

Strategy for export of Kosovo's cultural assets

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I. Introduction

Kosovo, the NEWBORN state, is enjoying its independence. The long dreamed aspirations are more than real for Kosovo right now. Looking forward to the future and being recognized by more countries is another “war” for Kosovo. Seeking new avenues in this direction is the key to the newest state in the world.

However, the next “war” of Kosovo has to be a muted and psychological one. Whether it will be successful or not depends on a series of factors. Kosovo, as a new independent state, is more focused on working toward the accession by new states, neglecting the relevance of the arts and culture in the process. But no development is expected without the interplay of the culture. If culture is defined as the entire system of beliefs, practices and customs that exist in a society, it is the foundation that supports every development.¹ Economic development without cultural roots will never be sustainable.²

Relying on the power of art and culture is crucial for Kosovo's future. This paper examines the importance of the art and culture on bridging the gap between a new state, its neighbors and the world.

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¹The power of Culture, <http://powerofculture.nl/en/theme/policy.html>, (last visited on Dec.2, 2008).

² *Id.*

It emphasizes the importance of coming up with a proposal on how to sustain and build a strategy for the export of Kosovo's culture. This paper also argues the social-economic factors, which play an integral role in this strategy.

The first part of this paper introduces and analyzes the term of soft power and its substantiality as an instrument in helping Kosovo change its stereotype. This part introduces a strong model of how soft power helps in building and performing around the world, the United States model.

The second part of this paper focuses and introduces the actual cultural inventory of Kosovo by analyzing the steps taken so far and the future progress. This part aims to point out that the issues the Kosovo artists are facing must be dealt properly, by trying to not always blame the politics. The final part of this paper introduces a proposed strategy to be followed in helping and supporting the export of Kosovo's cultural assets. The final part of this paper analyzes also the difficulties and hurdles the proposed strategy might face.

II. Soft power in the 21st century

The term soft power has been championed by Joseph S. Nye, a Harvard professor and leading international relations scholar. Professor Nye has defined soft power as “the ability to achieve desired outcomes in international affairs through attractions rather than coercion.”³ This term is generally used in international relations theory to describe the ability of a political body, such as a state, to indirectly influence the behavior or interests of other political bodies through cultural or ideological means.

³Matthew Fraser, *Weapons of Mass Distraction: Soft Power and American Empire* 18 (Thomas Dunne Books ed., St. Martin's Press, NY, 2005).

The basic concept of power is the ability to influence others to get them to do what one wants. There are three major ways to do that: one is to threaten them with sticks; the second is to pay them with carrots; the third is to attract them or co-opt them, so that they want what one wants.⁴ In fact, if one can get others to be attracted to want what he wants, it costs much less in carrots and sticks.⁵ [formal paper should not use the second person]The first time one visits a new country regardless of his or her preparation, it is always different from the way he or she imagined it would be.⁶

Images of certain nations, however right or wrong they might be, seem to form fundamentally through a very complex communication process involving varied information sources.⁷ Practically anything can contribute to the forming an image of another nation: the fact that a bottle of Italian wine tastes of cork; that the highways in Russia are awful; that the consular official has bad breath; that yet another product made in Germany doesn't work.⁸ During the Grenoble winter Olympics in 1968, the West German ice Hockey team brawled with the United States team.⁹ According to the German public relations practitioner, Rainer Fabian (1970), this earned the Germans considerable empathy from the French who are not enthusiastic fans of the United States.¹⁰

The global appeal of one country depends a lot on the assertion of soft power which includes lifestyle, culture, norms, and values. Soft power also includes artistic

⁴ Joseph S. Nye Jr., Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics 3 (PublicAffairs, March 16, 2004).

⁵ *Id.*

⁶ Michael Kunczik, Images of Nations and International Public Relations 1 (Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, October 1, 1996).

⁷ *Id.*

⁸ *Id.*

⁹ *Id.*

¹⁰ *Id.*

expression and institutional arrangements- such as traveling, exhibitions and scholarly exchange programs- that help export that nation's model. Creating this communication bridge surely helps a new state build its image in the global world. The future of a new state depends strongly on showing off its greatest cultural assets, virtues and powerful traditions. Soft power can be "high", directed at elites in a country, or "low", aimed at the general public.¹¹ It can stem from governments and nongovernmental actors-business people and pop music stars, as well as politicians and leaders.¹²

This is a powerful strategy where a new state as Kosovo, might be based to help create and sustain a stronger image around the globe. Moreover, this strategy will be helpful to the recognition of Kosovo around the world.

Kosovo is very familiar with hard power, but not as much with soft power. Leaders of Kosovo have not been faced yet with the choice about what type of power they might use. This follows their belief and long timed conviction that the power comes only from the barrel of a gun. However, there is a strong interplay between hard and soft power. Hard and soft power are related, because they are both aspects of the ability to achieve one's purpose by affecting the behavior of others.¹³ The distinction between them is one of degree, both in the nature of the behavior and in the tangibility of the resources.¹⁴ Command power—the ability to change what others do—can rest on coercion or inducement.¹⁵ Co-optive power—the ability to shape what others want—can rest on the attractiveness of one's culture and values or the ability to manipulate the

¹¹ Joshua Kurlantzick, *Charmoffensive: How China's soft power is transforming the World* 6 (Yale University Press, May 28, 2007).

¹² *Id.*

¹³ Joseph S. Nye Jr., *The benefits of Soft Power*, <http://hbswk.hbs.edu/archive/4290.html>, (last visited Nov. 28, 2008).

¹⁴ *Id.*

¹⁵ *Id.*

agenda of political choices in a manner that makes others fail to express some preferences because they seem to be too unrealistic.¹⁶

Following this rationale, one great model for the Kosovo leaders might be the “famous” [why quotes?]skillful Albanian dictator Enver Hoxha. He was the master of using both kinds of power. He did rely on hard power, but he relied on attraction as well. The result of that attraction was the “strong” relationship with China for how long it lasted. However, this relationship is an example of coercion of politics, more than a culturally oriented one. This is the example of a superpower supporting a tiny country just because of similar ideologies and policies, similar and/or same enemies, and most importantly quite similar systems.

