



# **The Influence of Tradition on Consumer Behavior**

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Bachelor Thesis for Obtaining the Degree

Bachelor of Science

International Management

Submitted to Ms. Maria Lord

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Vienna, 10 May 2021.

## **Affidavit**

I hereby affirm that this Bachelor's Thesis represents my own written work and that I have used no sources and aids other than those indicated. All passages quoted from publications or paraphrased from these sources are properly cited and attributed.

The thesis was not submitted in the same or in a substantially similar version, not even partially, to another examination board and was not published elsewhere.

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## **Abstract**

This thesis aims to explore the effect tradition has on consumer behavior. While researching how tradition influences an average consumer, a set of factors is considered. Firstly, factors of age, social awareness, beliefs, culture, and economy are focused on and individually studied. These factors exist independently in studies of consumer behaviour but when magnified through a cultural lens, they also overlap with tradition; therefore, they have been linked to people's priorities when acting as consumers in the market. A qualitative research approach has been taken and for the purposes of this study, 5 groups of Serbian people have been interviewed. As a consumer group that has maintained their cultural identity through a historically and economically turbulent period, this group has been chosen as an interesting one to analyze. This study showed that Serbian people are highly motivated by tradition when making everyday purchases, regardless of whether they are in their home country or abroad. Moreover, the markers of culture most frequently used are food and music. As tradition is a common denominator for 5 different groups of interviewees, it creates a foundation to explore diverse consumer behavior types. Therefore, this thesis assesses cultural aspects and how tradition, upbringing and other external influences shape a consumer.

**Key words:** consumer behavior, tradition, attitudes, purchasing decisions, societal roles, culture

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## **List of Abbreviations**

H1 – Hypothesis 1

## 1 Introduction

Consumer behavior is defined as how individuals identify their wants and needs and subsequently make purchasing decisions to satisfy them (Radu, 2021). There are many factors that go into the decision-making process and they can include a range of intrinsic and extrinsic processes; for example, individuals might consider the economic and functional elements of products and services, as well as their personal, social and cultural values before making an investment (Radu, 2021). Moreover, depending on a consumer's needs and the extent of differences between the brands on offer, there may be a variation in the degree of involvement in choosing a product. Both processes have a part in distinguishing between the four types of consumer behavior: habitual buying, variety-seeking, dissonance-reducing and complex buying (Radu, 2021). This paper will explore how a consumer is shaped by all these factors.

Various studies conducted on the topic of consumer behavior accept that there are numerous factors that affect it (Gajjar, 2013; Ramja & Ali, 2016). A classification developed by Ramja and Ali (2006) identified the following factors as important: cultural, social, personal, psychological and economic. Further components of these groups are subculture, social class, age, gender, family, occupation, lifestyle, personality, motivation, personal/family income, perceptions, beliefs and attitudes (Gajjar, 2013). All these forces act, to a certain extent, on consumers when they make purchasing decisions. That these are important is indisputable, however, as this list is extensive, depending on the product/service in question, more weight might be put on certain factors than others.

In addition to these intrinsic factors, consumers are exposed to external ones: different products and ranges of attributes that are variously priced, offered at different purchasing points and promoted in distinct ways (Gajjar, 2013). Therefore, the "4 Ps" of marketing strategy also affect consumer behavior. As these factors are widely acknowledged and marketers use studies on consumer behavior to shape their advertising designs, this paper will not question existing conclusions but rather concentrate on one particular factor – tradition.

The Oxford Dictionary defines tradition as “the transmission of customs or beliefs from generation to generation” (2021) while that of Cambridge defines it as “a belief, principle, or a way of acting that people in a particular society or group have continued to follow for a long time” (2021). Both definitions agree that these customs have a symbolic meaning and beliefs are shared and passed on within a culture or a community. This study will explore how tradition supports different factors affecting consumer behavior to influence consumers.

The hypothesis of this paper is that tradition has a strong impact on individuals in the market regardless of other factors operating on them. Together, these independent factors undoubtedly influence consumers but this research assumes that people are inadvertently influenced by their tradition. The research question is concerned with how people from different age groups and with different external influences respond similarly as consumers due to tradition and its long-lasting influences on consumer behavior. In order to interpret tradition and later measure its influence, the following components have been identified: education levels, social awareness, religious beliefs and patriotic identity. These represent basic cultural principles and create a common foundation for comparison (Gajjar, 2013). Therefore, although this paper will recognize and acknowledge a spectrum of factors that influence consumer behavior, the main goal of this study will be to determine the weight that a traditional upbringing carries when molding a conscious consumer.

For this topic, the Serbian people have been chosen as an interesting group to study because of the cultural transition they experienced when the former Federal Republic of Yugoslavia broke up in 1992. Previously consisting of six socialist republics – Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Slovenia – Yugoslavia split into 5 independent entities with Serbia and Montenegro remaining a reduced federated state until 2003. This transition from a large unity to a smaller independent country, along with drastic alterations in political and religious ideologies, impacted on the Serbian people and created a significant rift between generations. With this distinct history, the Serbian people experienced a cultural shock with changes to education and the economic system, religion and its acceptance, lifestyle and perceptions of societal norms, as well as changes to many other aspects of life.

Therefore, Serbian people born between 1950 and 2000 have been identified as compelling subjects to analyze as the differences in consumer behavior are stark between consumers who were raised under a socialist system compared to those raised in a capitalist system.

Furthermore, due to close relations with Austria and a large population of Serbian immigrants there, this particular country was chosen as the best one with which to create a comparison. Serbian people have had strong ties to Austria since the 17<sup>th</sup> century when Serbian merchants first started settling in Vienna (Spiric, 2020). This relationship strengthened in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries as many Serbian poets, painters and scientists viewed Vienna as a metropolis where they could gain an education (Spiric, 2020). However, these early settlers are not the ones who formed the now largest immigrant group in Austria; Serbian people are believed to have relocated to Vienna in three distinct waves (Spiric, 2020).

After World War II, many Serbs came to Austria as “Gastarbeiters,” (“guest workers”), thanks to a treaty signed in 1966 between Austria and Yugoslavia. This first wave consisted of mostly laborers who came from rural backgrounds, did not intend to stay permanently, and who had little formal education (Spiric, 2020). The second wave occurred during the wars in Yugoslavia in 1990s, when economic sanctions and poverty made people flee the country. Unlike in the first wave, these individuals were highly educated and looked for a stable and permanent home in Austria (Spiric, 2020). The third wave was in the early 2000s when Serbia opened up its borders and all economic sanctions imposed by the United Nations and the European Union were lifted (Spiric, 2020). These individuals were young, often university-educated students who set out for a promising future abroad (Spiric, 2020). Even the ones who had had no formal education yet could receive it in Austria for free, based on a 2001 treaty that offered Serbian people free education at Viennese public universities (Spiric, 2020). Questions surrounding how assimilated Serbian immigrants are in Austrian society will be addressed later in the literature review, but as Austria is the largest home for Serbian people, outside of Serbia, it was chosen as the best country for comparison.



This study therefore focuses on people from the Republic of Serbia and aims to find differences in consumer behavior that can be attributed to the understanding and acceptance of tradition. The components of tradition listed above, studied in relation to the consumer behaviour of five different groups of Serbian people:

- 1) People born between 1950–1980 who were raised and remained in their home country of Serbia
  1. Their children, born between 1981–2000, who were raised and remained in Serbia
  2. Their children, born between 1981–2000, who were raised in Serbia but immigrated to Austria
- 2) People born between 1950–1980, who were raised in Serbia but immigrated to Austria
  3. Their children who were born in Austria between 1981–2000 and were raised there

This investigation will include a detailed literature review that will consider the components of tradition mentioned above and a central hypothesis tested using interviews. The participants will be reached through stratified sampling: nationality, age and geographical location of residence are the elements used to identify the subgroups of participants. The interview consists of questions that cover both demographic information such as age, gender, citizenship, and more complex questions concerning consumer behavior and buying preferences. The goal of the interviews is to provide an insight into similarities between the five groups of Serbian people when acting as consumers in the market that can be attributed to their upbringing and shared cultural values.

For the Serbian people, markers of identity have become stronger due to the need to create distinct differences between them and their five neighboring countries after Yugoslavia broke up (Mijic, 2019). Therefore, this population is believed to uphold its traditions and cultural values fiercely at home and abroad. The findings of this study could be useful for marketers and companies selling products and services to Serbian

people in both Serbia and Austria. By identifying the participants' attitudes towards money, wealth and consumption, businesses would be able to tailor products, their placement, prices and other promotions to appeal to this target group. In addition, this study will also add to existing literature on the topic of consumer behavior. By focusing on tradition, this study analyzes elements from each group of factors: cultural, social, personal, psychological and economic. Compared to previous classifications which vertically grouped elements, this study picks out only those that can be attributed to tradition and social awareness.

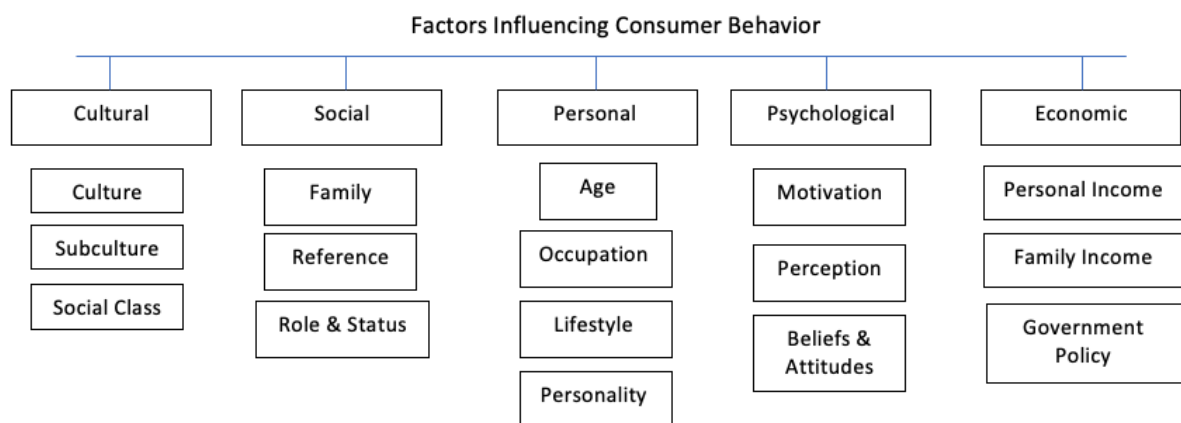


Figure 1 – Factors Influencing Consumer Behavior

Figure 1 above portrays the traditional classification of factors which affect consumer behavior. It has been adapted from the study by Ramraj and Ali (2016) and it shows not only how different aspects of a consumer's life are grouped but also how they come together to contribute to the overall perception of the consumer. While economic and psychological factors distinguish between the possibilities presented to consumers and their motivation to buy, cultural, social and personal factors delve into the internal and external influences that shape a consumer's thought processes and purchasing intentions.

## **2 Literature Review**

### **2.1 Consumer Behavior**

Although every consumer acts as an individual and is able to observe their own needs in the market, there are finite possibilities when considering which factors are crucial for the decision-making process. Therefore, every consumer can relate to one of the following four types of consumer behaviors depending on the scenario they are in and the need/want they are looking to fill (Radu, 2021):

- Complex buying behavior

This occurs when consumers are shopping for rare and mostly expensive products/services that they need to take a lot of time to consider and research before making a purchase (for example a house).

- Dissonance-reducing buying behavior

This occurs with purchases where consumers are involved in the purchasing process but unsure of what the right decision is; this situation happens when consumers do not have extensive knowledge about the product and are afraid they might base their choice on the wrong factors (for example when buying life insurance).

- Habitual buying behavior

This occurs when consumers are not highly engaged in the product/service and they see little to no difference between brands, so they go for the brand they usually choose out of habit (for example milk).

- Variety seeking behavior

This occurs when consumers are not highly engaged but there are still big differences between brands, so they seek to try out new options (for example hair shampoo).

Given that the instances consumers find themselves in can always be defined as one of the four categories detailed above, marketers can safely assume that there are certain factors consumers always consider when making a decision (Ramraj & Ali, 2016). Combining the fields of biology, chemistry, psychology and economics,

consumer behavior can be approached from different points of view. However, most marketers agree that the following five factors – cultural, social, personal, psychological and economic – encompass the study of consumer behavior (Ramraj & Ali, 2016).

Cultural factors include the behavioral habits and patterns exhibited by individuals in society that tie a community together; therefore, subgroups of this category are subculture and social class (Gajjar, 2013). Further, these two can be broken down into ethnicity, nationality, religion, race and wealth, education and professional occupation (Gajjar, 2013). Marketers group people with similar backgrounds and lifestyles in order to develop products/services and advertise them appropriately. Culture is an imperative component when defining tradition. As a person grows, learns and matures in a certain environment, they develop a set of personal values that drive their attitudes and behavior (Ramja & Ali, 2016). These values cover freedom and individuality as much as they cover, for instance, humanitarianism, achievement, success and practicality (Ramja & Ali, 2016). Therefore, the acceptance and understanding of culture, absorbed at a young age and exposed to it via parents, friends, teachers and the community are important when forming a discriminating consumer (Ramja & Ali, 2016).

