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Between Goals and Reality: Education in the Context of Democratic Transition in Bosnia and Herzegovina

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PREFACE

This thesis is the culmination of 18 years of education, and the final brick in a wall thoughtfully crafted by teachers, past and current, who believed in me and inspired me to explore. Writing this master's thesis has given me many insights into the complex educational system in Bosnia and Herzegovina (hereafter, BiH). The thesis, I hope, will represent an effort to contribute to an understanding of BiH's education system in the context of a democratic transition. Education has become a neglected security issue in BiH; but the way children are educated poses a threat to the long-term stability of the country. The aim is not only to emphasize what has been done in the educational sector, but also to offer suggestions for further improvement.

While collecting information for my analysis I did encounter some troubles. It was not easy finding the different curricula online – I had to rely on my friends and family in Bosnia and Herzegovina to get me these documents. Also the history textbooks were sent to me by family in BiH. For this I wish to thank both my parents, Mirsad and Edina, who not only created me, fed me and sent me off to school, but also helped me get in touch with people in BiH and supporting me in the overall writing process. Further I wish to thank Hasan Ajnadžić, friend and candidate for the Storting for SV, who has been involved in projects with Utdanningsforbundet and who cooperated with some central trade unions for teachers in BiH. He has given me both useful reports for my analysis and important guidelines. Last, but not at least, I wish to thank my supportive supervisor, Sabrina P. Ramet, who has been very helpful during the entire process. By suggesting useful literature and giving constructive criticism she has provided me with important reflections for which I am very grateful.

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GLOSSARY OF TERMS

BiH – Bosnia and Herzegovina

CCC - Common Core Curricula

CoE – Council of Europe

DM - Didactical-Methodological (education)

DPA – Dayton Peace Agreement

FBiH – Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina

HDZ - Hrvatska Demokratska Zajednica (The Croatian Democratic Union)

ITUPE - The Independent Teachers Union of Primary Education

ITUSS - The Independent Teachers Union of Secondary School

NDH - Nezavisna Država Hrvatska (The Independent State of Croatia)

NGO – Non-governmental organization

OHR – Office of the High Representative

OSCE – Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe

PP - Pedagogical-Psychological (education)

RS – Republic of Srpska

SDA – Stranka Demokratske Akcije (Party of Democratic Action)

SDS – Srpska Demokratska Stranka (Serbian Democratic Party)

SFRY – Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia

TUESCRS - The Trade Union of Education, Science and Culture of Republika Srpska

ABSTRACT

Education, one of the most vital subsystems in every society, is not always a force for good. This thesis looks into the present education system in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) and the influence of three different curricula and history textbooks in the creation and maintenance of a liberal democracy. What is evident in Bosnian society is that the construction of a liberal democracy requires a liberal-civic education which is still not the case in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Current educational practices in Bosnia and Herzegovina reflect a highly politicized and fragmented educational system which makes the effort to change the educational sector more difficult. The educational practices in the Federation and the RS are still dissimilar and mark a big challenge for the creation of national unity in Bosnia and Herzegovina. History as a means of “defining national identity” has turned history in BiH “into a weapon”; three different curricula and history textbooks in BiH maintain an identity born out of differences, and the construction of the “other”, moving away from national unity and integration within BiH. Moreover, the teachers in BiH are not given enough support and training, and they are not fully unified, indicating a lack of coordination which is a hindrance to a unified educational system. In sum, education in BiH as presently constituted is an obstacle to the development of the country rather than a contribution to the development of democracy.

PART I: INTRODUCTION

”Men hate each other because they fear each other; They fear each other because they don’t know each other; They don’t know each other because they are so often separated from each other.” – Martin L. King, Jr.

As one of the new states created in the aftermath of the fragmentation of the former Yugoslavia, Bosnia and Herzegovina (henceforth, BiH)¹ is now making efforts to strike a balance among different national and international influences and interests. Even though the Bosniak-Croat Federation (not so much the RS) has emphasized the ideas of liberal democracy, political pluralism, individualization and the development of civil society, these ideas are still lacking in any demonstrable outcomes. During the post-war period, Bosnian society has been marked by numerous intersecting lines of conflict. This follows naturally since the country is going through a transition process. BiH finds itself in a context of democratization which constitutes a comprehensive approach covering the broad range of new peace-building priorities, top-down international regulations, institutional development and economic management, and also bottom-up assistance to develop a democratic political culture through civil society-building (UN 1996, par. 124).

Education, one of the most vital subsystems in every society, is at one of its most important turning points in BiH. Finding itself in the context of a tripartite division, the educational system is highly fragmented. It has become a political phenomenon. The political abuse of education at the national level skillfully avoids each attempt at sincere democratization and respect for cultural differences in the educational system. With the great amount of decentralization at the canton and municipal levels, enforced by the Dayton Peace Accords, and the Constitution of FBiH which states that the cantons are solely responsible for the educational policies, the results have been segregated schools such as the so-called “Two schools under one roof” where children are separated not only physically but also in terms of the three different curricula which they follow depending on the ethnic group to which they belong. It is particularly in such subjects as history, geography, and literature that the state (politics) attempts to convey to the young what the “desired” social and political values are.

¹ See map of BiH in Appendix (figure 1).

There is no doubt that the need for reforms is crucial. It appears that the country is facing Hamlet's dilemma, in this case indicating two scenarios – to change or to wither. Another indication that Bosnia-Herzegovina has reached the point of decision is that it seems as if everyone agrees that the rescue is to be found in some kind of change, but this is as far as they can agree. How to change the educational system has not been easy to agree upon. In addition, the importance of education has often been neglected due to other priorities. Little attention has been paid to the integration of the educational system into the overall process of political and societal development. By examining the process of ethnic socialization in children and acknowledging that schools do not function in isolation, it is recognizable that schools cannot in themselves foster tolerance and democracy, but as one of many societal interventions, the educational system of a state can influence people's attitudes and willingness to cooperate over the long term. The Bosnian student is at once the hope and the concern of post-war BiH. It is from his/her class that the nation must eventually draw its leadership in the political, economic and moral reconstruction of the country.

Research question

Whether the end result is segregation or integration depends on both the way schooling is structured and the content of the books and curriculum (both hidden and explicit). The educational system should be such as to support the democratic development of BiH, a system that promotes respect of ethnic and cultural diversity as a precondition for survival and development of the whole society.

Technical prerequisites, such as a single school building or a common curriculum would be one thing; the transformation of mindsets is clearly another, and is even more complicated. Although youth is obviously an important target group in order to initiate societal changes, one should not overload children by expecting them to be the pioneers in such fundamental transformation. Changes may more effectively come from within rather than being imposed from above – indicating that the focus should be on domestic efforts rather than solely on international initiatives. This leads to the question of reforming the teaching methods. Teachers are the ones to implement each new reform, but the question remains whether they receive enough support (training and counseling) for that task. Books, especially textbooks, are the chief vehicles for the transmission of the lore and wisdom of the past, while teachers are the agents through whom pupils are brought into effective connection with the material.

Teachers are the agents through whom knowledge and skills are communicated and are among those agents through whom rules of conduct are enforced.

Education is considered a prerequisite for development, but in divided societies it could be either poison or cure. It is interesting to assess whether the educational system in BiH is undermining the very existence of the state, or if it has a potential to bring about positive change. With this, the main research question arises, namely:

1) What role does the educational system play in the democratization process in BiH?

In order to give an answer to this question it will be appropriate to address the impact the educational system has on the development in BiH. This will require a functionalist approach, and will seek to emphasize not only what has been done, but also suggestions for further improvement. The aim is not to criticize for the sake of criticism, but to develop a critique that would show the necessity of improvement and defining the areas where it is necessary. In this master's thesis, I will take the educational system to include textbooks (especially history textbooks), curricula (again, especially history), and teachers. Moreover, the focus will be on primary education. This is done to limit the thesis and provide a more thorough comprehension of the educational system in BiH within the context of democratic transition.

The method

Curricula and textbooks in BiH are set by the governing authorities and therefore assumed to indicate the intentions the respective government has in relation to the transmission of knowledge and attitudes to the younger generations. In order to address the role of education in post-war BiH, the values contained in history textbooks and curricula have to be investigated. History textbooks are a product of contemporary society, yet they can attempt to fashion the understanding and assumptions of the next generation and condition the future action of young generations.

In this sense it is appropriate to carry out content analysis of the three different history curricula (for Bosniaks, Croats and Serbs), basically in primary school, to assess if they are tailored to the needs and interests of the students as they are supposed to be. Content analysis of recent history textbooks will also be undertaken where the aim is to comprehend the differences and historical rivalries through 3 analytical categories: war, peace and nation. The

purpose is not to give a detailed description of the content in the curricula and history books, but rather to use quantitative measures to support and illustrate the arguments. In regard to the history books, the 3 analytical categories are based on Pilvi Torsti's (2003) analysis of history textbooks in the 1999-2000 school years.