Sure enough this is a just a demonstration of how much even the most brutal dictators relied on soft power.

Similarly, as Joseph S. Nye Jr. states, if Yasser Arafat had chosen the soft power model of Gandhi or Martin Luther King rather than the hard power of terrorism, he could have attracted moderate Israelis and would have a Palestinian state by now.¹⁷

Shattering the existing stereotype must be another goal for Kosovo. As social psychologists M. Sherif and C. W. Sherif observed “...once established in a group, stereotypes tend to persist.”¹⁸ National stereotype for Kosovo so far has not been the greatest one. Kosovars are generally perceived as strong-tempered, ready to spur violence and intolerant people. [this is my conclusion after reading and talking to different people]

One reason of associating Kosovars with these characteristics is because of the Balkans stereotype triumphing over the national stereotype. Moreover, it looks like

¹⁶ *Id.*

¹⁷ *Id.*

¹⁸ See Images of Nations and International Public Relations; supra note 4, at 6.

Kosovars are carrying the weight of the negative stereotype, because they are perceived by other nations as culturally incapable of ascension into the civilized world. They are in the middle of the Balkan/Europe dichotomy. It's time for Kosovo to think about shattering its stereotype by introducing to the world the fundamental values of the nation, the most talented actors, singers and athletes, by introducing to the world its culinary abilities.

There are two processes related in this strategy: first the export of the culture around the world and second bringing more visitors to Kosovo. These are strongly related to each other. [wrong word]. Exporting of the culture around the world increases the cultural exchanges with the developed world.

The world needs to touch Kosovo's great craft [wrong word]work, to feel the rhythm of Kosovo's national music, to take pictures of Kosovo's traditional costumes, to learn about the archeological discoveries, to watch movies about Kosovo, to watch and cheer for the great Kosovo sport teams. The world needs to be enticed...[good paragraph]

The following example is the strongest to follow as far as being successful to ascertain its strong cultural exportation. This example relates to American power and its instrumental role in creating the American Empire.

A. The Americanization of the world

Recognition of America as a “hypermower” is usually based on material facts- especially, the superiority of American hard power.¹⁹ Yet America’s global domination has been achieved largely through non-military means- in short, through the extension, assertion and influence of its soft power.²⁰ American soft power - movies, pop music, television, fast food, fashions, theme parks - spreads, validates, and reinforces common norms, values, beliefs, and lifestyles.²¹

Soft power has the advantage of being much less violent than brute force. In a world where wars have become increasingly expensive both in financial and political terms, the non-violence aspect of soft power has become ever more attractive.

Soft power includes artistic expressions and institutional arrangements – such as traveling exhibitions and scholarly exchange programs- that help export American models.²² When foreign students undertake studies in the United States, they return to their home countries immersed in American values, attitudes and modes of thinking.²³

The truth is not everybody can understand the huge impact of America’s soft power. Yet America’s adversaries have never underestimated its effects.²⁴ Mao Zedong once warned that American pop cultural products were “candy-coated bullets.”²⁵

Today, American pop culture is ubiquitous. Pop diva Madonna is a superstar in India.²⁶ American basketball superstar Michael Jordan is hero-worshipped in

¹⁹ Matthew Fraser, *Weapons of Mass Distraction: Soft Power and American Empire* 10 (Thomas Dunne Books ed., St. Martin’s Press, NY, 2005).

²⁰ *Id.*

²¹ *Id.*

²² *Id.*, at 18

²³ *Id.*

²⁴ *Id.*

²⁵ *Id.*

²⁶ *Id.*

China.²⁷ American television shows—from soap operas to prime-time sitcoms— are watched daily in virtually every corner of the earth where TV sets can be found.²⁸

Even the strongest political figures around the world are enticed by American power. On an official visit to North Korea in the fall of 2000, U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright was intrigued to discover that even this brutal Stalinist dictatorship was not impervious to the appeal of American pop culture.²⁹

Secretary Albright had been tipped off that North Korea’s enigmatic leader, Kim Jong-il, was an unconditional fan of the American basketball star Michael Jordan.³⁰ When she arrived in Pyongyang, Albright ceremoniously presented Kim Jong-il with a basketball personally autographed by the Chicago Bulls superstar.³¹ The North Korean dictator was thrilled.³²

But, how strong and expanded is the American cultural influence around the world? As Fraser puts it, the claim...“The best barometer of the relationship of the U.S. and any other country is the way Coca-Cola is treated”..., shouldn’t be taken lightly.³³

The expansion of American culture has usually been described as an “Americanization” of the world. From China to France to the Middle East, foreign leaders and activists have expressed fear that global culture may become too Americanized, destroying their own cultural, economic, and religious traditions. Europeans and Latin Americans, left-wingers and right, rich and poor - all of them dread

²⁷ *Id.*

²⁸ *Id.*, at 11

²⁹ *Id.*, at 14

³⁰ *Id.*

³¹ *Id.*

³² *Id.*

³³ See *Weapons of Mass Distraction: Soft Power and American Empire*; supra note 19, cover

that local cultures and national identities are dissolving into a crass all-American consumerism.³⁴

In the early 1900s Americanization was the term used to describe the process through which immigrants from most parts of Europe settled in the New World and acquired a different identity as American citizens.³⁵ Today, the use of the word Americanization denotes the process and the extent to which other countries begin to substitute American values, customs and culture in place of their own.