Social factors include the impact of friends and family but also reference groups. While a society's imposed beliefs influence a consumer, reference groups have great impact because these are the groups individuals often interact with and compare themselves to (Gajjar, 2013). Therefore, when it comes to social factors, marketers not only examine the life stages of their target audience but also control brand awareness and image in the hope of generating positive word-of-mouth marketing (Gajjar, 2013). Moreover, this category acknowledges how an individual sees themselves and their role in society, in relation to purchases they should make. The role and status a person holds in society are necessary to consider when examining tradition and their understanding of it. A role is a position a person holds in any group they are a member of, while status is the level of significance awarded to that role (Ramja & Ali, 2016).

Personal factors are a combination of individual elements such as age, gender and occupation and more complex elements such as personality and self-perception (Gajjar, 2013). Hence, personal factors distinguish between how people move through life and the processes in an individual's life that motivate them as consumers, due to their gender or age for example, and more convoluted, intimate characteristics such as sincerity or self-discipline. Age is paramount when considering tradition because it is tied to generational differences and the environment an individual has been brought up in. However, lifestyle, defined as how a consumer interacts with their complete immediate environment, is another factor that can be tied to the education, beliefs and income levels of an individual (Ramja & Ali, 2016).

Psychological factors cover internal motivations, perceptions and personal beliefs and attitudes (Gajjar, 2013). Marketers can respond to urgent needs by producing and releasing specialized advertisement that will motivate consumers to make a purchase by altering their beliefs and perceptions about a brand or a product (Gajjar, 2013). Beliefs and attitudes are relevant to tradition as they are largely shaped by the society a person was raised in, therefore absorbing the habits and positions of friends and family. When studying consumer behavior, a need is recognized as a motive only once it reaches a certain sense of urgency (Ramja & Ali, 2016). Those needs can be classified as biogenic (derived from the physiological states a person is in) and psychogenic (derived from the psychological states a person is in) and it is important that both are satisfied equally (Ramja & Ali, 2016).

Finally, economic factors address the personal and family incomes that affect a consumer's ability to choose when satisfying a need and general government policy that decides on the market options and availabilities that will be made for consumers (Gajjar, 2013). Economic factors, in this capacity, are something marketers need to not only consider but carefully base what they offer on. When studying tradition, in this instance, apart from personal income, government policy is necessary to take into account as it greatly limited the choices given to Serbian people in Yugoslavia and instead promoted local products. Economic factors impact all 4 Ps in marketing as businesses always try to charge more while consumers inevitably look to spend less

(Ramja & Ali, 2016). Hence, additional topics such as income expectations, consumer credit and savings can influence consumer behavior (Ramja & Ali, 2016).

Having taken into consideration the range of factors that affect consumer behavior, a selection has been made to conduct further analysis in relation to tradition. A factor has been chosen from each of these groups in order to have representation from each which represents an aspect that complements the traditional values at the core of this study. The next portion of the paper will cover these factors and the demographic differences they relate to.

## **2.2 Demographic Differences**

Demographic differences among people have long been used to segment them and separately target consumers in the market. In turn, researchers have developed a certain set of factors that is looked at when dividing groups of consumers and, in most cases, these factors are age, race, ethnicity, gender, marital status, income, education, and employment (Pratap, 2019). With the belief that there are no consumers in the market who are acting unbiasedly, the simple stratification of the target market can and should be done for a brand to appeal to their audience (Pratap, 2019).

Successively, research studies similar to those done by Walsh and Mitchell (2005) or Salman and Huaibin (2012) showed that there is an even more detailed way to segment consumers within a country or depending on the product/service the study is about. For example, Walsh and Mitchell focused their 2005 case study on consumers who were indecisive, especially when faced with a wide set of choices, to aid marketers in generating a clear brand image. Their research concluded that older, female consumers who were less educated had a more difficult time in reaching a purchasing decision (Walsh & Mitchell, 2005). Therefore, the demographics they singled out were age, gender, and education levels. However, as this study was limited to a city in Germany, its findings were not as intricate as the consumer behavior study's findings, conducted in Pakistan in 2012, which considered country-wide differences (Salman & Huaibin). This study identified gender, income level and culture as predominant aspects of consumer behavior and focused the main idea on customer involvement in products and consequently purchases (Salman & Huaibin). Moreover,

the paper published by a group of master’s students in Iran which evaluated the different choices consumers made in respect to ecological packaging, also considered green purchasing behavior and green consumers as factors (Mazloumi et al., 2013). This study concluded that apart from the more obvious aspects of gender, age and education levels, even marital status and employment status had an impact on consumer behavior (Mazloumi et al., 2013).

Accordingly, it is safe to conclude that there is no single set of factors or values that researchers and marketers can consider, as even the demographic differences mapped out for one country can always be gone into in more detail. For the purposes of this study, the figure showing factors that influence consumer behavior is reintroduced, this time with the highlighted factors from each group that have been established as meaningful when considering tradition and its impact on consumer behavior. These are the factors which will be discussed in detail in the literature review.

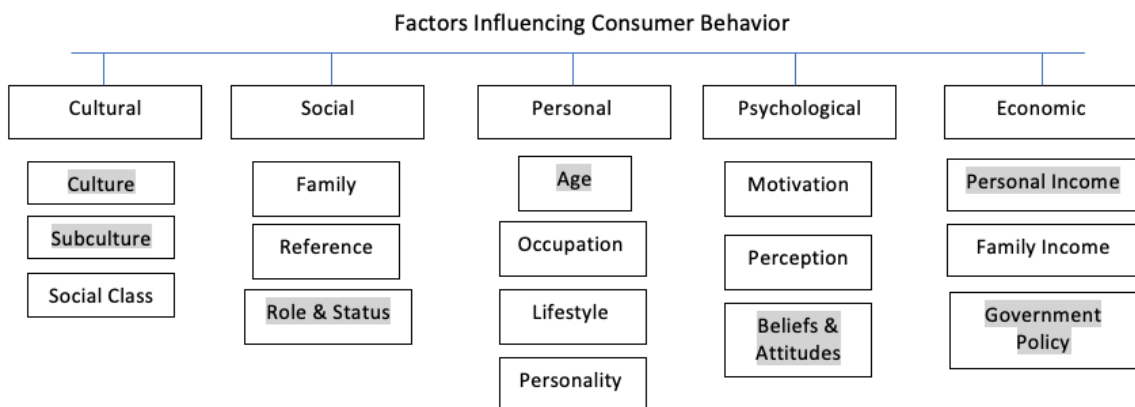


Figure 2 – Factors Relevant to Tradition

Culture and subculture were identified as vital in this study as tradition is an aspect of culture, frequently related to people’s memories and the stories they pass on. Subsequently, all creative and artistic representations people make or use, to keep those traditions alive, fall under “culture.” Role and status, as well as beliefs and attitudes were identified as essential because they assess what a person was taught to believe and how it has shaped their opinions about themselves and the environment, they are in. Age is perhaps a determining factor in this study as it

separates generations which were brought up in very different conditions. Finally, government policy was chosen as the control group in this research was brought up with very strict political and religious ideologies. Personal income, although highly important in consumer behavior generally, was chosen in this investigation to highlight the stark differences between consumers' purchasing power in Austria and Serbia due to the contrasting state of the two countries' economies. Figure 3 below shows a hierarchy of these factors in respect to tradition and consumer behavior, created before the research was conducted. Therefore, the following order was determined when formulating the hypothesis.

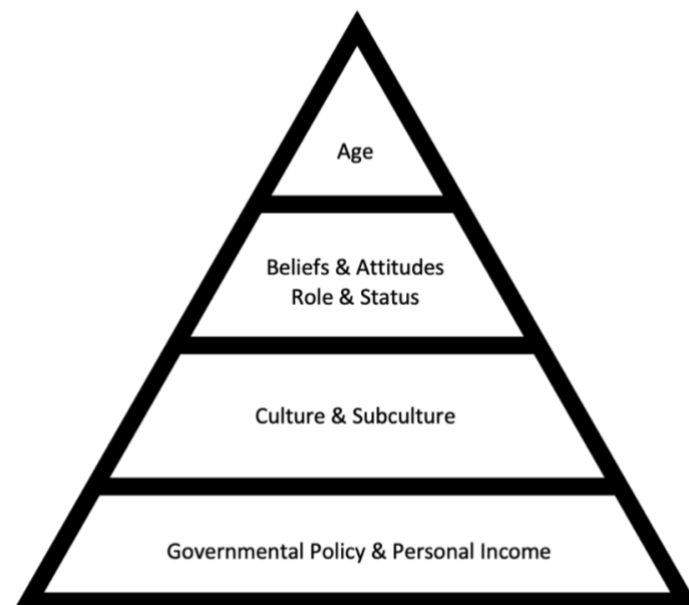


Figure 3 – Hierarchy of Factors

Culture ranked in the middle of the pyramid because personal, social, and psychological factors tend to shape people and their attitudes to a great extent. Therefore age, followed by beliefs & attitudes and role & status ranked higher. As proven by previous research papers, like the one conducted by Salman and Huaibin in 2012, even consumers brought up with the same cultural beliefs tend to interpret and embrace tradition differently depending on their age and other intrinsic aspects of their lives. Moreover, governmental policy and personal income ranked low as they address what is available in the market and not consumers' wants and needs. Each of these factors will be evaluated separately and addressed in the interviews.



### **2.2.1 Age**

Classification of consumers according to their age is a common way brands and marketers distinguish between their target audiences (Dimock, 2019). Distinguishing between generations is necessary as people who live through different eras, world events and technological, economic, and social advances will have a certain mindset and emotion towards those milestones that people born years after might not relate to (Dimock, 2019). Generational cohorts, therefore, are frequently used to explore how people of a certain age feel about an issue and how their opinion might have changed over the years. Their attitudes and beliefs are heavily shaped by education, media, mainstream culture, and other external influences (Dimock, 2019).

The following list shows how generations are defined (Dimock, 2019):

Silent: born 1928–1945

Baby Boomers: born 1946–1964

Generation X: born 1965–1980

Millennials, also referred to as Generation Y: born 1981–1996

Generation Z: born 1997–2012

This classification, although useful in many situations, has ordinarily been used as a distinguishing factor when studying consumer behavior (Williams & Page, 2011). The contrasting life expectations, experiences and values instilled into these generations create a need for marketers to study them individually, in order to understand them, build relationships and gain loyal customers (Williams & Page, 2011). Multi-generational marketing is a term used to refer to the approach marketers use when “appealing to the unique needs and behaviors of individuals within more than one specific generational group” (Williams & Page, 2011). This paper will deal with Baby Boomers, Generation X, Millennials and Generation Z. Considering how the political and religious ideologies changed between generations in Serbia, this paper hopes to confirm that the traditional values each generation was brought up with have an impact on how they act as consumers in the market, demonstrating that tradition is important to the Serbian people and passed on intentionally. The next section of the paper will therefore cover the ideals these generations hold.

Baby Boomers, as a generation, were born in the era of striking losses post-World War II. Globally, and also in Serbia, Baby Boomers entered the world during the Cold War struggle, fight for power and the uncertainty of rebuilding economies (Williams & Page, 2011). Characteristics often used to describe them are hard-working, price-sensitive, responsible, caring, sensitive to growing old and indulgent in terms of individualism and optimism (Williams & Page, 2011). In marketing, products that they respond well to are those which were communicated in a simple and clear way and that can justify their purpose and create a sense of active retirement or youthful habits such as health spas and organic foods (Williams & Page, 2011). Generation X was brought up during difficult economic periods and is therefore more independent; for example, many of them are entrepreneurs and small-business owners who are more loyal to family and traditional values than their work (Williams & Page, 2011). They are often referred to as more pessimistic and selfish in terms of how likely they are to sacrifice their time and energy in comparison to Baby Boomers. Regarding marketing, Generation X tends to be skeptical of advertisements and relies on branding messages that seem relatable to them (Williams & Page, 2011).

Millennials were born and raised during a world-wide cultural boom, movements for gender and racial equality, the introduction of computers, the virtual world and increased social awareness (Williams & Page, 2011). One of the biggest differences in comparison to Generation X is that most millennials, although self-reliant, desire social acceptance in a world where they insist on creating the rules themselves. In marketing, they respond well to brands that have a higher purpose and are on a mission, for example to be sustainable, as they are global citizens greatly influenced by globalization (Williams & Page, 2011). Generation Z, born into globalization but also the horrors it can bring – terror attacks, the era of cyber-bullying, recession - have turned back to some of the more traditional values which can be labeled conservative (Williams & Page, 2011). In comparison to their peers, they tend to be very compassionate, determined and optimistic. With respect to marketing, they are very aware of the message brands send, partially due to their technological competence and partially to the availability of information. Their fields of interest are such that

marketers need to integrate different strategies to appeal to their short attention spans (Williams & Page, 2011).