All the concepts have been chosen because they represent typical examples of historically constructed societal concepts. Within Bosnian society, the concept of nation is of vital importance for the question of nation, for the sense of belonging to a certain nation, and for the understanding of national rights and national enemies, and has been a significant part of the almost daily experiences of the peoples in Bosnia both in war and post-war years. Through the political structure of the state, each citizen has been forced to be aware of which national group he or she belongs to and to declare it publicly. This allows the distinction of "self" and other".

The concepts of war and peace are also considered important since the war-peace dilemma has existed in Bosnian society as the war fought in 1992-95 was of such a nature that it affected virtually everyone in the country at least indirectly. The war has also determined the post-war reality and continued to occupy public space. The parallels with previous wars and in particular with the Second World War have also been a common part of the recent history culture among Bosnian Serbs, Croats, and Bosniaks. Moreover, wars have classically been presented as decisive historical events around which the contents of the textbooks are organized.

The selection of the history textbooks was based on the idea to analyze the most recent books used by the pupils from all three national groups in order to gain a representative analysis. The 8th and 9th grades are the most interesting because they deal with the most recent history. The textbook *Istorija* (Pejić et.al. 2010) is used in most of the schools in the area of the Serb Republic. In the Federation of BiH, the Bosniak-Croat dominated schools mainly use the book *Povijest* (Matković et.al. 2009). The Bosniak dominated schools mainly use the book *Historija* (Sehić et.al. 2009). However, it is important to note that there are other history books available, but due to the limited resources, teachers still chose to use these books even though in theory they are given an opportunity to choose other textbooks. Due to space limitations this research has not included an analysis of the educational system (textbooks,

curriculums and teachers) in the district of Brčko.² The focus is rather on the FBiH and the RS.

Moreover, in outlining the historical narratives, I have no wish to suggest that all teachers and/or students of any given people will agree with the given narratives, only to suggest that the different narratives represent the views typical among the most vocal exponents of the present policy. Nor do I wish to suggest that the contents of any of the narratives should be seen as necessarily true or necessarily false; for purposes of this thesis, I am not interested in determining the truth values of the narratives being discussed.

In regard to the history curricula, there are three different versions of the historical narrative. My purpose in analyzing each of them is to reveal which values are highlighted, especially if any liberal values are emphasized. The curricula have been chosen in order to assess what the goals in the history curricula are since people's understanding of history plays such an important role in people's nation-building.

² Brčko is a unique part of the country, in practice part of neither the Federation nor the RS. It avoids entity (and cantonal) politics and legislation, and has more freedom to shape its own laws and approaches. Moreover, it has experienced a robust form of international engagement which has made it easier for reforms to be pushed through (and for local politics to be swept aside) than in the rest of BiH.

PART II: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

A review of perspectives on education

In undertaking an investigation of the relationship between values and the political system, and the specific function which education might play in underpinning a sociopolitical system, we are mindful of the fact that this theme occupied the minds of Plato, Locke, Rousseau, Dewey, Durkheim, and others. Moreover, we are aware that not only do political systems and values evolve, but our understanding of the role which education might play also evolves. Thus, the assessment depends on the historical context.

Education has, since the time of ancient Greece, played an important role in the formation of man and society. Plato suggested that the mind is like a “wax block” which takes impressions from experiences. John Locke also emphasized an “empty” mind – a tabula rasa – that is “filled” with experiences. Locke argued that people acquire knowledge from the information about the objects in the world that our senses bring. People begin with simple ideas and then combine them into more complex ones. In *Some Thoughts Concerning Education and Of the Conduct of the Understanding* (1693), Locke writes "I think I may say that of all the men we meet with, nine parts of ten are what they are, good or evil, useful or not, by their education" (Locke 1996:10). In this sense, men are moved to action not by things as they are, but by their own opinions and convictions.

Rousseau also recognized how important education is, understanding it as a learning process of autonomous thinking, but also as training for citizenship. This implies the importance of developing ideas for ourselves, to make sense of the world in our own way. People must be encouraged to reason their way through to their own conclusions. In *Democracy and Education: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Education*, Dewey (1966:2) stated that in its broadest sense education is the means of the "social continuity of life". Considered as the philosophical father of experiential education, or progressive education, he opposed the traditional education, which he claims prevents active participation by pupils in the development of what is taught -- which is static, taught as a finished product, and is the cultural product of a society that assumed the future would be much like the past. Focusing solely on the subject matter to be taught creates certain inactivity on the part of the student (Dewey 1902:13). Dewey argues that in order for education to be most effective, content must be presented in a way that allows the student to relate the information to prior experiences, thus deepening the connection with this new knowledge. He goes on to acknowledge that education and schooling are instrumental in creating social change and reform.

Education is argued to have the potential to promote democracy both because it can facilitate the development of a “culture of democracy” and because it can impart the skills that can lead to greater prosperity, which is also believed to lead to political development. This argument is central in the modernization theory, popularized by Seymour Martin Lipset (1959), which emphasizes the role of education as well as economic growth in promoting political development in general and democracy in particular. For instances, Lipset argues that “Education presumably broadens men’s outlooks, enables them to understand the need for norms of tolerance, restrains them from adhering to extremist and monistic doctrines, and increases their capability to make rational electoral choices” (1959:79).

Functionalists view education as one of the most important components of society. Emile Durkheim emphasized that education is crucial for promoting social solidarity and stability in society. Education is the “influence exercised by adult generations on those that are not yet ready for social life” (Durkheim 1956:28), indicating that education has a function of transmitting cultural norms and values. Moral education is important because it conveys moral values – the foundation of a cohesive social order. Durkheim believed that schools are responsible for teaching a commitment to the common morality, thus building a civic culture. The correlation between education and values implies also a division between education as contributing to the development of moral integrity, and imparting specific understandings of morality, civic duty, and social life. One of the drawbacks of the exposure to certain moral philosophies is that it can become counterproductive when it degenerates into propagandization. In regards to this, James Rest writes, “Cognitive developmental value education differs from ‘socialization’ or indoctrination approaches, for the cognitive developmental approach aims not at producing mere conformity with the state’s, the teacher’s, or the school’s values, but at developing capabilities in decision making and problem solving” (1980:103).

Teachers have always been moral educators whether or not they are conscious of this role. Their comments in the classroom, their manner of speaking, their behavior, and their treatment of other people convey important “moral messages” to students. In recent years, these moralizing activities of the teacher have been called the “hidden curriculum”, and some writers (Jackson 1968; Dreeben 1968) have argued that the unconscious shaping of a teacher’s activities by the demands of classroom management and of the school as a social system performs hidden services in adapting children to society. According to Turner (1983), “side by side with the manifest curriculum, the knowledge, skills, and attitudes that schools are charged with teaching, there is a ‘hidden curriculum’ which may make as much if not more

impact on pupils". Teachers can pass on unintended stereotypical messages about minorities or ethnic groups, about the role of males and females, and the meaning of success and failure in school, which can lead to prejudices and intolerance.

The two faces of education

It is said that education reflects the society around it, and although it is being conditioned by the nature of this society, the education system tends to have relative autonomy: 1) its organization and management is not exactly the same as in other institutions, and 2) it often functions without coherence in the statements in its official goals (Daun et.al. 2002:13). Education is not always a force for good. While the provision of good quality education can be a stabilizing factor, the education system can be manipulated to drive a wedge between people, rather than drawing them closer together. Thus, education can have two faces – positive and negative.

Positive

Education is commonly understood to provide the means for the acquisition of appropriate knowledge, and thence for development. Moreover, education has a critical role to play by encouraging individuals to question taken-for-granted understandings and facts. In short, it can help an individual recognize the need for change. To the extent that the education system is able to do so, it assumes a very important role in the peace building process, especially in its ability to maintain and articulate credible alternative visions of the future; visions that are inclusive, tolerant, liberal, democratic and just.

According to Bush and Saltarelli (2000:18) education can also cultivate inclusive citizenship by highlighting commonality, shared experience and objectives. In divided societies there is a need to move away from the idea that a particular ethnic group is the only legitimate holder of state power and toward ideas of nations as multi-cultural entities, though with a distinctive cultural profile. They also point out that education can contribute to the de-segregation of the mind, emphasizing that communities cannot desegregate until the idea of de-segregation has taken root in enough individuals to develop a sustainable critical mass of interest in fundamental change (Bush and Saltarelli:16).