The spread of American media including TV, film and American music has been the main component of Americanization of other countries.³⁶ The drum beat of disco music emanating from night clubs on Saturday night in all major cities of Europe is a testimony to the all-pervading commercial and cultural influence of the US on the mass participative youth culture across these countries.³⁷

The debate over the Americanization of global culture centers around the trepidation of a world speaking only English, living by westernized society mores and values, homogenized into one deep-dish apple pie.³⁸

This is a great example, which might seem hard to follow for Kosovo right now. But at least the message is out there. The fact that Americans are famous for their deep-dish apple pie is nonetheless important in making Kosovars famous for their Fli.³⁹

But everybody has tasted American apple-pie; [good metaphor]therefore America already passed the taste test, which Kosovo hasn't passed yet. A lot of visitors after their

³⁴ Migel Jayasinghe, The Ameicanization of Popular culture in the West, <http://ezinearticles.com/?The-Americanization-of-Popular-Culture-in-the-West&id=1596716>, (last visited December 2, 2008).

³⁵ *Id.*

³⁶ *Id.*

³⁷ *Id.*

³⁸ Trish Hallmark , Americanization of Global Culture, <http://www.globalpolitician.com/22654-globalization>, (last visited Dec.2, 2008).

³⁹ A very good Kosovar pastry

first experience in Kosovo keep referring to the great cuisine and those specific Kosovar dishes. The suggestions, after visiting Kosovo, usually are: ...”Be sure to try Fli, which is a type of pie with an Albanian origin...” Also, Ayran, a mixture of yoghurt, [water](#), and [salt](#),⁴⁰ [what is this?] though a bit thicker, is the most important drink with meals.

The values of American pop culture are penetrating everywhere. American entertainment- Hollywood, Disneyland, CNN, MTV, and Madonna- conveys values that have made America great, such as an abiding belief in democracy, free enterprise, and individual liberties.⁴¹ A lot insist that America has the best model to offer the world as a humane and just society.⁴²

The United States never has hesitated to promote its values. Kosovo must do the same: keep trying and trying to get the message out there, to advocate that its values and beliefs are strong and reflect a new stereotype, that the world hasn't have the chance to see it yet. Kosovo has to insist on promoting and emphasizing what makes it so special and unique, by including every single aspect of its everyday life.

It's true that violence, disorder and less democracy have been the keywords to describe Kosovo. This must change and will change if Kosovars insist to transmit efficiently their cultural message.

Kosovo doesn't have a Mickey Mouse and Donald Duck, a Hollywood or Bollywood.⁴³ However, Kosovo does have the power and the resources to create its own Kollywood, which probably, with persistence and motivation, will become as much famous as Bollywood. [good way to say it]

⁴⁰ Wikipedia, <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ayran>, (last visited, Dec.22, 2008)

⁴¹ See Weapons of Mass Distraction: Soft Power and American Empire; supra note 19, at 260

⁴² See Weapons of Mass Distraction: Soft Power and American Empire; supra note 19, at 263

⁴³ Wikipedia, <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bollywood>, (last visited Dec.2, 2008).

III. Kosovo cultural inventory

A. Some history

Looking back at Kosovo's history it is very easy to understand why the people of Kosovo have so much to show the world, but not as much motivation to get involved in the process. Kosovo, this little state roughly the size of Connecticut, is land-locked and mostly mountainous.⁴⁴ The first inhabitants on the Balkan Peninsula were the ancient people known as the Illyrians.⁴⁵ The Slavs followed in the 6th and 7th centuries. Albanian speakers began moving into Kosovo from the Adriatic in the 8th century.⁴⁶ Serbs gained control of Kosovo in the 12th century.⁴⁷ Kosovo was the site of the Serbs' defeat by the Ottoman Turks in 1389.⁴⁸ Kosovo was then absorbed by the Ottoman Empire.

Diverse cultures were thrown to Kosovars, but they resisted by protecting and cultivating their own culture. Not only they protected their own culture, but they tried to enrich it and make it reflect their strong spirit. [so far, it's not clear why Kosovars are not exporting this]

Kosovo, is one of the cultural crossing-places of Europe; it was probably central both to the survival of the Albanian language and to the development of the Romanian one; it became the geographical heart of an important medieval kingdom; it was one of the most characteristic parts of the Ottoman Empire in Europe; and it was the area in

⁴⁴InfoPlease, All the knowledge you need, <http://www.infoplease.com/world/countries/kosovo.html>, (last visited Oct.26, 2008).

⁴⁵ *Id.*

⁴⁶ *Id.*

⁴⁷ *Id.*

⁴⁸ *Id.*

which the modern Albanian national movement was born, and had its greatest successes and failures.⁴⁹ The sacred duty of hospitality characterizes the Kosovo tradition. As one Austrian who visited Kosovo in the bloodiest period of its final revolt against Ottoman rule declared: “If you observe the customs of the land, you can travel more safely in Albania than in any other country in the world.”⁵⁰

Having described the geographical and historic influence in the culture of Kosovo, the power of the language and its role as defining the Albanians everywhere should not be left aside. In Kosovo, in 2000, there were estimated to be around 60,000 Albanian Catholics, although this figure could be higher.⁵¹ There were also a very few Orthodox Albanians in Kosovo.⁵² However, the overwhelming majority of Kosovo Albanians are of Muslim background.⁵³

Whenever Albanians address their religion it becomes a matter of pride, but also a cliché, to quote a line from a poem of Pashko Vasa, a 19th- century Catholic writer , who said that ‘the religion of the Albanians is Albanianism.’⁵⁴ He meant that the identity of the Albanians did not derive from their religion, as it did for other peoples in the Balkans.⁵⁵ Language is the key to national identity of Albanians. So, while language and a shared identity define who is an Albanian, be they from Kosovo or from Albania or from anywhere else, it is the religion that has defined the other nations of the Balkans.⁵⁶

⁴⁹ Noel Malcolm, *Kosovo: A short History* xxxiv-xxxv, ,Harper Perennial (June 10, 1999).

⁵⁰ *Id.*, at 21

⁵¹ Tim Judah, *Kosovo: What everyone needs to know* 7, Oxford University Press, USA (September 29, 2008).

