

have this role as a teacher. It is rewarding to work in a place where you see you can help someone.

**Informant 7.** Informant 7 is a librarian in Novi Sad, Serbia. Before working at the Novi Sad International Library, Informant 7 worked at a few different departments including the department for adult users, the children's department and the technical services department. As the sole librarian for the Novi Sad International Library several responsibilities fall onto her shoulders including programming, promoting the library, managing the book collection, working with users, among other things. She shared with me:

At one moment, three years ago, I was pretty active and I was in the library during the whole day. Because all the programs that I organize are in the opposite shift from the one in which I work. So, I would go home, have lunch, and then go back to the library and again prepare everything alone. Some things I would have to prepare include placing 50 chairs for people that will come to sit and listen to the program you, to move the tables, connect all the computers with video games, prepare coffee and drinks for guests that will come, to be ready to say something to the media if they show up. Many different things you must prepare in your mind and concentrate on all of them and it is very hard. You cannot do that for a long time. Now I have a slower pace.

**Informant 8.** Informant 8 has been a librarian for 8 years and has worked in the American Corners library system and the Belgrade city library system. Her bachelor's degree was not librarianship, but she then completed a master's degree in librarianship with a thesis on digital libraries in central Serbia. Having worked in business before coming to the library she sees in many ways how the two work the same. For example, she noted, "Good management

actually sets goals, improves the functioning of the entire library.” She also pointed out that management also sets goals and a vision of the library and how it can grow and develop in the future. She had a strong sense of job fulfillment by working in the library, saying, “I am dedicated to that profession and improve every library I work in and I believe it can be done.”

**Informant 9.** Informant 9 has worked at several branch libraries in Belgrade and at an American Corners library. She graduated from the Faculty of Philology at the University of Belgrade with a degree in Serbian language and literature. During her last year in school she started working in the library. She noted that librarian responsibilities change depending on the job requirements:

So, before my bachelor’s degree I had no actually important responsibilities. I mean I was checking out books, I was shelving them and I was giving some basic information to our patrons. After my bachelor’s degree, I started doing and attending different seminars, different workshops at the university, at the National Belgrade city library, online, and my professional career actually started.

Her experience at many different libraries also led her to note that different libraries offer different challenges. While in some libraries she was in charge of working, “To organize some kid’s programs, acting, storytelling and to help out with different activities and checking in and checking out, basically.” In other libraries, there was no Internet and it was challenging to do simple things such as fulfill book requests or make recommendations. However, she continued on a positive note, saying:

Even if you don’t have money or fancy space or fancy equipment, there is always something you can do with the books, with the pencils and paper, as an adult and you can always invite authors to have a book promotions or people with some

disabilities they are always ready to come to read and to work and present what they know. There is always some kind of program that will involve different institutions. That can be useful for the community. There was always something that can be done.

**Informant 10.** Informant 10 has been in librarianship for 12 years. Informant 10 has worked at two different locations while a librarian, both an American Corner and a children's library. She was initially on track to be a medical student, but switched faculties and completed a bachelor's degree in librarianship. About the switch she said, "And I ended up switching faculties and never regretted it because librarianship is just another way to help out people." She is currently working towards a master's degree in library and information science. She mentioned that the bachelor's degree in library and information science is more general, but "Only on master's level you have more in-depth courses that related to either school libraries or towards the academic librarians. I think that by selecting topic for the master's degree that is how you move closer to either one or the other."

**Informant 11.** Informant 11 has worked in the field of archives and librarianship for 10 years and has passed the state exam for both archives and librarianship. Before working in the field, he was a high school history teacher and then school librarian which both offered him a background in the field. He enjoys his current job, but shared, "I must say, in the beginning I'd like to, my wish was to work here as an archivist not as a director." Many of the responsibilities as an archive's director have kept him from his scholarly pursuits including writing a book. Some of these responsibilities include overseeing such activities as digitization, cataloging, building maintenance and infrastructure, and preserving the historical documents.



Many of the people who come to archives do so because of the country's past history of communism when private owners' land and property were confiscated, Informant 11 noted:

They have deprived private owners from their property. A lot of people are trying to use the law or institutions to get back their houses and to take over their land and their property. So, we are helping them to find the court ruling that has deprived them from their ownership, so we have more than 1,000 requests per year for that.

In some cases, Informant 11 finds that this is one of the biggest differences between librarians and archives. "The main thing about us which is more different is between librarians and us is that people who are coming here they are, they know what they want and they want us to help them."

**Informant 12.** Informant 12 has experience working at a national library in Serbia and at the Student City cultural center library for a total of 7 years in the library setting. He has primarily worked with library programs such as KoBSON, the Serbian consortium for coordinated acquisition and students who were working completing academic degrees. He came to librarianship through an influential high school teacher who saw that his experience working at a technical high school for computers and having a familiarity with informatics and computers and also literacy and reading would be an ideal librarian candidate. In 2018, he was a visiting scholar in an international library association-sponsored professional program in the United States for librarians from developing countries.

**Informant 13.** Informant 13 has worked as a librarian for 14 years at an American Corners and a children's library. She came to librarianship after completing a degree in Latin and

Ancient Greek. She began by doing a part-time summer job in the children's library creating workshops for children and as she notes:

I realized what that kind of work means and everything. And they really liked the way I worked with children and when there was a position open, the head of department asked me if I was interested in maybe working in the library and I said yes, I can try and it was love at first sight.

Even though she had not gone to school for librarianship, she shared, "but see it was my fate to become a librarian."

In her job, she mostly designs programming for the library, "Basically we work a lot of programs, different kind of programs, and they are changing over time. Because we following the needs of children." Some of these changing needs originate from changes outside the library. As she noted, "For example, ten years ago we had some preschool preparations, and now because they are obligatory in the schools in all preschool expectations we don't have it. So now we are trying to focus on parents and children." Other changes come from integrating new technologies into existing programming:

My colleague and I we organize and use a lot of new technologies to work with children, PowerPoint, we make movies out of stories and using I don't know, some computer programs for making movies or an app for augmented reality or something like that, children really like that. We don't push them away from books, we just try to find some new ways to mix new technologies and reading and everything.

### **Themes that Emerged from Interviews**

Interview informants shared about their education, their employment, their views of Serbian librarianship and the future of the profession. Their interviews naturally organized into several themes including globalization, university education; continued education; librarian roles; librarian traits, and Serbian Librarianship. Within these themes several trends emerged including the ways in which librarians communicated, collaborated, and overcame challenges within each area. In many cases this communication and collaboration was global in scope.

**Globalized society.** Serbian librarians participate in a globalized society through a wide continuum that includes at the most basic level, connection and awareness, to more moderate communication and continued education often mediated by formal professional organizations and programming, to more elaborate collaboration and coordinated programming. The continuum also extended from local to international awareness, local to international communication, and local to international collaboration.

**Formal and informal connections.** Serbian librarians often use the Internet to learn about how other librarians are promoting and prioritizing various facets of their roles. In some cases, this involves a one way viewing of library websites, websites of professional organizations and following libraries and librarians on social media. In other cases, they use the Internet to communicate, ask questions, collaborate, and further learning. The Internet provides a way in which Informant 7 stays in touch with the global world outside Novi Sad, she said:

I follow one group for teen librarians on Facebook they are from Asia, ASEAN School Libraries. When I read, professional papers about librarianship I am not that much interested in theory. I need to share with people ideas, what to do in practice with children and the teenage population. So, when I search on the Internet I also search those kinds of recommendations and creative ideas to do

with them. I don't have any particular website I visit regularly, I just randomly search on the Internet.

Informant 3 shared in the value of connecting beyond the things happening at the library building, itself:

Through the Internet we can also find out everything that is new in librarianship, we follow the sites of the Serbian Library Society, IFLA, etc. Of course, we use the Internet to communicate with librarians all around the world, we can compare our work with theirs.

Informant 9 uses the Internet to help participate in a larger conversation about librarianship and grow as a professional librarian:

There are a lot of people and institutions that I follow through my personal accounts and through now A/C accounts. Starting from the Library of Congress, starting from the national libraries of many European countries, many American states, our national institutions. There are many successful individuals that I follow such as IFLA president, or a colleague from Serbia, from Belgrade university library, who got transferred to IFLA in the Netherlands.

Some of her Internet follows are not library specific institutions but:

cultural institutions, hubs, entrepreneurship modern technologies, ISTE hub, Belgrade hub, I follow them and see how they manage and who they invite to their event how they maintain their space and which equipment do they have which digital marketing, and how do they manage to get that.

Informant 1 agreed that following library groups is useful noting that he follows library specific Facebook groups, library websites, some which are specific to academic librarianship. Likewise,

following these different groups, getting different ideas about the library and marketing is something that Informant 9 finds key. She shared that the Internet offers a way for librarians to continue their studies past the University level, “So we have to learn different new skills and learn new technology and new technology and new trends.” Informant 13 shared that when it is not possible to get ideas from conferences and seminars she goes online to the Facebook pages of different children’s branch libraries in Serbia, “Well we go for example to Facebook to see what colleagues from Serbia do. Because each library has its own Facebook profile so we go there to see what they are working.” Informant 10 also uses the Internet to follow pages on Facebook, but she mentioned that primarily she learns about programs from local colleagues, “So, somehow the good ideas they find ways to be heard. But a lot is pretty much through individuals researching and talking with colleagues seeing if that idea is feasible or not.” Finally, Informant 8 noted that promoting her library through social media and Instagram continued to be a goal of hers.

***Formal communication.*** Communication between librarians can also be more formalized, through professional programs, listservs run by professional organizations, or through personal contacts. Informant 1 is also a member and informant in several programs at the Serbian level that are active in librarianship including the Serbian Library Association. In addition, in order to stay current, he subscribes to the Serbian association listservs and emails and this practice is encouraged by his supervisor, “My boss is really happy about it to have that kind of employee who is interested in other things in librarianship, not just things at the faculty library.” Informant 9 noted that some of these groups are more remote, such as international organizations and groups, and other members of Informant 9’s network include the other American Corners coordinators. As she mentions:

We communicate throughout email if it is something official and important. I mean something about the library and some embassy question, but on the other hand some of them I know personally and we are just kind of friends I can just ask them through chat and Facebook messenger and I can just call them to ask them.

Informant 9 shared, “It is really important to create a strong and healthy network so I am not shy when it comes to that I like to ask simply and openly to get a recommendation to learn something.” Informant 10 uses contacts both within and outside of Belgrade to collaborate, pursue professional development, and get ideas for programming. Informant 11 noted that professional connections can be both local such as the association of archivists of Vojvodina and larger groups such as the bigger association of archivists of Serbia. Informant 13 had the opportunity to pursue more formal global connections through structured interactions such as an American library pen pal type program:

You can leave your name and data and they find you some, matching librarian in some other country, I had a contact with librarians from America. So, we emailed each other and talked about the ways libraries functioned here and there.

***Fellowships, conferences, and international travel.*** Many of the Serbian librarians interviewed had participated in international conferences, fellowships, and international travel that gave them a chance to expand their view of librarianship. Informant 1’s experiences visiting abroad through fellowships have helped shape his view of librarianship in a globalized way. Informant 10 also mentioned the chance to travel abroad and gain ideas, “I was also in the states 2 times so I had the opportunity to see what you guys are doing in the libraries.” In addition, Informant 2 was interested in both local and international conferences, and referenced events that

took place in Croatia, Austria, and Germany. “I like conferences it is best way to interact with other people maybe get some contacts, see new spaces and new places, new countries.” He mentioned attendance at 70-75 conferences over his past twenty years of experience, both as an attendee and a presenter. In many cases these conferences offered a chance to make personal connections that then continued online through direct email, listservs, and other connections via the Internet. When asked what he thought the most important thing a librarian could do in Serbia, Informant 2 shared attendance at conferences, presenting Serbian libraries to the world and to be “among top librarians in other parts of the world.”

As a librarian in a university library, Informant 6 sees a lot of opportunities to participate in a global society. One opportunity presented itself in 2018 when many of the staff at the library were asked to represent Serbia in the International Book fairs worldwide.

These book fairs were worldwide, they were Beijing, they were in Frankfurt, Leipzig, Tehran, and the last one was in Moscow. We had our booth or our stand at these book fairs and I traveled to Beijing, Moscow, and Frankfurt and some other colleagues traveled to other countries.

In addition to the book fairs, Informant 6 also went with other colleagues to international conferences, such as IFLA in Poland, “So for example two years ago we went to the largest international IFLA conference in Warsaw, in Poland, so it was also kind of networking experience, connecting with librarians and trying to establish some cooperation.” Other globalized experiences came from international conferences that were organized in Belgrade:

For example, next year we will be organizing for LIBER. It is the Association of European Academic research libraries. It will be hosted by this library and the

faculty of philology, next year so we will also participate in the organizations for this year's conference.

Informant 11 connects with others through meetings such as the European Association of Archives called Icarus:

Icarus is the NGO made in Austria in Vienna. It offers connections with other archives. Because if I need information from the Czech Republic I will call them in Vienna and say please make me a connection there and they will do it for me. It is a great European association and it helps us in our fields of digitization.

Another European program that Informant 11 was very interested in was the Time Machine project, "All major archives and libraries in Europe are connected, to make some VR reality of history of Europe. It is very interesting. In the Netherlands, they have meetings 9 and 10 May." Although Informant 11 could not go to the Netherlands individuals associated with this program were going to be invited to Novi Sad in 2021, when Novi Sad becomes the European capital of culture.

Informant 12's experience in international fellowships gave him a view of librarianship outside of Serbia. When I asked him, what made librarianship in America different than his home country he said:

I was surprised when I saw animals in the library. When we visited the public library, they have very big department for children and they have departments in departments for babies, for preschool kids, for kids who are around 5 or 6 they brought chickens and they saw whole process from egg to chicken. It would be impossible to see an animal in the <Serbian> library, maybe a cat, but not a chicken.



But he was not just struck by the farm animal experience, he also mentioned different types of services offered in United States libraries:

I was surprised by wide range of services for the local community very pleasant to see, the library offers help about tax payers, they offer help for people to fill out those forms, I saw also they offer for passports when you want to apply for passport they give help for that. I was amazed they offer plant seeds to spread your garden and flowers.

Another international conference Informant 13 mentioned was one that took place in Turkey. “One huge conference that I attended in November, was in Turkey. It was the first symposium for children’s librarians. It was really huge, hundreds of librarians there. Mostly from Turkey, but also England, Brazil, Germany, from some other countries.” This conference offered Informant 13 a chance to learn about children’s librarianship and to make personal connections with librarians outside the country:

They have proceedings that is really huge so you can read the paper of other informants. Of course, we made our own connections between librarians that we met there. I have a contact now with one librarian from Germany, one librarian from Bangladesh, Turkey.

***Local conferences and meetings.*** Serbian librarians also attended many local conferences and meetings. Informant 1 mentioned those at the National Library by name:

On a monthly basis sometimes two times a month we have one kind of program in the national library called librarians for librarians. So that is some kind of conference, gathering, if I can say like that where we can share our experiences among us like, professional experiences. At the National Library we have great

professionals there. They are traveling around the world and visiting conferences. In my experience there is no such thing for a professional better than releasing those kind of events and stay in touch with those people and to have that opportunity to learn from them to hear from other kind of experiences. You can hear about it and read about it, see how they work and transfer that to your job in your library department.

Some of these local conferences garnered international attendance. Informant 4 organized international conferences through the national library, including one to celebrate 70 years of their department:

I wanted to do something different so the idea was to organize an international conference on the topic of special collections it was so successful and lots of people came there and we had informants from 27 countries all over the world. It was such a great feeling I realized that I made it to convince my other colleagues how important it was to hear the other opinion to share and share about your work.

This event, while taking place at one time, generated continued collaboration:

But also concerning the other things we made of an agreement of different conference things, different meetings and working groups, one part of those informants became actually our partners and colleagues that we are communicating and working with.

She ended by sharing that the challenge for librarians today is one that is global:

The biggest challenge globally--the biggest challenge for librarians today is to be fast enough. We have to be fast and competitive and this is the biggest challenge

for librarians in Serbia but also the other part of the earth. Even the librarians who have the global thinking about that it is not easy to manage all those things.

*Satellite meetings.* Informant 6 and Informant 8 both mentioned attending IFLA satellite meetings that were being held locally. Satellite meetings exist to offer professional units in IFLA, such as sections or special interest groups, the chance to organize meetings to take place either before or after the IFLA World Congress. Meetings typically take place either in the country of the annual IFLA meeting or in the surrounding region. In some cases, these meetings are free of charge. (International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions, 2019).

Informant 8 participated in four or five professional conferences in the past year including a local IFLA satellite meetings related to the UN Agenda 2030. These satellite meetings often bring librarians from outside of Serbia such as Croatia, and Bosnia and Herzegovina. About the meeting she said, “We exchanged ideas and it is always good to be surrounded by people that have experienced things that you have.” Informant 6 said she is also a part of organizing for the IFLA satellite meeting being held in Belgrade in August of 2019. These opportunities offer a chance to compare librarianship and how it is practiced around the world. She noted that:

For example, it was in May of last year, we had this IFLA workshop last year and we had librarians from Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Bulgaria, and Romania. So, all the librarians from the region. There was some research that was conducted in all these countries and when we could compare the results we could see that anything that is applicable to one country is comparable to the whole region so we found challenges are just the same.

Informant 13 likes to connect regionally with other librarians who run children's programming, through face to face professional development, social media, and through structured online interactions. Professional development is something she mentioned as a priority, "I try to attend as much as possible conferences and seminars for librarians so I can, I don't know, improve my knowledge or skills. We need a bit more in regarding conferences." In addition, she has organized her own accredited seminars for librarians with colleagues and traveled around Serbia, "We organized a seminar, accredited seminar for other librarians and for school librarians and children's librarians in public libraries."

***Bringing back information from International Conferences.*** Serbian librarians shared a strong tradition of bringing back information from international conferences to librarians who were not able to attend. Conferences were one way that Informant 2 considered that Serbian libraries will be able to move towards the future:

But yes, one percent, or how to say, one bunch of people must think about future and must think what will be improved in a way to have better results. So, I'm in that group of people who likes to be at conferences. I try to present to others and also to bring to others knowledge and how to say everything here in our library.

This personal development was also situated in a context that brought home the best results and best ideas to his library in Belgrade, "Also you can not only present your staff your results to present maybe in the other direction what will be the easiest and not so expensive way to improve some of the results." Informant 10 shared that she had benefited from her colleagues who had participated in professional development programs through library 2.0, regional conferences, and IFLA meetings and she often has received ideas second hand that will be implemented in the library. One example of this was learning about Lego robotics:

One of the things that also Belgrade city library did is through the ideas of a colleague who was in the conference abroad. He saw some ideas for makerspaces and Belgrade city library ordered Lego robots and the training for librarians.

***Local, regional, and international collaborations.*** Serbian librarians mentioned numerous opportunities to connect with librarians outside of their library building that grew into collaborative partnerships. These collaborations were local, regional, and international in scope. In a few cases these collaborations are defined by the specific library or librarian role, in other cases, librarians have reached out to create new programs and partnerships. Informant 2 referenced the connections between the former Yugoslavian countries, “We were one country once, at one time a republic, now we are six other countries, six different states and there was a connection between us because we had one type of acquisitions one type of materials.” In many ways, the connections he referenced came through individual people, “The old generations the generations before us, the librarians before us keep those connections and as they kept now we are doing those connections.”