Moreover, education is delegated the task to prepare children for life and activities in different societal spheres; hence the emphasis on the development of civic virtue and behavioral dispositions of a good citizen in a democracy (Patrick 2003:4). This implies the

“subordination of personal interest to the common good of the community to which one belongs”, and includes the development of commitment to justice or fairness, compassion for others, hope or optimism about the future, fidelity to the truth, tolerance and respect for the equal worth, amongst others. According to Held (1995:198) institutions alone are not adequate; a will to democracy and a democratic culture are indispensable supporting conditions for the sustainability of a democracy. The country must firmly implant as Tocqueville states, “the habits of the heart” in the character of the citizens.

Negative

As the author Neil Postman has said “...public education does not serve a public. It creates a public. The question is, what kind of public does it create?” (1996:18). In its negative mode of operation, education is an instrument of the rulers both for conscious social reproduction and for maintaining the political system. This holds a significant validity especially in societies which have been marked by conflict where ethnicity has been mobilized and politicized. In a post-war context people constitute a transitional society which cannot comprehend which ideas to choose and reject. Instead of educating people to value equality and integration, education becomes a means of encouraging hate. This is highly evident when the education system is segregated. Segregation is said to emphasize differences and encourage mutual ignorance and, perhaps, more important, mutual suspicion.

Bush and Saltarelli (2000) assess the role of manipulating textbooks which contain negative ethnic stereotypes, concluding that they impoverish the imagination of children and thereby inhibit them from dealing with conflict constructively. Being exposed to selective narratives makes children and students less resistant toward intolerance, fear and inequality.

Education, ethnicity and nation-building

Children’s ethnic socialization

There is still no scholarly consensus about the processes and structures that influence and shape ethnic attitudes in children. According to Padilla and Ruiz (1974), early socialization experiences are critical in the formation of ethnic attitudes. This is because ethnic attitudes are formed early, and once positive or negative prejudices are formed they tend to increase with time. Riegel (1976) argues that socio-cultural attitudes and identities are a function of the interaction of individual factors, the physical environment and last but not at least the historical socio-cultural milieu. These factors are understood to form unique patterns of

development for each generation, each ethnic group and each individual. The advocates of these constructivist theories perceive individuals as producers and co-producers of their own (micro) realities, including roles and selves. Hence, new and intensive experiences may cause individuals to redefine themselves (Berger and Luckmann 1967). Learning, seen as reality construction and the construction of mental images, takes place practically everywhere and learning and doing are important principles among children and youths (Burr 1995). This signifies that “socialization messages” are implied in the shape of the interaction itself, sometimes as important as the content of the interaction and the communication itself.

Within the psychoanalytic tradition, researchers have emphasized personality types. They view negative attitudes as being determined by early childhood experience, especially parent-child relationships. Children do not come to the classroom as *tabula rasa*; they bring with them the attitudes and values of their societies, often those shared by their parents. This suggests that education will have to target both children and parents if it is to play a constructive role in inter-ethnic relations (Bush and Saltarelli 2000:3). One major challenge with this approach is how it is to be done in practical terms. It is evident that parents cannot attend classes too, thus leaving the focus on the children and the teachers.

History teaching

Education in general, and especially in divided societies, has great importance. As mentioned earlier, it may be an integrative, but also a disintegrative factor. It may be used as means to deepen the divisions in the society and promote splits and intolerance, or it may be a significant factor for the recovery of the society. These general comments about education refer also to history, or maybe most to history as a teaching subject. Depending on how it is approached, history in societies in crisis may be poison or cure.

As philosopher John Keane (1988:204) has noted, crisis periods highlight the importance of the past for the present. The challenge of teaching history is always present in societies emerging from violent conflicts and in societies going through societal transitions. Pilvi Torsti (*forthcoming*) suggests that there are two relevant approaches to history teaching: 1) History teaching and textbooks serve as a tool for societal analysis. It represents the official views the government want to promote and encourage. 2) It serves a tool for the development of a society and a possible tool for improving and enhancing for instances democracy, pluralism and justice.

Educating young generations to become good and loyal citizens is reflected in school subjects, especially history (Schleicher 1993:24), which seems to be especially important and useful in processes of children's national identification. According to Hein and Selden (2000:3), the purpose of history education in the modern state has generally been "to transmit ideas of citizenship and both the idealized past and the promised future of the community. History and civics textbooks in most societies present an 'official' story highlighting narratives that shape contemporary patriotism. Education helps to articulate relations between state and society and sets the boundaries and terms of citizenship". Insofar as the representation of a group's past is recognized as an integral part of identity, and identity includes not only how one views one's own group, but also the groups indicated as "other" or enemies, understandings of history are crucial to a society's ability to deal with the difficult past for the sake of a more just future.

Schlesinger (1992:46,72) argues that the writing or teaching of history as a means of "defining national identity" turns history "into a weapon", and history as a weapon is an abuse of history. The high purpose of history is not the presentation of self or the vindication of identity but the recognition of complexity and the search for knowledge. This implies that history education, particularly through pedagogy, is also able to contribute to the strengthening of a culture of democracy (Cole 2007:125). By revising history education methodology, as well as content, one can deepen democracy through the enhancement of critical thinking and empathy skills, the willingness to question simplistic models and the ability to disagree about interpretations of the past and their implications for present social issues without violence being the only solution. This will present history education "at its best...not simply a collection of facts, not a politically sanctioned listing of indisputable 'truths', but an ongoing means of collective self-discovery about the nature of our society" (Foner 2002:88).

"Yours, Mine, Theirs – Not ours"

According to Rustow (1970), the only prior condition for successful democratization is national unity. This does not mean that everyone has to trace his ancestry back to the same clan; nor does it mean that everyone has to speak the same language, or even practice the same religion. Instead, it means that nearly everyone must believe that he or she belongs together with others in a single political community and that the members of that community "participate in a common past" (Budak 1999:15). The existence of substantially different

evaluations of the country as a whole by large sub-national groups would be evidence of a lack of national unity and, as such, would potentially challenge the way in which social capital affects the democratization process.

It is often argued that the aim of education is nation-building.³ Education as nation building involves deferred gratification in pursuit of long-term gains, not only for the student, but for the society as a whole. It seeks to transmit collective memory and as such, serve as vehicle for the formation of national identity. As Ramet (2007:3) writes, love of country, national feeling and cultural awareness are natural, healthy and perhaps necessary things, but if we seek an understanding of how people perceive different national identities, we must bear in mind that nationalism is still always about favoring the members of one's own nation.

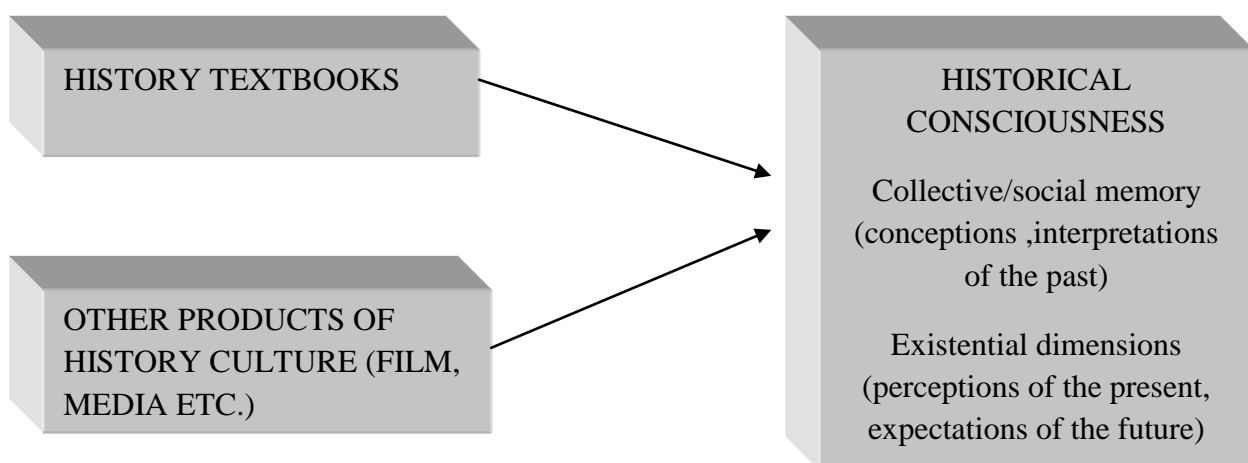
According to Pål Kolstø (2005:3), the factors that lead members of two (or more) groups to see each other as different rather than as members of the same collective are often "mythical" rather than "factual". This means that the differences are located in "the head", in perceptions, rather than in any observable social or cultural characteristics. However, this does not imply that there are no objective differences between the groups. Differences are present, but it is through the cultivation of historical myths, found especially in the history textbooks that the claims to separateness on objective grounds appear. Mythical stories about differences of descent, about how groups have interacted and fought each other in the past, and so on, can function as substitutes for "real" differences. Specifically, mythical stories provide a common myth of descent, which in short seems to be the basis for the whole myth of ethnicity (Sokolović 2006:101). Such myths allow the members of the groups to suppress and ignore obvious similarities and blow out of all proportions certain differences between themselves and "the others".