⁵² *Id.*

⁵³ *Id.*, at 8

⁵⁴ *Id.*, at 8-9.

⁵⁵ *Id.*, at 9

⁵⁶ *Id.*, at 9

These entire factors interplay together, by marking deeper the cultural identity of Kosovo Albanians. Treating separately and analyzing the cultural inventory of Kosovo is helpful to define what Kosovo can export and what can help transform the existing stereotype.

B. Handicrafts

Kosovo is very well known for its craft [wrong word]work. A resourceful part of the Kosovo's art is handicrafts. Handicrafts have a long tradition in just about every city in Kosovo, with Prizren, Peja, and Gjakova being the best known.⁵⁷ Kosovar artisans are distinguished by their rich and skilled tradition they skilled tradition they have with filigree, silver, copper, brass, argil, wood and other materials.⁵⁸ Wonderful examples of such work can be found in souvenir shops throughout Kosovo.⁵⁹

Wood carving by Kosovar artisans has been made for decorations used in general construction, house roofs, religious buildings, traditional furniture, decorative stone-carving in Albanian bastions (towers, castles), etc. Kosovo's artisan production and wood engravings are found in Albanian traditional musical instruments such as: the çiftelia; lahuta (lute); fyelli (flute, pipe); children's beds known as "djepi" (the cradle); producers of "plis" (Albanian traditional, white hat); and other national clothes to name a few.⁶⁰

From copper and magnesium, Kosovar craftsmen have made the mill/grinder (to grind the coffee), coffee-pots, tobacco boxes, etc. Even today the creators of such works have strong dedication and willpower to preserve the traditions of their ancestors. In the

⁵⁷ VisitKosovo: History in the Making, <http://www.visitkosova.org/english/handicrafts.htm>, (last visited Oct. 26, 2008).

⁵⁸ *Id.*

⁵⁹ *Id.*

⁶⁰ *Id.*

⁶¹ All these great handicraft

works represent a great possibility to organize national exhibitions in Pristina and why not even in other European countries. At least charge d'affaires will have the possibility to justify their jobs by organizing, planning and promoting such exhibitions.

C. Arts

Lying at the core of society, art is also a medium of bringing social change. Drama, film and music can help people get to grips with their own lives. Art is often an open platform for freedom of speech, even in societies where that freedom is restricted.⁶² This makes art an effective tool for exposing social issues. The effective role of the art becomes visible through enticement of the world.

How will Kosovo entice the world? In fact, it has already enticed a lot of foreigners. A lot of artists are finding in Kosovo a great source and model to their art works. Elizabeth Gowing calls Kosovo "...a strangely lovable country."⁶³ She even presented her works based on the Kosovars everyday life at the National Gallery of Kosovo in August.⁶⁴

The point is that Kosovar artists should try to capture and represent the glorious culture of Kosovo. Foreigners and visitors will use different perception of the reality, because they don't know very well the deepness of the traditions lying down. Sometimes Kosovars critique such works as representing "...a primitive and backward society."

⁶¹ *Id.*

⁶² The Power of Culture: Art and Development, http://powerofculture.nl/en/theme/art_development.html, (last visited Nov.15 2008).

⁶³ Elizabeth Gowing, 30 Glimpses of Kosovo, <http://www.newkosovareport.com/200810211323/Culture-and-Sports/30-Glimpses-of-Kosovo.html>, (Last visited Oct.26, 2008).

⁶⁴ *Id.*

There are steps being made toward the representation of Kosovo's art around the neighbors' countries. Shyqri Nimani, the first artist opening his personal exhibition in Croatia, after the Kosovo's independence, received awesome reviews.⁶⁵ His main subject was fine arts and design.

This makes a great initiative that needs to be furthered by having more national art exhibitions around the Balkans and Europe, and not always waiting for the foreign artists to represent and fixate Kosovo's everyday life. The message transmitted to a foreign crowd, through such exhibitions, creates more rapid advances toward the change of the stereotype. This translates precisely in a new impression and desire to learn more about Kosovo. This should be done by not going through the bureaucratic procedures of the Ministry of Culture; this is mostly an independent project. The motivation and the individual role of Kosovo's artists are keys to the export of Kosovo's culture abroad.

D. Cinematography

Movies always express and promote the national values by interpreting that nation's way of life to all the nations of the world. Television can be a powerful force of expression and creativity. Images of certain nations, however right or wrong they might be, seem to form, fundamentally, through a very complex communication process involving varied information sources.⁶⁶ The process starts with one's experiences in very early life; in school; in children's books, fairytales and other leisure literature; the theater and so on, and may include accounts by relatives, acquaintances, and friends.⁶⁷ The

⁶⁵Kohaditore.com, http://74.52.64.18/~wwkoha08/index.php?option=com_content&task=blogcategory&id=28&Itemid=62, (last visited Oct.2008).

⁶⁶ See Images of Nations and International Public Relations, *supra* note 4, at 8

⁶⁷ *Id.*

influence of novels, films, and youth literature in forming images of foreign nations and countries should not be underestimated.⁶⁸

The current situation of the moviemaking in Kosovo has elicited some international attention. Despite the fact that the funds given from the Center of Cinematography in the process of filmmaking usually don't cover the necessary budget,(which is not always a good justification), Kosovo moviemakers are doing a pretty good job in using theatre and art play to define the cultural community.

Through the process of requesting funds for moviemaking, Kosovar moviemakers don't get more than 350000 euros, which they think is not enough considering the huge expenses in the process of moviemaking. However, this shouldn't be considered an insufficient fund at the same time.

Kosovar cinematographers concentrate their efforts on approaching Arab donators (usually they are the first source Kosovar moviemakers rely on). By relying on this type of support, Kosovar moviemakers have been able to allocate new funds helping in the process. However, they should consider also all the help they can get by their own citizens/emigrants around the world.