Informant 3 shared that she enjoys the opportunity to work at a larger library that brings in librarians from many different areas. In addition to conferences that are held on site, the location also serves to provide a space for librarians from Vojvodina, a region in Serbia, to take their professional examinations required by the state in order to work as librarians. In many ways, Informant 7’s job at the International library is naturally global in scope, because their books and materials encompass so many different languages, including Serbian, English, Russian, Turkish among others. They also offer language classes to their patrons, the people of Novi Sad. Because of this international focus, Informant 7 collaborates a lot with the local foreign institutions:

I cooperate with the foreign institutes of culture in Serbia, the British consul, the Goethe institute, the French institute, the American corner, with some associations including the English-language teachers association and the German language teachers' association, then with schools, primary schools, secondary schools. I also cooperate with the Center for learning and teaching languages at the faculty of philosophy and some embassies as well.

Shared cataloging provides another way in which regional collaboration is built into a specific library position. Informant 4 shared the way in which the COBISS system provides interaction with many different libraries and countries:

It is a kind of a system for cataloguization for a few countries it is Slovenian program now and Montenegro and Bulgaria and Macedonia are in that system and most of the libraries in Serbia. Not all of them <are involved> but the National Library of Serbia is. It is shared catalog and it is based on the principle that one item, one book or some other library item is just one time cataloged and the other libraries can take that record for them and just to put some local marks that are important for them.

Informant 3 shared that through the reference department they not only search their own electronic catalog but those of libraries within in Serbia and abroad as well. Like other informants, she noted the limit of these shared catalogs saying, "But, I think that we need a union portal that would contain all digitized materials from all Serbian libraries." However, she ended by noting:

Probably there are many things that I didn't tell you, but the most important thing is that we always try to do everything that modern libraries in the world do. We

use the latest technologies in librarianship, and an agreement of digitalization has been signed on the national level.

Informant 2 talked of other connections and collaborations that existed in a more local or regional level for his library system. For example, in his department he had often had opportunities to provide assistance to other libraries:

We have special occasions to be advisors to be people who come to help other libraries in and in charge of other libraries in Belgrade including school libraries, special libraries in museums in some other companies, first. I go to maybe several other libraries in one month to visit them, to see what is in their collections, to help them go about their problems how to solve something what would be some of their questions.

Informants mentioned that local and regional collaboration often included more than just individuals from libraries and library systems. Informant 8 mentioned a plan “to make one open day and invite all professors and school and university professors to discuss what they would like to see in the corner and what we can give them.” Working at the American Corner offered one sense of a globalized perspective in Informant 8. At the American Corner, she worked in combination with the city libraries of Belgrade, the Ministry of Culture of Serbia, and of course the American Embassy. In addition, they would be promoting their programs within the city libraries themselves in order to reach more students in Belgrade. Informant 4 mentioned that in addition to this international collaboration, she participates in local collaboration with different universities including the University of Belgrade. Another collaboration was a local NGO that had begun working and partnering with Croatian libraries, but it was now expanding to partner with the children’s department at the University of Belgrade to implement the project digital

citizen in their libraries. In this project Informant 10, along with other librarians works to use micro bit computers to teach basic coding.

International collaborations were also evident for many informants. Several librarians had experience working with people from abroad and international organizations. As a personal example, Informant 2 referenced the relationship with the Dr. Andrew Smith from Emporia State University who has brought American students to his library in Serbia on multiple occasions. Informant 11 shared that a large topic in the archivist's world is the desire to digitize the collections within archives and connect with other European archives:

In Serbia right now, we have a large idea that is promoted by our prime minister, Ms. Brnabić. She wants everything to be digitized. So, we get some new programs and equipment to do that work and we are doing some digitizing we are doing some digitizing activities right now.

While the ultimate goal is for these digitized resources to be available on the web and freely accessible, there is a challenge in a government law that requires foreigners researching in Serbian archives to have a letter of certification:

So, we are hoping there with the new legislation about archives which is now in the process of adopting which is now in the house of representatives of Serbia that will change and that everybody would get a free pass for research.

One example of digitization on the web that Informant 11 described was:

We have a good project in our neighboring country, Hungary, <https://hungaricana.hu/en/>. They have cataloged and scanned millions of documents and books and it is all free to use it. That is a good project and something special we can see it in our surrounding countries.



Informant 12's job description has some responsibilities that lead him to work with organizations outside of the country such as EIFL, based in Lithuania, and OCLC, based in the United States. For example, "EIFL gathers library consortiums from developing and poor countries, they help us to negotiate with those publishers." EIFL works with many different countries:

Now there are around 50 countries in the consortium. Around 50 I think, from our neighborhood, Serbia, Macedonia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Slovenia, Ukraine, Indonesia, Belarus, Armenia, Georgia, Ethiopia, Kenya and developing and poor countries and they help all these countries in negotiations with publishers.

In addition to working with EIFL, Informant 12 works with OCLC on a regular basis through their EZproxy service that provides remote access to the web page KoBSON. Selected users, such as university faculty can, "From any part of Serbia, cell phone or tablet, anywhere they have Internet access they can access and download any part of information they need."

***Importance of staying current and connecting globally.*** Several informants mentioned staying current in new technology and trends in order to remain relevant in a globalized world. Informant 1 shared specifically that he considers continued education as necessary to his position saying:

In academic librarianship you need to stay focused on the things in science, because a lot of things are happening and changing if you are not following those things, it can be really a great problem for you as librarian.

Informant 5 mostly noted participating in a globalized society through modern technologies and collaborative programs:

For the last 16 years, I can notice an advanced use of modern technologies in librarianship. The program for cataloging (COBISS) has been modernized, email communication has been intensified, the digitization of library materials has been intensified. My impression that the librarians in children departments use modern technologies, and especially mobile devices, in their activities to a larger extent.

However, she also noted, “As for my library, it is national library, and it is a bit traditional, so there have not been many big changes.” Informant 6 noted, “I think that librarians in Serbian are waking up are now and 10 years ago they are waking up and connecting more with people and colleagues in neighboring countries and Europe.”

Informant 10 noted librarianship in Serbia was challenged because many global thinking and exceptional librarians have moved to work abroad:

We had excellent colleagues, and perhaps one of the problems or issues we have now, I don't say that they are no creative colleagues but a lot of them for Belgrade have moved from Belgrade and have went to work abroad. I think that Belgrade librarianship would be so much better or more creative if they had stayed here. Because they were idea creators and it was easy to follow them. They were always exploring and now it is up to you.

**Education.** Education helps Serbian librarians define their roles and expectations. As Informant 1 notes, education “makes you in the first place, to become a real librarian with that kind of self-image that you can promote it outside for your members and users.” Many practicing librarians begin their career by taking coursework at the bachelor's level via library and information science coursework, Informant 10 shared, “I enrolled, I started my library science degree. Which is first at bachelor's level here with us in Serbia.” Other librarians complete

degrees in other subject areas. However, Informant 10 shared that all practicing librarians complete the exam on librarianship, “That is mandatory according to our law on library.” Other librarians choose to continue education and complete coursework at the master’s and Ph.D. level. Coursework on librarianship has changed throughout the years, mostly due to the recent Bologna accreditation. In addition to formal education practicing librarians participating in continuing education and professional development in a variety of ways, Informant 9 considered, “After my bachelor’s degree I started doing and attending different seminars, different workshops at the university, at the National Belgrade city library, online, and my professional career actually started.”

***High school education.*** One route to librarianship that no longer exists in Serbia is the high school training that provided library technicians or technical assistants (Cveljo, 1977). While none of the informants had been part of the high school training for librarians that previously existed, two informants had, or continued to, work with colleagues who were trained as library technicians. Informant 5 shared that, “Yes, I have an older colleague in my office who graduated from high school for library technicians. As far as I know, the high school education for library technicians does not exist any longer in Serbia.”

***University education.*** Library Science as initial degree in Serbia is currently offered in two places. Informant 5 shared, “There are departments of Library and Information Science at the Faculty of Philology in Belgrade and at the Faculty of Education in Sombor (belonging to the University of Novi Sad).” While 5 of my informants had completed a bachelor’s degree in Library and Information Science, only one of them had the bachelor’s degree. The other four held master’s degrees in Library and Information Science. The other interviewee is currently working towards her master’s degree through the Faculty of Philology. One other informant

completed a master's degree in Library and Information Science although her first degree was in law.

Several informants who had been through the master's degree program shared some of their reasoning behind obtaining a further education in the Library and Information Sciences. Informant 1 shared, "This master's degree is really important I think that is very important for us as a society and as professionals." Informant 10 shared how the master's level courses differed from the bachelor's degree:

Only on master's level you have more in-depth courses that related to either school libraries or towards the academic librarians. I think that by selecting topic for the master's degree that is how you move closer to either one or the other.

One informant, 2, was working towards a Ph.D. in Library and Information Science, and shared his reasoning for pursuing an advanced degree:

But I want to be on faculty as a member of team which teach somebody. When we met, in a way, I am helping the faculty, it was not a classical lecture, but a way to teach students from abroad or from our country. Why not?? Maybe it will be shifted in next 10 years I suppose or 20 years from nowadays young generations will bring to the faculty to new methods, new knowledge, and new, maybe, curriculum. So here I am.

As he notes, the Ph.D. is not required for library positions in Serbia, "Because there is no position in how to say maybe in libraries in Serbia which is obliged to have Ph.D. degree. The Director of library is not obligated to be with Ph.D."

**Coursework.** While both the programs of the Library and Information Studies department at the Faculty of Philology at the University of Belgrade and the Faculty of Education

department at the University of Novi Sad at Sombor were mentioned, it was the University of Belgrade that was identified by most informants with a degree in Library and Information Science studies. Informant 1 mentioned the long history of the program of librarianship studies at the University of Belgrade noting, “When I heard that it existed, first of all I was proud for the university. Then I was surprised and I thought maybe I could apply even though I don’t have that type of background.” Ultimately, he noted, “I was satisfied with the program. Then when I graduated I wanted to, let’s say, finish my master’s degree. I also applied for that and I had that kind of master’s degree in academic libraries.” Although the program has been a part of the University for many years, it has continued to be adapted, most recently through the Bologna system. Informant 10 shared about the Bologna system:

The University of Belgrade and the entire educational system in Serbia went through changes in 2005 and 2006 when the universities accepted the Bologna declaration and changed the way how the syllabus is structured and how the complete University education is created and how the programs are created.

This led to adaptations in the coursework required of students. For example, the pre-2005 students, “had a lot of Serbian literature and world literature as part of their curriculum.”

However, the current coursework allows that, “Technically you can finish your studies now without having any literature courses, or any knowledge, class, in literature, world or Serbian.”

***Librarianship exam.*** The exam for librarianship is required of all practicing librarians. A different separate exam is required of archivists. Informant 3 shared some information about the content of the librarian exam:

In Serbia, every librarian is supposed to pass the professional exam, after first year of work. We have 6 exams and one written work. Those 6 exams were/are:

System of state administration and law on the library and information service;  
 Fundamentals of Librarianship; Cataloging and classification; Informatics in  
 librarianship; Bibliography; History of letters, books and libraries.

7 of the informants came to librarianship from other fields having taken the exam for librarianship and archives rather than library specific coursework. Informant 11 said about the archivist exam:

The exam for archivists is much, much different exam it is far more easier than the exam for the librarians because 1/2 of the exam are about history, part is a foreign language, is English, there is a small task about IT about computers and we have small exams about just plain archivists what is your job and what do with the materials that goes into archives, and everything else.

Informants noted one major challenge in the education of practicing librarians. Informant 1 was just one individual who shared concerns about the number of librarians who were practicing without library science coursework, “We have a lot of librarians who are not from the library program here. That is an issue.” But he also noted, “I hear that things are changing a bit about it. For instance, according to our law they need to have candidates who have degree in library and information science.” Another Informant, 7, noted, “I don’t know what is the trend in your country and in other countries in the world. I think librarians should be specially trained and educated.” However, other libraries benefited from their alternative backgrounds of their librarians, Informant 3 shared:

I studied <foreign> language and literatures, and I thought I would work in school, as a teacher. But, two weeks after I got my University Degree I started to

work in <National> Library. I heard they need someone who knows a foreign (with Faculty Degree), I applied and got the job.

***Continued education.*** Librarians continue their education and professional development by following individuals and organizations online, participating in online professional development, looking to individual role models, exemplary libraries around the world and by visiting other libraries and visiting with librarian colleagues. Continued education was a trend shared by many informants regardless of library position. Informant 4 shared:

One of my main goals is to follow the modern trends of catalogization and cartography, especially in some digital tools that I'm planning to find some way to incorporate them to work within my collection mostly for the users because they expect that.

Following people online is one way that librarians gain new ideas and continue to learn.

Informant 3 shared:

Through the Internet we can also find out everything that is new in librarianship, we follow the sites of the Serbian Library Society, IFLA, etc. Of course, we use Internet to communicate with librarians all around the world, we can compare our work with theirs.

Informant 9 said:

There are a lot of people and institutions that I follow through my personal accounts and through now A/C accounts. Starting from the Library of Congress, starting from the national libraries of many European countries, many American states, our national institutions. There are many successful individuals that I follow such as IFLA president, or a colleague from Serbia, from Belgrade

university library, who got transferred to IFLA In Netherlands. Those are some of the people that I like to follow and learn from them.

Informant 13 also likes to gain ideas from librarians online, “Well we go for example to Facebook to see what colleagues from Serbia do. Because each library has it its own Facebook profile so we go there to see what they are working.” Informant 10 also agreed that Facebook was an easy way to follow librarians and see what new trends were occurring in librarianship.

*Mentoring.* Mentorship programs, official and unofficial advisory roles, learning from senior colleagues, and learning from younger colleagues were continued education opportunities mentioned by several informants. Mentoring was mentioned by Informant 6, “I had a mentor here, she welcomed me into this library world. Actually, I learned a lot from her and some other colleagues and that is how I ended up in the library.” Informant 2 mentioned serving in his position in a mentor, or advisor role:

We have special occasions to be advisors to be people who come to help other libraries in and in charge of other libraries in Belgrade including school libraries, special libraries in museums in some other companies, first. I go to maybe several other libraries in one month to visit them, to see what is in their collections, to help them go about their problems. How to solve something what would be some of their questions.

Informant 11 also spoke to the advisory role played by larger libraries to smaller ones, such as school libraries.

The school libraries are under library of Matica Srpska, they have one yearly inspection everything is done by the law. They will give their advice about what to do next and how to improve library activities. They give you some advice, you



should have to buy shelves, books, you cannot keep books in this room you have to change it, something like that.

Learning from colleagues, both younger and older was also mentioned by informants.

Informant 10 shared:

A lot of our colleagues travel abroad so they participate at the IFLA conference, or libraries 2.0 or some regional conferences and there we get the ideas. One of the things that also Belgrade city library did is through the ideas of a colleague who was in the conference abroad. He saw some ideas for makerspaces and Belgrade city library ordered Lego robots and the training for librarians. We have workshops with them.

Informant 4 mentioned the importance of younger colleagues as well:

I am always ready to work with them and I think it is very important to them not just for them but also for me to work and to hear new voices and new and fresh ideas. When you work every day the same job you how much you think you are open minded you are doing your own thing and it is hard always to think different, to think outside the box but young people are actually doing that.

*Formal professional development.* Participating in structured online professional development was a less common way to continue personal education that was mentioned a few times by Informant 9:

After coming there as a librarian as part of the staff, I was attending several embassy workshops, online courses. On a daily basis, I am using Glenda as a professional platform which is a lending platform for online learning. Udemy.

More common among the informants was participating or providing in person professional development. Informant 13 noted:

We organized a seminar, accredited seminar for other librarians and for school librarians and children's librarians in public libraries. Now it is over, it was in 2018, it lasted 6 hours and so they can get some points which they needed for their job. And then they had a lot of opportunity to share some theory, a small part of theory and practice. They can apply that way of working in their own library. Some of them really did that and sent us their works and it was amazing.

Informant 6 also participated in the creation of professional development courses that she presented with a colleague in the United Kingdom in 2016, "I went to London it was in 2016 it was also with this colleague, we created three of them, three professional development courses and we shared our experience with librarians from Europe, but mostly they were from the United Kingdom." Informant 1 shared:

On a monthly basis sometimes two times a month we have one kind of program in the National Library called librarians for librarians. So that is some kind of conference / gathering if I can say like that where we can share our experiences among us like-- professional experiences. In my experience, there is no such thing for a professional better than releasing those kinds of events and stay in touch with those people and to have that opportunity to learn from them to hear from other kind of experiences. You can hear about it and read it about see how they work and transfer that to your job in library department: those kinds of new trends.

*Conferences.* Conferences offer a more structured and in-depth method of pursuing professional development often organized by both national professional library organizations such as the Serbian Library Association and the Society of Archivists of Serbia, and also international associations such as IFLA and the International Cartographic Association, and Icarus, the European Association of Archives. Librarians often participate in both local and international conferences and occasionally local conferences that have an international scope such as the IFLA satellite conferences or other international conferences taking place in Serbia.

Informant 2 shared an example of attendance and participation at both local and international conferences:

In first 2 or 3 years working in the library I started to visit first conference, not just to visit, but to present my work, to present some theme of my work I was in several in Belgrade, firstly, then I went to some international conferences. These days I am going to some international conference, in March, next month, in Croatia about digitizing processes in cultural preservation positions, cultural heritage, but I was at some at some IFLA satellite conferences, presenting. I published my work there. Also, in Germany, in Croatia, in Austria as a guest, sometimes as a presenter of my work. But I have more than how to say 70-75 conferences behind me.

Informant 6 shared another international conference:

We also participated, as librarians, in different conferences. So, for example two years ago we went to the largest international IFLA conference. In Warsaw, in Poland, so it was also kind of networking experience, connecting with librarians and trying to establish some cooperation.

International conferences were not just limited to librarians in special or academic libraries, Informant 13, a children's librarian, told about one international conference she attended in Turkey:

It was the first symposium for children's librarians. It was really huge, hundreds of librarians there. Mostly from Turkey, but also England, Brazil, Germany, from some other countries. Of course, we made our own connections between librarians that we met there. I have a contact now with one librarian from Germany, one librarian from Bangladesh, Turkey.

Informant 1 also mentioned some international conferences and international funding, from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, that helped him participate.

Another local conference with international attendance happened at the National Library of Serbia, Informant 4 shared:

I had the idea because the National library we are often celebrating with some exhibitions and is not much open to the public and to our other colleagues. I wanted to do something different so the idea was to organize an international conference on the topic of special collections it was so successful and lots of people came there and we had informants from 27 countries all over the world.

Even such local conferences such as the Serbian Library Association often bring in international speakers. For example, Informant 12 mentioned that during the Serbian Library Association meeting in Čačak, "A guest speaker was Loida Garcia-Febo, from the American Library Association she visited us and she was guest speaker at our conference." Other local events for librarians included the international organization IREX, a global development and education organization, Informant 9 shared her experience organizing this event:

During June I will attend IREX at the embassy and IREX and I together are organizing that event. That's it for now. I really appreciate the allowance, I mean, I appreciate when my supervisor allows us to visit any training. That is a crucial thing. It always gives you a new perspective on your job and your purpose. All A/C coordinators are invited, first it is going to be trainers to trainer sessions, and trainers to community members.

Informant 2 summarized his feelings about conferences, "I like conferences it is best way to interact with other people maybe get some contacts, see new spaces and new places, new countries."

Informants shared both some advantages and disadvantages to using conferences as a means of education. Primarily they noted that conferences offer opportunities to travel, meet new colleagues and that the experience often allows for continued relationship after the conference is over. They mentioned such difficulties as simply not having the desire to attend conferences due to personal preferences or personal obligations, having an inability to attend conferences because you are needed at work or because you cannot find funding to attend.