Through their different historical narratives and myths people build up a historical consciousness which is the way people and communities deal with the past in order to understand the present and the future. In short, a narrative links the past and the future, and can construct a sense of continuity. According to Antoon van den Braembussche (as noted in Torsti 2003:49-51), historical consciousness may also illustrate how an individual or community attempts to deal with the past in the current situation, indicating that it constructs

³ By nation I refer to the definition: "a community of people who share or believe that they share a common history, who identify with some territory they view as their homeland, and who share a common cultural heritage, which usually includes a common language, shared religious life, and shared musical and culinary traditions".

the past because of the present. Thus, historical consciousness tends to “forget” parts of the historical experience which can lead to historical traumas when faced with a difficult situation. With that, Braembussche suggests that one should not “forget” possible traumas but instead work them out. If they are not worked out, the memory of the traumas has a tendency to become mythical and may even result in taboo-formation (Torsti 2003:49-51).

Memory can be considered an integral part of the historical consciousness. The conception of collective memory has slowly been replaced by the concept of social memory which emphasizes the idea that an individual does not passively obey some collective will (Torsti 2003:51). “Memories are not retrieved from past experiences but rather reconstituted by the social groups in which we presently participate”. Further, this implies that social memory can be considered an expression of collective experience; social memory identifies a group. All of this comes down to the formation of values, which aim to give a common identity among people and enable them to work together towards their goals.⁴ As Plut-Pregelj (2006:193) claims, values provide reasons and energy for action and are an important and inseparable part of every society and school. Without a common ethical ground to determine what is right and what is wrong among teachers and students, the schools cannot function. It is also important to recognize that acquiring knowledge as a basic value of schooling has not only cognitive aspects but also emotional, moral, and political consequences.



One must bear in mind that students’ historical consciousness must not be regarded exclusively as a product of history teaching in schools. History teaching is definitely one of the factors shaping it, and rationalizing historical consciousness could rightfully be regarded

⁴ In this thesis the focus will be on values that are affected by educational policies, which consequently influence students’ knowledge and character.

as one of the objectives of history teaching in schools. However, it is not the sole factor, since students gather information about the past at home, from their family and peers, and from the media, especially television but recently to a large extent from the Internet, too.

Civic culture and democracy

The functionality of liberal values

As Ramet and Fink-Hafner (2006:15) point out, education is relevant to liberal democracy in at least three ways: 1) by making facts and basic information available to the public, 2) by training the public in critical thinking, and 3) by promoting values conducive to harmony and stability. Thus, it is important to recognize that, while building a democracy means creating certain institutions and passing a number of laws, building liberalism means dispersing values not only within the government but throughout society. Without a liberal society, liberalism in government is insignificant. In this sense, liberal values are functional for democracy and stability alike. In order to build a “civic culture” supportive of liberal democracy, with special attention to education, four values will be considered central: tolerance, equality, civic-mindedness and trust.⁵

Tolerance is viewed as the foundation of respect for others, of any notion of equality, and indeed of liberty itself. While tolerance is a prerequisite of freedom and enhances respect, intolerance on the other hand is subversive of democratic procedure and breeds violence against those not tolerated, which in turn creates divided societies.

Equality stands as a strong indicator of stability. In the latest democratic thinking on democracy, it recognizes that citizens are formally equal (everyone has the same rights) and substantively equal (everyone has an equal opportunity to exercise rights). Equality of treatment – in which people are judged according to their talents and achievements, instead of their ethnic identity – has a relative compelling force.

Policies capable of building and enhancing civic-mindedness, especially in societies characterized by ethnic fragmentation, are important. Instead of being considered a form of nationalism, civic-mindedness can be thought of as an alternative to it. Even though both of these features are collective sentiments of belonging through which people feel that they are part of a community, they are nonetheless quite different. Where nationalists experience a bond with co-ethnics, regardless of national boundaries, civic-minded people view themselves

⁵ This is not to say that the values of church-state separation and laicity, respect for democratic procedure and the rule of law, and human rights, are not important, but in the scope of this research their role will not be assessed.

as part of a geographic community, in which common concerns, projects and duties are being emphasized, without regard to ethnic differences.

Social capital

In most political science literature, as detailed by Ronald Inglehart (1999), it is shown that democracy could never develop in a society that has no democratic culture. Inglehart believes that democratic culture is tightly related to interpersonal trust amongst citizens. The cultural factor is also emphasized by Francis Fukuyama (1995) who writes that democracy is based on “the expectation ... of regular, honest, and cooperative behavior, based on commonly shared norms.” These cultural values deliver social capital that allows society to co-operate. The main basis however lies in interpersonal trust. As Fukuyama says, prosperity “arises from the prevalence of trust in a society”. According to Putnam (1993:167), social capital “refers to features of social organization such as trust, norms and networks that can improve the efficiency of society by facilitating coordinated action”. Thus, communities with higher levels of social capital are thought to be able to cooperate more often to overcome social problems, keep their governments more responsible and more honest, and improve democratic institutional performance.

PART III: THE EDUCATION SYSTEM

Legacies from the past: The Yugoslav educational system and consequences of the Bosnian war

In order to explain the current situation and challenges, legacies from the past have to be tackled – both those left over from the Yugoslav educational system and those resulting from the Bosnian war. In socialist Yugoslavia the main objective, apart from spreading communist ideological propaganda, was to create a collective consciousness, reflected in the slogan “Brotherhood and Unity”. This was clearly embedded in curricula and teaching methods that stressed collective solidarity and political loyalty (Council of Europe 1999: 5f). Even though the young Yugoslav urban generations understood diversity as enriching the society (Perica 2002:28), partly to the credit of the educational system,⁶ the same system had its own weaknesses. Critical thinking within the educational system was not highly emphasized, meaning that the focus was clearly more on the acquisition of facts than on analytical tools.

What was presented at the schools was an idyllic representation of a Yugoslav mosaic of cultures, tolerance, and peaceful coexistence. Tito’s Communist Party was aware of the explosiveness of the hidden past, which is why Yugoslav newspapers and magazines were constantly reminding Yugoslavs of the slaughter of World War II, blaming the Chetniks and Ustaše⁷, implicating the Catholic Church (falsely) in Ustaša crimes, and presenting the Communists as the sole available saviors of the peoples of Yugoslavia. Wolfgang Höpken (1996:105) believes that “it was less the biased and one-sided interpretations on crucial issues, which made textbooks so problematic during Tito era, but more than that it was the unbalanced and selective historical memory. Historical education of this type in the end produced the vacuum which later on could be filled with historical myths and prejudices”. This dependence on a “fragmented memory” that selects historic events and claims that there was only one “true” history is still apparent in textbooks in BiH. It has been recycled now from a nationalist perspective (Low-Beer 2001:5).

During the war in BiH, each local area adopted its own textbooks and curricula. BiH territories that were controlled by the Serbs received their curricula and textbooks from

⁶ The old SFRY system constantly reminded its citizens that the point was to value cultural diversity but to coalesce around some common values.

⁷ Ustaše - as the Croatian fascist forces were known – set up concentration camps for their campaign of ethnic killing, including the notorious Jasenovac camp where many Serbs, Jews and Romas were killed. Chetniks, known as Serbian nationalists, committed atrocities against many Muslims and Croats, both in the NDH and Bosnia (Bass 2002: 209).

Serbia, while the areas under the rule of the Croatian Democratic Union followed the educational policy of neighboring Croatia (Torsti 2003:153). In areas controlled by the Army of BiH there was an effort to publish new textbooks for a new curriculum which was introduced in 1994 before the end of the war. All educational systems that currently exist in BiH still suffer from strong political influence, unclear decision-making processes and organizational structures, outdated curricula and pedagogical principles. These problems can be partly attributed to the socialist past and the concept of a “self-management system” which proved to have its shortcomings in reality, acting as an obstacle to clear decisions because it blurred responsibilities and competencies. The situation is even more complicated due to the separate structures set up during the war, which were also affirmed by the internationally brokered Dayton Peace Agreement. The result has been too much decentralization and lack of coordination within the education system.

Defining the actors: Who is in charge?