It doesn't take a lot to ask for help abroad, by aiming precisely at Kosovar emigrants all over the world. They presumably are doing very well financially which must translate in a readiness to contribute.

Another strategy would be the collaboration with American or European moviemakers to promote Kosovo's talent. The latest testimony of a great collaboration was the Doruntine show.

⁶⁸ *Id.*

Blessed Unrest of New York and ODA theater of Prishtina staged the first ever US-Kosovar bilingual theater collaboration to New York City with Doruntine, written by Matt Opatrny and Lirak Çelaj, and directed by Florent Mehmeti and Jessica Burr.⁶⁹ Blessed Unrest is the first American theatre company to host a Kosovar theatre company in the United States. In May 2006, Blessed Unrest traveled to Kosovo to perform their original play” Lying”, into which they integrated a bilingual Teatri Oda actor. The success of this endeavor led the companies to plan for a more intense collaboration in New York City.⁷⁰

Blessed Unrest is considering continuing traveling around the Europe and US to stage “Doruntine”. This is a great start for ODA Theater, considering it is the only independent arts organization.

ODA Theatre was founded at the end of the year 2002 with an initiative of Lirak Çelaj – Actor and Florent Mehmeti – Director.⁷¹ On March 1st, 2003 was promoted with his first play “Vagina Monologues”.⁷² Besides plays, the theatre performs music, film and art exhibitions, and is known for hosting the Jazz festival every November.⁷³ They are an extremely motivated and bold group of artists making strides towards defining the future of independent arts in the Balkans.

⁶⁹Blessed unrest: Kosovar-American collaboration to stage Doruntine, <http://www.newkosovareport.com/200809181229/Culture-and-Sports/Kosovar-American-collaboration-to-stage-Doruntine.html>, (last visited Nov.23, 2008).

⁷⁰ *Id.*

⁷¹ Teatri ODA, About us, <http://www.teatrioda.com/?cid=2.2> (last visited Dec.22, 2008).

⁷² *Id.*

⁷³InyourPocket,EssentialCityguideshhttp://www.inyourpocket.com/kosovo/pristina/Culture__and__Events/Theatres,_Opera__and__Dance (last visited Oct.23,2008).

The National Theatre founded in 1946 in Prizren, the birthplace of the Albanian culture, is another great catalyst of the Kosovar artistic life.⁷⁴ The National Theatre puts on Albanian-language plays and shows. With help from the authorities and sponsors, the theatre has revived after a difficult period of censorship, forced management and staff changes and a dictated repertoire between 1981 and 1999.⁷⁵ In that period some directors and actors went underground to performed illegal plays, some performed at the Dodona theatre.⁷⁶

Would one be thinking about co-operation with the National Theater, he would first consider contacting the director and discuss further plans and strategies? Interestingly it took forever for the National Theater of Kosovo to have a director.

Was this for lack of candidacy? Strong criteria? Or just plain negligence and abuse in selecting a person with the appropriate skills for this position?

The Dodona Puppet Theater, putting on puppet, children's and youth shows since 1986, is very popular with local kids.⁷⁷ During the repressive years of the 1990s, this was the only Albanian cultural institution that was not completely restricted.⁷⁸ After 1999, the theatre did performances for child refugees across the region, and has also toured Kosovo villages with a puppet show warning children of the danger of landmines - which perhaps explains why the puppets all have wooden legs.⁷⁹

Staging puppet shows abroad would be a great idea. The first hurdle to pass is allocation of the funds needed for the staging of the shows. Again this is doable by not

⁷⁴ *Id.*

⁷⁵ *Id.*

⁷⁶ *Id.*

⁷⁷ *Id.*

⁷⁸ *Id.*

⁷⁹ *Id.*

implicating the governmental institutions. The independent initiative is the strongest available possibility to further assist international shows.

Recently Kosovo experienced a flow of visitors coming for the film weeks of different European countries. The most recent one was the German Film Week in Kosovo during the week of 7-14 of October 2008.⁸⁰

The reverse cultural exchange is the key to the introduction of the Kosovo movies in other countries. Countries, regions, peoples and communities are becoming more and more intertwined and interdependent. Kosovo audiences have already had the chance to see British or German movies. The German and British audiences must have a chance to watch the great Kosovar movies.

Kosovars have a lot to show including here very well produced movies and documentaries. Kosovo's cultural assets, especially, the breathtaking film-making work being done by Blerim Gjoçi at Prishtinafilm and his 911 festival, and the drama by Jeton Neziraj at the National Theatre and Florent Mehmeti and Lirak Çelaj at Theatre Oda deserve far more prominence, both within and outside Kosovo.⁸¹

They are a lot of donors who help produce this great festival.⁸² However, the donors of the 911 festival should consider to help organizing festivals with these great movies abroad and not just concentrating in Kosovo area. Recently, the fifth edition of "Nine Eleven Dedication" Festival started on Monday, September 8, 2008.⁸³ This was another success of the "Nine Eleven dedication" Festival, which now has been successful

⁸⁰ *Id.*

⁸¹ Henry H. Perritt, Kosovars are running away from risk, <http://www.newkosovareport.com/200808201145/Henry-H.-Perritt/Kosovars-are-running-away-from-risk.html>, (last visited Nov. 23,2008).

⁸² Nine Eleven Festival, Donors, <http://911fest.com/> (last visited Dec.22, 2008).

⁸³ Nine Eleven Festival, <http://911fest.com/>, (last visited Dec.2 2008).

for five editions. Considering the Nine Eleven Festival has been able to keep up with the great movie shows for five editions, means that by now the producers should be more confident to represent their great work not only in Kosovo, but in the world as well.

So far, the originators of the “PrimFilmFest” are the only one organization considering an international film festival in Pristina.⁸⁴ This is a great initiative which hopefully will produce results and not remain a blank project. This will help bring in Pristina more visitors from all around the world.