Informant 2 in particular highlighted the opportunity to travel, noting that conference organizers often capitalize on prime locations, "People are trying to organize them in the mountains where skiing is but some are near beaches. But not on the summertime." Informant 4 shared the experience of working with colleagues and having a continued relationship with colleagues after the conference:

We are actually still in contact with them because after the conference we started preparing conference proceedings. And of course because of some financial problems, the conference proceedings will be published this year hopefully during

the summer and so we stayed in contact with them concerning the conference proceedings until now, but also concerning the other things we made of an agreement of different conference things different meetings and working groups, one part of those informants became actually our partners and colleagues that we are communicating and working with, not every day work, but common topics.

Although Informant 2 was in favor of conferences personally he noted that not all individuals were interested in conferences or travel, “Younger people like to travel. Maybe others ones less. You are usually born for that type of thing. It is not easy when you have cat.” Informant 9 noted that personal reasons kept her from applying to present at the IFLA conference of 2019:

I had a lot of changes even of my personal plan, so that prevented me from applying for IFLA conference in Athens, so I am sorry I didn't manage to finish my work and to transform it from a single sketch to actual work to try to send out and to try to be one of the presenters.

She also noted that not all librarians have the same reasons for non-attendance, “Some literally don't get permission from their supervisors or they are not interested or they don't have enough private time or whatever.” Informant 7 shared that, “I have visited conferences, but not every year, because the library has to delegate me to go to conference.” Informant 2 shared his challenges with finding finances for travel to accommodate.

*Challenges to continued learning.* Informant 10 shared that continued learning can be a challenge and that following innovative librarians can be a good way to learn, “So, somehow the good ideas they find ways to be heard. But a lot is pretty much through individuals researching and talking with colleagues seeing if that idea is feasible or not.” She shared that one of the recent challenges in Serbian librarianship has come from librarians moving away from Serbia:

We had excellent colleagues, and perhaps one of the problems or issues we have now, I don't say that they are no creative colleagues but a lot of them for Belgrade have moved from Belgrade and have went to work abroad. I think that Belgrade librarianship would be so much better or more creative if they had stayed here. Because they were idea creators and it was easy to follow them. That had really excellent ideas. Excellent ideas are ok now as well, but <it is> slightly more challenging to find them. They were always exploring and saying, I saw this, and now it is a bit up to you.

### **Librarian Roles**

Librarians participate and assign importance to different roles based on their assigned jobs within the library. Different Serbian libraries require librarians to undertake different roles, with smaller libraries requiring more variety in what they need to accomplish. Different librarian roles mentioned by informants include working with users; programming; caring for, cataloging, acquiring, and maintaining a collection; managing people, resources, and spaces; communicating with stakeholders, media, patrons, and collaborators; and providing leadership to move the library field forward.

Librarians in some libraries work in a variety of roles, in larger libraries, the roles are more specialized. Informant 3 said,

I think there is a difference if you are librarian in a big library and a small one, national or public. Here, in <national> Library the work is separated, there are a lot of departments. In small libraries, librarians do everything: acquisition, cataloging, reference...

Several informants mentioned the specialized role as their primary job. Informant 2 said, “For several years I was a librarian, then a reference librarian in a special reading room.” Informant 3 also identified in this way, “I started to work in Reference Department as reference librarian.” Participant 10 shared, “From January I work in the children’s department.” She enjoyed the change of role that this move had made. “I am actually the person doing the programs and so much less paperwork.”

Librarians in some libraries work with a variety of users, in other cases the users are more specialized. Different user groups may include people at different age stages such as adults, seniors and children/young patrons. Informant 6 noted that sometimes users were very specialized such as farmers:

But there are these projects where librarians are cooperating with farmers in villages and giving them the necessary information they need. There are inspired by one project that was awarded ALA association. This project has inspired many projects in Serbia. And now many small libraries and many village libraries are doing something similar.

Informant 7 noted older patrons coming to the library often enjoy socializing:

When they people come if they are older they like to chat. If they don’t see anyone else in the library and just see me sitting with my computer then they start talking. You cannot predict how many people will come and how many will like to chat with you about their lives, political situation, anything.

Informant 2 suggested that users were not always so segregated by age:

We have some courses for Internet, computer science and so, for elder people, 65 or older but also we have something new for kids well it is maybe it is not so new



in your world, we combine them, the elder people and kids in one special, in some special places in our libraries. So, this changes the health and the experience of the one and the youth of the other, it is good, and it is something like a cure sometimes.

However, while some librarians may especially plan for one type of user group, they often receive help from colleagues. Participant 9 noted,

On the other hand, when some of the staff from the adult section was missing or using sick leave, I was working with the adults as well. I was helping out with anything, sometimes even with computers, and other programs.

Participant 13 shared about a colleague who worked primarily with high school students,

That one colleague because she has a degree in language and Serbian literature and so it is adequate to work with high school children because for example they do about jargon and slang workshops and idioms and or I don't know about parody and literature or something like that. So, she works with mostly with the high school students and we all help her as much as we can.

Working with children involved quite a bit of programming and also some reader's advisory. Informant 13, a children's librarian shared, "Basically we work a lot of programs, different kind of programs, and they are changing over time. Because we following the needs of children." Librarians tied to educational centers such as school libraries or university or academic libraries were more likely to work with students, professors, or researchers. Some libraries, such as the Student City Cultural Center library focused on students from more than one university, Informant 12 said:

In Serbia there are especially in Belgrade some private universities like John Naisbitt University, European University or I don't know if you are familiar with these universities. Our patrons was also besides students from the University of Belgrade, students from those private colleges and faculties.

For other academic libraries, the primary users are professors. Informant 1 noted:

First thing that surprised me here is because I have a lot of experience working with people is that the staff focus on professors not on students. That is true in a lot of faculty libraries here. So, I think that is a problem because we are here for professors and not for students. That is something I would like to change a bit.

Archives attracted adults in various stages who were usually looking for specific information.

Informant 11 shared, "The main thing about us which is more different is between librarians and us is that people who are coming here they are, they know what they want and they want us to help them." The archive in which Informant 11 works is in fact, inundated with incredibly specific requests, over 3,000 per year for information relating both past court rulings in which:

Through the process of communism in this country they have deprived private owners from their property. A lot of people are trying to use the law or institutions to get back their houses and to take over their land and their property.

and:

With people have to prove they have been working in some firm or something like that and because of the problems they had with the past a lot of the documentation has been lost. We have to find where they were working and how much their wage was.

Finally, even the National Library of Serbia considered the ways in which users could make use of their materials and resources, Informant 4 said:

I'm also trying to make some connection with engineering department in Belgrade and department of geo-informatics and faculty of geography and faculty of cartography and they are actually trying to do some researches and trying to make connections with them and offer them our collections on which they could work and maybe we will possibly make product good for us but also good for them. Maybe this is one of the possibilities actually, to work with students.

**Programming.** When asked about one of the biggest challenges in Serbian librarianship, Informant 1 talked about the increasing need for librarians to provide programming for users:

We need to focus on programs and we need to involve volunteers in--not volunteers in the typical library job--but volunteers in programming. You need to involve other people to do classes for free just to be clear and programs for children, programs for retired people and for me the American corners in Serbia are a best example of how libraries can do a lot of different things and can be successful. And other librarians from let's say, public libraries need to be much informed about how they can provide not just programs but provide services for their local communities. I'm just following what other public libraries are doing in a lot of cities in Serbia. A couple of them are just doing really, really good.

In many cases programming for adults was mentioned in collaboration with computer or Internet instruction, Informant 7 mentioned:

I think they are not aware that not all information they can find on the Internet is valuable information. It is up to librarians to be loud and be heard in giving that

information to society. It is good to use Internet but accept the help of the librarians which are ready to help you search for valid information.

In particular, access to accurate information and doing sophisticated Internet research through journals and databases was something students needed to learn during their time with the faculty:

Also, second thing are students here are not so focused on electronic references. If I ask them if I see them googling something in the reading room and I ask them do you know that we have I don't know how many electronic databases we have here. They'll say that they are not informed. That is a question, not for them, but for us here, but we need to inform them and to start with some other trends to move them from hard copies to more usual electronic. When I ask them and I show them how advance search in database works. They are surprised to see how many things are online. They are really pleased about it.

Programming for children followed several different trends including author events, guest speaker events, and collaboration with schools and other educational institutions. Several informants shared with me a number of creative programs that they had implemented in their libraries. Informant 10 shared that her library had offered several author events to children:

We had book presentations, we had gatherings with Serbian Authors especially if they have a new book. They would come to the library and present the book and they would talk with the kids about the books, if they have read the books that the author previously wrote. Probably those are the most interesting ones because you never know how the kids will react.

Other librarians, such as Informant 13 mentioned that publishing houses often reach out to libraries as well to coordinate author visits:

We try to cooperate as much as we can with publishing houses and then they come to our library free of charge and they bring the writers library, we try to provide as much children as we can because it is an opportunity to meet the writer and to speak with him and ask them questions and everything.

Informant 6 shared about storytelling workshops for kids, recycling workshops, and collecting money for wheelchairs, all different activities that she has seen take place in libraries. Other types of children's programming have moved into the digital realm. Informant 10 shared a current programming plan:

The children's department now has become a partner with the Croatian libraries, or with an institute, I need to remind myself for the exact title. I can send you that in an email as a clarification. They are an NGO from the Croatia, they are implementing the project digital citizen in Croatian libraries. And through the foundation, B92 the program is implemented in Serbia as well in 20 different public libraries in children's departments. We are going to use micro bit computers that are developed between Microsoft and BBC and use them to teach kids some basics of coding.

Other partnerships include school librarians mentioned by Informant 6, "They are also organizing these virtual meetings on Skype. For example, librarians from school libraries in Serbia are skyping with a school library from Australia and the kids are talking with each other and sharing experiences, knowledge."

***The changing needs of users and other programming challenges.*** Working with patrons and providing programming for users can sometimes have difficulties for librarians. They identified lack of patrons, funding, and changing needs and government influence as a few

challenges they are working to overcome. Informants 9, 10 and 13 mentioned lack of patrons as a challenge. Informant 9 thought that this was just some libraries in some situations:

School libraries, university libraries, city libraries are not in great shape. Maybe some main branch, they collaborate with institution, they have fancy equipment, they have thousands and thousands of books, you know when you go, you will find everything you need and they are popular and people visit them. 1/2 of libraries including school and university libraries are not so popular and don't have so many patrons as they should, as libraries in Finland have.

Informant 10 thought that lack of patrons was increasingly because parents are more willing and more able to simply buy books for their children:

At one point, I think it was February a lot of parents came to the library with the sentence, "oh we wanted to find this book in the bookstore, but we couldn't find it because it is an old edition." I know from my friends who have kids. They prefer to buy books rather than to borrow them from the library.

Informant 13 shared that not knowing how many patrons one will have is challenging when it comes to preparing programming, "You never know the number of them sometimes we have, I don't know, 10 children and parents sometimes only 3 children and parents sometimes 15 so we never know."

Informant 6 shared that funding is always a challenge:

Whenever you mention a challenge I think about funding and money in the first place. So, when you want to do something on a bigger scale you need to be funded by someone and you need to obtain some funds and sometimes that can be challenging. Especially when we talk about obtaining funding from Serbian

institutions or administrators. I mean we are supported by these institutions on a regular annual basis. But there are so many good projects and so many good ideas which cannot be funded because these budgets are limited.

Informant 9 shared some ways to overcome budgeting challenges:

Even if you don't have money or fancy space or fancy equipment, there is always something you can do with the books, with the pencils and paper, as an adult and you can always invite authors to have a book promotions or people with some disabilities they are always ready to come to read and to work and present what they know.

Informant 10 said that often when budgets are tight, "Then you depend on the enthusiasm of the librarians to end up buying stuff for programs that is just the simplest thing." Informant 13 agreed, "The biggest challenge is doing stuff without money."

Librarians also identified ways in which they need to change and adapt based often on government requirements. For example, Informant 13 noted that:

For example, ten years ago we had some preschool preparations, and now because they are obligatory in the schools in all preschool expectations we don't have it.

So now we are trying to focus on parents and children and we run that workshop I told you about, storytelling time, for parents and children each Wednesday in the afternoon.

Other challenges include adapting to school scheduling and needs, including being aware of the mandatory reading lists at both elementary and high school level. Informant 10 mentioned that programming for kindergarteners always occurred in:

A regular time slot when they come, it was Thursday morning. It sometimes depends on the teachers that bring, if they only come 30-45 minutes or an hour and a half. Depending on their age and how long they can stay, we adjust our program.

A recent challenge also came from simple procurement of supplies:

The pencils that we get at the children's department are a bit poor quality because you need to, what's the term, you need to get a quote and for the preferred product, for office materials, and the ones who give the cheapest quote are the ones, those companies are accepted as the provider to give us the new goods. Now there are some changes in legislation. So, we will be able to assess the quality of the product and the price and not just go with the cheapest ones. You get the package of the crayons, but it is not quality they dry out they don't last. Then technically again you don't have the materials for the workshops.

***Communication and collaboration.*** Librarians working with users and instituting programming noted many places in which communication and collaboration played an important position in fulfilling their duties. Informant 1 spoke about the role of communication and collaboration with colleagues in a general way:

There is no such thing for a professional better than those kinds of events and stay in touch with those people and to have that opportunity to learn from them to hear from other kind of experiences. You can hear about it and read it about see how they work and transfer that to your job in library department. Those kinds of new trends.

Informant 13 shared several communication opportunities that allowed her to reflect on her job:



I participate in, I don't remember of the exact name of the program. It was in America, it was online. I can find you that and send you that, the name of the program, you can leave your name and data and they find you some, matching librarian in some other country, I had a contact with librarians from America. So, we emailed each other and talked about the way's libraries functioned here and there. Everything regarding the library.

In another example of communication Informant 13 said, "Well we go for example to Facebook to see what colleagues from Serbia do. Because each library has its own Facebook profile so we go there to see what they are working."

Informant 11 shared the many ways in which he has seen European archives become more accessible to patrons via collaboration online and shared some ways in which he is hoping to work across international lines:

As I said earlier the main thing is Hungaricana or the Hungarian National Archives. They have done a lot in the field of digitization. So, every year we have meetings and we are working together. They were in Novi Sad three weeks ago.

Working across international lines was not limited to European archives however, Informant 2 noted that the faculty and city libraries,

Are connected with other organizations and institutions with some of our formal capitals: librarians in Croatia, some document to be cooperation with librarians in China, librarians in Russia, libraries in Scandinavian countries, Oslo, Norway, some other of Germans in the Belgrade city library. We have document or degree signed about cooperation.

Informant 11 offered details about cooperation through a shared European program,

Icarus:

Other thing we are trying to do is we are connected in one European association of archives. It is called Icarus. Icarus is the NGO made in Austria in Vienna. It offers connections with other archives. Because if I need information from the Czech Republic I will call them in Vienna and say please make me a connection there and they will do it for me. It is a great European association and it helps us in our fields of digitization and I have seen a lot of projects are very interesting and they can be useful to some to copy and do in their culture. They are in now in some great project, I haven't had a chance to see it. It is called, time machine, all major archives and the libraries in Europe are connected, to make some VR reality of history of Europe. It is very interesting. In the Netherlands they have meetings 9 and 10 May. I can't come there, but I will do my best to call them they will probably be our guest in 2021. When Novi Sad is European capital of culture.

Several informants shared ways in which communication and collaboration helped them to discover and implement programming in their libraries. Informant 10:

We actually had another excellent program that didn't get funding for some reason. It was actually a way to show the 8th graders of the elementary school part of the cultural history of Belgrade. It was a workshop was envisioned as a collaboration with the Belgrade city library, of one NGO, and the museum of Belgrade with the help of ballet school and school of beauty. Our department that just happened two weeks ago. So, the Museum of Belgrade provided materials for

the bracelets and images from how the bracelets and necklaces looked like from that period and the ballet school showed the high school they were there to show the dances popular then. They were all dressed in costumes for that period. The school for beauty they were making braids and hairstyles from that period. That second team was helping men, male teenagers, to create medals and broaches from that period. Our associate from the NGO would tell them the historical background of that era, what was happening then and influence of the Austro-Hungarian Empire and the Ottoman Empire both the wardrobe and what was happening in that period and all that happened in different places in the library. In one room, they make cylinders and they made bracelets, lecture and for the end they had the dance. It was important because they are studying that period in history in the 8th and high school and it was an enrichment of the school period. It was really excellent and those are the types of programs we need more of.

Informant 2 said:

We do some projects of teaching some skills and languages. And so maybe we should present some exhibitions, or some professor teaching the language or some students from the college to be tutors for the language and culture and also for school grades. Or maybe will invite some Russian arts and authors. The other one is in English language or also in German language Goethe Institute from Munich. Yes, we have some special arrangement to give them some of our spaces, to have lessons here and to work their programs but they give to us our libraries some special events to learn general language here. So, libraries are not just books here, but something beyond and something different.

Informant 13 collaborated with preschool teachers and kindergarten teachers to organize times in which children can come to the library. She and the library were open as well to older age students, but she mentioned:

You know in our high school they are really overburdened with so many subjects and everything and the professors don't like to lose some of the classes, it takes time to go to the library to have a workshop and then come back to school.

**Books and materials.** Librarian roles in Serbia also include care of books and materials in the realms of acquisitions, book care, cataloging, inventory, weeding, collection management, reader's advisory including lending, promoting education and reading, and fulfilling patron requests. Librarians mentioned challenges to fulfilling these duties including following laws, cases in which lack of technology hindered their ability to complete tasks, and simply finding time to complete all their duties.

*Acquisitions.* Informant 4 shared that every day librarian work in Serbia very much mirrors the rest of Europe:

When it is about every day librarian job like, like cataloguization, acquisition work with users. Well actually my experience and the experience of most of my colleagues from special collections departments we all have similar problems we all have similar situations. And when it is about librarianship in Serbia, on that level. I can say that Serbia is in just a regular level of development of librarianship in Europe.

Informant 10 shared that the President of the Serbian Library Association has worked with librarians on acquisitions:

We have Bogdan Trifunović, he is the director of the public library in Čačak. He has done a lot in his period while being president of Serbian Library Association and when we had some challenges and questions about pay grades and about the acquisition of the books. You would see emails pop up on the mailing list and we would check through there.

Informant 2 offered some information about how acquisition are considered in his library, “One of our obligations is to choose what to buy, acquisition, like maybe a subscription for end of 2018 we are starting 2019 collect all the subscriptions for the future year.” In addition, he noted that acquisitions are often shared amongst Serbian libraries:

Nowadays we exchange titles and books and magazines, but like in the old days we are now we are not just the same. But yes, our second or third copies, we don't put them in a garbage bag we just share with other libraries. That is the way it is from time to time.

Informant 7 also shared that book gifts and donations are shared with other interested libraries:

I have many donations during the year from Novi Sad citizens and different sides and of course I cannot accept all these books that I receive as a gift so I prepare some of those donations and send to different libraries in Serbia who are interested in opening this type of library or at least open a section for the first time with foreign books.

Informant 12 shared information about how acquisition of scientific resources through databases and journals in Serbia are organized via Coordinated Acquisition via KoBSON:

KoBSON is a project which is almost 20 years old. It started in that department and that was initiated by a few of the biggest Serbian libraries, so National

Library of Serbia, the Library of Matica Srpska, the Belgrade University Library, University Library of Niš and Kragujevac.

Informant 11 shared that acquisition and the rights of first issue offer a distinction between Serbian libraries and archives:

It is a big difference between the status of archivists and the libraries. Because the libraries have the special role that is meant to build the working of the libraries. They have three or four laws that are building librarian activities. They have the law about first issue that means if you researching a book you have to send 5 copies to the library that is a way to preserve the books.