The 1995 Dayton Peace Agreement created two separated entities: the Republika Srpska (RS) and the Federation of Bosnia-Herzegovina (FBiH).⁸ In the Federation there are ten cantons: 5 have a Bosniak majority, 3 a Croat majority and two are mixed, while the RS is divided into seven regions composed almost entirely of a Serb population and functioning as a strongly centralized republic (Fischer 2006:300). According to the Constitution of FBiH (1995), “cantons are solely responsible for developing educational policies, including declarations for education, ensuring education, as well as developing and implementing cultural policies”. Currently, the education administration in FBiH is conducted on several levels, including the Federation, canton, municipality, and school levels, while the RS has kept central control of education.⁹

It is of course possible to understand the DPA as “the best possible solution under the circumstances” (Bojkov 2003:15) and it cannot be overlooked that it did indeed end the war, but the agreement with its outcome has also been target of harsh criticism. Although the DPA did not directly affect the educational system, it placed decision making in the field of education in the hands of the two entities, legalizing segregation based on lines of national division. Various development actors (Smith/Vaux 2002:23f; Perry 2003:17) have pointed out that autonomy for local authorities in education can have positive impacts in multiethnic

⁸ The district of Brčko is yet another independent administrative unit under international control.

societies, but in the Bosnian case the transfer of authority to a lower level was not implemented and bureaucratic centralism has continued – albeit on a more local level as mentioned. Those actors that are directly involved in education (school personnel, teachers, parents and students) are not included by the authorities. The political agendas of the three nationalist parties (the SDA, SDS, and HDZ) leading BiH since 1992-93 seem also to create a wider gap separating the three constituent peoples. What could not be done in war continues to be attempted in peace by the nationalist differentiation of education. Providing each group with its “own” education system promotes certain political and ideological goals (UNDP 1998).

The Pedagogical Institutes, which are in charge of teacher training, curricula development and the setting up and monitoring of teaching standards, are also characterized by segregation in their organizational setting. Even though both entities and cantons are entitled to maintain a Pedagogic Institute, not every canton has one, and in those that do, these parallel institutions exist without agreed standards or sufficient cooperation procedures (Open Society Foundation 2003:29). Another piece of the big puzzle is that the work of these Institutes is still open to political influence, as their directors are appointed by the respective ministries of education (RS or cantonal) without any co-determination of an advisory board. Moreover, their lack of interest in sharing experiences and developing common strategies has been proved on various occasions (OSCE 2005:18). It is a striking resemblance to the well-known equilibrium where no player has anything to gain by changing only his or her own strategy unilaterally, in this case indicating that the activities of these Institutes are still dominated by loyalties along ethnic lines. With 13 Ministries of Education¹⁰ as well as the state-level Ministry of Civil Affairs (MoCA) with competencies in education for an estimated population of 3.8 million people, the system remains extremely fragmented.

¹⁰ Formally speaking, there are 12 Ministries of Education (part of the governments of the RS, FBiH and ten cantons) and a Department of Education in Brčko District.

Towards a framework: Efforts to reform and transform the education system in post-war BiH

The need for education reform in BiH was evident even as the war was raging. In subsequent years, there were several efforts aimed at improving the educational system in BiH from a technical standpoint. It is understandable, considering the damages during the war, that there was an emphasis on material reconstruction in the immediate post-war years. Even though education in BiH received international attention, there were other pressing issues, including police reform and defense reform, which had stronger international constituencies and funding (Perry *forthcoming*). It was also clear that reforming the educational system was not the highest priority among the political leaders. The highly segregated and non-transparent educational system suited their interests, where history textbooks became one of their most powerful weapons.

For all nationalities, the main priority in post-war educational reforms has been to change the content and curriculum in the national subjects. The major changes can be seen in literature, the national language and history (Kolouh-Westin 2004: 497). Curriculum reform has been an issue of ongoing controversy in BiH, mainly for two reasons. First, parts of the teaching materials have been characterized as offensive, encouraging stereotypes, and likely increasing divisions between the ethnic communities in BiH. Second, pupils returning to their pre-war areas of residence have met challenges due to the incompatibility of the different curricula (Fischer 2006:311). The curricular reconstruction, especially in conflict-affected societies such as BiH, has tended to focus on emergency response, followed by a mix of teacher training, tolerance and democracy learning modules and broad curricular or extra-curricular peace efforts, rather than holistic curricular reform and modernization (Weinstein et.al 2009:45). The reconstruction of history curricula has been one of the biggest challenges. Even though there can be different opinions on specific aspects of the non-contentious subjects like natural sciences, as for instance the question at what grade certain elements should be taught and on teaching methods in general, these questions are likely to be less controversial than reaching agreement on how to teach the history of World War II or the recent war.

There followed an agreement on Common Core Curricula (CCC) signed by all the Ministries of Education in 2003, in order to ensure that students learn at least a minimum of common elements across the entire country and to facilitate greater student mobility (OSCE 2005:11). The CCC for history is world history, while the contents of national history

remained at the competence of cantonal or entity (RS) plans and programs. The CCC did not change anything essentially, since as common were taken the contents that were already studied by all, namely topics from world history. Still, the CCC it is not one curriculum. The international community has recommended the Swiss model, where each constituent people will develop its own curricula, but integrated to the curricula of the other constituent peoples with shared core elements. The “openness” for educational influences is not without risks as Ivić (1996:13) points out:

It is also of use to mention that the non-critical adoption of the models which are successful in the developed countries and their exact copying represent a danger for countries in transition, because of two reasons. First the entire school infrastructure, the organization of the system, the administration, the methods of preparation of the teachers and the textbooks would be challenged in such a case. This is an insurmountable undertaking, not only concerning the organization, but from the economic standpoint as well. Secondly, cultural and educational paradigms, and this is even more important than economic problems, which served as the basis of the creation of a successful school model cannot be transposed, except in the case of cultural neo-colonialism.

Since 1998, the review of ethno-nationally-divided schoolbooks has been high on the agenda of international actors (Low-Beer 2004:4). Examples of offensive content of school books, especially history books supporting prejudices towards other ethnic groups, have been documented extensively (Höpken 1993; Torsti 2003). In fact, it was this issue which brought education onto the agenda of the OHR. One of the quick results was the Sarajevo Declaration, and its Education Working Group which was to evaluate curricular content and textbooks, unfortunately without any success.¹¹ The next step was to withdraw the potentially offensive material from textbooks before the start of the 1999-2000 school year, as part of the minimum requirements for accession in the Council of Europe. There were two categories for the materials that were to be identified. One category included texts to be annotated, the other category included texts to be removed. In practice, this was done by blackening the text which was to be removed while marking the text which was to be annotated and accompanying it

¹¹ The Sarajevo Declaration was signed by the cantonal authorities in 1998, and constituted the first document to address the return of former refugees and displaced persons. The declaration was more a symbolic gesture than a substantive policy initiative, as its formulations were rather vague. In October their findings were leaked to the press and caused a furore. Accusations of seeking to take away BiH's history, teaching children lies, and preparing the ground for further genocide were emphasized. Cantonal government retreated and decided to reject all the recommendations for reform of textbooks, the working group disintegrated and the Sarajevo Declaration with the international bodies lost their credibility (Low-Beer 2004).

with a stamp that read: “the passage contains material of which the truth has not been established, or that may be offensive or misleading; the material is currently under review” (Torsti *forthcoming*). One wonders on what basis the distinctions between these two categories were made, and what exactly happened if blackening out a section made the whole passage unintelligible. Resorting to blackened passages and stamped annotations may not, however, have the desired effect on the next generation – who will doubtless be more interested to figure out what lies beneath those mysterious illustrations than the usual textbook words.

Immediately after the war the reform efforts, there were so-called “quick fix” attempts to change and correct the existing textbooks. A more systematic approach started to evolve in the new millennium, focusing on new textbooks, guidelines for them, and teacher training (Torsti *forthcoming*). When the OSCE became involved in educational reform in 2003, one of its tasks was to set up a review commission to remove objectionable and inappropriate material from textbooks in the so-called “national group of subjects” (language and literature, geography, history, religion, and nature and society). Even after this commission had completed its work, problems of history and geography remained (Premilovac 2007). Subsequently, education authorities in BiH, at the initiative of and supported by the OSCE Mission in BiH, CoE, and the Georg Eckert Institute in Braunschweig, produced *Guidelines for writing textbooks of history and geography for primary and secondary schools in BiH*, which were adopted at the beginning of 2006 by all the ministries. The guidelines declared that the students should acquire a basic understanding of the history of all three constituent peoples as well as of the national minorities; that BiH should be the starting point; that all three constituent peoples, together with the national minorities and neighboring states, should be presented in a non-biased way, and that interactive learning and comparative methodology should be applied during the writing of the textbooks (OSCE 2005). In theory, these guidelines became obligatory for textbooks authors, but in practice they had a different impact on the Croat, Serb and Bosniak teaching curricula respectively, as will be illustrated in the following analysis.