For Serbia (up until 1992 part of Yugoslavia) and the people born there who fall into these generational cohorts, there was a distinct socialist ideology imposed on them until the country's disintegration. Therefore, even more prominently than elsewhere in the world, the rift between generations is wide and the factor of age has been identified as the most pressing for this paper. However, the way that politics, economics, religion, education and the society shaped consumers' views, attitudes and beliefs all have an impact on how they behave in the market. The transition between generations is not clear-cut but rather blurred due to the transition periods Yugoslavia faced. Therefore, social awareness of generations is dependent on their understanding of life events but also the way their families and reference groups, who can belong to a different generation, understand those same events. These generations' actions and world views would be tied together by Serbian tradition.

### **2.2.2 Social Awareness**

Social factors and one's acceptance of how and where they fit into society is considered to be social awareness (Jisana, 2014). Social factors cover three distinct areas: family, reference groups and personal roles (Jisana, 2014). According to the frequency of interaction, an individual's immediate environment can be split up into primary and secondary social circles (Jisana, 2014). The primary reference group consists of people an individual frequently interacts with, such as family and close friends, while the secondary reference group consists of, for example, acquaintances, work or school colleagues and neighbors. Furthermore, as family is a crucial aspect of many people's lives, the common household needs and the general state of personal relationships at home drive individuals as consumers (Jisana, 2014).

More prominently, the way that an individual sees themselves in society determines how they will act in the market. Every individual has a role in life and every role, in turn, holds a certain status (Jisana, 2014). A working mother has two roles – one at home, as a parent and the second at her place of work – as an employee; however, she can also be a wife, a sister, or a friend. The products and services that she is interested in,

as a consumer, can have a wide range (Gajjar, 2013). However, as her role of a mother comes with a certain status, she also needs to make purchasing decisions that align with that role (Gajjar, 2013). Consumers tend to be aware of which group they belong to, based on what their role is, and tend to act accordingly in the market. However, according to Goffman's dramaturgical model, people can also "act out" different roles in different situations (Goffman, 1974 cited in Wood, 2004). In a comparison to theatre and a theatrical performance, Goffman affirms that people strategically shape their role depending on the audience present (Wood, 2004).

Roles and status were predetermined for consumers born in Serbia while it was a part of Yugoslavia. When considering Baby Boomers and their Yugoslav childhoods, one has to consider the economic and cultural momentum that drove Yugoslavia. Dubbed the "golden cage," scholars often describe Yugoslavia from late 1950s to the 1980s as inexplicably opportunistic (Marjanovic-Shane, 2018). On departing from the Stalinist view on how the society should work in 1948, Yugoslavian teachers and educators worked closely with musicians, scientists and artists to create a new, different ideology that would shape Yugoslavian children's lives (Marjanovic-Shane, 2018). All communist ideologies have a specific role for children, they are the "pioneers of the future;" however, with Yugoslavian leader Tito intent on separating his ideology from Stalin's, Yugoslavian children had a sense of freedom that did not correspond to a totalitarian viewpoint (Marjanovic-Shane, 2018). Instead, they were given a carefree childhood where they were controlled in a "more indirect, informal and seductive way that was equally effective" (Erdei, 2006 cited in Marjanovic-Shane, 2018). The way children were brought up in Yugoslavia was not entirely homogenous either and varied in rural and urban areas with communist officials and their families having privileges others did not (Marjanovic-Shane, 2018). However, the multi-cultural and multi-ethnic country did have certain aspects that bonded all children such as "Kiki" candy, "Borovo" shoes and "Cocta," a fizzy drink replicating capitalist "Coca-Cola." In this socialist society, everyone was assigned a specific role, which held a certain status and shaped them as people and consumers. Although most people were considered equal and privileges were reserved for the lucky few, Yugoslavia's developed and

diverse industry bonded people as consumers by promoting domestic products (Marjanovic-Shane, 2018).

Even in the years after Yugoslavia disintegrated, a certain nostalgia remained and the Yugoslavian children who are the point of interest in this paper faced rapid economic and social changes. Researchers Zabukovec and Polic discovered, when they explored children's understanding of the political changes they were faced with, that not many of them understood the complex economic system that had been introduced (1990). Older children seemed to understand the basics of economic problems and inflation while the younger ones, reasonably, had very limited knowledge of those topics (Zabukovec & Polic, 1990). The difference between them is that young adults (Baby Boomers) were of an age where they understood and perhaps even participated in the disintegration of Yugoslavia while Generation X was faced with the sudden loss of what used to be familiar to them.

This forms a stark comparison with Millennials and Generation Z, born into a completely different social, political and economic structure, the two groups had less defined roles in life. Naturally the personal and life roles of being children and students remained, but their lives were not organized according to Yugoslavian beliefs and ideals. These two groups therefore hold more homogenous views, exacerbated by globalization, that have left them with different roles (Williams & Page, 2011). Moreover, for the two groups looked at in this study that were born in Austria, their roles would have been different compared to those of their peers in Serbia. Although the Serbian community is strong in Austria, Serbian children are still seen as immigrants (Spiric, 2020). For example, philosopher and researcher Ljubomir Bratic claims that Serbs are not very well integrated into Austrian society (Spiric, 2020). He alleges that even Serbs who are willing to assimilate are not able to do so easily as the societal structures do not allow it (Spiric, 2020). Apart from the roles dependent on the life-stages of consumers, Serbs in Austria are not, on average, in higher social classes or elite circles and their roles often do not allow for lavish lifestyles. And while roles and social classes exist in Serbia too, the role of an "outsider," given to Serbian people in Austria is irrelevant of how well educated or integrated they are. One of their roles is as an immigrant and that comes with certain expectations as a consumer

since it carries a lower status than that of a local. To use Goffman's impression management, the second generation of Serbs in Austria are very likely to switch between their roles depending on the company they are in. As Austrians frequently impose a social stigma, Serbs might amend their social interaction to better suit the environment but still stay true to their traditions in a more relaxed, home setting.

It is therefore safe to conclude that the role and status a person holds in society and the regard one views themselves in are vital for shaping a conscious consumer. This role is determined by many factors, such as age, education, marital status and other external influences that have shaped their beliefs and attitudes; that role can also be altered as necessary. While the role and status have a specific influence on their own, they are imposed by society's standards, history and social class. Hence, the next portion of the paper will address the contrasting political and religious ideologies that have shaped Serbian people, at home and abroad, to give them conflicting beliefs and attitudes.

### **2.2.3 Beliefs and Attitudes**

Over time, thanks to external influences, people develop attitudes and beliefs on which they base their personal values. An attitude is how an individual feels about something or someone, a belief is a concept an individual accepts as true even without facts, and values are certain principles that a person considers important and lives by (FutureLearn, 2021). Figure 4 below is a representation of how these three ideas come together and interact. By the time a person reaches adulthood, they have a developed mindset and a set of values they rely on in life (FutureLearn, 2021). As these are instilled during childhood, a child's development can be hindered when their views clash with those of institutions they are exposed to such as school or church (FutureLearn, 2021). However, a healthy development of views and values, irrespective of those generally accepted in society, has increased the opportunities for marketers.

Political ideology controls a country's economic, religious and educational systems. The control group that this paper focuses on consists of people who were born in socialist Yugoslavia while the comparison groups consist of people who were born in

democratic Serbia, moved to or were born in democratic Austria. The socialist model of Yugoslavia was not oppressive like the one the USSR's satellite states dealt with (Uvalic, 2018). On the contrary, the socialism promoted in Yugoslavia allowed, to an extent, personal freedoms, foreign exchange and travel that Stalinism did not tolerate (Uvalic, 2018). However, practicing religion was not allowed openly and publicly, in an effort to merge the Catholic, Orthodox and Muslim nations together (Uvalic, 2018). The economy was centralized at first, but with the principle of self-management, and while most sectors were state owned and controlled the economy was slowly decentralized and became more market oriented (Uvalic, 2018). Accordingly, the education systems taught students that the socialist ideology and its social and economic approach was the best and students were influenced to agree (Marjanovic-Shane, 2018). In terms of consumer behavior, beliefs and attitudes imposed by the society and strongly upheld by all these institutions impacted how Serbian people developed their personal values.

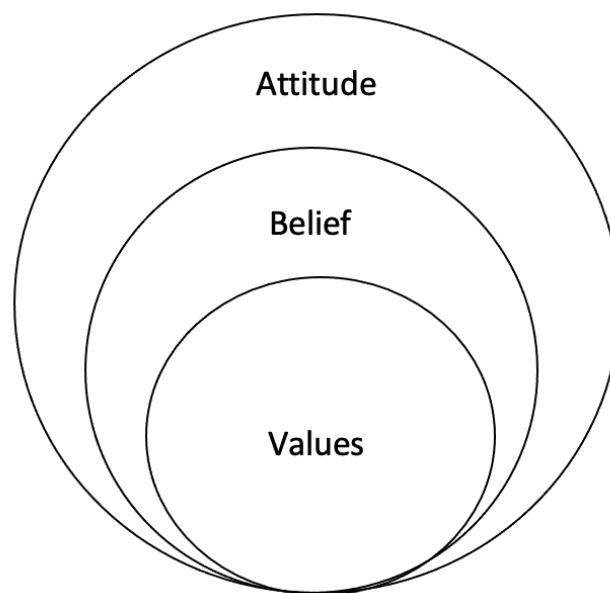


Figure 4 – Values, Beliefs and Attitudes

For individuals born in Serbia after 1992, the unstable economy and strongly nationalist political ideology drove them away, as consumers, from the industries Yugoslavia had built and promoted (BBC, 2018). Slobodan Milosevic, a nationalist

leader who came to power in 1989, swayed general public opinion and caused people's beliefs and attitudes to become more closed and independent (BBC, 2018). It is important to note that due to the wars that Serbia participated in during the 1990s, harsh sanctions were imposed by the United Nations which placed limits on the Serbian people as consumers. The choices available and the economic sanctions, however, had a stronger impact on older people than children. Therefore, the younger groups looked at in this paper, born between 1980 and 2000 are believed not to have had their beliefs and attitudes affected as strongly since many of them were not yet conscious and independent consumers in the market.

On the contrary, the political and economic opportunities in Austria were much greater and capitalist oriented. The country's predominantly Catholic population had an influence on the way of life. With its stable economy, Austria has, historically, relied on trade with other European nations and its own industry which enabled the Austrian economy to grow annually (Statistik Austria, 2021). Austria's established industries and stable infrastructure were state-owned after World War II to give them protection from Soviet takeover but were later privatized in the 1980s and 1990s (Statistik Austria, 2021). Austria also joined the European Union in 1995 and was one of the first countries to adopt the Euro as its currency; membership brought many economic advantages, foreign investors and market opportunities (Statistik Austria, 2021). Moreover, the reforms Austria went through in 2000s made it a rather liberal state that was internationally competitive with private entities and a reformed welfare system (Statistik Austria, 2021). Therefore, the hypothesis, regarding Serbian people who immigrated to Austria or were born there, assumes that market opportunities and higher income, coupled with higher living standards shaped them as more self-indulgent consumers but tradition kept their priorities similar to those of average Serbian consumers.

By the same token, different groups of participants in this study should have different beliefs and attitudes which were shaped by their personal histories, age, education received and the ideologies they were exposed to. Beliefs and attitudes shape consumers and also influence their role and status (Ramja & Ali, 2016). However, even though the participants in this survey were exposed to considerable differences in



their environment, they are all in some way Serbian. Hence, this study aims to explore how the underlying culture and their honoring of tradition impacts them regardless of the conditions they were brought up in or where they currently live. This paper hopes to establish a correlation between consumers' behavior in the market and their national culture. For instance, people born between 1950 – 1970, who were raised in Serbia but immigrated to Austria are expected to have strong ties to their homeland. Their purchases in Austria are expected to be based on the beliefs adopted and attitudes developed when they were in Serbia. This would mean that their consumer behavior potentially differs from people who were born in Austria to Serbian parents. The latter group's habits are believed to have been greatly impacted by their surroundings which would have weakened their ties to Serbia. However, while their general consumer behavior might resemble an Austrian consumer, they are still expected to make purchases that relate to their culture because their beliefs and attitudes are also conditioned by their parents. In particular, Serbian people are known to express their loyalty to Serbia through food and music. Cultural ties can often shape a consumer and the next section of this paper will look at how subculture is formed within overarching cultures.

#### **2.2.4 Culture & Subculture**

National culture refers to the nationality people identify with, and also all the beliefs, customs, stereotypes and shared values that are specific to a nation (Hofstede & Hofstede, 2005). The unique characteristics that national culture consists of are comprised of its language, ethnic identity, oftentimes religion and other local traditions (Hofstede & Hofstede, 2005). As mentioned before, national awareness does not have to be present to the same degree across all layers of society and equally across an entire country, thus subcultures are created. However, certain cultures dictate how individuals will behave depending on what their perceptions and beliefs are (Hofstede & Hofstede, 2005). In that respect, individuals consider themselves both independent and interdependent (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). The way an individual perceives themselves and their role and status in their national culture can affect their personal experience and influence their motivation and emotions in life (Markus & Kitayama, 1991).