**Book care.** Book care, inventory, and weeding were mentioned rarely in interviews.

Informant 8 said, “Something I can see in the parts of process of library and book collection. It is always very important and books are everywhere around us and we take care of them. This is a little part of them.” Informant 10 mentioned learning about inventory while in library school, “At the fourth year instead of classes on bibliography we had like a practice at one of the elementary schools doing the inventory of the books.” Informant 9 shared that sometimes her duties included helping out in other areas of the library,

On the other hand, when some of the staff from the adult section, was missing or using sick leave, I was working with the adults as well. I was helping out with anything, sometimes even with computers, and other programs, I was done, I was doing it, inventory process.

**Cataloging.** Many informants worked directly in cataloging, others had spent some time working in that particular area, or counted cataloging as a small part of their many jobs.

Informant 3 wrote,

I think there is a difference if you are librarian in a big library and a small one... national or public... Here, in <National> Library the work is separated, there are a lot of departments. In small libraries, librarians do everything: acquisition, cataloging, ... reference.

This informant was initially in the cataloging department, “First, I catalogued the books (in French and other Romance languages – Italian, Spanish, Portuguese and Latin), and in 2003 I started to work in Reference Department as reference librarian.” Informant 7 worked for a short period of time in a processing department, “For a short period, I was in the Department for Processing books, that was maybe for 3 months and that was long enough to see that part of the job.” Informant 4 spent many years updated the catalog of their special collection at a national library,

My job for the first few years mainly was cataloguization and revision of our old collection because that is something that hadn’t been done for 20 years ago or more. A few months ago, I have actually finished that job it was a big relief after I finished that because it was very hard and long and what a job to do. I was since I feel that need to connect with other people and colleagues working with other people in special collections.

Informant 2 considered cataloging a piece of his daily work, “Third one is behind the scene the work is connected with classification and working in the stacks of some new and popular periodicals.

***Reader’s advisory and lending.*** Reader’s Advisory and lending was also mentioned by a few informants in their interviews. Informant 9 shared that her background in Serbian literature helped prepare her to make book recommendations,

You know, when I worked in Voždovac there were not any programs or events, only books. You would only check in and check out and give some basic recommendations. I was good at it, because I studied language and literature so I could help a lot of students, high school and university students with their seminars with the workshops if they were to prepare some, you know, essay.

From my heart I could just recommend important books and literature but actually I was not working too much on events or with the audience or with other institutions.

Informant 2 shared as well that, “Maybe to tell you about that I work firstly in a lending department. So different type of work is dealing with users at that level.” Promoting books and education was key for Informant 7. When asked, ‘What is the most important thing you can do as a librarian in Serbia?’ she responded,

The most important thing to do as a librarian in Serbia is to affect children to become fond of books and education. I think that is very important. Our library is very much engaged into working with children from the smaller age. Because we all think if we do our best in modeling small patrons they will stay with us later. If we don't do that on time then it is hard to make library patrons of people which were not interested to visit in their young age. Mostly if children don't like to read or don't like the book they will never come to the library, especially today when they have information on Internet. They might think the library is not necessary at all. If you educate them and connect with them from their youngest age then they will stay with us.



*Serbian laws, librarian's lack of time and access to technology.* Serbian librarians mentioned challenges to fulfilling these duties including following laws, cases in which lack of technology hindered their ability to complete tasks, and simply finding time to complete all their duties. Informant 11 did share some information about laws pertinent to library weeding,

They are saying, library and information activities, they have law about all the rare books. Because in our law everything that is older from 1867 that is going in the region of old and rare books, they are protected, they can't be sold, they have to be preserved by the country.

The year 1867 is also important because it is also time in which Vuk Karadžić's reformed and modernized Serbian Cyrillic alphabet was approved for official use (Szerbhorváth, 2015). Other problems came with lack of technology. Informant 9 said,

But yeah, I used to work in several libraries that didn't even have the Internet, so it was difficult to use the computer in that way. It was difficult to create new boards and how do you expect me to log in and search for the exact book or the recommendation.

Finally, librarians may wish to complete certain tasks, but be unable to find the time necessary. Informant 4 shared,

Often we do not have time we already have enough job to do. It is often expected for us to learn new things that are in this moment important and to know everything is hard and you always have to learn. But it is about the time you need to learn and have better to find good partners and improve communicate with community and have them to share with you their competencies and help I think

this second model is better. I think we should think in that way. To improve communications and cooperation.

In many cases communication and collaboration occurred during the acquisition and cataloging of books and materials, it was mentioned less often in relation to readers' advisory and lending. During acquisition, occasionally the government, offers books to libraries.

Informant 7 said,

It is up to the library to decide what it wants to buy or how to create or develop its collections. We have the possibility to take or to accept a number of books from the government, because the government buys it for us. It functions in that way and it sends a list of books which they are ready to buy us if we are interested for the amount of money we have at our disposal. That is not some huge amount, for us it is symbolic amount. For us it is symbolic because we are a very big library.

Other efforts of coordinated acquisition are shown in the resource KoBSON, by

Informant 12,

Because the money was spent on a lot of institutions the ministry gave money for acquisition of scientific literature to many different institutions, to University of Belgrade, to University of Novi Sad, to University of Niš, it was a waste of money in one way. Some smart people in that time think about it and decided to join in a consortium and to centralize these acquisition. So now the ministry gives only us money for acquisition for all these universities and libraries. Then we negotiate with together with publishers of scientific literature, Elseveier, Springer, Wiley, you have probably heard of them and we negotiate for the price, we need to conduct, unfortunately, public procurements with every publisher. We develop

and maintain KoBSON portal, web page for which you can access all the resources that we subscribe.

The coordination of acquiring these resources is not just with the Universities and institutions using those resources, Informant 12 also works with the EIFL consortium, an international group that works with developing countries to negotiate with publishers for scientific resources,

EIFL helps us in negotiations with publishers. EIFL works with some of them, not with all of them, but the first time when we negotiate with Cambridge University press and they don't want to give us a low price increase, then we ask EIFL could you help us to negotiate with Cambridge can you please help us to get lower price increase for the next year. Now there are around 50 countries in the consortium.

Around 50 I think, from our neighborhood, Serbia, Macedonia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Slovenia, Ukraine, Indonesia, Belarus, Armenia Georgia, Ethiopia, Kenya and developing and poor countries and they help all these countries in negotiations with publishers to develop publishers. They really promote open access, too. There is an annual fee of 2,000 euros for 3,000 euros is annual fee for consortium, between 2 and 3,000. But that is very good invested money.

Informant 12 also coordinates with the international organization, OCLC, to improve access to those resources for select patrons,

We subscribe to EZproxy, we provide that service for our community and that provides remote access for our web page KoBSON. They can access with their username and password. From any part of Serbia, cell phone or tablet, anywhere they have Internet access they can access and download any part of information they need.

Cataloging is also an area in which collaboration among Serbian librarians was evident. Informant 3, 4 and 5 mentioned COBISS, the shared cataloging system used by many Serbian libraries. Informant 4 described the cataloging system this way,

It is a kind of a system for cataloguization for a few countries it is Slovenian program now and Montenegro and Bulgaria and Macedonia are in that system and most of the libraries in Serbia not all of them but National Library of Serbia is. It is shared catalog and it based on the principle that one item, one book or some other library item is just one time catalogued and the other libraries can take that record for them and just to put some local marks that are important for them.

**Management.** Many librarians in Serbia also work in positions where they must be managers: of people, of spaces and of finances. Many of the librarians interviewed mentioned ways in which management is accomplished. In some cases, they find they find that library difficulties make management challenging. Informant 8 shared an overarching perspective on how management works in libraries,

I am always thinking after so many years of professional experience, management in libraries is very important as much as other organizations. It helps us understand modern librarianship. The information connects people and knowledge and information and improve people's life. Good management actually sets goals, improves the functioning of the entire library. You have to have a vision and to know the direction of library and how it can grow and develop you have to know your opportunities and community conditions and employees with skills knowledge and practical experience.

*Managing people.* A few informants had experience managing people, Informant 2 shared the many ways in which the management role can sometimes supersede other more traditional library jobs.

In the first 5 years I started to be a manager of some biggest department in Belgrade city library we had more than 60,000, well about more than 50,000 users in that period, and I had staff of around 30 people. It was very new for me. I was on a high position, not well paid that is a different story. But after that I went for a manager on a municipality library it was another type of job. Where you don't deal with users anymore, you don't see users, you don't feel books anyway, adjust economics on paper, digits and numbers, how to provide, I don't know, printers somewhere on the other part of time when problems come, the leaking from rain, this is the other type, managerial work.

He continued to share that other positions offer some supervisory role, but require less time focused on management responsibilities,

But after, that in my third period, in the last period is mix of that two you were here in my department is dealing with users, seeing them, working with them and also being in charge of some processes. Old and rare books, materials, what to digitize and what to preserve according to some laws here.

Informant 11 also spoke of the time needed in management of library personnel and space,

7:30 in the morning, I am at work, first I have to meet with secretary of archive, a lady she is working our finances. So, after briefing with them, working on my

emails and I am trying to balance everything else I have meetings with colleagues.

Usually that is past 10:00, then I am dedicated to problems to solve as I said.

***Managing space.*** Some informants talked about the responsibilities of managing space for libraries, including maintenance and space updating. Informant 11 shared,

We have an enormous building that stretches out 7,000 square meters. It is a tremendous task to maintain the building, and to preserve at the level it is a lot of job from cleaning, maintenance, maintaining the system and climatization. So, it is a job that goes from 0 to 24. That is, I must say, almost daily.

Managing a space and updating the library was also a concern for Informant 9,

To create modern space, you know, to give some, you know, even though we didn't have a lot of money. I was trying to set priorities in the best way and make a modern open space, urban space, open concept and so. I will continue in that manner, indefinitely.

Informant 6 said,

I never imagined if someone if someone works in the library can do some costs that are related to construction works. It wasn't as if we actually did them. But we had to get acquainted with these types of tasks, we cooperated with architects, with construction workers, because we this roof, the roof of this building redecorated, actually reconstructed, and the facade redecorated, so we were engaged with this project for two years and we constantly had to work on this.

Informant 12 talked about the new library built recently in Čačak, Serbia. "The library is a very big and nice. It was really great news that in Serbia after, I don't know how many years that

some library building was built finally.” Informant 12 shared that one Serbian Library Association meeting took place in Čačak to allow librarians to visit the new library building.

***Building renovations, management, and closings.*** Library difficulties include the amount of time needed to keep up with a building, building closings, renovations, and updates. One challenge of course is simply the amount of time that takes to maintain the building such as Informant 11 suggested earlier and the need to deal with problems such as leaking rain, as mentioned by Informant 2. Other challenges include library closings. Informant 10 shared about the former children’s library building, “Technically they were closed. The old building where the library was located it wasn’t safe enough to work. So, it was closed. They were closed a little over a year.” The other children’s department in Belgrade was also closed for a period of time, Informant 10 shared, “That building was closed due to renovation. Changed the owner and now there is some legal stuff to be solved before returning to that library as well.” Informant 2 shared that some buildings were rebuilt after the wars of the 90’s,

We have hard time two decades ago with some clashes here and war. So, some parts of culture are destroyed and some institutions are brand new buildings so nowadays we have a new perspective about what a libraries can be in those societies that are divided by war.

***Managing budget.*** Several informants mentioned not only challenges with the budget, but the skills needed to manage money, put together proposals and work with library boards and the ministry of culture. Informant 12 shared we are,

Always struggling with budget, you know, because the government gives a little, they give not enough money, they don’t give enough money for culture

completely in our country. So, there is always a struggle for budget. Budgets originate with funds from the Ministry of Culture in Serbia.

Informant 10 shared, “It also can be challenging because when the budgets are cut: the first thing that it cuts are the culture and institutions which the libraries belong to.” The management of the budget falls to the director of the library, Informant 10 continued, “The directors plan the budget for the entire library with the library boards and with the deputy directors. We can suggest some things but it really depends on whether there is enough budget in the library to execute that.”

Informant 8 shared about the American Corner budget, “Budget is related only to American Corner and embassy and that was completely new for me.” Separately the American Corner staff puts together budget proposals, “Now I have learn how to put together budget proposals and acquisitions while working with the embassy. I will have to learn how to spend in a quality way.”

Several informants mentioned grant writing as a way to secure extra funding to solve the problem of library budgets. Informant 9 wanted to be clear that in Serbia,

You have to know how to manage finances and you have to know how to purchase different things and how to write grants. We in Serbia do not have grants in that way as the Americans have so we have to learn different new skills and learn new technology and new technology and new trends.

The American Corner libraries often received extra embassy grant funding, Informant 10 shared that, “We would apply for embassy grants to do a project.” Informant 9 shared that American Corner grants required a special certificate making her eligible to apply for the embassy grants, “I think that the program will give me a special certificate that will make me eligible to apply for grants and hold smaller workshops with youth.” Other possibilities of grants for the city libraries



came from the ministry or city government but as Informant 10 shared they weren't guaranteed funding,

We actually had another excellent program that didn't get funding for some reason. We applied for a grant from the Ministry of culture for that program, it was old stories and new designs. This was the title how we imagined it. We wanted to add a sign language interpreter so that children who were deaf or had hearing impairments they could hear the story and not be included from that library part. Unfortunately, we didn't get the grant. But they said it was a good project but still we advise you to apply with the city council since they have way more money. This year not many cultural institutions from Belgrade got grants, mostly the central parts of Serbia got grants.

***Budget challenges.*** Money and budget challenges in Serbia were mentioned as stemming from the few places from which to receive funding, the need for grant writing, and the opportunities and challenges that joining the European Union represents. Currently the opportunity for funding in Serbia is limited to Ministry of Culture and city governments, Informant 4 said,

But they are actually the only resource of our financing because libraries in Serbia are working that way. So, we actually depends on them completely, because all of our sources on a daily basis from our users and services we gave them. They are actually, paying, the users are paying all those services to the ministry of culture.

Informant 10 talked about how writing grants often became necessary,

If we came up with an idea we would share with deputy director and then they would consider if they are doable or not. But probably they would advise us to find a grant through the ministry or through city government.

Informant 12 offered some ideas about how joining the EU may impact library funding in Serbia,

I think if we approach the European Union the biggest challenge will be for librarians to adapt for that transition to European Union and to learn how to get money from the European Union and from their funds. To use that opportunity which used for example, Slovenia and Croatia in our neighborhood, have gotten money from European Funds to reconstruct buildings, to build new libraries, to invest in new infrastructure of Internet and computers and these stuff and to invest in education as well.

Informant 12 saw this is as a challenge, but also an opportunity, “That is how things are now in modern world. You can’t just ask for one place and your ministry or leadership end you have to find outsourcing and money from the other source.”

**Advocacy.** Several informants noted the need for Serbian librarians to advocate for their jobs and positions and to work on their image in the minds of the Serbian people. Informant 1 said,

I think that we need to work on an image of librarian in Serbia and think that is a great issue right now. We need to work on our image and to promote our profession and to get people much involved and to say as professionals what we are doing is for our home and our community not just academically, but is on all levels and in all kinds of libraries.

Informant 6 agreed that,

The other challenge would be that librarians do not speak up and that they do not show their community or the public what they are doing and how they can help their community in all different aspects of life. So, I think that librarians tend to be shy, but I think it is our responsibility as librarians to speak up and actually promote more what we can do and what we are actually doing and connect more. And in that way I think that they would have better arguments to advocate for their cause. If they showed some stakeholders how for example, how many people they included in a certain project in different parts of Serbia they could get state funding for some I don't know some more creative or more important project they could conduct together. I think this kind of communication and presenting themselves in the public is one of the challenges still to librarians actually they should to learn how to advocate for libraries and for themselves as librarians. I think librarians are realizing that, but we should still work on that.

Informant 7 also talked about advocacy as a constant fight for the library,

But of course, you have to do some things that you don't like because you have to fight for the library all the time. You have to fight for its image in society and in these terms, you have to be exposed and you have to go to media and make different partnerships with different organizations.

**Leadership.** In addition to advocating for librarians and librarians and changing the image of the library, it is necessary for librarians to show leadership, consider a vision of libraries in the future and have a changing vision in the librarian role. Informant 9 shared her experience both with librarians with and without initiative, for some coworkers and supervisors,

“I was always feeling that they are not people who had the initiative, you know, for some collaboration, who will actually lead, you know, who would have the idea, that was my main feeling that they don’t have vision.” However, she also noted,

I have a lot of great coworkers and colleagues, librarians on the Belgrade city library network, that are really active and passionate people capable who are open to new experiences, who are looking forward to different events and work with people and checking out and checking in books, why not. They are open for recommendations and chatting.

Informant 12 shared the vision and enthusiasm offered by the Serbian Library Association,

We got new president of Serbian Library Association, it is Bogdan Trifunović and he is from Čačak is very enthusiastic and dedicated to job and he moves things forward. He is a really great person. He made a lot of changes together with the dedicated librarians there. That is a few steps in the future.

**Representing Serbia abroad.** A few informants spoke of the importance of representing Serbia abroad through presenting at conferences or participating in the International Book Fairs.

Informant 2 shared that his director shared his feelings about representing Serbia, “Our director is a lady who thinks it is important to be on conference as we represent our library in some other places and some other countries or some continents or so. Then it is ok for her.” When asked ‘What is the most important thing you can do as a librarian in Serbia?’ he answered,

To say something about your library to present some special results and so to the others. Maybe to not to only be on some conference but be among other librarians in the surroundings or in Europe or the rest of the world, in between those librarians in which you will be not the only librarian there, also you can not only

present your staff your results to present maybe in the other direction what will be the easiest and not so expensive way to improve some of the results.

Informant 6 spoke of the International Book Fairs where she and her colleagues represented Serbian publishing abroad,

The whole last year was dedicated to presenting Serbia in the International Book Fairs worldwide. So, we have all different kind of organizational activities related to these book fairs. These book fairs were worldwide, they were Beijing, they were in Frankfurt, Leipzig, Tehran, and the last one was in Moscow. We had our booth or our stand at these book fairs and I traveled to Beijing, Moscow, and Frankfurt. And some other colleagues traveled to other countries. That was also activity, that was also our job at these book fairs, to meet colleagues, to meet people, connect with them and connect these people with publishers in Serbia. We were like mediators between different parties and target groups.

***Re-inventing the library.*** Librarians noted a few difficulties in the challenging of re-envisioning the library, adopting new buildings types and moving the library forward. Informant 9 shared a new view of what the library building can be,

Of course, there is fourth thing and that is our idea of the library. Sometimes I see colleagues that cannot accept that libraries are not as they used to be, that are not only rooms with books with dust on it. They somehow do not want to accept the fact that libraries are gathering centers, meeting centers. Rooms actually developed to serve multiple purposes together and be like our research centers or cultural centers I believe boundaries between libraries and cultural centers and hubs should be minor, I mean even should be cancelled in a way. I admire

libraries who have several floors who have huge buildings, who have research center first floor and archives on second and open concept on 3rd, and 4th floor is only dedicated to events or organizations or something like that. I believe that our libraries are somewhere in the past you know. There are only several branches that are working, resembling the best role models.

Informant 10 offered a different, practical challenge to this reinvention, “For instance, we were looking for foldable chairs, since we don’t have enough chairs when we organize for bigger events.” So, they asked the director for these funds and were told, “Ok, we will see if we money for that by the end of the year.” Finally, as Informant 5 notes, not all libraries need to be reinvented, “As for my library, it is national library, and it is a bit traditional, so there have not been many big changes.”