There have been several efforts to train historians in the development of modern, multi-perspective textbooks, and tenders for new textbooks issued by the Ministries of Education. It was only in the 2007/2008 school year that the first of these textbooks became available. They are certainly better than the textbooks in use just five years ago, but still they meet the standards set in the Guidelines only to varying degrees (Perry *forthcoming*). Bosnian history teachers together with history teachers from neighboring countries published a joint textbook

on the daily life in socialist Yugoslavia in 2008 for all the Yugoslav successor states which does not have an official textbook status, but has been presented as complementary material.¹² Moreover, some of the recent textbooks in history are for instances written in both Latin and Cyrillic, illustrating the importance of both alphabets. These efforts should not be underestimated, especially when considering that educational reforms are a process, not a condition.

¹² For more information see *Obični ljudi u neobičnoj zemlji. Jugoslavija između istoka i zapada. Svakodnevni život u Bosni i Hercegovini, Hrvatskoj i Srbiji 1945-1990* (Beograd: EUROCLIO, 2007).

PART IV: RESHAPING THE FUTURE

Tackling a sensitive issue: Teaching History in BiH

Identity lessons: Transforming neighbors into enemies

Scholars generally agree that history lessons are in fact lessons in patriotism and that nation-states use history to form the national identity of students and guarantee loyalty to the nation and state. While the government of BiH supports this view, it must simultaneously be seen as a slightly peculiar case. While national identity or patriotism is major educational objectives, one scarcely finds a history textbook explicitly advocating nationalism or ethnic intolerance. Even in BiH, textbooks on all sides have become more neutral and sober in their tone in comparison with the textbooks that were used during and immediately after the recent war. While the problem is thus not open nationalism, there are underlying assumptions in the identity promoted in many history textbooks that are indeed problematic. It comes as no surprise that the textbooks in use in a country will likely represent its nation's history in a way favorable to that country and inculcate in young people a conviction that that country is the "best" country in the world. However, applying this to the Bosnian situation raises a big issue – which country is to be considered the "best"? BiH? Serbia? Croatia?

The current history textbooks, especially those used by Serbs and Croats emphasizes that national identity derives from ethnic identity, not shared citizenship. In its presentation of Serbs *Istorija*, a book written by Ranko Pejić, Simo Tešić and Stevo Gavrić, and published in the Eastern part of Sarajevo, does not include any special mention of Bosnian Serbs but focuses on Serbian Serbs. The textbook also glorifies the "Serbian nation" and speaks about collective "decision-making" of the entire "Serbian nation" and the "will of the people" shaping history, although, of course, the whole community could not have an impact on that process. This is problematic not only because it implies that the nation functions as a unified organism, but because it also suggests that all of its members must think and act identically. This proposed unity is contrary to the unity of BiH.

This representation of "us" is clearly correlated with the notion of victimhood. The "Serbian nation" is presented as an innocent victim. References to the Second World War show that the "Serbian nation" and the Jews "suffered genocide". When referring to Jasenovac, one Serb commentator claimed that "one should definitely remember but not seek revenge, but rather do everything to prevent it from happening again" (Pejić et.al. 2010). What is surprising is the representation of Chetniks who in *Istorija* are presented as a group

fighting along with Tito's partisans against Germany and the Ustaše. Nowhere do they acknowledge that the Chetniks were actually in an alliance with the Germans and Italians, and operating in close coordination with the collaborationist government of Milan Nedić in Belgrade, indicating only that they were against the Partisans and the Communists. The interpretation seems to be that two quite different ideologies fought for the same cause, which is misleading. The cruelties committed by the Chetniks against unarmed civilians are not acknowledged in this textbook; instead the Chetniks are presented as victims. This victimization follows in regards to the disintegration of Yugoslavia where the Serbs allegedly had no opportunity to make decisions about their own future and destiny. The purpose of the representations is clear: to show who were the "real" victims of the Balkans' past. Moreover, the representation of "others", Croats, and Bosniaks, is misleading. Bosniaks are always connected with Islam; they are perceived as a religious community. Croats and the Croatian nationalism are believed to have played an important role in the war in Croatia when Serbs were forced to leave Croatia as they did at the time of the NDH. The textbook emphasizes Serbs' endangered status and their alleged striving for justice, and that Serbs are "always" under threat because of Croat nationalists and Islamic fundamentalists. In the face of this kind of stereotyping, children are not encouraged to form even a slightly positive opinion about their neighbors; other nations are pictured as eternal enemies, emphasized by linking past experiences with recent events.

In the case of Croatia, reducing the content in the history curricula of the peoples who made up socialist Yugoslavia has instead been used to expand the content on Croatian history. In the Croatian history textbook prepared by Hrvoje Matković, Božo Goluža and Ivica Šarac, an ethnocentric account is created with the development of the national state at its center, and relations with neighbors are presented as a series of conflicts and Croatian resistance to conquering intentions and attempts to annihilate Croatian national identity. The rivalry with the Serbs is a central characteristic. The stereotype of Serbs is based on the idea that Serbs have been responsible for various unfair state structures discriminating against Croats in both the first and second Yugoslavia. Moreover, the Ustaša terror is marginalized, while the violence of the Chetniks as well as of the Communist Partisans is highlighted. It is not Jasenovac (a concentration camp operated by the Ustaše), but Bleiburg (the scene of Partisan violence against Croats), that becomes the major *lieu de mémoire* for Croatian identity in the textbook.

Even though the Federation/Bosniak textbook, written by Zijad Sehić, Zvezdana Marčić-Matosović and Alma Leka, try to keep the country together by emphasizing and endorsing values such as equality and humanity to “our group” and defining the Bosnian nation by territory, it also aspires to construct the Bosniak national identity as the identity of the “core nation”. In terms of the representation of others, *Historija* is more moderate than the other books; it does not attach as much of historical importance to the actions of others. Still, the bad conditions for the Muslim population in the first Yugoslavia where they lost their century-long internal and external autonomy, borders, national symbols and the right to official use of a national name are emphasized, evoking a notion of victimhood, especially compared with the better conditions for Serbs and allegedly also for Croats. However, in the second Yugoslavia conditions for the Muslims became better in the sense that from 1968 onwards they could be recognized as a nationality (with the first census allowing them to declare themselves as such being the census of 1971), not only as a religious group - which they considered a big achievement.

Lessons about the nation, promoted through the deeply segregated schooling system in subjects like history, are a perfect device for the promotion of completely separated identities of the different nationalities. Through history lessons the nationalistic leaders want to create and save an “ethnically cleansed” vision of the past and justify the existence of three communities in BiH which cannot live together. The analysis of textbook narratives shows such an intent. The children are being prepared to view the political community through an ethnic lens. The stereotypes found in the official textbooks are clearly contributing to this scenario. According to Stojanović (2001:29) these stereotypes produce three dangerous effects. First, they create an incorrect perception that one’s own nation is a “historical victim”; hence, the children retain an unrealistic attitude toward themselves. Further, they breed an unconscious fear of most neighboring peoples which can lead to desires for revenge. And third, they impose the idea that relations between peoples and their “historical characteristics” never change. There is no doubt that democracy will not blossom in a landscape where the young are permitted, even encouraged to fear and hate those whose beliefs are different.

In terms of societal development, the role of history teaching and textbooks can be seen as supporting division and being counterproductive, for example, for such goals as liberal democracy, peace building and pluralistic society. History textbooks have in no way contributed to the transitional justice of post-war BiH. As Baranović already concluded in 2001: “By contributing more to the creation of a closed, ethnocentric identity of children,

rather than to an identity open to diversity, history textbooks appear to function more as a disintegrative than [as an] integrative factor in the post-war reconstruction of social life in BiH” (Baranović 2001: 24). Unfortunately, this still holds true particularly for the history textbooks written for Serb and Croat curricula. Instead of strengthening democracy, the teaching of history has served as a tool to create an idea of people as passive bystanders of history instead of active citizens with power for change. In the Bosnian context the high purpose of history is not the recognition of complexity and the search for knowledge but rather the presentation of self and the vindication of identity.¹³

History stops in the 1990s

It is utopian to believe that brutal conflicts and wars will be forgotten and excluded from the textbooks’ narratives. It is important not only to learn about these historical events but also learn from them in order to prevent them of occurring again. However, all three history textbooks devote a rather small amount of attention to the recent war. It seems like history stops with the recent war. There is no interest in exploring the real causes of the war let alone in recognizing the fact that, in some ways and in some measure, all three constituent nations have been victims. According to Bartulović (2006:58), the function of this “silence” is to cover up the “secrets” that should stay carefully protected within the intimacy of local and national community or to expel the hurtful and unpleasant elements which should be erased from memory once and for all.