This idea also depends on the society in question; Geert and Gert Jan Hofstede identified six dimensions that can particularize a society (2005). The first dimension, called “power distance” looks at the degree of inequality within a country. In instances where there is a small power distance, unlike when there is a large one, inequalities are minimized, parents and their children are treated as equals and teachers do not have absolute authority in education systems (Hofstede & Hofstede, 2005). The second dimension, labeled “collectivism vs. individualism” refers to people’s use of “I” and “we,” whether they obtain their information from the media or social networking and, for example, how much emotional expression is encouraged (Hofstede & Hofstede, 2005). Unlike individualism which relates to loosely knit societies, collectivism refers to strongly integrated ones (Hofstede & Hofstede, 2005). The third dimension, “femininity vs. masculinity,” addresses gender roles and the stereotypes assigned to them, such as women are fragile and family-oriented while men are tough and ambitious (Hofstede & Hofstede, 2005). The fourth dimension – “uncertainty avoidance” – touches upon how emotional the people in a certain country are: for example, how accepted are people/things that break the norm, how stressed and anxious is the population or how agreeable are they (Hofstede & Hofstede, 2005). The fifth dimension – “short-term vs. long-term orientation” – describes whether the national culture is especially traditional or open-minded while the sixth dimension, “restraint vs. indulgence,” deals with whether nations suppress gratification due to strict societal norms (Hofstede & Hofstede, 2005).

On the grounds of their extensive research regarding national culture, it can be concluded that it is an important factor that affects people in all aspects of life. This naturally translates into consumer behavior as it can determine not only which products people are interested in, but how they should be advertised to as well. Figure 5 below illustrates the six dimensions and their association.

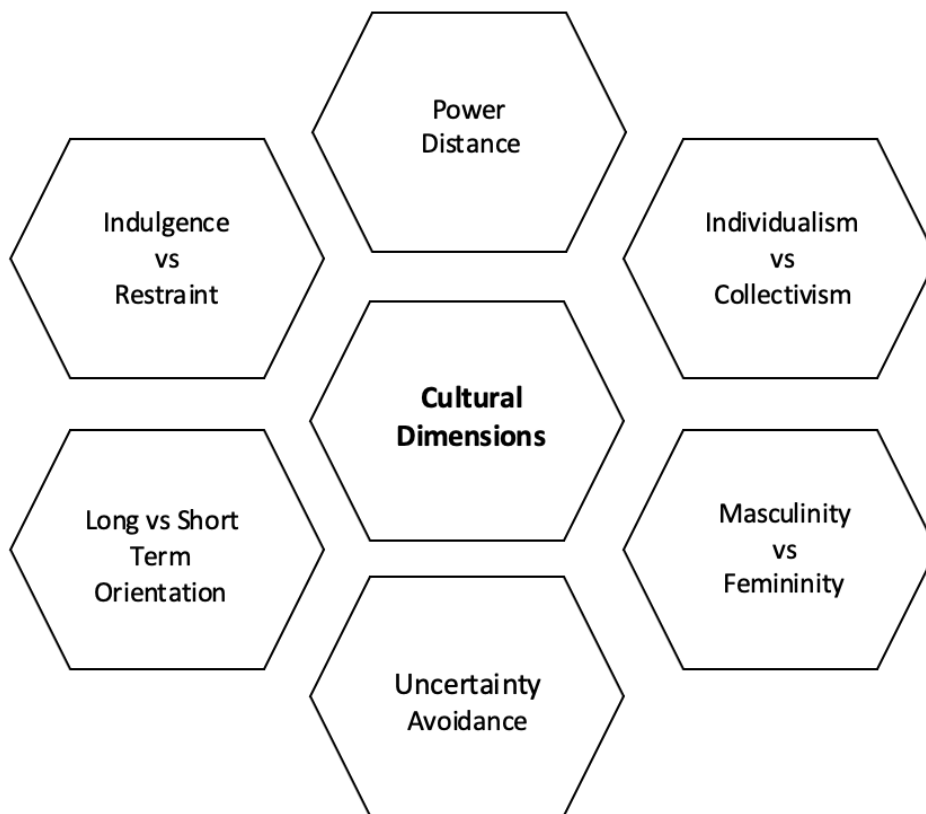


Figure 5 – Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions

Serbian people who were born in socialist Yugoslavia were encouraged to act as a unified nation. Their societal norms revolved around equality, sharing, social welfare and social justice. Meanwhile, Serbian people born once Serbia had become a democracy identified with a mixed economy, privately owned businesses and more liberty. In that sense, although all groups mentioned in this study identify as Serbian, their national values might differ depending on all the factors covered thus far. However, as culture is frequently expressed in materialistic ways that represent traditions, Serbian people are known to rely on food, music, clothing and gold to express their national loyalty or show their social status. Regarding the above-mentioned dimensions, Serbian people gravitate towards nationalism, patriotism, and traditional gender norms. The power distance is large and there is a stronger uncertainty avoidance. They are very traditional and fond of "old-school ways," therefore short-term oriented and indulgent. Although these assumptions might differ for Serbian people who moved to Austria or were born there, it is still true according to some researchers, like Ljubomir Bratic, who claims that the Serbian

people that migrated to Austria in the third wave keep to themselves and have not forgotten their roots (Spiric, 2020). National culture is hence a strong motivator for how Serbian people behave in the market.

Considering the focus groups of this study are clearly separated by age and geographical location, it is salient to acknowledge the following characteristics of culture. Culture is not inherited, it must be taught and practiced so that younger generations embrace it; therefore, it is generational (Matijevic et al., 2015). Moreover, culture is “symbolic, structured/integrated, and adaptive” (Matijevic, et al. 2015). The cumulative understanding of culture and traditional practices is in consequence unique and specific to a nation (Matijevic et al., 2015). In order for a national culture and its values to endure, the basic principles and preferences need to be strongly integrated in the society (Matijevic et al., 2015). In terms of how cultures and their subcultures affect consumers, it can be said that they help establish a set of values supported by what is considered ethnic taste, local preference and a general attitude towards things that are widely accepted or frowned upon (Ramja & Ali, 2016). Moreover, for traditional or religious values to be sustained, individuals need to learn them from parents and see them in practice (Ozorak, 1989). That way, when they are instilled at a young age, traditional values have a stronger chance of enduring external pressures in late childhood, adolescence, and adulthood (Ozorak, 1989). This is where the Serbian population is an interesting case study as their culture and beliefs in the post-Yugoslav era were altered. Researcher Senija Causevic goes as far as to claim that a certain sentiment of nostalgia still lingers because of nationalism and capitalism and the confusion that transition introduced (2019). The turbulent period Serbian people lived through impacted their national culture deeply and affected society, politics, and the economy (Causevic, 2019). This leads to consideration of the final factor, that of economics, in how Serbian people act as consumers.

### **2.2.5 Economic Factors**

Economic factors of governmental policy and personal income were assumed to be the least important when considering how Serbian people at home and abroad make purchasing decisions. This assumption was based on the fact that the current

opportunities or limitations, imposed by personal income or the political ideology, do not affect consumers in the long term nor do they reform an individual's wants and personal taste. However, as the discrepancy between socialism and capitalism exists and leaves an undeniable imprint for consumers, it was a factor necessary to consider.

Personal income comprises disposable and discretionary income (Ramja & Ali, 2016). Disposable income refers to the money left after all taxes and deductibles have been subtracted while discretionary income refers to the money left after basic needs have been met (Ramja & Ali, 2016). For Serbian people, who have lived through high inflation and economic crisis, the expenditure of disposable income might be distressing due to the uncertainty of the economy they have been brought up in. This "fear" can also be translated to younger generations who have not lived through the turbulent periods of economic crisis. Tradition and behavioral patterns of how personal income is spent are easily taught to children (Ramja & Ali, 2016). The same conclusion can be reached for consumers who relied on a centralized economy and domestic products in contrast to those who grew up during the rise of globalization, free market economies and market competition. To that end, economic factors are relevant in the short-term while the effects they leave on people (by affecting life experiences and modifying beliefs and attitudes) are pertinent in the long-term.

### **2.3 Tradition**

Having established the range of factors that affect consumer behavior and their relation to Serbian people, it can be concluded that they collectively act upon an individual's upbringing. Tradition is therefore a significant influence on how a person relates to their national culture, which role they have assigned for themselves in society, which beliefs and attitudes they have developed and what stage of life they are in, in terms of what is traditionally expected of them (Stavkova et al., 2008). When conducting consumer behavior research, tradition is a primary factor to consider but, as it is difficult to investigate it on its own, existing ideas of self-perception should be factored in (Stavkova et al., 2008).

For this study, concepts of patriotic identity and assimilation are paramount. Patriotism is defined as the "devotion to and vigorous support for one's country"

(Oxford Languages, 2021). It is closely related to nationalism, loyalism, and patriotic sentiment (Oxford Languages, 2021). Therefore, for the focus group whose participants were born and raised abroad, the sense of understanding of and unity with Serbian traditions affects how similar their consumer behavior will be to a Serbian consumer in Serbia. The assimilation of Serbian people in Austria is not strong as exhibited by numerous behaviours: they use “us” and “them” when referring to Austrians, they populate the sixteenth district of Vienna, which is commonly known as “Balkanstraße,” their inner circles and reference groups are homogenous comprising other Serbs and they are fiercely loyal to a specific lifestyle exacerbated by an immigrant mindset (Mijic, 2019). Moreover, as linguistics distinguishes between different meanings of “we,” Austrians are also guilty of using it to create an exclusive group (Wodak, 2021). Thus, as both parties indulge in this practice, differences in perspectives are clear. Another example of how the beliefs and attitudes are fundamentally different is the motto “keep it Yugo, do it Švabo” (Mijic, 2019). In Serbian language, “Švabo” is a dialect expression for Austrian or German people and is here used in this sense to highlight the need for Serbian people to set a social boundary between how things should be done (Mijic, 2019). Although this example includes stereotypes, it portrays how the attitude of a Serbian immigrant in Austria is predisposed to be different compared to a typical Austrian person (Mijic, 2019).

This suggests that the hypothesis that tradition does impact consumer behavior has a foundation. Tradition, in this study defined as the conveyance of customs and transmission of beliefs to younger generations, is assumed to be strong regardless of whether Serbian people are at home or abroad. Although the factors discussed above have a strong impact on consumers, and there are undeniably outliers and families who have completely integrated and embraced Austrian culture, the general assumption is that Serbian people hold traditional values in high regard. Traditional values accepted by an individual strongly depend on the parents’ beliefs and practices but also their dedication to them and outside influences that can affect them over time, especially during their development (Ozorak, 1989). Therefore, at a certain stage, individuals independently decide the extent of their involvement with traditional practices and develop their personal beliefs (Ozorak, 1989). As shown, the

external factors affecting Serbian children in Austria are thought to be stronger than the factors affecting Serbian children raised in Serbia as even the external influences would be, in a way, familiar or traditionally oriented to a certain extent. Hence, to test the influence tradition has on these individuals and their consumer behavior, the following research model has been developed.

### 3 Research Model

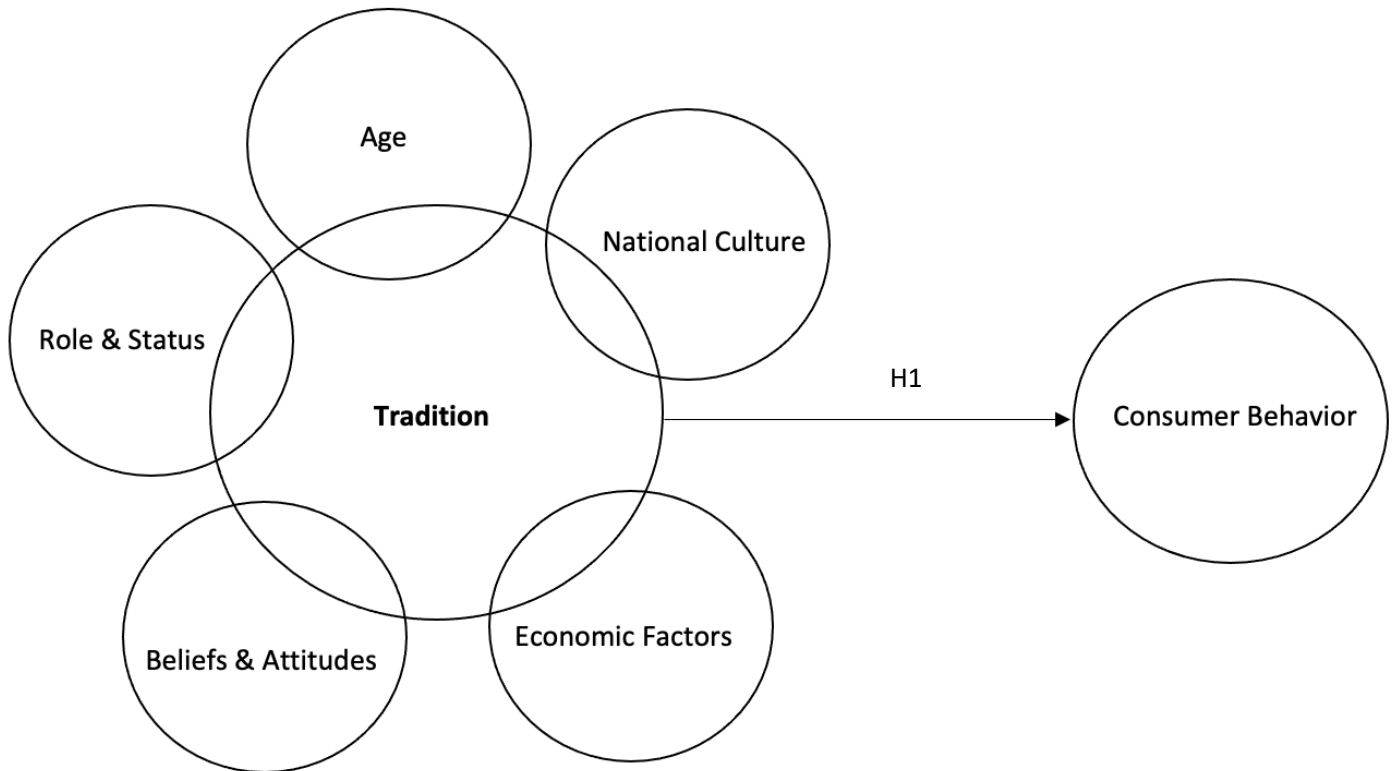


Figure 6 – Research Model

In an attempt to convey how the ideas and factors discussed in this paper are not straightforward, but rather complex, a circular research model that resembles the features of a Venn diagram was chosen. As discussed in the literature review, age, national culture, role & status, beliefs & attitudes, and economic factors all exist as important and independent factors relating to consumer behavior. However, they all overlap or are influenced by tradition. Therefore, the resulting combination of factors guided by tradition is believed to have an impact on consumer behavior and is recorded on the research model as Hypothesis 1 (H1).