**Librarian traits.** Librarians in Serbia exhibit a number of traits that were key in completing their jobs successfully, including creativity, flexibility, persistence, resourcefulness, social ability. They shared that librarians are seen as trusted individuals in society. Informant 7 shared the joy that she found in being creative as part of her work even when it came via challenges,

I didn’t have a chance from the beginning to do what I wanted to do, but later I liked it when I came to the children’s department. I enjoyed working with children and creating different programs for them. But they also give me the opportunity, to do some things I like such as cooperating with schools and children and young people and create dynamic programs and be creative. Of course, it can be more interesting for the audience if you have bigger budget or you can provide more creative program. Or more projects throughout the year.

But mostly we do the same thing maybe it is better, if you don't have a budget you have to be more creative.

Several informants mentioned situations in which they needed to be flexible. Informant 7 said,

Sometimes even we in the library have several events at the same time. We have 26 library branches in town. And you cannot predict what amount of interest will be in town not only in the library but also other institutions.

Informant 13 shared that during programming,

You never know the number of them sometimes we have, I don't know, 10 children and parents sometimes only 3 children and parents sometimes 15 so we never know. Even if they send us messages, we will come, they don't because it is free of charge. They don't feel like they really have to come.

Informant 6 shared ways in which librarians exhibit persistence,

I think for example ten years ago if they asked for some funding and it wasn't improved they would stop with developing a project or more creative ideas. I think now they are not stopping and they are developing and creating small projects in their libraries I think they are changing.

Informant 9 shared that librarians also need to be resourceful,

Those are all prejudices and the old libraries and the strict librarians from childhood with the narrowed face and strict voice telling them what to do and where to leave the book. That is the prejudices from 20 years ago but libraries are not that anymore, really. They are open for recommendations and chatting. And are really resourceful and which is the most important to be resourceful.

Informant 7 shared that social ability is a skill that librarians need that she didn't expect,

I don't know, there were also some things I didn't expect when I graduated from the faculty. Many of my colleagues wanted to work on television because they liked to be exposed to and to communicate with other people and I was avoiding these kind of jobs. The library was good idea, I was thinking here I wouldn't have that but maybe I made a mistake, because I had it a lot. I still have it and that is maybe the part of the job I don't like.

Informant 6 shared that librarians are seen as trusted individuals in society,

I think that people trust librarians and that is one of the things that we as librarians should take advantage of in the most positive way and that has to do with the traditional education. Because people in Serbia were, how to say, raised, not the right words are coming to my mind, but in school you learn that you have trust your teacher therefore you trust librarians because they are a type of teacher and you have the first contact when you come to school with your teacher and librarian. There is some kind of source of knowledge. Serbian people are raised in that way to trust authorities and that is why they trust librarians.

### **Serbian Librarianship**

Several informants shared information about Serbian Librarianship as a whole or how it compared to other countries. Informant 2 said, "We have round 3,500 librarians in Serbia so we have a librarian society. So, it is not so often to be a librarian." Informant 3 shared they learn about librarianship globally through the Internet,

Through the Internet we can also find out everything that is new in librarianship, we follow the sites of the Serbian Library Society, IFLA, etc. Of course, we use



Internet to communicate with librarians all around the world, we can compare our work with theirs...

When talking about Serbian librarianship versus other countries, Informant 2 said,

They are all pretty much the same, maybe, 80% the same, but those 10-20% because they are aware of other librarians and other moments in history, in science and technology nowadays and so they are trying to bring something new in their experience, they are different in their jobs or their libraries.

Informant 11 agreed,

I can talk on the countries that I have seen. I have been to Croatia, Slovenia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Czech Republic, and Austria. I cannot say that they are very much different maybe because most of these countries come from Austro-Hungarian Empire. Maybe we have some tradition from that. I cannot see the only difference is the amount of funding that institutions there have. The other things are pretty much the same. In November I will be in Canada. I will see what is the difference between [them] and us. What can we learn? There is not much difference in this part of Europe.

Informant 6 agreed that the regional countries around Serbia were very similar,

I think is very similar and especially when it comes to funding I think that all librarians have similar problems. For example, it was in May of last year, we had this IFLA workshop last year and we had librarians from Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Bulgaria, and Romania. So, all the librarians from the region. There was some research that was conducted in all these countries and when we could compare the results we could see that anything that is applicable to one country is

comparable to the whole region so we found challenges are just the same. There is one that I just remembered.

Informant 4 said,

When it is about every day librarian job like, like cataloguization, acquisition work with users. Well actually my experience and the experience of most of my colleagues from special collections departments we all have similar problems we all have similar situations. And when it is about librarianship in Serbia, on that level, I can say that Serbia is in just a regular level of development of librarianship in Europe.

**Status of the library in Serbia.** Even amongst competition from the Internet most informants shared a number of ways in which the status of librarians in Serbia is strong and developing. Informant 11 shared that

Libraries have a special role and three or four laws that are building librarian activities. They have the role of the culture, which is our common law that we are working about it. We have law about bibliotecs, library and information activities, they have law about all the rare books. They have the law about first issue that means if you researching a book you have to send 5 copies to the library that is a way to preserve the books.

Informant 9 was less certain about the status of librarians in Serbia, saying,

I believe our status is not too popular, there are people who are feeling sorry for you. Or you are working in the library, ahh-- that is nice -- you are surrounded with the books. I believe we are not too popular. On the other hand, I am happy to work at the American Corner so I can demolish all those prejudices and I really

feel that I can do a lot. Or in some European cities where reading and researching is kind of retro, you know, something that was old and is now back on table. It is modern again.

Informant 7 shared about the challenges that come with navigated in a world with changing and adapting technology and access to information,

In that way you cannot develop librarianship you can just keep the status quo and that is not good nowadays when you are fighting technology and prestige, which is most important, computers or books. We have to be strong enough to explain that we are inevitable but in connection with books and computers. Traditional librarianship in connection with new technologies is the winning combination.

We are still fighting with these kinds of things. We have to have very trained librarians to do something which is more important, who can fight for librarianship and survive.

Informant 8 agreed,

So even in such considerations of Serbia and libraries are very important role and community and academic world and not stay apart from social changes. They are the center of changes. Both domestic and foreign. They are multifunctional institutions and very dynamic.

**Hiring freeze.** Several librarians spoke about the library difficulties relating to the hiring freeze for librarians in Serbia. The hiring freeze resulted from a law that regulates employment in state service and is a challenge for Serbian librarians, but also for all employees in state institutions in Serbia (A. Vraneš, personal communication, April 14, 2020). Informant 4 said,

We have a problem in Serbia because librarians cannot employ new people they just cannot give them some contracts for a few months not more than 2 years. So, the libraries are losing them. This is a very big problem. Our political situation is very bad for the culture in general and not just for the libraries because some political stakeholders because the different political options are often sending us people to work in library who are absolutely not interested in learning about libraries and we have to work with those people and those young people who would like to learn and make plans we cannot make contracts with them. This is actually for the last 5 years for sure maybe 7 years. It is a very big problem. I got a contract to work at a <National> library in Serbia in 2012 and with a permanent condition since then in our department we didn't get anyone with the same conditions we had some volunteers they were staying for a year or two and they worked with us a lot and they stayed a lot and then we could not offer them anymore. This is a problem in library and culture. The best people in libraries want to make some improvement faster. And so, they are going to other countries, Western Europe or East so people are leaving and we are not in the position to employ some new librarians. This is I think the biggest problem today and since 2012.

Informant 10 shared that having connections often equal stronger job prospects while library and information science graduates are challenged with finding librarian positions. These problems with the hiring freeze lead librarians to complete volunteer work or short-term contracts that only sometimes lead to full time positions. Informant 2, 6, 10, and 12 started in the library on volunteer positions, Informant 2 said,

Well, firstly I was volunteer, as I was a volunteer I worked half a year, sorry, one year and a half, 16 months. I was volunteering in lending department of the biggest public library in the country. After that I learned what is my intention to be, to learn to study. Is it OK to be in library or some other things.

Informant 10 shared,

Lots of students are volunteering at the national library and the university library and because they can get some experience there. Afterwards those institutions offer them to pay the state exam that each librarian is required to pass within three years period of working in the library. After volunteering at the corner, I was offered the position.

**Job fulfillment.** At the end of my interviews I asked each informant if there was something they wanted to share about Serbian librarianship, something that I had not asked them that they wanted me to know. In many cases informants most wanted to share the fulfillment they felt with doing their job and doing it well. Informant 8 shared, “Big picture I am not librarian by education, but since I was a kid I loved books. I love my job. I am dedicated to that profession and improve every library I work in and I believe it can be done.” Informant 5 wanted me to know that even with challenges, “Being a librarian has its beauty.” Informant 9 shared, “For now, I don't know what the future will bring, but I feel happy and fulfilled with this job. I have a lot to work on and yet to learn, but I clearly see my personal path, my personal development in the past 6 years.”

## Chapter 5: Discussion and Conclusions

The purpose of this study is exploratory as it seeks to determine how Serbian librarians self-report their involvement in the global network society as defined by Castells and how they report this interaction as influencing their view of Serbian professional librarianship. I used a case study approach and semi-structured interviews to gather data via Skype and email between January through May 2019. Informants in the semi-structured interviews came from libraries in Belgrade and Novi Sad. Many of the informants I had met personally through previous travel in Serbia, other librarians were recommended through personal and professional contacts.

The central question driving this study was: how do Serbian librarians self-report their involvement within the global network society and the impact this has on their practice of librarianship? This question was considered through the theoretical framework of Castells' network society theory as it uncovered interactions between the formation of identity in a highly networked world. While Serbian authors Stokić Simončić and Vučković (2014) wrote, that Serbian librarianship is challenged to define itself during this "turbulent technological and social change" (p.285), this study offers one suggestion that the local context and a global network help Serbian librarians to define professional librarianship in their daily work both in a Serbian context and a global one. The sub questions were:

1. How do Serbian librarians define their roles and professional goals as librarians?
2. How do they describe their interactions with the global network society?
3. What spheres of influence do Serbian librarians report as important in defining their professional identity?
4. What effects do they report on their professional identity by their involvement in global networks?

5. What can the library profession learn about a global network society from Serbian librarians?

The previous chapter presented the information that was gathered during these interviews. This chapter will discuss the informants for this study and the role they played in the results and the role of the researcher. In addition, this chapter will show how my interpretation of the interview data suggests an answer to the central research question and sub questions to provide an overarching picture of Serbian librarianship. I will discuss the limitations of the study. Finally, I will conclude with suggestions for future research.

### **Central Question**

Serbian librarians on the whole report many ways in which they are involved in a global network society. They shared that they communicate via direct emails, chatting, through in-person meetings, the Internet, via listservs, mail, phone, posters, research publications, magazines, traditional media, online video chatting and other virtual meetings, and social media. Specifically, they directly mentioned social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter both to follow individuals and groups and by using the messaging features. They use online platforms that are more restricted in nature as well, such as paid learning platforms and proprietary software. This communication is facilitated by formal and informal groups, international commissions, professional associations, and person to person shared relationships. Serbian librarians interact with individuals, including individuals within a specific group, with stakeholders, users, supervisors, colleagues, both within and outside their department, with personal connections, people online, and those that they meet via conferences. Their purpose in communication is to ask and answer questions, commiserate, advertise programs and program

successes, solve problems, and collaborate. The individuals and groups they communicated with were local, regional, or global.

During these interactions they report collaborating with archives, colleagues, institutes of culture, embassies, government, museums, other libraries, and other branches, publishing houses, tourism organizations, schools, and educational centers, authors, local experts, local history societies, and universities. These collaborations occur with individuals and institutions that are local, regional, and international. Some of the collaboration is initiated person to person, occasionally it is institutionally organized such as through coordinated acquisition or union catalogs, or sponsored programs hosted by professional organizations. Other types of collaboration occur as a result of conferences, such as official publications. The impact of this individual communication and collaboration is profound and allows librarians to reflect on their positions and libraries, plan for the events and activities, and create visions of the future. Their collaborations were almost universally defined as professional activities that provided training for librarians or coordinated work that increased access or provided diverse services for patrons. Informants shared their sense of identity through their understanding of librarianship through professional practice as Hicks (2014) noted, “By focusing on how librarians themselves construct librarianship, and how this construction shapes their interactions with patrons, their local community, other professions, and society at large” (p. 252).

Serbian librarians rely both on personal networks and online ones, following Castells (2010b) claims that,

While networks are an old form of organization in the human experience, digital networking technologies, characteristic of the Information Age, powered social and organizational networks in ways that allowed their endless expansion and



reconfiguration overcoming the traditional limitations of networking forms of organization to manage complexity beyond a certain size network (p.xviii).

Their networks span both their local connections and their global ones, again suggested by Castells (2010a), “The network society is based on the systemic disjunction between the local and the global for most individuals and social groups” (p.11).

### **Sub Question 1: How do Serbian librarians define their roles and professional goals as librarians?**

Informants suggested several ways in which Serbian librarians may define their roles and professional goals. They indicated the importance of education, both formal, through university or formal conferences and programming, or informal educational experiences. In some cases, they identified that their specific library or librarian role helped define their goals. In other cases, informants participated in formal and informal collaborations that occurred with both local and international contacts. Many informants participated in programs of formal and informal mentorship either as mentors or mentees. Finally, government suggestions and mandates informed other informants of initiatives and changes they needed to make in their own programs.

Education plays a large part in how many librarians define their roles, goals, and what they experience as the core values of librarianship. Education for librarians in Serbia is conducted at the Faculty of Philology at the University of Belgrade and through the Faculty of Education at the University of Novi Sad at Sombor. Many informants noted that the education system for librarians is dynamic and changing. Most recently the degree has been remastered in order to fulfill the Bologna criteria, which provides a European perspective for the field of librarianship as a whole. However, not all practicing librarians have been trained through the university system. Several informants noted with concern the number of librarians working in professional roles without training in library science specifically. The exam system offers an

alternative route for librarianship in Serbia. Several individuals who did not complete the traditional university system report having completed either a volunteer period or short-term employment period within a library before obtaining a full contract. In many cases, they shared that their complementary backgrounds have offered them a unique perspective on literature, language, management, or history that helps them complete tasks in their librarian role.

Informants also shared that professional conferences serve to extend their educational backgrounds. Several informants shared how educational opportunities through conferences or meetings help them stay ahead in their job and learn about new trends. A few informants shared that they were limited in the number of conferences they could attend due to library funding or the inability to step away from their position for that period of time.

**Types of libraries.** In many cases, librarians defined their professional roles and goals based on types of libraries that they worked in and the role for which they were hired, such as a children's librarian, catalog, reference desk, etc. Their professional roles helped define their core practice. As noted by Hicks (2014), "Practices are more than just activities performed by professionals; their basis in the profession's knowledge provide meaning and intention that guide the activities and identities of practitioners" (p. 252). This local focus is important and relates to Hansson's (2010) view of the library as primarily a local organization,

It is important to look at libraries as primarily local organisations. They are tied together by the international profession of librarianship and work on a global market of information provision services. Furthermore, they collaborate widely at both national and international levels, when it comes to, for instance collection development, and bibliographic control. Still, the core of public library is the local

community and every change in its role should primarily be discussed in relation to what it does--and means--to the local community it is set to serve (p.41).

**Collaborations.** Collaboration with other institutions helps librarians define professional goals particularly in the realms of acquisition, cataloging, and programming. Collaborations may be long-term, essential features of the library system, while others existed as short-term additions to programming. Collaborations took place at the local, regional, and international levels. Finally, collaborations may be with other libraries and librarians, but informants also mentioned collaborations with archives, educational institutions, museums, institutes of culture, embassies, the government, publishing houses, tourism organizations, authors, local experts, and local history societies.

Some collaborations were exclusively library or archive related such as the acquisition program KoBSON, the coordinated acquisition and website portal for research used by many academic libraries, COBISS, the shared cataloging program, and Icarus, the shared European archive. COBISS was a long-term collaboration an essential feature of the library system that was in stasis during the Yugoslavian war but re-established in the years afterward. Other coordinated programs such as Icarus and the European Time Machine project offer the opportunity for Serbia to participate in a shared European archive. While collaboration for this final program has not been formalized at this time, meetings and networking have begun to lay the groundwork for Serbian integration into these programs.

The Serbian KoBSON network is a local collaboration that provides web portal access to academic articles for Serbian university faculty. The COBISS network is regional, among members of the former Yugoslavia. Collaborative archives such as Icarus and the Time Machine project are examples of European collaboration that may provide Serbia a chance to be a part of

an international network. Serbia also benefits through participation in such programs as EIFL, which works with librarians around the world to negotiate with publishers and OCLC which provides the web portal access for the KoBSON network.

Several informants mentioned the existence of local and sometimes regional collaborations through programming. Informants mentioned collaborating with local organizations to promote their library program to a wider audience. They also utilized local experts such as authors or individuals working in universities, museums, or institutes of culture to provide programming and classes for library patrons, both young and old. In other cases, such as with the American Corners, technology and technology support were provided by the US Embassy so that libraries could provide certain types of services and programming. In many cases, librarians were not only provided access to resources through shared collaborative acquisitions but also training and technology support to patrons using these services. One aspect of professional identity found by Hicks (2014) was the change repertoire which highlighted the role librarians play in using and training patrons on enhanced technology services. Training and supporting patrons using technology services was something mentioned by informants working at many different types of locations, academic to public, and serving a wide variety of patrons, from young to old.

**Mentors and supervisors.** Several informants shared how informal and formal mentoring or supervisory relationships between libraries and librarians helped define library roles and provide assistance. In some cases, mentorships were within one library system or branch, such as when mentors worked with volunteers or librarians new to the career. In other cases, the mentorship was formal, such as a supervisory librarian that worked with the school libraries and provided suggestions regarding the location of books, acquisitions, and other details

regarding the collection. In many cases, mentors seemed to play an important role as encouraging guides in the library field.

**Government mandates or suggestions.** In a few cases librarians defined roles and goals based on requirements or suggestions they received from the government. As noted in Chapter 2, Budd identified that libraries are not the power of the state, but an agency of it and therefore subject to both direct and indirect mandates and suggestions. Castells (2010b) notes the connection as well finding, “continuity between civil society’s institutions and the power apparatuses of the state, organized around a similar identity” (p.9). However, Castells is careful to note that this does not mean civil service workers approach their positions with one mind, rather “civil society, is a set of organizations and institutions, as well as a series of structured and organized social actors, which reproduce, albeit sometimes in a conflictive manner, the identity that rationalizes the sources of structural domination” (p.8). For a specific example of how librarians are mandated to certain types of work, Informant 2 noted the laws regarding librarianship require the care of old or rare books. Informant 11 noted how laws govern the acquisition of newly published Serbian books through the law of first issue. Other suggested activities offered conflict such as digitization. While certain government officials stated digitization as a goal, other Serbian laws require that certain materials are only to be accessed by certain individuals. Finally, while libraries may have discretion on how they spend their government funding, the ministry of culture holds some control of grant financing and identifies which programs that it may fund in a given year. This may either promote or discourage librarians who are working to complete desired programs or tasks.

**Sub Question 2: How do they describe their interactions with the global network society?**

Responses by informants suggested that Serbian librarians interact within a global network society in a variety of ways that are both casual and in-depth. Informants mentioned ways in which they used already established professional networks as a basis for much of their communication. Interactions were local, regional, and global. Informants also mentioned using a variety of technological tools to communicate with one another online.