This also might help blooming of a new stereotype about Kosovo all around the world, by introducing it not as a war zone anymore, but as a civilized European country in the heart of the Balkan community.

Kosovo has very talented young artists. One of them is Arta Dobroschi. The movie “Silence of Lorna” which is based on an Albanian girl lifestory, is a Belgian, French and Italian co-production. The movie was a winner for screenplay in the Canne Film Festival.⁸⁵ The great performance of Ms. Dobroschi made her a nominee for the best actress award. The movie will be translated in twenty two European languages.

Kosovo has a lot of talent; it only has to find the way how to promote and use it efficiently in the world.

E. Music

The statement that “music is more than notes” has definitely a new meaning in the 21st Century. Nationalist music usually based on the folklore of the nation, plays a very

⁸⁴Kohaditore.com, New Events, <http://www.kohaditore.com/>, (last visited Oct.25, 2008).

⁸⁵ *Id.*

important role in defining and uniting a country. The role of folk sources is very well known in Kosovo's culture. In Kosovo, the folk music is the most popular.

Kosovo music is characterized by the use of *çiftelia* (an authentic Albanian instrument), mandolin, mandola and percussion.⁸⁶ The most notable Albanian rock bands are: Gjurmët, Diadema, Toxin, Purgatory, Troja, Votra, Humus, Asgjë Sikur Dielli, Kthjellu, Cute Babulja, Babilon, etc.⁸⁷ Some of these groups have managed to bring together modern music and traditional rhythm. This should be a good way to appeal to both local and international audiences. [do they use traditional instruments? What makes them special][“etc.” does not communicate anything; don't use it]

As far as musical artist Faton Macula - Jazz Guitarist, Armend Xhaferi - Jazz Guitarist, Bajram Istrefi Jr. - Jazz Drummer, Ilir Bajri is a notable jazz and electronic musician.⁸⁸ Some of the most popular singers in Kosovo today include Sabri Fejzullahu, Leonora Jakupi, Ilir Shaqiri, Nora Istrefi, Gentiana Ismajli and Adelina Ismajli.

In Kosovo, along with modern music, folk music is very popular. Shota is the multicultural ensemble. The most striking effects about folk music in Kosovo are the special strong and heroic tones, associated with characteristic movements.

Kosovo folk music constitutes a great cultural asset, significance of which should not be left apart. Kosovo folk music is a real mirror of Kosovo's existence.

Kosovo is doing pretty well introducing and exporting national music around the globe. Kosovar famous singers travel around by staging performances usually in countries with a considerable Kosovar population. Genta Ismajli, one of the most Kosovar singers,

⁸⁶Wikipedia-Music of Kosovo, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Music_of_Kosovo, (last visited Nov.23, 2008).

⁸⁷ *Id.*

⁸⁸ *Id.*

launched last may her 2008 North American tour.⁸⁹ A lot of her fans around the world are mostly young ages; therefore this really helps in introducing the new Kosovo stereotype, represented by young performers as Genta Ismajli.

Having a lot of talented singers, RTK⁹⁰ is drafting an application to become an Active Member of the European Broadcasting Union. This is the first step in being able to participate in the EBU's Eurovision Song Contest. The participation of Kosovo, hopefully in 2009, will be of a great significance for the new state of Kosovo.

Classical music is not of less importance in Kosovo. The classical music festival Kamerfest 2008, concluded in November after nine evenings of performances.⁹¹ Famous classical artists participated from Turkey, Norway, Japan, Macedonia, USA and Germany. Kosovar violin player Sihana Badivuku accompanied by the American pianist Derek Han under the direction of Toshio Yaganisawa performed in the festival.⁹²

Marigona Querkezi is another very talented young artist. Despite Russian government opposition to Kosovo's independence, the young Kosovar flute player performed in a major festival in Moscow as a representative of the youngest state in the world.⁹³ Performing in a stage of the Russian country is just the beginning of introducing and using the Kosovo assets there. Therefore, Ministry of Culture must concentrate all the efforts in organizing and sponsor such performances especially in countries which

⁸⁹ Genta Ismajli, Press Release, <http://gentaismajli.blogspot.com/2008/05/genta-press-release-north-america-tour.html> (last visited Nov.23,2008).

⁹⁰ RTK_Radio Television of Kosovo, http://www.rtklive.com/ser/javni_servis.php, (last visited Nov.23,2008).

⁹¹New Kosovo Report – Classical Komerfest approaching finale,<http://www.newkosovareport.com/200810271337/Culture-and-Sports/Classical-Kamerfest-approaching-finale.html>, (last visited Nov.23,2008).

⁹² *Id.*

⁹³New Kosovo Report, Kosovo young artist performs in Russia,<http://www.newkosovareport.com/200807281078/Culture-and-Sports/Kosovo-young-artist-performs-in-Russia.html>, (last visited Oct.20, 2008).

have not recognized it yet. Kosovo leaders must always consider treating music not just as a form of expression, but as a medium to promote and strengthen Kosovo's image around the world.

F. Sports

The latest decision of the Executive Committee of FIFA rejecting Kosovo's request for FIFA membership⁹⁴, is a big disappointment to the Football Federation of Kosovo. According to the official decision, FIFA rejected Kosovo because it is not a member of the UN and enjoys diplomatic recognition by only 51 of the 192 UN members⁹⁵, (UN membership is one of the rules of the organization). The decision goes even further by not allowing Kosovo's National Team to play friendly matches against FIFA members. This constitutes a big hurdle to pass for the Kosovo soccer team. Not allowing them to play friendly matches means a lot more than just forbidding them to play against national teams.

This means that the great soccer players of Kosovo won't have a chance to show other nations their team spirit as a national team. Letting politics interfere with sports is so unfair to the great Kosovo soccer players. Kosovo leaders must consider the great role of sports, as a tool of tremendous importance, in the social integration during the nation-building process.