## 4 Methodology

Qualitative research involves non-numerical data collection with the aim of delving into in-depth concepts by recording thoughts, opinions, and experiences (Bhandari, 2020). As the design taken for this investigation was qualitative, a narrative research approach was decided on to form an understanding of people's perceptions and attitudes. To test the hypothesis that tradition has an impact on consumer behavior, the research method used was an interview consisting of 16 questions which was sent out to 30 participants. As there are five groups of interest in this study, a balanced sample was maintained by asking three male-identified and three female-identified informants, per group, to participate. The questions first established the participants' age, nationality, current country of residence and the official legal citizenship before diving deeper and examining their familiarity with Serbian traditions and the possible ways it has impacted them as consumers. The questions were mainly straightforward but with the possibility to elaborate on them if needed and there was a question that, directly or indirectly, addressed each factor discussed in the literature review. For example, two of the questions were: "Are there are any instances you can think of where you were influenced by your Serbian heritage to make a purchase?" & "Do you think that the status Serbia holds in the world has affected your decisions as a consumer at home/abroad?"

As the participants had to be categorized according to the five groups, the form of sampling used was stratified sampling. Before responding to the interview, all participants were informed of the purpose of the study and asked for their consent to participate. They were also made aware that their responses would be anonymous and recorded solely for the purposes of this research and so were asked to answer truthfully. In light of this, a possible limitation to the study is the fact that the participants were selected based on convenience and acquaintance. Even though they were hand-picked due to demographic factors, which were strictly controlled, the sample size and selection can be a limitation, especially if cultural bias is present in any of the interviewees. The interview questions and participants' responses can be found in Appendices 1 and 2 respectively, while the general interpretation of results and responses can be found in the next portion of the paper.

## 5 Analysis of Results

### 5.1 Group 1

Group 1 participants were six individuals, three male and three female, who were born between 1950–1980 in Serbia. Another requirement looked at when asking them to participate was that they are currently residing in Serbia and have not spent an excessive amount of time abroad as they were the control group for the study. Therefore, their official legal nationality is Serbian, and they all identify as such. When asked whether they correlate their role in life, and the status it carries, with being Serbian, four of them expressed that they do while the remaining two said “no” and “not really.” This does not interfere with the fact that they identify as Serbian, as different people have different roles and interpret them in various ways depending on where they are in life. As mentioned before, people tend to know their role and act accordingly; the example given was a mother acting as a consumer for her personal needs but also the needs of the whole household, therefore, how people see themselves and if they attach their national role to that understanding does not interfere with the identification of being, in this case, Serbian.

This group unanimously declared that they are very familiar with Serbian traditions and that they celebrate important holidays and milestones in life in a traditional way. However, according to them, this is not because they feel pressured by society to do so but because they like to and are proud of it. One participant, from Novi Sad (the second largest city), indicated that they sometimes feel pressured to follow traditions, and this discrepancy can be attributed to the more traditionally oriented part of Serbia they come from. Apart from that, they also all agreed that their personal values and beliefs align with those upheld by society. Once their views on tradition were established, they were asked if they would say that their Serbian identity influences their purchasing decisions. Their answers ranged from “yes,” “sometimes,” and “in most cases” to “never thought about it” and “no.” Having looked at their answers provided later in the interview, it can be concluded that the two participants who said no perhaps did not recognize how traditionally motivated their purchases were. As traditional products are always readily available and something they are familiar with,

they did not deem purchasing them as extremely traditional. The other participants, on the other hand, made a connection between buying local and domestic products as a conscious choice rather than a habit.

For all the participants in the first group, significant purchases were expensive and meaningful ones and some of the answers they provided were: a house, property, a vehicle, and a wedding ring. Therefore, their perception covered both the price and the sentimental value. Interestingly enough, when asked about purchasing material representations of culture such as food or music, this group gave the most diverse answers. They listed not just food and music, but also clothes, domestic produce, traditional furniture, artwork, and films. This group was also the only one that mentioned how important it was to buy from local businesses and use domestic products. On the other hand, this group had the most participants who had no reason to look for Serbian products abroad as they were never there long enough to start missing Serbian food, for example. One participant said that although they did not necessarily look for it, it is always a pleasant surprise to see Serbian brands in foreign countries while another communicated that during their 1 year abroad in France, they often looked for Serbian food. This is an interesting statement as it indicates that even though they might not recognize it as shopping for traditional products when at home, they realize how it is culturally motivated when abroad.

Group 1 was also the most knowledgeable and definitive when asked if they believe Serbia's status in the world has affected them as consumers. They mentioned that Serbia has bigger import taxes and that due to sanctions and financial hardships in the past, there was often a poor range of choice in supermarkets. Since then, they believe that the status has improved and so has the selection in stores. Besides being loyal to local businesses and domestic produce, and willing to buy Serbian products over foreign ones, they do not believe that Serbia's status has impacted them greatly. Moreover, they also had instances where they made purchases inspired by their heritage. These ranged from customary holiday items bought annually, to items purchased for special occasions such as weddings, and even property. For example, one participant said that they decorated their house in a traditional way while another

one revealed they had bought a traditional rug. The biggest heritage-inspired purchase for this group was land and a house in a village.

In conclusion, group 1 participants were generally very aware of their purchases and how they interact with tradition and cultural values. Even those who did not recognize their consumer behavior as being traditional at the beginning, later admitted to having had a traditional wedding ceremony, a second home in the countryside and repeated purchases for traditional holidays such as *slava* (a patron saint's day). These purchases, although small and inexpensive such as wheat and traditional bread, are repetitive and traditionally motivated; they are repeated annually and passed down through the generations. The fact that they are all familiar with Serbian traditions and respect them also indicates that they are making culturally driven purchasing decisions without classifying them as such. This group did not realize, as they were born and raised in Serbia, that their eating habits and music they listen to are heavily influenced by tradition. Rather, as that is how they defined it in their responses, they think of it as something they are used to and always have available. Moreover, it can also be argued that all products and services that are very common and easily accessible within a country are there due to tradition and consumers' continuous interest in them.

## **5.2 Group 2**

Group 2 participants were six individuals born between 1981–2000, who were born and raised in Serbia and still currently reside there in Belgrade. Four of them were born in the capital, and the other two were born in Obrenovac and Valjevo, cities close to the capital. Their official legal nationality is Serbian, and they identify as such. In order to represent the group properly, 3 of the participants chosen were born in the 1980s, two in the 1990s, and 1 in 2000. When asked if they relate their role in life to being Serbian, two of them said "yes," one said "partially," and the remaining two said "no." As discussed, everyone's understanding of roles will differ and as they are younger than the participants in the first group, it is understandable that they do not strictly view their role through a cultural lens.

Like the participants in the first group, group 2 participants also said that they are familiar with Serbian traditions. Two of them suggested that they are familiar with the more common ones, referring to religious holidays, and said that they celebrate them each year. An interesting observation here is that the answers recorded, when asked if they traditionally celebrate special occasions, were “well of course,” “definitely,” and “yes, of course.” This tone puts a strong emphasis on the fact that they proudly do so. Unlike in the first group, this group’s participants had mixed feelings about societal pressure: one participant said that they feel the pressure to be traditional but that regardless, they enjoy celebrating holidays like that. One participant said that celebrating in a traditional way is definitely expected but that they still do it, and the participant from Valjevo said that they had felt more pressure before moving to Belgrade. This is a recurring theme as the participant from Novi Sad, from the first group, said that they also feel pressured sometimes. As Belgrade is considered a metropolis and the most modern and developed city in Serbia, its habitants might not feel as much pressure as people in the more rural areas.

When asked if they think their personal views and values are in line with the values generally upheld in Serbia, all of them answered positively apart from one participant who said “not always.” On the contrary, when asked if they think their purchasing decisions are influenced by their culture, they all answered negatively, except for one who said yes, but only when it comes to purchasing food. Once again, this group stated that they frequently buy traditional food, listen to Serbian music, watch Serbian TV, shop locally and enjoy homemade products. Only one participant suggested that although they enjoy Serbian music, they are not very loyal to other representations of culture such as films or food. However, when asked to name a traditionally motivated purchase, these participants spoke vaguely and hinted at how other factors affect them more as consumers such as price, preference, and good marketing.

A thought-provoking conclusion at this stage is the following: individuals born and raised in Serbia do not recognize how tradition is affecting them, their habits, and their consumer behavior. For example, one participant said that they do not consider buying local products such as *rakija* (fruit brandy) to be a tradition but rather a habit. This is a weak statement because if they were not Serbian or raised in a country where

having fruit brandy was so common, they would likely not be exposed to it enough for it to become a habit. Further, group 2 participants also never experienced the need to look for traditional products or services abroad unless they were there for extended periods of time. However, they did not necessarily recognize their usual purchases at home to be as traditional as when done abroad.

For this group, significant purchases ranged from things you really need, to expensive items, to furniture, to a flat, to “anything above 100 euros.” However, the biggest purchase mentioned was the refurbishing of an inherited house in Valjevo, which was decorated in a traditional style but with a modern twist. This hints at how people from the same country can have different ideas about what a significant purchase is and how people develop individual taste that can be inspired by tradition. Moreover, they expressed dissatisfaction with the variety of products available in Serbia, high import taxes and uncertain customs duties when ordering online from abroad. Therefore, their knowledge of Serbia’s status and how it affects them as consumers was sound. One interviewee, on the contrary, claimed that they were never burdened by product availability because they are used to what is available and consider that to be sufficient.

In conclusion, group 2 participants seemed to have a strong opinion about how traditional they were and although they did not recognize their consumer behavior as inherently traditional, they admitted to often purchasing Serbian food, furniture, and holiday items such as an oak tree branch for Christmas Eve. All these purchases are, to an extent, traditionally motivated. Therefore, even though the first two groups seem not to acknowledge their consumer behavior as necessarily traditional when making purchases in their home country, they can be classified as such because culture shaped them.

### **5.3 Group 3**

Group 3 participants were also born between 1981–2000 in Serbia but they have, unlike group 2 participants, moved away from their home country. They all currently live in Vienna. Two participants, born in 1987 and 1994, have become Austrian citizens with all the others still having their official nationality as Serbian. One participant, born

in 1983, said that their nationality is “still Serbian,” thus indicating that they are in the process of applying for an Austrian passport. At this stage, it is important to note that to become an Austrian citizen, Serbian immigrants are required to give up their Serbian passports. Regardless of having Austrian citizenship or being in the process of applying for it, all 6 participants from this group stated that they identify as Serbian. When asked if they correlate their role in life with their nationality, only two answered positively and the remaining four said that they do not necessarily think of nationality but rather their personality and life stages. Similar to the group 2 respondents’ answers, younger people seem to think of their role as something individual and not common to a culture.

This group’s responses were highly affirmative when asked if they are familiar with Serbian traditions; all their answers were either “very familiar” or “familiar”. Moreover, they all stated that they celebrate holidays and other festivities in a traditional way. When asked if they feel pressured to do so, they all said no which, in a foreign setting away from home, makes sense. To celebrate Serbian holidays in Austria, especially religious ones, which do not overlap with Austrian dates, takes more effort. This effort might be in finding customary items for the holidays, asking for the day off, or preparing for the celebration, so it requires a desire to do so. Consequently, these interviewees agreed that they share the same views and values with people in Serbia, with two of them saying “not always” and “not necessarily” which could indicate a personal development of attitudes and beliefs influenced by external factors and attitudes widely accepted in Austria.