**Hierarchy of communication.** Serbian librarians participate in a globalized society in a hierarchy of communication levels, by consuming information, communicating with various individuals and groups, and collaborating with others. In some cases, they communicate and consume information from local individuals and organizations such as the Serbian Library Association. In other cases, these communications are more regional or global such as the association of archivists of Vojvodina, IFLA, the International Catalogr's Association, the American Library Association, or ASEAN School librarians. While Castells (2010b) does not spend a lot of time talking about the levels of ways people communicate online, he suggests in, *The Rise of the Network Society*, that “multimedia appear to be supporting, even in their early stage, a social/cultural pattern characterized by the following features. First, widespread social and cultural differentiation, leading to the segmentation of the users/viewers/readers/listeners.” (p.402). In this way, he distinguishes between those who use the Internet to consume information and those who “take advantage of <its> interactive capacities” (p.402). Informants indicated that they viewed and read information online through reading magazines for librarians and following individuals and groups online. They communicated more interactively by researching programs, speaking with colleagues about the feasibility, sometimes via phone, other times via email, chat programs or Facebook messenger. Several informants mention the importance of having a healthy network that they can rely on. Other informants further emphasized the interactive

capacities of the Internet such as continued communication with individuals who sought to collaborate after an in-person conference in Belgrade.

**Communication via networks.** Serbian librarians interact in many different ways with a global society using many different technologies. Castells (2010b) suggests ways in which online communication and collaboration are undertaken, “self-generated in content, self-directed in emission, and self-selected in reception” (p.xxx). However, the emphasis on the self does not negate that many of these interactions are due to organizational networks that are already in place. Castells (2010b) outlines ways in which this ‘spirit of informationalism’ is organized (p.211). The features that make up this informationalism and facilitate communication are business networks; technological tools; global competition; the state; and the emergence and consolidation of the network enterprise. Castells offers a broad view of business networks, looking at any type of ‘cross-border networks resulting from strategic alliances between firms, and their ancillary support networks.’ It is not a long stretch to replace firms with the library and see the connections made between librarian professional organizations, EIFL, OCLC, and Icarus.

Technological tools include the many ways in which librarians were seen to use computers, the Internet and any number of communication platforms to facilitate information sharing. Global competition is noted by Castells (2010b), and primarily its focus is, “forcing redefinitions of products, processes, markets, and economic inputs, including capital and information” (p.212). This redefinition is a key feature of a move forward in librarianship and mentioned by key authors cited in this paper including Hansson (2010) and Stokić Simončić & Vučković, (2014). The state plays a role in Castells’ theory because of its influence on innovation and the expansion of the Internet. Many librarians noted that Internet expansion is not complete in Serbian libraries at this time. Finally, Castells’ (2010b) notes the “emergence

and consolidation of the network enterprise” (p.212) in which information technology recreates tasks that occurred physically with ones that now occur online, in many cases without resulting gain in efficiency. Hansson (2010) refers to this type of technology as Library 2.0 as just core library services in new clothing. While this study did not ask individuals specifically about task automation, efficiency or the like, several informants shared some features of things they do online that replicate previous technologies. For example, one participant mentioned that digital promotions, via email and social media have replaced, for her, print promotional materials in the newspaper. Other informants mentioned chat and email programs that have replaced other forms of communication. Electronic access to digital resources has also, largely replaced print journals for access to scientific resources. In this case, this type of program, available to Serbian professors on the Internet anywhere in Serbia via EZproxy, is an example of increased efficiency in the digital realm. Furthermore, this type of resource puts the library, itself, as a hub in the space of flows.

### **Sub Question 3: What spheres of influence do Serbian librarians report as important in defining their professional identity?**

Informants identified many spheres of influence that influenced them and helped them define their professional jobs. Spheres of influence included professional organizations, institutional relationships, role models, and online contacts. In some cases, these spheres operated on an in-person basis, and in other cases they were mostly online. Most informants did not just mention one or two groups, individuals, or role models, but multiple. Castells (2010b) suggested how individuals online were influenced by, “multiple memberships in partial communities” (p.289). As mentioned in the literature, Hicks (2014) also identified ways in which professional identity is determined in librarians including, service, change, professionalism,



library-as-place, insider/outsider. In a few interviews, informants also indicated they served in an influential capacity to other librarians.

**Professional organizations.** Serbians reported involvement with several professional organizations some library specific and others less so. Some of the organizations mentioned included the Serbian Library Association, IFLA, the International Cartographer's Association, Icarus, the European Association of Archivists, and the Society of Archivists of Serbia. Some of these organizations are local, some regional, and others are international in scope. Informants indicated a varying degree of relationship with these professional organizations. In some cases, they were merely a part of the group and followed activities online or through listservs or social media. In other cases, they were more active and attending or presented at conferences. In some cases, this was mentioned as a personal preference, in other cases, they were reliant on the directors of the library system to make decisions regarding who could or could not attend.

Professional organizations often set the stage for librarians, offering a sense of direction and increasing professionalism through continued education activities. In other cases, acknowledgment by professional organizations led to increased involvement in certain types of work. For example, when ALA recognized an exemplary library program in one Serbian library, other libraries sought to duplicate their success. In other cases, strong leadership via professional organizations was able to enact change that directly affected librarians' status and pay.

**Institutional relationships.** In some cases, librarians entered into positions in which their identity and role were integrated into well-established local, regional, and international institutional relationships with other libraries or groups for which they are expected to collaborate. For example, the libraries and individuals responsible for working with KoBSON, the coordinated acquisition and website portal for research, already must define their role by

completing tasks related to making these items available to users. Other highly coordinated collaborations include COBISS, the shared cataloging system. In other cases, supervisory libraries offered assistance, such as the Matica Srpska librarians who tour and make recommendations to regional school libraries. In many cases, librarians noted how these activities have been more ‘modernized,’ work activities have ‘intensified,’ and improvements are being made.

**Role models.** Role models, both local and via the international community help librarians identify ways in which they can define their roles and professional goals. Role models in this study encompass a wide range of informal library leaders who may not be professional or formal mentors, but whom librarians identify as someone they learn from and may seek to emulate. Librarians identified specific individuals that they considered to be role models. In other cases, they mentioned library professional organizations or institutions that were dynamic and well informed on new library trends. In some cases, these role models had served as mentors to informants in my study, but they were also named as role models to other informants. In other cases, these individuals were less well known on an individual basis but highly regarded within the field within both Serbia and globally. Other times they had no direct personal contact with these individuals they were just a person, organization, or institution that they followed online.

**Online contacts.** Informants suggested that they followed several individuals, libraries, and organizations online through a variety of different platforms, such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. In some cases, the individuals they followed were ones that they had met professionally, and in other cases, they were people they merely knew of through other individuals or groups. As one informant noted, many Serbian libraries have their own professional social media account or website that can be viewed by other librarians so that they

can stay informed about the programs of libraries within their area. Other informants mentioned following groups online. These groups may be professional organizations that exist also offline. In other cases, these groups merely consist of librarians with similar interests, who were not always Serbian in origin. Informants shared that they used these online contacts to learn more about different ways to practice librarianship and support users through enhanced services. The practice of supporting users is considered by Hicks (2014) to be part of the librarian's service interpretive role, one that is also emphasized as a core value from such organizations as ALA.

**Sub Question 4: What effects do they report on their professional identity by their involvement in global networks?**

As noted in Chapter 2, Castells suggests that roles in a network society are based on negotiation, "Roles...are defined by norms structured by institutions and organizations of society. Their relative weight in influencing people's behavior depends upon negotiations and arrangements between individuals and these institutions and organizations" (p.6-7). Informants in this study noted several different influences in how they determined their library role from influences including university education, library directors, laws on libraries, professional organizations, professional colleagues from Serbia and abroad, social media groups. Global networks suggest and enhance the identities of Serbian librarians. Stokić-Simončić & Vučković (2014) stated that the,

The problem of identity for Serbian librarianship in the period that has followed the upheavals of the early 1990s up to the present time has been distinguished by three interdependent characteristics: survival during the crisis of war and political sanctions; change during a time of revolution in information and communication

technology; and self-awareness with respect to status, social responsibility, and professionalism (p.287).

This study has found evidence of these characteristics. Serbian librarians interviewed for this study did not frequently mention the challenges of war or political sanctions, instead they mentioned many other challenges that they must overcome, such as economic challenges, adapting to new technologies, and providing services while positions remain unfilled due to the hiring freeze.

Castells suggests three ways in which identity building originates: legitimizing identity; resistance identity; and project identity. Statements made by informants suggest how Serbian librarians build their professional identity in each of these ways. This is not to say that all three types of Castells' identity building concepts are evident in all informants all the time or are relevant to all Serbian librarians.

Legitimizing identity is introduced by dominating institutions in society. First, we can consider the library a societal institution, with its history and specific role in culture and education. In addition, several informants shared ways in which libraries receive their legitimation in Serbia via the government and the specific laws governing the roles of libraries. Therefore, regardless of popularity and funding, they have very specific legitimacy in Serbian society. Notably, informants in national libraries and archives are those that both mentioned the role of the government and the more traditional role of the library. In addition to the government, international professional organizations such as IFLA legitimize the library's role within society. These organizations also offer Serbian librarians a platform for learning, enhancing their professionalism, and giving them opportunities to represent their country and their work abroad. Furthermore, librarians work on programs originating outside of their country,

such as the United Nations Agenda 2030 which enhances their legitimacy both within Serbia and abroad.

Resistance identity, as noted by Castell's is seen by those that are "building trenches of resistance and survival on basis of principles different from, or opposed to, those permeating the institutions of society" (p.8). When considering this identity, it is necessary to consider what institution of society librarians may be opposed to. For example, a resistance identity may be in resistance to the main institution of society, the government. In other cases, it may be resistance against specific cultural norms, such as the role of the library. Castells uses both government and cultural norms as examples of institutions within society from which people may rebel against.

Specifically, Serbian librarians indicated resistance in their statements that they need to fight for the library, to change library perceptions, and to convince stakeholders to continue funding. In several cases, informants noted that although the library field is changing and that librarians expressed self-awareness of this change, the public perceptions of the library field were out of date and only slowly changing. The concept of resistance is one that may not be specific to Serbian librarians, as Hansson (2010) notes, "The library sector is one of very low self-esteem nervously searching for a role in society," and that it "has come to question the traditional role of libraries in society and as a result of this, the institutional and professional identity of librarianship" (p.52).

Resistance identity can occur globally by both offering models of different ways of librarianship and different priorities and by modeling ways of adapting to technological change. In many ways, librarians must navigate local conditions and both local and international priorities. One example was the increase in digitization both in Serbia and internationally that put many library and archive materials on the web. Serbian archivists must navigate both the desire

for digitization and collaboration with European archives with the need to follow national laws concerning who is allowed to research in Serbian archives.

Serbian librarians also exhibit project identity that offers individuals a chance to “build a new identity that redefines their position in society” (Castells, 2010a, p.8). Global networks also suggest project identities, offering new ways for libraries to provide services to their local communities. While Castells uses the concept of project identity as one in which individuals navigate and make significant changes to cultural boundaries such as the role of women or the rights of LGBTQ people, other scholars have followed up Castells by identifying project identity within smaller, professional oriented projects (Lamb & Davidson, 2005). Children’s librarians in this study noted the increased use of digital tools and technologies had been used in recent years to enhance programming with children. Hansson (2010) speaks globally when discussing the need for librarians as an institution and the “professional identity of librarianship” (p.52) to change and modify according to social, economic, and technological change. Serbian librarians shared that programming was one area in which they were breaking out of the concept that libraries merely lend books, to the idea that libraries are a part of the educational opportunities available in a community. Informants also noted that technology, teaching technology, digital literacy and providing digital resources redefines and extends the library role.

**Sub Question 5: What can the library profession learn about a global network society from Serbian librarians?**

Castells’ network society (2010b) features five characteristics: information as a raw material, acted upon by technologies; the pervasiveness of new technologies; the systems logic or networking capabilities of new technologies; flexibility of information technology; and integrated technology systems. Informants shared several ways in which Serbian libraries and

librarians interact within this network society. First, they share information, which is increasingly not limited to the physical place of the library, but available online via databases, websites, and portals. Secondly, they are adapting to new technologies such as websites, social media, coding, and apps, to both promote their programs and to provide instruction in digital tools. Informants also noted that technology is becoming more common with their patrons. Third, they are actively working to enhance the networking capabilities of this information by integrating their databases and archives with other organizations and technologies, such as virtual reading rooms, collaborative archives, and internationally based website portals. In other cases, they are working to transform their networking power via personal connections, social media, and other online collaborations. Fourth, informants expressed flexibility in how they use information technology, noting that they have a variety of tech hardware and software that can help them in their daily work. Finally, they are integrating their technology tools to provide access. In some cases, they have been working on the re-integration of national programs such as COBISS, and in other cases, they are working to figure out how to make their programs and archives work within the strictures of other already established online archival tools.

**Space of place vs space of flows.** Castells' network society theory considers the transition from the space of place to the space of flows. While the space of place is very much linked to one area, the space of flows offers a chance for connections that are global, digital, and networked. Libraries offer both a space of place and a space of flows. Several informants noted that the Serbian libraries offered an important place for individuals to connect online and study. Furthermore, as one informant mentioned, librarian professional networks and conferences, such as the IFLA conference on UN Agenda 2030, help prioritize librarian roles and help librarians plan ways to support their patrons in a global world. Librarians in Serbia offer more than just a

place of Serbian literature, in many branches, academic libraries, and corners they offer technology connections, collaborations with outside organizations, virtual reading rooms and databases, and educational opportunities that prepare their patrons for a network society.

**Moving to a knowledge-based society.** As seen in Chapter 2, both Budd (2008) and Vraneš (2005) noted key features that transform an information society into a knowledge-based society such as cultural diversity, equal access to education, access to information, and freedom of expression. Other authors such as Sanchez Vanderkast (2013) highlighted the need for digitally literate and multi-literate individuals. Many informants shared ways in which they were transforming Serbia into a knowledge society within their libraries by providing educational opportunities, extensive web-based access to research for Serbian scholars, and increased cultural opportunities through connections with cultural institutions. In addition, the programming offered to individuals, both children and adults were often directly aligned with concepts of digital literacy, through such things as Project Digital Citizen, basic computer lessons, coding and apps, and directed trainings on how to access databases. Of course, several informants shared that not all libraries were able to offer technology trainings, Wi-Fi, or unlimited access to databases for their patrons. However, informants were clear that increasing amounts of these services were desirable and part of their understanding of professional librarian service.

**The changing role of libraries in a global network society.** Hansson (2010) notes that technological change is not the only development that impacts librarians and librarian identity: social, political, and economic developments are important as well. This emphasis does not discount Castells' theory, Castells identifies social, political, and economic changes and their impact on society, while emphasizing the technological innovations that drive those changes



(2010a, 2010b). Specifically, libraries are agencies of the state. Serbian libraries must fulfill government laws, goals, directives, and they owe their existence to government funding. In many cases, they have to justify projects to receive extra funding through grants. In many cases, informants noted that challenges in their libraries stemmed directly from government, such as lack of funding and the hiring freeze. However, they also noted the libraries have an acknowledged role as part of the Serbian culture in both preserving its past and moving it into the future.

### **Limits of the study**

This study was limited to 13 informants who were currently working in libraries within Serbia in a professional role. While these individuals have shared about their own professional identity we cannot assume that these perspectives are shared universally by all librarians in the country. In addition, the methods, emphasis, and selections I have made are my own and reflect my personal values and attitudes. This study was limited by a period of time and may reflect idiosyncrasies that occurred of both political or individual importance in January through May of 2019 in my own life or the lives of my informants. Limitations also occurred in the interviewee pool as some potential informants who were located in rural and small-town Serbia chose not to participate. Other potential informants may have chosen not to participate because of many reasons which may have included time limitations, disinterest, or lack of comfort in conversing in English. In addition, study informants who did chose to participate may not have always felt free to discuss aspects of their professional career or personal proclivities.

### **Informants**

Informants for this study were extremely well in touch with matters of librarianship and the global world. I was impressed by the knowledge they had about IFLA, the UN 2030 agenda,

international digital archives, and their role as Serbian librarians. In many cases, they shared how they found creative solutions to problems they saw within their library branches. While the informants for this study were purposively sampled to interview librarians from a variety of different positions, it is clear that I also interviewed a number of extremely gifted librarians. In many cases, they were also librarians at libraries that represented the more developed and well-funded libraries within the country. Several informants mentioned the challenges facing other librarians in their city or country such as lack of resources and lack of Internet. The perspective of librarians from these smaller branches would have provided a different view of how Serbian librarianship differs across the country.

Likewise, while librarians outside of these major metropolitan areas, such as rural librarians, were asked to interview, for various reasons they were unable to participate. Rural areas do not necessarily have the same needs as urban areas, and it would have been both interesting and informative to see if rural librarians had the same globalized focus and networks as librarians in Belgrade and Novi Sad. Some programs that I am aware of at this point suggest that rural librarians also have networks that connect them professionally outside of the city, but it would be good to study specifically. While some of my informants had grown up in smaller areas, their moves to the city and urban librarian position likely offers them a different perspective on the role of the librarian. Overall, 19 librarians were directly solicited to participate and 13 librarians completed interviews for this study.

### **Researcher's Role**

Background research for this study included two study trips taken in the fall of 2014 and the summer of 2018 by this researcher. I was in the country for a total of 4 weeks. I had met several of the informants before the study initiation and design and was also able to meet

informally before my proposal was approved. These trips were essential to my understanding of Serbia and Serbian librarians. I had the opportunity during those trips to meet with many other Serbians, take historical tours, and see libraries firsthand.

As a doctoral researcher I used background knowledge I had obtained through field research, library research to develop constructive interview questions to answer my research agenda. By following research procedures such as collecting research carefully, obtaining and saving video documents and transcribing these to the best of my ability, I was able to showcase informants' answers and organize their comments on librarian professional identity. The interviews are summarized below in answers to both my central question and sub questions.

### **Future research**

Many exciting areas of future research exist either to replicate this study, explore this topic with other librarians, or to further our critical understanding of the global network society. In a few cases, future research specifically hinges on expanding this study to areas in which I was unable to fully study due to the limited study length, and a limited number of participants, and the amount of time per interview. In other cases, future research could fill in other holes in library research such as looking at librarian professional identity in other contexts and situations, such as specific sub-sets of American librarians, rural librarians, and librarians in other countries, or library science students both before and after completing educational coursework. Finally, future research could consider the role of other theories and how librarians interact online, such as computer-mediated communication theories.

Future research may expand on the professional identity of Serbian librarians in a global world. This study provides some suggestions about how Serbian librarians interact in a global world, but it does not provide the answer or only answer on this topic. An expanded study may

include a larger number of Serbian librarians. Librarians could be identified in other locations in Serbia, such as smaller towns, or rural librarians. Other informants could include older Serbian librarians who went through the high school librarian program that no longer exists and librarians who have completed the degree within the past 1 or 2 years. Finally, teenagers and younger generations are very familiar with technology and the global world, but librarians often struggle to keep them utilizing library resources for both information access and reading for pleasure. Specific research could investigate steps libraries could take to encourage teens to continue reading and utilizing library services through programs focusing on global connections or cooperative programs.

In many cases, as I was writing up this dissertation, I realized areas in which I could have asked more detailed questions or probed more into certain topics in order to better answer my research questions. For example, in many cases my overarching questions about projects, collaborations, and daily work existed to provide me with background information on Serbian librarianship. However, in many cases, I thought, in hindsight, that my questions were not pointed enough to truly identify the goals and professional identities of my informants. While a librarian's professional activities may suggest a certain focus or global identity, they may provide only a snapshot of what the librarian's role at a particular time and place. For a future study, on Serbian librarians, or others, I may suggest future questions such as have you identified any specific goals for your position? How did education define your professional identity? Did any specific experiences lead you to make these professional choices? Does anyone, either a supervisor or colleague, or others, help you define professional goals for yourself or your library?

Many informants identified education as important to their identity as librarians. A future study could identify the changes in a librarian's professional identity as they progress through formal education. This type of study would provide both interesting and extremely useful information to all library science programs whether in Serbia or the United States or across the world.