There are plenty of soccer players playing for other teams all around the world: Lorik Cana playing for Marseille, France, Mergan Mavraj playing for Bochum, Holand,

⁹⁴ Southeast European Times, http://www.setimes.com/cocoon/setimes/xhtml/en_GB/features/setimes/roundup/2008/10/29/roundup-cl-03 (last visited Dec.22, 2004).

⁹⁵ *Id.*

Albert Bunjaku playing FC Rot-Weiss Erfur in the German Bundesliga, Arian Beqaj playing for Anorthosis, Greece, Fatmire Bajrami playing for the national female soccer team of Germany, Besart Berisha playing for Burnley, England.

Soccer is not the only sport where Kosovars show talent. Basketball, heavy lifting and boxing provide some new talents of the Kosovo team. Luan Krasniqi is the biggest name in boxing. Luan Krasniqi, born in Junik, Kosovo, moved to Germany with his family in 1987.⁹⁶ The highlight of his career was the fight against Rene Monse, when he became European Champion. He was the first German European Champion after 29 years.

Kosovo didn't have a chance to participate in this year Olympics, in China. The reason why is because the OCK is not a member of the International Olympic Committee and therefore its athletes are not entitled to participate in the Summer or Winter Olympic Games. Hopefully, this will happen in the nearest future.

However, the importance and the role of sports are vital. Sports, in whatever sizes or genres they come, sure play an integral role in every society or country. Sports bring people together and also set people apart. With this in mind, Kosovo teams must consider independently organizing friendly matches with other neighbors' teams. This would be the only way to keep introducing the power and the talent of Kosovo's athletes. Media and advertising play a crucial role here, by constructing a more focused publicity on the home teams. Overall, the key must be in emphasizing that sports encourage cultural diversity, respect and development in the international level.

⁹⁶ Wikipedia http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Luan_Krasniqi, (last visited Oct.20, 2008)

IV. Strategy for export of cultural assets

It is essential for Kosovo's authorities to start thinking about the influence of the culture on the future of Kosovo. However, the proposed strategy emphasizes the role of the independent initiative, as the main medium on the exportation of the cultural assets.

So far, the only organization providing some helpful ideas and projects on Kosovo's heritage is the Cultural Heritage without Borders with centre in Sweden.⁹⁷ Its projects are concentrated to save the built heritage, no matter ethnic origin.⁹⁸ These projects include both restoration projects and sustainability for the restored objects.

This is a great start. However, Kosovo needs a stronger nongovernmental organization in charge of the entire export of its cultural assets.

The proposed strategy emphasizes the creation of a Foundation, the Kosovo Cultural Export Project Foundation (KCEPF), which must include in its structure both private and public cultural stakeholders.

The main efforts of this Foundation should concentrate on finding of the strategies for enhancing international appreciation of Kosovo's culture. One way would be by using and exploring academic exchange programs around the world.

Kosovar exchange students might be a great starting network to expand the interest regarding the Kosovo culture abroad. Also, the proposed Foundation should work on promoting Kosovo's culture abroad meaning close collaboration with other Kosovo citizens all around the world. The Foundation must concentrate its efforts in creating a donor alliance for artists and athletes.

⁹⁷Cultural Heritage without Borders, <http://www.chwb.org/kosovo/english/aboutus.htm>, (last visited Oct.20, 2008).

⁹⁸ *Id.*

Considering the creation of the Foundation abroad might be very helpful to get away from the bureaucracy and prejudice of the governmental agencies. This strategy must really bring together all Kosovo citizens abroad, to step forward and contribute by helping Kosovo's cultural export all around the world.

Bringing independent initiatives into focus would help to expand the knowledge base of Kosovo's youth to understand the importance of working together on establishing social programs and policies for assisting the export of Kosovo's cultural assets.

Moreover, the Foundation must create its own functioning website, where to promote upcoming national and exchange cultural events. Another idea to consider would be emphasizing and promoting the artistic creativity on the website, by enticing small and big donors to come forward and help exporting of the national culture.

Perhaps an even more important initiative must be considered in this aspect: the improving of the way Kosovo's culture is presented to the world through better translations of government Web sites, which are already "suffering" from the poor web presentation.

The Foundation must consider the planning and organizing of special events to assist the dissemination of Kosovo's culture internationally. This means creating and organizing educational programs about Kosovo's cultural assets and the importance of sustaining and creating a soft power of Kosovo.

Moreover, cultural exchange programs must be the center of the strategy where the Foundation must concentrate its efforts. Culture needs dialogue and dialogue needs culture.⁹⁹ Cultural exchange contributes to mutual understanding between societies and

⁹⁹ The Power of Culture, Cultural Exchange, <http://powerofculture.nl/en/theme/exchange>, (last visited Nov.23,2008).

peoples.¹⁰⁰ Cultural exchange also enriches lives by inspiring new forms of artistic expression and providing fresh insights that broaden our horizons.¹⁰¹ Cultural exchange and activities can exercise a more powerful influence than military task forces or political delegations.¹⁰²

Following this policy would be helpful in working on the transformation of the stereotype of Kosovo, by representing the most valuable assets of the nation. To put it another way: Art can be the source of enormous impact around the world.

Media contribution must be another aspect where the Foundation can start working on. Mass Medias are flooding the world with messages. Media contributes to development in a variety of ways.¹⁰³ Films and television programs can strengthen solidarity throughout the world and spur people into action.¹⁰⁴ Media must concentrate its efforts on advertising every single successful project or collaboration around the world.

Also, exploring other possibilities to collaborate with international media might be very helpful. A possibility might be considering inviting the travel channel to continue exploring some more of the Kosovo's food and culture. The video included in this website: <http://yourtrip.travelchannel.com/Clip.aspx?key=4C69DA550DFA5EDA>, is a very interesting one.

Furthering such initiatives would be very helpful in delivering the word out there, that Kosovo is not the country of "crooks", but a warm and very welcoming state.