Hence, when asked if they think their consumer behavior is impacted by their nationality, most group 3 participants answered positively with two of them saying “no” and “not sure.” However, later in the interview, they both mentioned that they have bought or still buy Serbian food and music but did not realize this qualifies as being influenced by tradition. This group collectively agreed that they buy Serbian products – clothes, food, music – and use Serbian services such as cable TV, restaurants, shops, tattoo parlors, and nightclubs. Moreover, some very contrasting opinions were recorded at this stage: one participant expressed how they immediately tried to fit in with the Austrian culture and avoided Serbian products and

services in the beginning because they were embarrassed, while another participant said that they were (and still are) far more comfortable using Serbian services in Vienna and therefore had looked for a tattoo parlor owned by Serbian people. One participant expressed how nostalgic they are and how routine and Serbian products in Vienna helped with the transition while another said how they had stopped looking for Serbian food a while ago because it “isn’t the same.” This discrepancy between respondents’ experiences can be attributed to their personalities, their openness to the new environment and how integrated they were, or wanted to be, in the Serbian community in Vienna.

In conclusion, regardless of the extent of their integration in Austria, all participants have remained true to their tradition by either buying Serbian products or using Serbian-owned services. For them, significant purchases cover expensive, life-changing, and long-lasting things such as jewelry, cars, and homes. They could all identify at least one culturally inspired purchase, and whether it was every-day food or a Serbian flag for a basketball game, the overall impression is that their mentality is still closer to someone from Serbia than Austria. This is supported by one’s desire to go out with the Serbian community, one’s identification of how their individual style does not resemble Austrian style and their hope that they can retire in Belgrade. Although it is difficult to analyze everyone’s individual experience, there is evidence that this group is still very loyal to Serbia and therefore makes traditionally motivated purchases. They were also aware of Serbia’s status and contemplated how this potentially affects the small variety of Serbian products in Vienna, even though there is a huge Serbian community there. Perhaps, as this group’s participants were born and raised in Serbia, their attachment is still strong, and they hold to the values instilled in them before they felt external pressure in Austria. This will be compared with the responses given by the group 5 interviewees who were born and raised in Vienna.

#### **5.4 Group 4**

Group 4 consists of six individuals who were born and raised in Serbia between 1950–1980 but have since immigrated to Austria. As this is a span of three decades, two



participants were chosen per decade to avoid age bias. Four of them were born in Belgrade, one was born in Novi Sad, and one was born in Paracin (town in central Serbia). They all currently live in Vienna, and four of them have Austrian citizenship. Therefore, the remaining two still have their legal nationality as Serbian, as a residence permit is enough to work and live in Austria. Five of them identify as Serbian with one identifying as Austrian. This individual therefore stands out in all the responses below.

All six interviewees have stated that they are familiar with Serbian traditions and that they celebrate important events and holidays accordingly. One participant mentioned that they only celebrate religious holidays from Serbia while another mentioned that they celebrate both Serbian and Austrian holidays. However, the participant who did not identify as Serbian has stated that they do not celebrate any holidays according to Serbian tradition. Moreover, they all agreed that they do not feel pressured by society to obey traditions. As discussed, although a large community does exist in Vienna, the societal pressure is not comparable to the pressure in Serbia where someone is seen as an outsider when they do not participate in a traditional celebration. Supporting this is one participant's observation that they used to feel pressure before moving to Vienna. Once again, the group's exception said that their views do not agree with the views traditionally accepted by the Serbian people, while everyone else answered this question affirmatively or indifferently.

When asked if they believe that nationality influences their consumer behavior, two of them declared "no", one said "not sure" and the remaining three said "yes". However, when they spoke about their purchasing habits, they listed buying Serbian food, spices, music, religious artefacts, paintings, traditional costumes, alcohol, clothes, and furniture. This extensive list supports the hypothesis that consumers are influenced by tradition even if they are not conscious of it. For example, the most frequently mentioned products and services were food and restaurants. Even the consumer who said that they do not identify as Serbian later admitted to occasionally buying Serbian representations of culture such as food and music. Moreover, this group said that, for them, Austria is not considered "abroad" due to their long duration residency there. However, this has not diminished their relationship with

Serbia as they mentioned having to look for specialized Serbian shops if they want a bigger selection of products, or having to ask friends and family to bring them items from Serbia. This indicates that tradition has tied together their new environment and old purchasing habits.

Further, when asked about whether Serbia's status has impacted them as consumers, the answers were diverse. For example, some of them confessed to only caring about Austria's status now and identified how their needs and bank balance, as well as tradition, influence them as consumers. Others identified how Serbia's status has changed and improved over time and how the variety in shops was poor, which was one of the reasons for their relocation. Most importantly, four of them recognized that they compare prices and quality between products in Serbia and Austria and thus plan their purchases in advance. Their assumption is that Serbia has cheaper prices but not necessarily lower quality products. This awareness and tendency to compare suggests that they are still involved in Serbia's market.

In conclusion, this group offered interesting insights into the topic of this research. Not only did they prove that they still have ties with Serbia, as individuals and consumers, but even those who did not immediately recognize it, or were unsure, later provided proof of their traditional buying behavior. Nor did they deviate from previous groups' responses, significant purchases for this group were houses, cars, jewelry, "anything above 500 euros," and long-term investments such as gold and even stocks. Therefore, regardless of where they live or what resources as consumers they have, all participants identified large, expensive, and durable purchases as significant. Finally, this group provided concrete support for the hypothesis presented here as they exhibited how even after years of living abroad, having a separate legal identity, or assimilating into a different culture, tradition and habits formed in childhood (while under influence of friends and family) impacted them as consumers in the long-term. Familiarity with tradition is a personal choice based on the circumstances discussed in the literature review but dedication to it, even when exposed to external influences, is a conscious decision.

## 5.5 Group 5

Group 5 is the last group but not the least significant one. On the contrary, these 6 individuals, born between 1981–2000 and raised in Vienna, have the weakest ties to Serbia. They all currently reside in Vienna, except for one participant who lives in Linz (a city in Upper Austria). Although they have never lived in Serbia, they have all visited or spent time there. Consequently, even though their official nationality is Austrian, four of them identify as Serbian, one identifies as both Serbian and Austrian, and one identifies as purely Austrian. Moreover, when asked about whether they associate their role in life with their Serbian heritage, two of them answered that they do. Although individual to the person, this is an interesting observation considering they have never lived in Serbia. In addition, five of them said that they are very familiar with Serbian traditions while only one said “not really.” Additionally, they all answered positively when asked if they celebrate holidays and other milestones in a traditional Serbian manner, although one mentioned that they celebrate like that infrequently. As a whole, this group said that they do not feel pressured to do so, with one going as far as to say “no, not in Austria,” which can support the assumption previously formed about how the societal pressure in Austria is lower.

When asked whether they believe their personal beliefs and values align with those generally accepted in Serbia, three answered affirmatively while the remaining three answered vaguely, that they do not think so and are not sure. As they have not spent extended periods of time in Serbia and are basing their assumptions on the values ingrained into them by their parents or friends, this is an individual answer that depends on personal experience. Therefore, when asked if they believe culture has affected their consumer behavior, it is was not surprising that they gave “yes,” “no,” “not necessarily,” and “probably” as answers. This wide range of answers depends on the individual. All of them, however, admitted to buying either Serbian food, music, or both. This is where divergent experiences come to light. Four interviewees stated that they go out to Serbian clubs, cafes, and restaurants. One interviewee stated that they tend to enjoy Serbian culture when they visit so that they are not burdened by searching for Serbian representations of culture in Austria, while the last one stated that, although they have not been raised with a closeness to their heritage, they still

enjoy traditional food and music in the company of their family. This last observation can be tied to Goffman's theory that people base their "role" on the audience present. Therefore, tradition has impacted each one of them, either directly or indirectly, as consumers.

To a large extent, the traditional purchases this group has made are smaller and cheaper than the purchases they have listed as significant. For example, they identified property, gold, vehicles, instruments and other expensive or sentimental items as significant, whereas when asked about traditionally motivated purchases, they only listed food, music, and entertainment services. Another notable point to mention here is that they have the most limited range of culturally inspired purchases. While other participants, who have spent more time in Serbia, made bigger and more valuable purchases, this groups' participants seem to be tied only to the most mainstream and accessible representations of culture – food and music. As second-generation Serbs, this is not surprising, but it still supports the assumption that tradition has a strong impact on consumers. Even when they did not make purchases for themselves, they have made them for others, thus fulfilling their national role. They also mentioned owning paintings of Serbia and enjoying Serbian beverages.

As expected, this group was not very familiar with Serbia's status in the world, so they did not have a strong belief that it has affected them as consumers. They identified that in general, they tend to, or their parents tend to, find most of the Serbian products and services they are interested in. Considering this is due to Serbia's status and large community in Vienna, it makes sense that Serbian products are more accessible in Austria than in other countries in the world. In conclusion, this group seemingly had the weakest ties to their Serbian heritage, but have, as consumers, been impacted by it. Most of them have bought both products and services, either for themselves or with their families. This puts a strong emphasis on the fact that tradition is not inherited; it is generational, and it must be practiced to stay alive. Therefore, when assessing how tradition has impacted Serbian consumers classified into five different groups, participants across the entire spectrum have shown consumer tendencies inspired by tradition.

## 6 Interpretation of Interviews

Having looked at the five different groups of Serbian people and their consumer behavior, a certain purchasing pattern emerges. Overall, for every group, tradition seems to influence consumers. However, this conclusion comes with a set of smaller observations. For instance, while all participants make frequent purchases related to Serbian culture, consumers with stronger ties to Serbia make a wider variety of purchases while those with weaker ties make less diverse purchases. Moreover, group 3 participants were dissatisfied with the variety of products in Vienna while group 5 participants were satisfied. As group 3 participants grew up in Serbia, they were used to having more Serbian products available, while group 5 participants grew up in Austria, with the smaller selection of Serbian products, and deem that sufficient. Thus, the two groups of Serbian people living in Vienna have two different perspectives on the Serbian products and services on offer.

Another prominent observation is that participants who live in Serbia do not recognize how traditional their usual, everyday purchases are. For them, traditional purchases are specific and rare, such as old, traditional furniture, or purchases made when you feel homesick, while for Serbian people abroad even the smallest purchases, such as food and music, are seen as traditional. Therefore, when initially asked if they believe tradition influences their consumer behavior, people living abroad recognized it more often than people at home. Purchases that are common for a culture, or that have become a habit are arguably always inspired by tradition. Hence, purchasing food such as *ajvar* (roast pepper appetizer) or cultural items such as a *badnjak* (oak tree branch) for Christmas Eve are both traditionally oriented purchases, regardless of where people are geographically. Although Serbian people abroad have made purchases that can be seen as “more traditional,” such as owning national costumes or wanting to buy property in Serbia, Serbian people at home make conscious decisions daily to be loyal to domestic products and local services. A possible reason for the “more traditional” purchases of those abroad is, simply, nostalgia. Moreover, representations of culture are diverse and depend on individuals, their preferences, and their ability to acquire them. Figure 7 below indicates the most important themes recorded in the research for each group interviewed.

*Group*      *Key Takeaways*

<p><b>1</b> <i>Born 1950 – 1980</i> <i>Serbia</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All have Serbian citizenship &amp; identify as Serbian</li> <li>• Familiar with traditions, celebrate accordingly &amp; do not feel pressured to do so</li> <li>• Group with the most diverse traditional purchases, loyal to local businesses</li> <li>• Do not recognize how their daily purchases are traditional, think you must “miss” home to make traditionally motivated purchases</li> </ul>
<p><b>2</b> <i>Born 1981 – 2000</i> <i>Serbia</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All have Serbian citizenship &amp; identify as Serbian</li> <li>• Familiar with traditions and proudly celebrate them</li> <li>• Do not recognize how tradition has shaped their consumer choices at home</li> <li>• Aware of Serbia’s status &amp; how it has impacted them as consumers, especially when considering online purchases</li> </ul>
<p><b>3</b> <i>Born 1981 – 2000</i> <i>Serbia – Austria</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A mix of Austrian &amp; Serbian citizenships but all identify as Serbian</li> <li>• Celebrate holidays traditionally although it takes more effort to do so abroad</li> <li>• Dissatisfied with the variety of Serbian products in Vienna</li> <li>• Diverse experiences: some used to shy away from traditional products/services while others always opt for Serbian products/services first</li> </ul>
<p><b>4</b> <i>Born 1950 – 1980</i> <i>Serbia – Austria</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A mix of Austrian &amp; Serbian citizenships, 5/6 identify as Serbian</li> <li>• Do not feel pressured to celebrate in a traditional way, do it regardless</li> <li>• Think of Austria as home but are very involved in the Serbian market; compare prices &amp; quality levels before making a purchase</li> <li>• Tradition has tied their new environment &amp; old purchasing habits</li> </ul>
<p><b>5</b> <i>Born 1981 – 2000</i> <i>Austria</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All have Austrian citizenships, 5/6 identify as Serbian but have never lived there</li> <li>• Mixed feelings on whether their beliefs align with the ones upheld in Serbia</li> <li>• Accept a more traditional role when surrounded by family &amp; friends from Serbia</li> <li>• Most cultural purchases were related to food &amp; music (least diverse)</li> </ul>

Figure 7 – Summary of Results

Due to nostalgia, group 4 participants, born between 1950–1980, had a very comprehensive understanding of Serbia’s status in the world. They pointed out how involved they were in the market and frequently compared prices and qualities before making a purchase. Moreover, while older participants in Vienna mentioned how Serbia’s unstable economic past was a factor that influenced their decision to leave and look for a more stable economy to call home, younger participants expressed how they were not very familiar with Serbia’s status but can easily find Serbian products and services. On the contrary, participants still living in Serbia, both young and old, were aware of the country’s status and made different observations. For example, older participants referenced high import taxes as their biggest consumer issue while younger participants mentioned how foreign companies often do not deliver to Serbia or have other problems at customs when making online purchases. It can therefore be concluded that although all five groups of participants have different experiences of Serbia’s status in the world, they are all aware of how that has affected them as consumers depending on their personal factors.