There are many things that are still not talked about in BiH; that is the war itself, the genocide itself, the things that have happened, the silence about these subjects prevailing in BiH, Croatia, and Serbia, and among the peoples of those countries. The educational environment should be of the kind where students are encouraged to talk about what has happened and why it has happened. By repressing those things and by neglecting them, there can be an explosion of emotions in twenty, thirty, fifty years again. If they are not dealt with right now, people will forget about them, many facts and many events will be blurred, other historical interpretations will be invented and feelings will be suppressed.

¹³ Besides history, the introduction of religion in schools is an alarming issue. Since the introduction of religious education in the early 1990s, religion classes have been taught more as a catechism than as an academic subject, leaving little room for participation and inclusion of children of a different faith. Instead of learning about the essential principles of a religious tradition, pupils in Bosnian school are solely learning about their “own” religion, thus making religion an enhanced identity marker. As with history, religious education serves to create division and perpetrate stereotypes.

According to Pejić et.al. (2010), the disputes began when the national parties won the multiparty elections. For Pejić, it had to do with the fact that the “Muslims” (Bosniaks) and Croat Members of Parliament allegedly formed a coalition and were making decisions without the consent of the Serbian delegates”. Soon after, the “Muslims” (Bosniaks) and Croats without the consent and cooperation of Serbian nation carried out a referendum, in which the “relative majority of Croat and Muslim voters decided to secede from Yugoslavia”. The state was internationally recognized and shortly after that “the war started”. The textbook neglects the first steps of independent BiH and focuses on the birth of the “parastate” under the Serbian flag. Clearly, the children in the RS are not being encouraged to see BiH as their homeland. Further, there is no identification of the allies in the various battles and the war is presented as a civil war; this implies a denial of the involvement and responsibilities of neighboring countries, Croatia and Serbia. According to Pejić, a war began in BiH, but nobody started it. Children learn that the war was provoked by Bosniaks and Croats since they were not prepared to acknowledge Serbian wishes. In this sense, the international recognition of the Serbian entity seems to be much more important than peace.

It is notable that the reasons given for the conflict in BiH of 1990s are different from one textbook to another. For the Croats, it was an aggression against an independent state. This aggression came mainly from political and military leaders in Serbia who “from the beginning wanted to gain as much territory as possible” (Matković et.al. 2009:124). They also emphasize that the Serbs in BiH, “following the logic of their political leaders”, wanted to see BiH as part of Greater Serbia while Croats and Bosniaks voted for an independent BiH. However, they acknowledge that there were three fighting sides, including Croats and Bosniaks, and that all of them wanted to gain as much territory as possible and therefore undertook to carry out “ethnic cleansing” which in the end had the most brutal consequences for the civilians.

The Bosniaks, on the other hand, seem to downplay those features of the war; instead they only emphasize the proclamation of BiH as an independent country (Sehić et.al. 2009:240). However, they indirectly point to the rise of Serbian nationalism as a leading force to the turning point in BiH. In addition, they underline the importance of Radovan Karadžić’s nationalist party SDS in forbidding Serbs in BiH to vote in the national referendum on independence in 1992.

As mentioned earlier, in the Tito era, the fighting associated with World War II among Yugoslavs was repeatedly revisited in newspaper articles, in order to keep anger alive, exploit that anger in the spirit of “divide and rule”, and present the Communists, as the leaders of the Partisans, as the only reliable and legitimate force to lead the united country. There was no attempt to confront the complexity of the war; this allowed the Communists to promote their own historical myths and encourage prejudices. There was a studied silence, of course, about the massacres carried out by the Partisans at Bleiburg, Kočevje, and elsewhere in spring 1945. The Communist treatment of World War II is in many ways similar to the contemporary treatment of the war of Yugoslav succession. Like the former treatment, the latter also suffers from historical myths which often encourage prejudices. Moreover, there is a studied silence where the nationalist parties, instead of confronting the past in an honest way, try to de-emphasize the recent war and neglect the fact that all peoples in the region were victims in one way or another. Instead, the focus lies on which ethnic group suffered the most and which other ethnic group caused this agony. In all three history textbooks there is, in each case, solely one page dedicated to the recent war, and the interpretations are dissimilar. The students are not introduced to the reality of the war. Moreover, they are not taught a history which presents the facts about the past, but rather a mythology that facilitates national identification. In this sense, nationalists are using the mind as a method for social control. The consequences can be fatal; everybody seeks to blame somebody else for what happened neglecting the fact that they all are victims of hard-line nationalist rhetoric. The fact that local authorities use their autonomy in the educational sphere to maintain discrimination on ethnic grounds constitutes a high risk of destabilization in the whole country. It could become a security issue in itself, as it hinders the development of a functional democratic state.

Forgetting Bosnia-Herzegovina and a common past?

According to Timothy William Waters, “To the degree [that] Bosnians oppose integration, they oppose their own state” (Waters 2008:60). Distancing themselves from the integrated BiH, which is caused not only by Serbian but also by Croatian and Bosniak nationalism is most noticeable when observing BiH Serbs and Croats. As the official (textbook) narratives strongly suggest, each of the latter groups believes that its national identity in BiH is threatened by “others” – their undesirable fellow citizens. It seems that for them national exclusion both physically and symbolically can be the only solution for a peaceful future. While Croats perceive Croatia as their “homeland”, Serbs believe their “fatherland” is Serbia.

The strength of exclusivist nationalism on the part of Serbs and Croats endangers their position as constituent nations, since, by embracing neighboring countries as their homelands, they accept, in fact, the status of minority in BiH. However, the BiH Serbs and Croats are not some kind of “import” to BiH; BiH is their proper home (Lovrenović 2002:164-5). The denial of the common and united country dictates to the younger generations that they should feel like strangers in BiH.

The reduction of the content about the shared Yugoslav past is sometimes so extreme as to make it impossible to gain a realistic picture of the historical development of the area. In none of the textbooks, is a concept of “Balkan identity” visible as an educational objective. Since the curricula are dominated by political history, which is mostly the history of wars and conflicts, long periods of coexistence by different national groups, are neglected. The consequence of the domination of political history over social and economic matters or the history of everyday life is that students leave school with a distorted image of the past. The main feature is namely the obsession with statehood.

The history curricula contain many examples of vagueness and the political history dominates it. They are overly prescriptive and discourage any creativity on the part of the teacher. Students are required to learn political history, and little space is devoted to social history. The history of everyday life is virtually nonexistent, there is no history of women, and minorities and recent history (after 1945) have been marginalized. Only international history is more or less similar between the federation and the RS; all other content differs between the two entities and often among individual cantons. National history is not situated in a broader European and regional context. The history of the neighbors has almost disappeared. This is clearly evident in the history textbooks. For example, in the Croatian textbook I analyzed, the history of Yugoslavia is regarded as an integral part of the Croatian history and is usually mentioned only when necessary for understanding the Croatian past. Croatia is the focus, and the rest of Yugoslavia is just a background, usually implicit, rarely explicit. Much more is said about Croats in Bosnia than about Bosnia itself and its other inhabitants and their history. BiH is presented as a totally distinct actor. Thus, the book is about Croats, about the homeland (the domovina). The basic interpretation of post-World War I history is that of occupation, which was finally overcome in the 1990s when Croatia gained independence. Therefore, when studying *Povijest*, Bosnian Croat pupils cannot but be left with the idea that they are part of the ancient Croat nation which has the right to its own state. The Serbs, as Great-Serbs and Chetniks, on the other hand, are their eternal enemy. The purely Croat nature of the

representations set forth in the textbook may suggest that Bosnian Croats should either have their own state in Bosnia, or belong to Croatia proper. Matković et.al. wrote this textbook for use in Croatia, and for that use, the emphasis on Croatia is normal. The problem is not with the textbook but with the fact that it has been adopted for use in BiH. For use in BiH, what would be normal would be to keep a focus on BiH in the discussion of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia and of socialist Yugoslavia, which is clearly not the case.

The representation of the Serbian history follows the same path. Its connection with BiH is also marginalized; the border between FBiH and the RS may suggest an assurance of Serbian independence – the RS is their homeland and BiH is irrelevant (Pejić et.al. 2010). The RS is treated as a country within a country, not as an entity which should seek close cooperation with the FBiH. Like Bosnian Croat pupils, Bosnian Serb pupils are likely to be left with the idea that they are part of a Great-Serb nation which has the right to its own state, something they now have accomplished with the creation of the RS.