Nurturing young and emerging artistic talent is the key to the proposed strategy. Kosovo has a lot of talented young people, who must step forward and let their wild

¹⁰⁰ *Id.*

¹⁰¹ *Id.*

¹⁰² *Id.*

¹⁰³ The Power of Culture, Media, <http://powerofculture.nl/en/theme/media.html> (last visited Nov.23,2008)

¹⁰⁴ *Id.*

dreams and desires explode. Their ideas should discard the pessimism and concentrate on how to come up with new and fresh thoughts in helping Kosovo's image prosper around the world.

As far as administrative structure, considering the following scheme might be helpful. The Foundation must include a Department of Kosovo's Heritage.

- This department should concentrate its efforts on establishing the connections with the famous artist/athletes of Kosovo origin around the world. A strong and explanatory propaganda is necessary to the famous artist/ athletes, therefore to make certain they understand the role they can play in the process of the Kosovo nation-building.
- The Department should establish a Cultural Export Advisory Board under the Kosovo Cultural Heritage Department. The Kosovo Heritage Advisory Board must consist in the participation of young and well known artist, including here actors, moviemakers, athletes and singers.
- This Advisory Board should create working groups in each cultural sector: movies, art and sports. A great start would be to create these groups based on the most up-to-date information of the Kosovo's cultural inventory.
- Working groups should organize workshops to raise awareness regarding Kosovo's culture. They should try to better understand Kosovo's art market by inhibiting new ideas on how to expand Kosovo's art market.
- Furthermore, the Advisory Board must come up with a list of other international organization and foundation which it thinks should play a very crucial role in the upcoming collaboration.

- The Advisory Board must do a situation analysis, by gathering all the information needed to verify the actual image of Kosovo's abroad and coming up with ideas on how to improve the actual state image.
- The Department of Cultural Heritage must allocate a fund to implement the Cultural Exports Strategy. One idea to consider would be that of coming up with fundraisers to help funding of the cultural exports.
- Considering collaboration with other international non-governmental organizations must be another consideration.

Soros Foundation has a great initiative, the Arts and Culture Program, which might be very helpful to the strategy. The Arts and Culture Program draws on the power of culture, in particular artistic and expressive culture, to help build and maintain open societies.¹⁰⁵ ACNP carries out its mission principally by working to strengthen the autonomous cultural sector as an essential element of civil society.¹⁰⁶

From its inception, the strategic policy of the Arts and Culture Network Program of the Open Society Institute, has been proactive, inspirational, and a catalyst for Soros foundation cultural activities, multifaceted in approach and inclusive of all groups of people and disciplines of artistic expression.¹⁰⁷

Actually, the Kosovo Foundation for Open Society (KFOS) is already established and functioning. KFOS works to strengthen government institutions and to further develop an open society within Kosovo. Its programs have focused on issues surrounding

¹⁰⁵Open Society Foundation, Arts and Culture Programs, <http://www.soros.org/initiatives/arts/about#about>, (last visited Dec.2,2008).

¹⁰⁶ *Id.*

¹⁰⁷ *Id.*

minorities, arts and culture, public administration, legislation, and education.¹⁰⁸ Among the activities supported by KFOS are the following:

- training civil servants;
- advancing education reform, including increasing access to programs for teachers and administrators;
- establishing access to electronic resources such as the Internet and libraries;
- organizing conferences for Kosovo's ethnic communities;
- helping to distribute guidelines for standard judicial practices as well as international human rights documents;
- emphasizing the rights of children, women, and minorities; and helping increase cooperation among civil society organizations and regional NGOs.¹⁰⁹

However, none of the mentioned activities is concentrated in the cultural sector. Maybe the focus of the KFOS might consider shifting towards the implementation and support to the export of Kosovo's cultural assets, by adding this important activity to its agenda.

Working on being included in the Arts and Culture program, sponsored by SOROS Foundation, might be another consideration to assist the proposed strategy.

Another idea would be that of associating any international cultural activity with a request for donations to provide general support to the Kosovo Cultural Export Project Foundation, (KCEPF).

¹⁰⁸ *Id.*

¹⁰⁹ *Id.*

Having a board of trustees will be very helpful to the administration. This strategy won't be successful without having somebody step up and take on the initiative. They are a lot of Kosovo intellectuals who might consider helping with this. The Kosovo Diaspora in United States and Europe might help with this strategy both in terms of ideas and execution and financially too.

It won't be an easy and smooth road for the proposed strategy to be implemented. The relocation of funds to support the above strategy will be the biggest hurdle to pass. However the first step must be taken. This strategy is not aimed only toward Kosovo artists, singers or athletes, but to academics as well. Everybody with a bright mind and big aspirations must make the first step.

As Prof. Henry Perritt puts it:..."The first step is not government action; it is individual initiative; an individual willingness to take risk; to confront the possibility of losing favor with one political party if one supports another; of jealousy from one's friends if one succeeds; of losing investment in what seemed like a good entrepreneurial idea."¹¹⁰ The need for bravery did not end with the end of the war; bravery will continue to define Kosovo's future.¹¹¹

Conclusion

Kosovo's military revolution succeeded. Kosovars are now free and live in a safe and secure environment. It is now time for their "soft revolution" to triumph around the world.

¹¹⁰ Henry Perritt: Kosovars are running away from risk, supra note 83.

¹¹¹ *Id.*

They have to aggressively improve their public relations by concentrating on their everyday values. Their standards and values must be an integral part of any upcoming development project. Competing for attention and making itself visible around the world helps not only the image of the state, but promotes new relationships with other states.

Cultural export is interlined with the economic development. A strong message to the world, that Kosovo is a safe and civilized state with a powerful cultural base, sustains new economic relationships abroad.

In every single step Kosovo takes, must consider how that will influence its image around the world. As Von Studniz puts it..."In the old days one could win over an empire by marrying, today you can win over peoples by a leading article."¹¹²

¹¹² See Images of Nations and International Public Relations; supra note 4, at 2

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