Furthermore, an interesting note is that older participants frequently related their personal role to nationality, while younger participants tended to think of individual characteristics. A possible reason for this is that people born and raised in Serbia while it was part of Yugoslavia were taught to relate the two. On the other hand, a common observation for all groups is a universal understanding of what a significant purchase is. For most, if not all participants, significant meant expensive, durable, and sentimental so their responses repeatedly mentioned property, vehicles, jewelry, and gold. Most participants also agreed that their personal beliefs and values aligned with those generally accepted and upheld in Serbia, with only a few outliers who claimed that was not always the case. Moreover, societal pressure to be traditional was only correlated to participants from the more rural areas of Serbia and not those residing in either Belgrade or Vienna.

According to the results of this research, a sound conclusion can be made that Serbian people are heavily influenced by tradition in their everyday lives. For individuals who still live in Serbia, any purchase can be considered traditional as the market is shaped by long-term consumer preferences and cultural bias and mainly served by domestic

businesses. While consumers in Serbia do not have to think twice when purchasing representations of culture, as products and services are easily accessible and abundant, Serbian consumers in Austria need to dedicate more time and effort to finding those same products or services. Therefore, as their efforts stem from a dedication to tradition and culture, it can be concluded that they are influenced by it: Individuals from different backgrounds who were exposed to different religious, economic and education systems all related to the same traditional fundamentals in the end.



## 7 Conclusion

The hypothesis that this paper set out to confirm, that tradition has a strong impact on consumers, proved true for the groups tested. The personal, social, economic, psychological, and cultural factors therefore act, independently and in combination with tradition, on individuals to shape them as consumers. Age blends with tradition by creating generational cohorts and forming groups of people who share the same views and have similar attitudes. Those groups then decide on what their interpretation of traditional rituals will be, thus framing new and modernized beliefs while maintaining long-standing ones. Social awareness, including both beliefs and attitudes and roles and status, is built through personal experiences, life stages and internal and external influences. People develop their personal roles and values through education and relationships and thus position themselves in society as individuals and consumers. Depending on governmental policies and personal income, they are limited when making purchasing decisions and encouraged to evaluate which purchases have priority. In communities that value tradition, that priority will be given to representations of culture as they appeal to both intrinsic factors (such as personal satisfaction and fulfillment of habits) and extrinsic factors (such as approval and acceptance). Moreover, individuals will always relate to their national culture, or when applicable subculture, if it is familiar and comfortable. Therefore, the research question, which considered how tradition affected consumer behavior, has been answered positively.

While tradition might have an impact on consumer behavior, the magnitude of that impact depends on the cultural ties and existing attitudes people hold. This is where two prominent studies are supported. According to Ozorak's 1989 study on social and cognitive influences, children's and adolescents' attitudes towards religion and tradition are shaped by their families, friends, and other external influences. This is sustained by the fact that all participants make traditionally motivated purchases and celebrate Serbian holidays regardless of where they are located. Moreover, five participants – who were born and raised in Vienna – identify as Serbian. This is due to constant exposure to their family's dedication and loyalty to Serbia and its traditions. Furthermore, Goffman's 1974 study is also referenced for the participants who admit

how devoted they are to that aspect of their identity when in the company of other Serbian people. Hence, they take on a more patriotic role when in a setting that promotes such views.

Although tradition impacts the consumer behavior of Serbian consumers, it is difficult to generalize this conclusion. Firstly, the sample size and the way the responses were collected is a limitation to the study. A bigger sample size, not collected as a convenient sample, could potentially point to contrasting conclusions due to the personal preferences and experiences of individuals. Moreover, the specific situation between Serbia and Austria is an undeniable element in this study. Due to the large and well-established Serbian community in Austria, and the proximity to Serbia, Serbian consumers in Vienna have a selection of products and services available that might not be the case in other foreign countries. This would mean that Serbian consumers do not have the means to act in a traditional way even when they want to. For example, a Serbian immigrant in France might not have the same opportunities as a Serbian immigrant in Austria does, which would also affect the results of the study.

However, as tradition overlaps with a variety of factors such as age, social awareness, culture, and economics, it can be assumed that it does have an impact. All the factors discussed in this study can be associated with tradition and consumer behavior. Furthermore, individuals loyal to a culture can harbor that and express it through practicing tradition and making traditional purchases regardless of where they are in the world and what external influences they are exposed to. Dedication to and the practicing of cultural rituals depends on families, communities, and the general ability to do so. Therefore, individuals who have certain values and cultural beliefs implanted in them are highly likely to continue practicing them and passing them on. This in turn shapes a traditional consumer, by creating preferences and habits that last. However, this is contingent on positive experiences and pleasant and enjoyable traditions that people are proud to replicate. Given that tradition must be taught and emphasized to sustain, it is possible to conclude that tradition shapes consumers more in close-knit and proud societies. Nonetheless, as long as there is a continuous transmission of customs, beliefs, principles, and values, there will be consumers motivated to make traditional purchases.

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## **Appendices**

### **Appendix 1**

#### *Interview Questions*

1. When were you born?
2. Where, in which city and country, were you born?
3. Where do you currently live?
4. What is your official nationality?
5. Do you identify as Serbian?
6. When you think of your role [e.g. student/parent/employee, etc.] and the status it carries, do you think of your Serbian heritage?
7. How familiar are you with Serbian traditions?
8. Would you say you follow Serbian traditions when celebrating holidays and other milestones in life?
9. Do you feel pressured by society to follow Serbian traditions?
10. Would you say your personal values agree with the beliefs traditionally accepted by Serbian society?
11. Do you think your Serbian identity influences your purchasing decisions?
12. What do you consider a significant purchase?
13. Do you frequently purchase traditional Serbian food/music/other material representations of culture?
14. Have you ever looked for a product/service associated with Serbia abroad? (e.g. ajvar)
15. Do you think that the status Serbia holds in the world has affected your decisions as a consumer at home/abroad?
16. Are there any instances you can think of where you were influenced by your Serbian heritage to make a purchase?

## Appendix 2

### Group 1

Group 1: People born between 1950–1980 who were raised and remained in their home country of Serbia											
Question #	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q9	Q10	Q11
Participant 1	06.01.1968.	Belgrade, Serbia	Belgrade	Serbian	Yes	Very often	Very, more with age	Yes	No, I love it	Yes they do	In most cases
Participant 2	21.05.1962.	Belgrade, Serbia	Belgrade	Serbian	Yes	Yes	Very familiar	Yes	No	Yeah mostly	Sometimes
Participant 3	30.10.1957.	Belgrade, Serbia	Belgrade	Serbian	Yes	Yes	Yes, very	Yes	No, I'm proud of it	I think so	Yes
Participant 4	23.09.1979.	Kraljevo, Serbia	Belgrade	Serbian	Yes	Absolutely	I'm familiar	Yes	Not at all	I would	Never thought about it
Participant 5	16.12.1953.	Novi Sad, Serbia	Novi Sad	Serbian	Yes	Not really	Pretty familiar	Yes	Sometimes	Mainly	No
Participant 6	13.02.1975.	Belgrade, Serbia	Belgrade	Serbian	Yes	No	Very familiar	Yes	No	Yes	Yes, I buy local

Participant 1	
Q12	A house and a car probably.
Q13	Most frequently traditional Serbian food and music but there are other instances like clothes.
Q14	Not really, I don't think I've ever been abroad long enough to start craving Serbian food.
Q15	Actually yes because Serbia has bigger import taxes.
Q16	Just once when I bought a cilim (Serbian rug) for my new house. It's part of my heritage.

Participant 2	
Q12	A house is definitely the most significant purchase I ever made.
Q13	I look for Serbian food all the time and I try to use local businesses like domestic produce from the farmer's market.
Q14	Absolutely, plazma, coffee, zacin C (spice). Mostly during the year I spent abroad in France.
Q15	I don't know.
Q16	Not necessarily heritage but environment, my first car was a Mercedes Benz which was very popular on the streets of Belgrade at that time.

Participant 3	
Q12	Property.
Q13	I usually buy Serbian food and I have old, traditional furniture in my house (chairs).
Q14	Sometimes when I'm abroad for a while and get nostalgic I look for some food maybe but that's it.
Q15	Probably not abroad but definitely at home, I tend to buy domestic and organic products.
Q16	I bought land in the village my father is from and I built a house there, that was completely inspired by my heritage and background.

Participant 4	
Q12	My house and my wedding ring.
Q13	I'm not a foodie but I do purchase Serbian artwork, films and music.
Q14	I can't recall if I have but it's always a pleasant surprise to see Serbian products abroad.
Q15	I don't think so, when I was little the choices at home were poor due to sanctions but currently I would say we're holding a better status.
Q16	Every year, I celebrate slava and follow all religious holidays so I guess I buy all the traditional things such as zito and slavski kolac (wheat and bread).

Participant 5	
Q12	Land or a vehicle.
Q13	Yes, I live in Vojvodina which is still very traditional so my house is decorated accordingly.
Q14	I don't think I have, my holidays are usually not too long.
Q15	I would definitely always go for a Serbian product before a foreign one but I'm not sure if that counts.
Q16	On my wedding day, my partner and I agreed that we would respect all the customs so I had a lot of traditional purchases for that celebration. Only that stands out.

Participant 6	
Q12	A house or a flat.
Q13	I buy a lot of Serbian food but I don't consider that necessarily traditional, it's normal and what we usually have at home.
Q14	No, when I'm abroad I look for traditional things from the country I'm visiting.
Q15	Apart from being loyal to products made locally, I don't think it's affected me too much.
Q16	I haven't thought about it in that sense because like I said, all the food, music and clothes I get seems normal to me to have and not motivated by tradition.

Group 2

Group 2: People born between 1981–2000, who were raised and remained in Serbia											
Question #	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q9	Q10	Q11
Participant 7	10.03.1986.	Belgrade, Serbia	Belgrade	Serbian	Yes I do	Partially	Yes with more common ones	Yes	No	More or less	Not really
Participant 8	04.05.2000.	Belgrade, Serbia	Belgrade	Serbian	Yes	Yes	Very much	Well of course	No, I want to live like that	Yes	No
Participant 9	31.12.1996.	Obrenovac, Serbia	Belgrade	Serbian	Yes	No	Very, I know a lot about them	Definitely	Yes but I enjoy it	Yes	I don't think so
Participant 10	10.01.1992.	Belgrade, Serbia	Belgrade	Serbian	Yes	Not at all	Yes but I only like some	Christmas & Easter	Not in Belgrade	I think so	Yes for food
Participant 11	15.02.1984.	Belgrade, Serbia	Belgrade	Serbian	Yes	No	Familiar with mainstream ones	I would	It's definitely expected	Not always	No
Participant 12	28.07.1989.	Valjevo, Serbia	Belgrade	Serbian	Yes	Yes	I'm very familiar	Yes, always	I used to before	Yes	Probably not

Participant 7	
Q12	Well anything that costs a lot of money proportional to what one earns.
Q13	Yes, I base my diet mostly on Serbian food and I shop locally. I also listen to Serbian music and enjoy Serbian TV.
Q14	If I'm spending an extended amount of time I will definitely look for the popularized products like koko bananice (chocolate sweets).
Q15	Sometimes I can't find great variety at home and many products are not available because of the high import tax. Oreos for example only recently came to Serbia.
Q16	I sincerely cannot think of a time. I buy things that I like and that does not always relate to Serbian trends or heritage. I'm more influenced by good marketing.

Participant 8	
Q12	Anything above 100 euros.
Q13	Yes, both food and music. I buy that for myself and the family as well.
Q14	No I haven't.
Q15	I don't think so because I'm familiar with the products I've been raised with and consider their availability to be normal. So I don't think about foreign stuff that we don't have.
Q16	Serbia has many different cultures running through its history and I appreciate that, therefore I think it influenced me because I am willing to try all traditional things.

Participant 9	
Q12	Since I am an interior designer, I see how significant any home related purchase is, so I would say furniture.
Q13	Of course, I listen to Serbian music every day and I also love traditional food like plejskavica, sarma, gibanica (meat patty, cabbage roll, cheese pie).
Q14	Not really because I didn't have the need to but I know my friends who live abroad are always searching for Serbian food there.
Q15	Yes many times! I'm always worried about customs and whether companies deliver to Serbia. The situation's improved in the last years but I still reconsider every online purchase.
Q16	No, I think price and my preference affect me more than heritage. But I don't consider buying rakija or local products as traditional by definition, more just habit.