Replicating this study among librarians in a different area of the world help identify the ways in which other librarians see themselves globally. This study may suggest how Serbian librarians see themselves globally, but that may be simply the product of their location in the world, their turbulent history, and the breakup of the Yugoslavian nation. Future research may consider different subsets of librarians, such as librarians from the United States, librarians from a smaller geographic region such as Kansas, or librarians in another country. Gaining a perspective on how librarians interact globally could inform future professional organizations and move the field forward.

Finally, while Castells' globalization theory offered one view and perspective on how librarians interact online, it is not the only theory to consider how individuals build community in an online context. Exploring other theories in computer-mediated communication could offer a different way to view librarians in an online space. While many of these theories are still in their infancy, communicating online is increasingly common for many people, not just librarians. Finding ways to study identity and community building in an online context will offer suggestions to the field of librarianship, but also general human scholarship.

## **Conclusion**

The global network society has created change in the areas of technology, politics, and economics around the world. These changes have influenced how institutions relate to each

other, how individuals relate to one another, and the way that people relate to institutions. For many people, access to information has changed dramatically. The network society has also changed the field of librarianship, suggesting different ways of managing information, different service models, and changes in the way individuals access services.

The librarian profession has not yet solved the answer to how to integrate the changes in professional identity resulting from this global networked society. However, the informants for this dissertation suggest ways in which Serbian librarians are already doing the work of incorporating changes in their own professional identity through networks, both in-person and online. These librarians integrate the information they learned from their professional education, their professional organizations, professional networks, and online. They negotiate the needs of their patrons, directives from directors, and initiatives from the government. They work through challenges related to lack of funding, a hiring freeze, and staying ahead of technology. While they are operating in this network society, they also have not abandoned the traditional values of librarian service, education, and preservation of the culture.

Professional organizations can learn from Serbian librarians how to harness the power of a globalized network. Informants shared ways in which they find and connect with individuals interested in similar topics in person and online to further their professional goals. Some informants noted that having strong leaders in the field of librarianship made it easier for practicing librarians to help direct their continued education and focus. Otherwise, they found it was often up to them to find those resources that would help them grow and learn.

The framework for this study was the radical structuralist paradigm. While this paradigm notes the challenge and opportunities presented by structural change, it does not negate an individual's personal response in facilitating the movement of information and technology.

Individuals chose their responses to structural change in terms of their identity as librarians. While all librarians exist in a field that is changing and developing, some informants and some traditional librarian positions have had less need for continued re-evaluation of their library identity. Also, some librarians have seen more changes in their position due a longer time in the field. In some cases, librarians continued relationships that were forged when their country was Yugoslavia.

Serbian librarians provide librarianship in a sea of change. Their country has undergone rapid changes in the past 30 years impacting their politics, economics, and technology. Through this study, we are given a snapshot of Serbian librarianship in a small time and place and how they see the network society as influencing their practice. While many Serbian librarians mentioned the importance of looking globally to continue to enhance their professional practice, it would be beneficial for us as well, to see how their model of librarianship, their extensive networks, and their professional identity could benefit our own practice in today's changing information world.

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Table 1.

## Interview Informants

	Gender		Education Librarianship Degree	Education Alternative Degree and Certification	Years in librarianship		
	male	female			0-5 years	6-14 years	15+ years
Informant # and date of interview							
1 1/18/19	x		Master's Degree in LIS		X  (10 years)		
2 2/23/19	x		Bachelor's and Master's in librarianship currently pursuing Ph.D. in LIS				X (20 years)
3 2/27/19 (email)		x		Foreign language and literature			X (20 years)
4 3/1/19		x	Master's degree in LIS		X  (9 years)		
5 3/1/19 (email)		x		Exam in librarianship			X  (16 years)
6		x		Foreign Language degree	X		

3/19/19					(5 years)		
7 3/23/19		x		Serbian language degree			X (19 years)
8 4/18/19		x	Completed Master's in LIS			x (8 years)	
9 4/23/19		x		Serbian languages and literature degree		X (6 years)	
10 4/26/19		x	Bachelor's degree, currently working towards a Master's degree in LIS			x (12 years)	
11 5/3/19	x			History Degree  Exam for archivist and Exam for Librarianship		X (10 years ago)	
12 5/16/19	x		Bachelor's and Master's degree in LIS			X (7 years ago)	
13 5/17/19		x		Classical Studies degree		X (14 years)	

Table 2.

## Interview Informants : A summary

	Gender		Education Librarianship Degree	Education Alternative Degree and Certification	Years in librarianship		
	male	female			0-5 years	6-14 years	15+ years
Totals	4	9	4 Master's Degree in Library and information science  1 working towards Master's Degree  1 working towards Ph.D.	7 having received alternative certification	1 participant	8 participants	4 participants

Table 3.

### Semi-Structured Interview Questions

#### **Introductory Question**

Tell me about being a librarian in Serbia.

#### **Professional Background**

Tell me about the process that led you to librarianship.

Tell me about the education you undertook that helps you work as a librarian.

If +5 years in the library

How have things changed since you first became a librarian?

#### **Serbia**

What makes librarianship in Serbia different or the same as other countries?

How does the government affect your practice as a librarian?

#### **Current role and responsibilities**

Tell me about your daily work.

What helps you make decisions about your daily tasks?

Please tell me about your professional goals.

Has anything about your job changed as you have worked here?

Does anything surprise you about your job?

#### **Professional network**

What opportunities do you have to learn new skills as a librarian?

Can you tell me about any professional conferences you have attended?

Where do you most often interact with librarian colleagues?

How do you learn about librarianship with other librarians?

Can you tell me how you learn about librarianship online?

What types of things do you and other librarians talk about with regard to librarianship?

### **Internet**

How does the Internet help your work as a librarian?

How does the Internet make your library work challenging?

Can you tell me how you use the Internet to learn about library trends or new library skills?

What are some of the big challenges for librarians in Serbia?

What are the big challenges for librarians today?

### **Professional Image**

What is the status of librarians in Serbia?

What is the most important thing you can do as a librarian in Serbia?

### **Conclusion**

Is there anything else I should know about librarianship in Serbia? Or

Is there anything I didn't ask you about Serbian librarianship that you think I should know?

Table 4.

Codes organized by theme

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Collaboration	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Archives (1)</li> <li>• Collaboration through professional conferences in Serbia (4)</li> <li>• Conferences outside of Serbia (regional) (5)</li> <li>• Coordinated acquisition (4)</li> <li>• Embassy (2)</li> <li>• Government (4)</li> <li>• Institutes of culture (4)</li> <li>• International collaboration (5)</li> <li>• International collaborative cataloging (4)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local collaboration (2)</li> <li>• Local experts (1)</li> <li>• Local history societies (1)</li> <li>• Museums (1)</li> <li>• Other libraries (2)</li> <li>• Publishing houses (1)</li> <li>• Regional collaboration (2)</li> <li>• Schools (5)</li> <li>• Tourism organizations (1)</li> <li>• Types of libraries (6)</li> <li>• Union catalog (1)</li> <li>• Universities (2)</li> </ul>

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Communication	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Colleagues (3)</li> <li>• Colleagues outside of the department (2)</li> <li>• Connections (1)</li> <li>• Continued relationship after person to person conference (3)</li> <li>• Direct emails (6)</li> <li>• In person meetings (2)</li> <li>• International commissions, groups (2)</li> <li>• Internet (3)</li> <li>• Listserv (4)</li> <li>• Mail (1)</li> <li>• Magazines (1)</li> <li>• News Media (2)</li> <li>• Online video chatting (1)</li> <li>• Phone (2)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Posters (2)</li> <li>• Publications (1)</li> <li>• Promotion of Programs (2)</li> <li>• Regional (1)</li> <li>• Restricted online platforms (1)</li> <li>• Social media (4)</li> <li>• Social media – Facebook (4)</li> <li>• Social media – Twitter (1)</li> <li>• Stakeholders (4)</li> <li>• Websites (3)</li> <li>• Websites - virtual meetings (1)</li> </ul>

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 Conferences
 

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conference proceedings (1)</li> <li>• Local conference (6)</li> <li>• Not having the desire to attend conferences (2)</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Opportunity to travel (1)</li> <li>• Regional conference (2)</li> <li>• Regional conference - IFLA affiliate (2)</li> </ul> |
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 Education
 

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|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bologna criteria (2)</li> <li>• Certificate for applying for grants (1)</li> <li>• Continued personal professional development (7)</li> <li>• Continued professional development (teaching) (2)</li> <li>• Coursework (6)</li> <li>• Exams (6)</li> <li>• Degree or certification (4)</li> <li>• Degree or certification – initial (7)</li> <li>• Degree or certification – secondary degree (4)</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Degree or certification – Ph.D. (1)</li> <li>• Highschool certification (4)</li> <li>• History of the program (1)</li> <li>• Learning from more senior colleagues (1)</li> <li>• Learning from younger colleagues (1)</li> <li>• Mentoring (2)</li> <li>• Previous background (4)</li> <li>• University - Faculty of Philology (1)</li> <li>• Routes to librarianship (1)</li> </ul> |
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 Library
 

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Research (1)</li> <li>• Role models – libraries around the world (3)</li> <li>• Space (1)</li> <li>• Space – archive (2)</li> <li>• Space – open concept (2)</li> <li>• Space – reading room (7)</li> <li>• Technology (6)</li> <li>• Types of libraries (4)</li> <li>• Types of libraries – academic (1)</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Types of libraries – American corner (1)</li> <li>• Types of libraries – departments in libraries (3)</li> <li>• Types of libraries – national libraries (2)</li> <li>• Types of libraries – special collection department (1)</li> </ul> |
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## Library Difficulties

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Better background (3)</li> <li>• Buildings and facilities (4)</li> <li>• Library closings (3)</li> <li>• Communication with stakeholders (advocacy) (1)</li> <li>• Continued education (3)</li> <li>• Government influence (1)</li> <li>• Hiring freeze (3)</li> <li>• Inability to attend conferences (2)</li> <li>• Lack of patrons (2)</li> <li>• Money (5)</li> <li>• Money – basic funding (2)</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Money – grants (3)</li> <li>• New Building Types (4)</li> <li>• Politics (2)</li> <li>• Re-envisioning the library (1)</li> <li>• Salary (1)</li> <li>• Status of the library (2)</li> <li>• Technology (3)</li> <li>• Technology – Internet (1)</li> <li>• Time (1)</li> <li>• Too few employees (1)</li> <li>• War (2)</li> </ul> |
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## Librarian

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|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Global connections (3)</li> <li>• Personal background (1)</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Professional background (3)</li> </ul> |
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## Librarian Roles

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Acquisitions (4)</li> <li>• Advocacy (2)</li> <li>• Based on type of library (1)</li> <li>• Budget (1)</li> <li>• Budget – budget proposals (1)</li> <li>• Budget – creative use of the budget (1)</li> <li>• Budget – grant writing (3)</li> <li>• Budget – management (2)</li> <li>• Book care (1)</li> <li>• Building maintenance (1)</li> <li>• Cataloging (3)</li> <li>• Collaboration – with colleagues (1)</li> <li>• Collaboration – with cultural centers (1)</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collaboration – with educational centers (4)</li> <li>• Collaboration – with supervisors (2)</li> <li>• Communicate (1)</li> <li>• Communicate – with supervisors (2)</li> <li>• Communicate –with stakeholders (1)</li> <li>• Communicate -via email (1)</li> <li>• Communicate – via Facebook messenger (1)</li> <li>• Communicate – via social media accounts (1)</li> <li>• Computer / Internet instruction (2)</li> </ul> |
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- Computer / Internet instruction – the basics (1)
- Computer / Internet instruction - information via the Internet (1)
- Computer / Internet instruction - Internet Research (3)
- Decision making (3)
- Digitization (7)
- Exhibitions (1)
- Following laws (1)
- Helping profession (1)
- Helping profession – trusted individuals (1)
- Inventory (1)
- Job (1)
- Job autonomy (2)
- Language learning (2)
- Leadership (1)
- Leadership -vision for the future (1)
- Leadership – changing vision in librarian role (4)
- Lending (1)
- Manage space (1)
- Manager (3)
- Organizing conferences (1)
- Presenting (2)
- Presenting – bringing back information from conferences to colleagues (1)
- Professional development (3)
- Professional development – conferences (2)
- Professional development – follow individuals / organizations online (3)
- Professional development – look to role models (2)
- Professional development -online professional development (1)
- Professional development – providing professional development (1)
- Programming (7)
- Programming -author events (1)
- Programming – guest speaker events (1)
- Programming – international programming (1)
- Technology (1)
- Reader’s Advisory (1)
- Reports (1)
- Reports – narrative (1)
- Reports – statistical (1)
- Representing Serbia abroad (1)
- Representing Serbia abroad – International Book Fairs (1)
- Special Collections (1)
- Traits (1)
- Traits – Creativity (1)
- Traits – Flexibility (1)
- Traits – resourcefulness (1)
- Traits – social ability (1)
- Translation (1)
- User Groups (7)
- User Groups – adults (3)
- User Groups – children (2)
- User Groups – difficult patrons (1)
- User Groups – professors (3)
- User Groups – researchers (2)
- User Groups – Students (3)
- User Groups – Talkative Patrons (1)
- User Groups – young patrons (1)
- Weeding (1)
- Volunteer / Internship / Short Term Employment (5)

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- Competition from the Internet (2)
  - Competition from the Internet – outdated view of library work / role (2)
  - Versus other professions (1)
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### Professional Organizations

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- IFLA (12)
  - Other (2)
  - Serbian Library Association (8)
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### Serbian Librarianship

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- Changing face of librarianship
- Job Fulfillment (4)
- Promote education and reading (2)
- Special Programs (1)

Table 5.

Illustrative Quotations by theme.

Theme	Responses	Sample Illustration of Response Items
Collaboration	58	<p>“We were one country once, at one time a republic, now we are six other countries, six different states and there was a connection between us because we had one type of acquisitions one type of materials.”</p> <p>“The old generations the generations before us, the librarians before us keep those connections and as they kept now we are doing those connections.”</p> <p>“I cooperate with the foreign institutes of culture in Serbia, the British consul, the Goethe institute, the French institute, the American corner, with some associations including the English-language teachers association and the German language teacher’s association, then with schools, primary schools, secondary schools. I also cooperate with the Center for learning and teaching languages at the faculty of philosophy and some embassies as well.”</p> <p>“It is a kind of a system for cataloguization for a few countries it is Slovenian program now and Montenegro and Bulgaria and Macedonia are in that system and most of the libraries in Serbia. Not all of them &lt;are involved&gt; but the National Library of Serbia is. It is shared catalog and it is based on the principle that one item, one book or some other library item is just one time catalogued and the other libraries can take that record for them and just to put some local marks that are important for them.”</p> <p>“We work with University of Belgrade. 8:44 I’m also trying to make some connection with engineering department in Belgrade and department of geoinformatics and faculty of geography and faculty of cartography and they are actually trying to do some researches and trying to make connections with them and offer them our collections on which they could work and maybe we will possibly make product good for us but also good for them. Maybe this is one of the possibilities actually, to work with students.”</p>

Theme	Responses	Sample Illustration of Response Items
Communication	57	<p data-bbox="634 270 1406 520">“If we have some challenges or difficulties we would probably go and ask our colleagues for an opinion through mailing lists. Serbian Librarian Association finally I think it was either the end of last year or the beginning of this year was recognized as representative association for our profession. That has something that has been tried to do to be done for the last 10 years.”</p> <p data-bbox="634 562 1406 741">“We made an agreement at the conference of different meetings and working groups, one part of those participants became actually our partners and colleagues that we are communicating and working with, not everyday work, but common topics.”</p> <p data-bbox="634 783 1406 1033">“In IFLA I am not part of some commission I am just following the work of commissions of rare book and special collections and the new professionals and it is a very fresh and new approach to librarianship I really enjoy it and I know most of the people in that group so we have very good communication. Also some other continual professional development and some other groups also.”</p> <p data-bbox="634 1075 1406 1253">“Through the internet we can also find out everything that is new in librarianship, we follow the sites of the Serbian Library Society, IFLA, etc. Of course, we use internet to communicate with librarians all around the world, we can compare our work with theirs...”</p> <p data-bbox="634 1295 1406 1724">“We have listservs or something like that--our national society of librarians has that list. If you are a member and you want to intercross to several members the if you want to send something to Invitation or something. Otherwise, it might be difficult to found out how to find anything without that list. When you work and live and in some smaller town, and work in a team of maybe two or three people, one in the morning, the other in the afternoon, when you have only a few hours to prepare for when you are leaving home, there is not so many ways to possibly find information, but to be on conference, but if you work in larger organization you can even talk to someone.”</p>

Theme	Responses	Sample Illustration of Response Items
Education	55	<p data-bbox="610 270 1414 411">“For instance according to our law they need to have candidates who have degree in library and information science. This master’s degree is really important I think that is very important for us as a society and as professionals.”</p> <p data-bbox="610 453 1414 667">“In the library and information science program we had three type of studies. One type is basic philology and languages. The second type is computers and programming and things related to librarianship. The third thing is we had like a common program for let’s say humanities background, so like psychology, philosophy and those kind of subjects.”</p> <p data-bbox="610 709 1406 957">“In Serbia, every librarian is supposed to pass the professional exam, after first year of work. We have 6 exams and one written work. Those 6 exams were/are: System of state administration and law on the library and information service; Fundamentals of Librarianship; Cataloging and classification; Informatics in librarianship; Bibliography; History of letters, books and libraries”</p> <p data-bbox="610 999 1414 1398">Actually, it was my professor of Serbian language and literature in my high school helped me to decide that I wanted to study librarianship. She told me that I think this might be interesting for you. I finished that technical school for high school a technical school for computers, an electrician for computers, I don’t know how to explain exactly in English. It is familiar with information and informatics and computers. So she said to me, I think that can be interesting for you, you are good in language, you read a lot, you finished school with informatics and computers, it can be good challenge for you and that can be very interesting for you.”</p> <p data-bbox="610 1440 1373 1545">“I don’t know what is the trend in your country and in other countries in the world. I think librarians should be specially trained and educated.”</p> <p data-bbox="610 1587 1406 1795">“The University of Belgrade and the entire educational system in Serbia went through changes in 2005 and 2006 when the universities accepted the Bologna declaration and changed the way how the syllabus is structured and how the complete University education is created and how the programs are created.”</p>

Theme	Responses	Sample Illustration of Response Items
Library	34	<p data-bbox="610 268 1409 369">“After that I got another position. It was a time when I actually became a librarian and I worked in nice and renovated, large library with internet.”</p> <p data-bbox="610 415 1396 630">“Well both, I was attending American Corner events even before I was American Corner staff. So I was going there as a patron you know, just to participate in different events, to see what they do. There always seemed like a cozy space where you can learn and study on your own where you can really spend some quality time.”</p> <p data-bbox="610 676 1414 1247">“Scandinavian libraries are leading libraries in the world. How to say in some spaces, in some services and after that we are not trying to copy them but to be as they are. So how to say, they have made more than 50--50% of their inhabitants as their users, maybe more 60% We are trying to have 20% of inhabitants of users. Maybe that is the reason. But they are in the Scandinavian lens, the German lens. They are better financed from taxes, whether the user, they use or not they are paid. But here in Balkans and in Southern Europe we are different, so yes we are different from other librarians, but we are trying to reach their experience. We have hard time two decades ago with some clashes here and war. So some parts of culture are destroyed and some institutions are brand new buildings so nowadays we have a new perspective about what a libraries can be in those societies that are divided by war. We are trying to.”</p> <p data-bbox="610 1293 1414 1465">“My library is a little bit specific, every small library is like that. I work in the library with books in foreign languages and not all the Serbian people speak in foreign languages or read in foreign languages so I don’t have as many visitors as we have in our regular Serbian libraries.”</p> <p data-bbox="610 1512 1393 1650">“I mean some of Serbian libraries and some of the smaller branches are quite dilapidated, they are poorly developed or the equipment is bad and some of the branches actually don’t have internet. Which is unbelievable in almost 2020.</p> <p data-bbox="610 1696 1414 1869">At one moment, three years ago, I was pretty active and I was in the library during the whole day. Because all the programs that I organize are in the opposite shift from the one in which I work. So I would go home, have lunch, and then go back to the library and again prepare everything alone.”</p>