Participant 10	
Q12	I consider everything I really need in the moment to be a significant purchase.
Q13	I love our food and homemade products. I also think we have a lot of quality musicians, painters and pianists, so I appreciate that aspect of our culture.
Q14	Yes! I lived in Moscow during my masters studies and I went to shops with Serbian products every day to buy biscuits, ajvar and other stuff.
Q15	I think Serbia has a different status in each country so that's hard to tell but when someone has a negative attitude about Serbia I think it's their lack of historical knowledge.
Q16	The only thing related to this I can think of is when I lived in Russia and was homesick. I would buy Serbian products.

Participant 11	
Q12	Expensive jewellery, a car, definitely a home.
Q13	Not really, I listen to Serbian music sometimes but I'm not loyal to traditional food or other cultural items.
Q14	No, I don't think I have. No need for that if I'm on vacation.
Q15	I always find a bigger selection and better prices abroad. Serbia is too focused on their local or Balkan products.
Q16	I can't think of a time because apart from music, I'm really not very traditional. I respect the holidays and make small purchases for that like badnjak (tree) for Christmas.

Participant 12	
Q12	A significant purchase for me is one that you really need to think about or collect money for like a flat.
Q13	Yes, I really enjoy Serbian music and our traditional food.
Q14	No, I haven't.
Q15	I'm price-sensitive and always look for where something was manufactured to be sure of its quality. Other than that, not really.
Q16	After I inherited my grandfather's house in Valjevo I contemplated selling it but for the sake of my roots, I kept it and made many purchases to refurbish it in a stylish but traditional way.



Group 3

Group 3: People born between 1981–2000, who were raised in Serbia but immigrated to Austria											
Question #	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q9	Q10	Q11
Participant 13	09.05.1999.	Belgrade, Serbia	Vienna	Serbian	Yes	Yes but not immediately	Very	Yes	Not at all	Yes, generally	Yes
Participant 14	01.06.1983.	Belgrade, Serbia	Vienna	Still Serbian	Yes	No, I think of personality	Familiar	Yes I do	No	Not necessarily	Sometimes
Participant 15	12.10.1994.	Belgrade, Serbia	Vienna	Austrian	Yes	Yes	Very familiar	Yes	No	Yes they do	Yes
Participant 16	19.12.1989.	Belgrade, Serbia	Vienna	Serbian	Yes	No, not necessarily	Familiar	Yes	No	Yes	Not sure
Participant 17	25.08.2000.	Belgrade, Serbia	Vienna	Serbian	Yes	No	Very familiar	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Participant 18	13.03.1987.	Belgrade, Serbia	Vienna	Austrian	Yes	No, more of life stages	Familiar	Not for all	No	Not always	No

Participant 13	
Q12	Anything more expensive, I think significant purchases are related to price.
Q13	When I first moved here I didn't, I wanted to fit in but with time I decided it was completely fine. Especially when I'm feeling nostalgic.
Q14	Yes! Food like cevapi and ajvar and I've been to the Serbian club last year for the first time.
Q15	Like I said, at first when I moved here I avoided anything related to Serbia because I wanted to embrace Austrian culture, maybe I was embarrassed.
Q16	Nowadays I don't shy away from traditional Serbian food and entertainment.

Participant 14	
Q12	A car, a house, land, big things like that.
Q13	Yes, mostly music and food but since my family isn't here with me, I stopped purchasing traditional items for the holidays.
Q14	Ever since I've been here in Vienna I've occasionally looked for Serbian products and shops.
Q15	Back in Belgrade it's super easy to get the food I want to but in Vienna it's a hassle. I wish there was bigger variety considering the population here is huge.
Q16	Although I would like to become an Austrian citizen now for work, I think I would want to buy an apartment in Belgrade and retire there.

Participant 15	
Q12	Life changing things like a new home but anything very expensive can be significant, jewellery as well.
Q13	Yes, the usual food and although it's not a representation of culture, I have Serbian cable TV installed.
Q14	Yes so restaurants, shops, clubs...
Q15	Not necessarily but I am more comfortable with Serbian services here, I got my tattoo at a Serbian tattoo parlour in the tenth district.
Q16	Every day when I opt for our food but probably nothing more significant than that.

Participant 16	
Q12	Anything very expensive is probably significant.
Q13	I think so, I buy the traditional Serbian food I ate as a child but I didn't realize it qualifies as being influenced as a consumer.
Q14	Yes, mostly the food either in restaurants or stores.
Q15	I don't think so, I can definitely see the difference in supermarkets but I think that has less to do with the status and more with consumer preferences.
Q16	I bought a Serbian flag once just to go watch a basketball game and show my support.

Participant 17	
Q12	Expensive items or items that will last long.
Q13	Yes, traditional food and services such as the Serbian kneipe (restaurant) or club.
Q14	All the time, I'm a very nostalgic person and I find comfort in routine so I like to do things I did back home or eat the same food, stuff like that.
Q15	I think so, not necessarily because of the status but because of the emphasis put on tradition. I can't imagine moving to Vienna and not respecting my culture.
Q16	Yes like I said food, music, also clothes and other services. My style is closer to the Serbian mentality than the Austrian.

Participant 18	
Q12	When I first moved here, every purchase was significant but I would single out my apartment.
Q13	Not really, I gave up on looking for good Serbian food in Vienna but I do still listen to Serbian music.
Q14	I have in the past but as I said it's not the same or homemade so I gave up.
Q15	Perhaps Serbia's low status and questionable prices have limited the offer of Serbian products abroad, that's affected me.
Q16	Maybe in the beginning, when I used to look for good places to have Serbian food or go out within the Serbian community.

Group 4

Group 4: People born between 1950–1980, who were raised in Serbia but immigrated to Austria											
Question #	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q9	Q10	Q11
Participant 19	10.06.1966.	Paracin, SFRYU	Vienna	Austrian	Yes I do	Yes	Not too familiar	Only religious ones	Not here	I don't know	No
Participant 20	25.04.1952.	Belgrade, Serbia	Vienna	Austrian	Yes	Yes	Very familiar	Yes I would	No	Yes	Yes, maybe
Participant 21	05.11.1975.	Belgrade, Serbia	Vienna	Serbian	Yes	No	Very	Yes but also Austrian	Not at all	Yes	Not sure
Participant 22	27.08.1974.	Belgrade, Serbia	Vienna	Austrian	Yes	No	I'm familiar	Yes	I used to	Mostly yes	Yes
Participant 23	14.10.1956.	Belgrade, Yugoslavia	Vienna	Serbian	Yes	No	Very familiar	Yes, usually	No	Yes	Yes
Participant 24	18.02.1969.	Novi Sad, Serbia	Vienna	Austrian	No	No	I'm familiar	No	No	Not really	No

Participant 19	
Q12	My new car.
Q13	Not frequently but I do get Serbian food. I think my purchases are more related to my needs and account balance than culture.
Q14	Yes, but only food.
Q15	No I don't. I've been here for about 40 years now so I think about the status Austria holds not Serbia.
Q16	A long time ago I bought a traditional Serbian costume for a festival. It just sits in the closet now but I keep it as a memory.

Participant 20	
Q12	Expensive items and services are a big purchase - house, car, holiday, jewellery.
Q13	I do, mainly music and food and I go to Serbian restaurants often.
Q14	If Vienna is considered abroad, even though I live here, then yes. I look for Serbian products frequently.
Q15	There is definitely a bigger variety in Serbia now than when I moved away, that has to do with status and it is one of the reasons I left.
Q16	My wife and I have religious relics at home brought from Serbia.

Participant 21	
Q12	Anything as small as a watch and as big as a house can be significant.
Q13	I frequently purchase Serbian alcohol and spices.
Q14	Yes, so the things I just mentioned and definitely Serbian clubs and restaurants.
Q15	No, but I am aware of where I can find better quality or a better price so sometimes I plan ahead if I'll buy something in Vienna or Belgrade.
Q16	I go to Belgrade often and always get some food and drinks to take back.

Participant 22	
Q12	A house or a car for example.
Q13	Yes and the reason I said I think I'm influenced by my nationality is because I buy Serbian food a lot.
Q14	Definitely and if stuff I like isn't available here, I ask friends/family to bring it from Serbia.
Q15	As an immigrant here I have to look for specific Serbian shops if I want more than the few basic products offered in supermarkets.
Q16	There's the daily purchases I mentioned and the desire to buy a second home in Belgrade soon.

Participant 23	
Q12	Long-term investments are significant to me so gold, property, stocks.
Q13	Yes, most frequently food and music and less frequently other stuff like clothes and furniture but sometimes I get that too.
Q14	I have, but only food I think. Otherwise I like to get authentic things from Serbia and not Vienna.
Q15	I always assume that everything is cheaper in Serbia so I tend to stall some purchases and compare prices a lot.
Q16	I just mentioned some but a separate occasion was an international ball where you were encouraged to wear your traditional costume so I went out and got a full set.

Participant 24	
Q12	Things that are expensive and that you really have to be careful with so maybe anything above 500 euros is significant.
Q13	No, even if I do it's seldomly.
Q14	No, I don't consider Austria to be "abroad" but even here I might have gotten some food but that's it.
Q15	Serbia's status was a reason I left but I'm not sure if it affected me as a consumer. They don't export a lot but their prices are mostly cheaper than in Austria.
Q16	This wasn't a personal purchase but I bought a religious, wooden painting as a present for my parents.

Group 5

Group 5: People who were born in Austria between 1981–2000 and were raised there											
Question #	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q9	Q10	Q11
Participant 25	26.04.1999.	Vienna, Austria	Vienna	Austrian	Yes	Yes	Very familiar	Yes	No, I don't	Yes	Not necessarily
Participant 26	16.11.1985.	Vienna, Austria	Vienna	Austrian	Yes	Yes	Yes, very	Yes, usually	No, I like to	Yes	Probably
Participant 27	02.08.1997.	Vienna, Austria	Vienna	Austrian	No	No	Not really	Rarely	No, not in Austria	I wouldn't know	No
Participant 28	12.09.1988.	Vienna, Austria	Vienna	Austrian	Yes	No	I'm familiar	Not always but yes	No	Not fully	Yes
Participant 29	24.09.1981.	Vienna, Austria	Vienna	Austrian	Yes	Not really	Fairly familiar	Yes, religious holidays	Not really	Yes	No
Participant 30	08.05.2000.	Vienna, Austria	Linz	Austrian	Yes, both	No	Familiar	Yes	No	I don't think so	No

Participant 25	
Q12	A significant purchase for me varies for different types of purchases, I generally want to fulfil my wants and needs. I guess property is significant.
Q13	Yes I like to eat Serbian food from time to time.
Q14	Yes food and going out to Serbian clubs and restaurants is a service I used.
Q15	No, I don't think so but the variety of Serbian products in regular grocery stores here is good at least.
Q16	Besides food, alcohol and music I don't think I've been too involved in other cultural representations.

Participant 26	
Q12	A house, a motorcycle, gold.
Q13	Yes all the time, I eat a lot of Serbian food and before corona virus I used to go to Serbian cafes a lot.
Q14	I buy food and music here in Vienna.
Q15	No because I can find most of the stuff I like here in Vienna. Maybe it's different elsewhere in the world.
Q16	Apart from the usual food and music I mentioned, I also have some paintings of nature in Serbia. It's at my home in Vienna.

Participant 27	
Q12	Personally, as a musician, a new instrument is significant for me.
Q13	I haven't been raised too close to my Serbian heritage but we do have Serbian food and we listen to Serbian music at home sometimes.
Q14	Not directly looked for it but when my family buys it I appreciate it.
Q15	Probably not, I know very little about the status it holds and the customs there. My parents seem to find the stuff they like from home here though.
Q16	I did get some Serbian chocolates for my boyfriend to try when I was visiting Belgrade.

Participant 28	
Q12	Either very big and expensive things or those with sentimental value that aren't as expensive but meaningful.
Q13	I listen to Serbian music a lot and I guess I have Serbian food from time to time.
Q14	Yes so Serbian food, music and places where they play Serbian music like this winery in the first district.
Q15	I don't think so, at least here there are many Serbian products.
Q16	A direct influence can be my interest in the music or liking Serbian food but this was inspired by my parents I think.

Participant 29	
Q12	I see all expensive things as significant and a purchase that needs to be well planned.
Q13	No, I wouldn't say frequently but I do get some Serbian food or play some music when I feel like it.
Q14	Yes, rarely but I have bought plazma (cookies) and went out for burek (cheese pie).
Q15	I really wouldn't know. I was born and raised in Vienna and I have seen the difference between Serbia and Austria but that hasn't affected me.
Q16	In most instances, it would be food but also perhaps all the trips I took with my family every year to visit Serbia.

Participant 30	
Q12	Significant purchase is one that costs a lot such as a car.
Q13	Honestly no, I visit Serbia twice a year or so and enjoy the food and music while I'm there.
Q14	I go to a Serbian restaurant with my mom sometimes because she gets very nostalgic at times.
Q15	I really wouldn't know.
Q16	Whenever I'm in Serbia I feel like we as a family make a lot of small purchases, for example food to take back.