Theme	Responses	Sample Illustration of Response Items
Library Difficulties	51	<p data-bbox="610 275 1385 411">“The biggest challenge globally--the biggest challenge for librarians today is to be fast enough. We have to be fast and competitive and this is the biggest challenge for librarians in Serbia but also the other part of the earth.”</p> <p data-bbox="610 453 1385 663">“When it comes to technology items we have actually a problem with that because we don't have enough people or enough financial resources to purchase all the things that we need actually. So we are trying to do our best. We have some improvements on the year's level. We always make some purchases.”</p> <p data-bbox="610 705 1385 852">“We had a couple of, let's say, closing of a couple of libraries in Serbia in a couple of towns. That's, I don't support that. Because according to our low area and every kind of city we need to organize a library.”</p> <p data-bbox="610 894 1385 1104">“Maybe in the last two years we experienced the trend of closing of libraries in small villages mostly. That is something we cannot allow that to happen. It is very important for village if that is the only institution of culture and education besides school. So I think if we don't have well trained and interested librarians that might happen very often in the future.”</p> <p data-bbox="610 1146 1385 1766">“The other challenge would be that librarians do not speak up and that they do not show their community or the public what they are doing and how they can help their community in all different aspects of life. So I think that librarians trend to be shy, but I think it is our responsibility as librarians to speak up and actually promote more what we can do and what we are actually doing and connect more. And in that way I think that they would have better arguments to advocate for their cause and. If they showed some stakeholders how for example, how many people they included in a certain project in different parts of Serbia they could get state funding for some I don't know some more creative or more important project they could conduct together. I think this kind of communication and presenting themselves in the public is one of the challenges still to librarians actually they should to learn how to advocate for libraries and for themselves as librarians. I think librarians are realizing that, but we should still work on that.”</p>

Theme	Responses	Sample Illustration of Response Items
Librarian	7	<p data-bbox="610 233 1382 411">“I started my work at the city library in the October of 2013. Actually, I was a fourth year student back then and I started something like a part time job. I have changed several municipalities here in Belgrade, three actually and 9 maybe even 10 libraries in them.”</p> <p data-bbox="610 453 1414 741">“At first I was a medical student, the American Corner library opened really close by and I was starting to borrow books from there, spend their time, and used the computers. Started helped the librarian that was working at that time, loved it. I one point I was stuck in my studies at medical school. And soon I had a lot of people kind of cheering for me to switch faculties. And I ended up switching faculties and never regretted it because librarianship is just another way to help out people.”</p> <p data-bbox="610 783 1406 926">“So before my bachelor’s degree I had no any actually important responsibilities. I mean I was checking out books, I was shelving them and I was giving some basic information to our patrons.”</p> <p data-bbox="610 968 1406 1110">“I became aware of all the different aspects of the library and all the different activities that can be done in the library. Some were related to my education. I started learning about all different aspects of being a librarian.”</p> <p data-bbox="610 1152 1406 1470">“Personally, my first love was let’s say libraries and I am from one smaller town in Serbia and library was say the only window into the world, the public library there. I started going and became a member when I was 7 or 8 years old. I don’t have that kind of romantic view in libraries because reading is not so important to me. Nowadays it is about activism say and programs in libraries. If you manage to get people and they are able to participate in some kind of program and one of them become a member that is success to me.”</p>

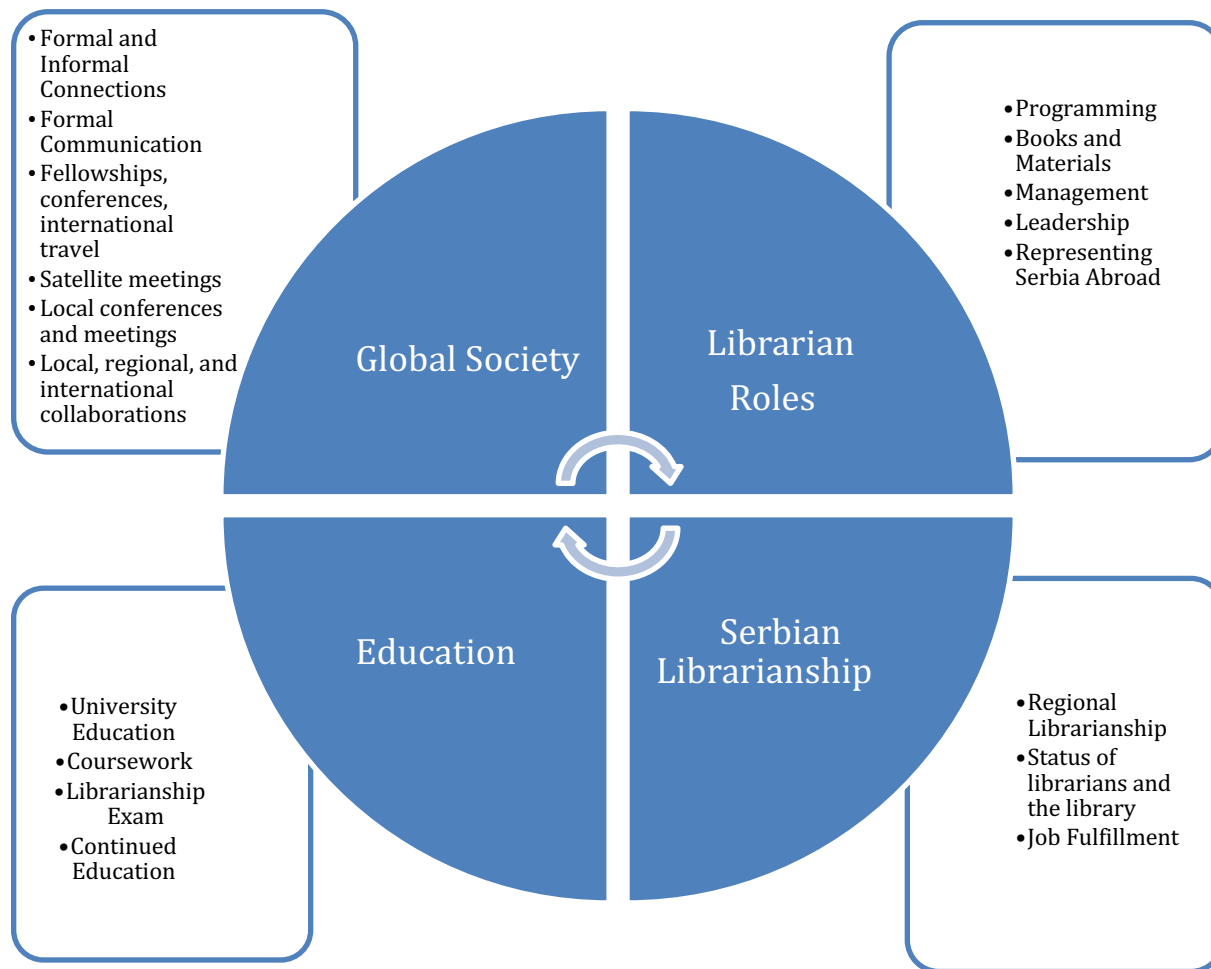
Theme	Responses	Sample Illustration of Response Items
Librarian Roles	126	<p data-bbox="610 268 1409 373">“One of our obligations is to choose what to buy, acquisition, like maybe a subscription for end of 2018 we are starting 2019 collect all the subscriptions for the future year.”</p> <p data-bbox="610 415 1409 562">“We are also doing acquisitions, we are researching for our for the items that we should purchase and we are making some lists and cooperating with the departments and colleagues that you were emailing about, acquisition catalogization, users”</p> <p data-bbox="610 604 1409 772">“I just started to put together budget proposals and acquisitions, but was not similar to the corner now, it was a much larger, much smaller scale, sorry. To put together delicate statistical and narrative reports, proposals, acquisitions.”</p> <p data-bbox="610 814 1409 877">“We applied for a grant from the Ministry of culture for that program, it was old stories and new designs.”</p> <p data-bbox="610 919 1409 1255">I am always thinking after so many years of professional experience, management in libraries is very important as much as other organizations. It helps us understand modern librarianship. The information connects people and knowledge and information and improve people’s life. Good management actually sets goals, improves the functioning of the entire library. It is challenge for the team and connect with associates in the communities, schools universities, approach them as they are your business partners.”</p> <p data-bbox="610 1297 1409 1444">“If I just searched on the Internet for fun or not for studies, then I don’t need the help of librarian. But if it is about education formal or informal information, it is better to do that with the help of librarians.”</p> <p data-bbox="610 1486 1409 1696">“I think the internet is one kind of competition, but it is a healthy competition. Because it gives librarians another role, and that is that they actually become filters for the information that can be found on the internet. I think librarians should help their users actually realize that is their role and in that way they can help them.”</p> <p data-bbox="610 1738 1409 1837">“A fourth type of work would be Digitization. My staff and I we choose what will be digitized, scanned, and that is the main work in a typical day.”</p>

Theme	Responses	Sample Illustration of Response Items
Librarian Status	5	<p data-bbox="610 268 1409 590">“I believe our status is not too popular, there are people who are feeling sorry for you. Or you are working in the library, ahh, that is nice you are surrounded with the books. I believe you are not too popular. On the other hand, I am happy to work at the American Corner so I can demolish all those prejudices and I really feel that I can do a lot. Or in some European cities where reading and researching is kind of retro, you know, something that was old and is now back on table. It is modern again.</p> <p data-bbox="610 636 1409 1178">“We are sitting 5 days ago at a birthday celebration and one is account executive at a startup company and one is also working in a startup company, another is freelancing in different branches, in different fields, and they find out oh, you are working in a library that is sweet. Those are all prejudices and the old libraries and the strict librarians from childhood with the narrowed face and strict voice telling them what to do and where to leave the book. That is the prejudices from 20 years ago but libraries are not that anymore, really. So, I believe our status is not as it should be. I believe we evaluated, sorry, there has been evaluation in our branch and our field. But it seems like sometimes no one notices it. Sometimes it is more normal, people who are 20 or 30 years old cannot understand well with people who are 60. Mostly, unfortunately.”</p> <p data-bbox="610 1224 1409 1690">“It is a big difference between the status of archivists and the libraries. Because the libraries have the special role that is meant to build the working of the libraries. They have three or four laws that are building librarian activities. They have the role of the culture, which is our common law that we are working about it. We have law about bibliotecs and it is not happy work. They are saying, Library and information activities, they have law about all the rare books. Because in our law everything that is older from 1867 that is going in the region of old and rare books, they are protected, they can’t be sold, they have to be preserved by the country. They have the law about first issue, that means if you researching a book you have to send 5 copies to the library that is a way to preserve the books.”</p>

Theme	Responses	Sample Illustration of Response Items
Professional Organizations	22	<p data-bbox="623 270 1414 594">“I was at a conference of the Belgrade / Serbian Library Association here and I am also a member and I have tried to follow things in my profession first of all I am subscribed to all the lists here so I get the emails and I tried to stay informed at what is going on in our profession on that say, national level. I also I just like to follow things. My boss is really happy about it to have that kind of employee who is interested in other things in librarianship, not just things at the faculty library.”</p> <p data-bbox="623 636 1393 741">“Through the internet we can also find out everything that is new in librarianship, we follow the sites of the Serbian Library Society, IFLA, etc.”</p> <p data-bbox="623 783 1398 1073">“In May of last year, we had this IFLA workshop last year and we had librarians from Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Bulgaria, and Romania. So all the librarians from the region. There was some research that was conducted in all these countries and when we could compare the results we could see that anything that is applicable to one country is comparable to the whole region so we found challenges are just the same. There is one that I just remembered.”</p> <p data-bbox="623 1115 1406 1251">“A guest speaker was Loida Garcia-Febo, from the American Library Association she visited us and she was guest speaker at our conference. Last year the Serbian Library Association was in Čačak. That is a city in West Serbia.”</p> <p data-bbox="623 1293 1406 1472">“For example, next year we will organizing for, LIBER, have you heard of it? It is the Association of European Academic research libraries. It will be hosted by this library and the faculty of philology, next year so we will also participate in the organization’s for this year’s conference.”</p> <p data-bbox="623 1514 1406 1801">“I have noticed that more and more people are becoming members of Serbian Library Association. I think there is an association, school librarians also have an association, I am not aware of any other professional development associations in Serbia. The majority of librarians are on their own. But we are promoting the membership in the Serbian librarianship because we want them to become aware of all the opportunities they have to connect with each other.”</p>

Theme	Responses	Sample Illustration of Response Items
Serbian Librarianship	7	<p data-bbox="618 275 1333 342">“We have round 3,500 librarians in Serbia so we have a librarian society. So it is not so often to be a librarian.”</p> <p data-bbox="618 384 1393 562">“We have 300 employees so it always someone is also on vacation or away on conference, when you have so many branches you must be very aware that it is hard to be just the old fashioned librarian you must learn something and to improve.”</p> <p data-bbox="618 604 1406 672">“It is great to be it is honor to be a librarian in Serbia, it is not much paid well paid. That is the other question.”</p> <p data-bbox="618 714 1414 1184">“The most important thing to do as a librarian in Serbia is to affect children to become fond of books and education. I think that is very important. Our library is very much engaged into working with children from the smaller age. Because we all think if we do our best in modeling small patrons they will stay with us later. If we don’t do that on time then it is hard to make library patrons of people which were not interested to visit in their young age. Mostly if children don’t like to read or don’t like the book they will never come to the library, especially today when they have information on internet. They might think the library is not necessary at all. If you educate them and connect with them from their youngest age then they will stay with us.”</p>

Table 6. Serbian Librarians' Communication Flow Between Individuals and Organizations



## Appendix A.

## Yugoslavia Dates from Medieval Period to Present

<b>Name of Country</b>	<b>Years</b>
Austro-Hungarian Empire Ottoman Empire	Pre-1830
Principality of Serbia	1830-1882
	Initial Recognition 1815 international recognition 1878
Kingdom of Serbia State of Slovenes, Croats, and Serbs	1882-1918 1918
Kingdom of Yugoslavia	1918-1941
also known as Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes	1918-1929
Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia (FPRY)	1945-1963
Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia	1963-1992
Federal Republic of Yugoslavia	1992-2003
Serbia and Montenegro	2003-2006



## Appendix B.

## Initial Email Invitation

Hello,

I am conducting research for my doctoral dissertation. It is my hope you will be willing to assist with this study or forward this message another professional librarian at your institution. Your participation will help me learn about how Serbian librarians conceive of their professional identity and what professional organizations or network connections help you make professional decisions.

I am requesting the opportunity to interview you via Skype or Zoom at a time of your convenience.

- The interview will take approximately 60 minutes.
- The interview ideally would be scheduled in the month of December or January.
- You may contact me via [aharri10@g.emporia.edu](mailto:aharri10@g.emporia.edu)

Cordially,

Amanda Harrison

Emporia State University Doctoral Student

## Appendix C.

## Email Response to Interested Interviewees

## Sending of Informed Consent

Hello,

Thank you for your interest in being an interview participant as a component of my doctoral dissertation. The interview will take approximately 60 minutes. Please respond to this message with available dates and times in the month of December or January.

I have attached an informed consent document to this message. Please read and sign the document, then return it to [aharri10@g.emporia.edu](mailto:aharri10@g.emporia.edu) no later than \_\_\_\_\_. Please retain a copy for your records. The informed consent document is in pdf format, which requires Adobe Reader. If you are unable to open the attached file, a current version of Adobe Reader can be downloaded at <http://www.adobe.com/reader/>.

Cordially,

Amanda Harrison  
Emporia State University Doctoral Student

## Appendix D.

### Informed Consent Document

The School of Library and Information Sciences at Emporia State University supports the practice of protection for human subjects participating in research and related activities. The following information is provided so that you can decide whether you wish to participate in the present study. You should be aware that even if you agree to participate, you are free to withdraw at any time, and that if you do withdraw from the study, you will not be subjected to reprimand or any other form of reproach. Likewise, if you choose not to participate, you will not be subjected to reprimand or any other form of reproach.

This study is being conducted by me, Amanda Harrison, as part of my dissertation research. I am conducting interviews with practicing librarians in Serbia to understand how librarians in Serbia perceive the profession of librarianship, and what things are similar and what are different from the perception of librarianship in the United States. I will be conducting these interviews via Skype or Zoom, in the English language, at a time convenient to you. I will ask you questions about your understanding of librarianship in your country, how you currently practice librarianship and how you would hope to practice librarianship in the future. There are no right or wrong answers to these questions. The purpose of this research is to gain a better understanding of librarianship in your country and will benefit you indirectly through increased scholarship and learning within the field. Each individual interview will take approximately one hour to complete.

Your participation in this interview is entirely voluntary and you are free to refuse to answer any individual question. You may ask for the interview to be concluded at any time and may also choose at any time to withdraw completely from the study.

The interviews will be recorded and transcribed for research purposes. You will be offered an opportunity to review the transcript of your interview to ensure accuracy and completeness. Under no circumstances will your name or personal identifying characteristics be included in the dissertation. Data included in any reports or presentations following this research will be aggregated by topic so no personal comments will be directly attributed to you. While anonymous descriptions may be included I will be careful that any identifying characteristics will not link certain individuals to the content. Therefore, as the research is about perceptions of librarian's professional work, any perceived risks to the participants are minimal. Digital information from this interview will be kept in password-protected storage. Paper copies of this form will be kept in locked storage. The digital recording of our interview, the transcript, and the paper copies of this form will be permanently erased or destroyed three years after final acceptance and publication of my dissertation. Information from this interview, and any follow-up communications, will be used only for teaching and research purposes.

Any questions or concerns about this project may be directed at any time to me, Amanda Harrison, to my dissertation advisor, Dr. Andrew Smith, School of Library and Information Management, Emporia State University or, if you prefer to discuss this in Serbian, you may ask questions of Dr. Aleksandra Vraneš, Faculty of Philology, University of Belgrade, who is also serving on my dissertation committee.

Ms. Amanda Harrison, aharri10@g.emporia.edu  
Dr. Andrew Smith, asmith37@emporia.edu  
Dr. Aleksandra Vraneš, aleksandra.vranes@gmail.com

"I have read the above statement and have been fully advised of the procedures to be used in this project. I have been given sufficient opportunity to ask any questions I had concerning the procedures and possible risks involved. I understand the potential risks involved and I assume them voluntarily. I also understand that I am free to withdraw from the study at any time."

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Subject

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Date

With my typed signature below, I, Amanda Eileen Harrison, hereby submit this thesis/dissertation to Emporia State University as partial fulfillment of the requirements for an advanced degree. I agree that the Library of the University may make it available to use in accordance with its regulation governing materials of this type. I further agree that quoting, photocopying, digitizing or other reproduction of this document is allowed with proper attribution for private study, scholarship (including teaching) and research purposes of a nonprofit nature. No copying which involves potential financial gain will be allowed without written permission of the author. I also agree to permit the Graduate School at Emporia State University to digitize and place this thesis in the ESU institutional repository, and ProQuest Dissertations and Thesis database and in ProQuest's Dissertation Abstracts International.

Amanda Eileen Harrison

April 17<sup>th</sup>, 2020