There is a very brief and neutral representation of Marshal Josip Broz Tito in all three representations of history. He is merely mentioned as part of formation of socialist Yugoslavia and the Partisan structure but not as a central figure of socialist Yugoslavia. Only the Bosniak textbook devotes a part, but still rather small, to some common accomplishments in culture and infrastructure (Sehić et.al. 2009). Moreover, it is only the Bosniaks who seek to treat BiH as a central actor. Bosniak pupils are likely to be left with the idea, in contrast to the Bosnian Serb and Croat pupils, that they are part of the Bosnian nation (mainly Bosniak) which seeks to preserve the sovereignty of BiH.

There is clearly a lack of common goals and national unity, which is reflected in the use of three different curricula. Even though each one of them emphasizes that the crucial aims of history teaching are the development of critical thinking, cooperation, and unity, and the cultivation of democratic thought and tolerance, their reference to what kind of national identity they seek to develop differs. However, curriculum packages that promote tolerance will have little impact if they are delivered within educational structures that are fundamentally intolerant (Bush and Saltarelli 2000).

It is important that the students gain a fair and true interpretation of the past of the nation they belong to but also of other nations. Fundamentally, this will require the knowledge of what kind of “nation” the peoples of BiH are seeking to build. According to Marko Hoare (2007: 414-414) a paradox is highly evident, namely that “the peoples of BiH

have never comprised a single nation, nor have they ever comprised three wholly different nations”. Although it is now 15 years since the war ended, the strong trend towards ethnopolitical segregation is still a key feature of BiH society. “Everything - from the greeting you use to the dialect you speak and the newspaper in your coat pocket – is judged, commented upon and categorized in terms of an omnipresent mysticised ‘ethnicity’. Under such circumstances, defining oneself as a citizen of the BiH state is tantamount to a betrayal of one’s national identity”, writes Ramo Atajić with reference to BiH reality (Atajić 2002:118). The big challenge will clearly be to build a national identity which derives from shared citizenship, not from ethnic identity. To come to an agreement in BiH, it is necessary “to strike a balance between education first as a means to preserve national identity and secondly as a mechanism for developing some kind of communality” (Popović 2006).

The art of creating one truth

The case of Bosnian education illustrates how difficult it is for teaching and learning to take place in an environment where there is little consensus about a shared sense of values, history, and what is important for the future. There is no doubt that historical narratives of the group(s) involved must change as a part of the transition, but the fact remains that textbooks are still largely controlled by the Ministries of Education and, hence, by the politicians in power. Hence, the question of Bosnia is not “what really happened”, but rather why different versions of the past continue to hold the meanings that they do, and why such great importance is attributed to these meanings.

In the post-war Bosnian context, the national question as a whole is one of a sensitive character. The question is difficult and complicated at present, and is likely to encourage people to seek solutions and explanations from the past. One needs only to take a look at the war of the 1990s to see that it is likely to remain a sensitive issue since it could be manipulated by political elites bent on redefining borders, thus resulting in massive destruction and suffering. Bosnian Serbs call the war a civil war, whereas the Federation portrays it as an aggression, which further illustrates the difficulty of agreeing to common terms in describing the conflict. The fact that generally critical and analytical public discussion of the war at the inter-ethnic level has not really taken place, is clearly affecting the educational reforms.

Further, one has to acknowledge that BiH is a country with a transitional society which most likely does not know what to reject and what to accept. Often consent is assured by reinforcing a general feeling of insecurity that leads ethnic communities to identify national leaders as the only possible tool to provide each community with security (Belloni 2001:170). It is also possible to acknowledge that real control comes not from acceptance (of historical events), but from the failure of individuals to reject them. This is highly significant where it is a civilization of oral, not written word. As long as there exists an oral tradition, say “it was said”, there will be parallel education in children’s heads. This is why the acknowledgment of collective suffering and the establishment of shared historical narratives are so crucial.

This is *not* to suggest that, in a multiethnic state, the narratives of the component nationalities need be harmonized to the point where they become virtually identical. Rather, for a multiethnic state to be stable over the long term, it is necessary that the historical narratives of the constituent peoples be purged of mutual resentment, mutual recrimination, and mutual blame, so that the constituent peoples do not subscribe to narratives in which they define each other as “the Enemy”. The differences dividing Bosniaks, Croats and Serbs are relatively small but the nationalists used the historical narratives to create enemy images. It is therefore important that the peoples and especially young students of BiH gain a self-ironic relation towards their historical narratives; only in this way will they develop a better immunity against political propaganda.

Achieving the historical truth involves objectivity, subjectivity and partiality. While objectivity is a principle to be followed in the effort to arrive at the truth, the main problem remains not with subjectivity and the influence of the current events upon the historians, but rather partiality, apropos their “moral education” (Mušeta-Aščerić 2001:17-22). Historians who are partial tend to solve problems under the influence of politics, or of the ideology to which they subscribe. This does not imply that they cannot be involved in politics, but they cannot let their profession be politicized. The historians might be partial in politics, but should not be partial in their work on history. Alongside historians whose aim is to reveal the historical truth, there are nowadays, unfortunately, historians in BiH who identify the “national”, i.e., the “ideological” truth with the historical truth. Even though guidelines for writing textbooks of history (and geography) for primary and secondary school have been adopted, guidelines without change in the system of education and without quality plans and programs cannot change the essence of the problem. To achieve an essential change in history teaching of BiH and its people it is necessary to build-in a pre-defined balance (state, BiH

peoples/nations, neighboring countries in which some of BiH constitutive nations also live, world's history) in the curriculum, as the conception of textbooks – the most widely used means in our reality, mostly depends on it.

Coming to terms with past injustices is a long process. Teaching about the effects of National Socialism in Nazi-Germany stands as a good example of this. Buruma (1994) identifies four factors that have made the teaching of the Nazi period an important component of Germany's postwar rebirth as a liberal democracy. In addition to full disclosure of Nazi-era atrocities in history classes in West-Germany since the 1960s, Buruma (1994: 177-189) notes the value of “a pedagogy that encourages students to make up their own mind”, through questions that “are not so much tests of political correctness as incentives for pupils to think for themselves”, a focus on the value of resistance and of the presentation in history classes of a national identity based on liberal values and the constitution, not ethnic identity. The postwar German success in incorporating a certain crucial and painful “truth” about the past can clearly stand as an good example and guide to further development in the educational system in BiH, but one has to acknowledge that in contrast to Germany, nationalist in BiH still have a strong role in the debates over education and promote an ethno-national identity from which Germany has long since moved away.

Considering the great trust that Bosniaks, Croats, and Serbs place in their respective history textbooks¹⁴, their interpretations of the truth should not be considered unimportant. However, this process should be intertwined with the notion that only historians should teach history, so as to prevent other people misrepresenting the past. Without the latter, students in BiH will not be encouraged to think critically and form their own interpretation of historical events. Especially in contexts where the conflict has not yet been “resolved,” some history educators believe that searching for consensus on historical truth will bring only disappointment. Educators at least can begin by aiming to persuade their students to look at their *own* historical narratives with irony. This goal precedes any attempt to help contending groups understand and accept the narratives of groups defined as current or former enemies. There is no doubt that some truths do exist: the so-called forensic truths, the “who did what to whom”, facts that human rights investigators seek to illuminate as well as verifiable historical

¹⁴ Pilvi Torsti carried out the first comparative survey (Youth and History) in Europe on the historical consciousness and historically constructed political attitudes among youth. At the time of research, 1999-2000, young Bosnians reported greatest trust in history textbooks (together with Scottish, Portuguese and Norwegian) than did respondents from 29 other European countries and minority groups. This emphasizes the possible effect of history textbooks which in the Bosnian context contribute to spread hatred and fear.

facts such as what political office did Franjo Tujman occupy in the 1990s. In the Bosnian context where multiperspectivity is not highly evident either in the textbooks or in the classroom, the need for such an approach in the education is crucial. There is no doubt that lacking alternatives and multiperspectivity in the textbooks creates a favorable environment for the education which is being developed into a powerful weapon. It is through the appearance of alternative interpretations of historical events that the students can reach these so-called forensic truths, distinguishing facts from opinions.

What is the solution for the educational system in Bosnia & Herzegovina?

Most European countries, as well as many other countries in the world, are multiethnic and multicultural. They have developed their educational systems to respond to their own needs and reality. Post-war education in BiH is facing issues similar to those experienced by immigrant students in Western Europe in the 1960s and 1970s, namely whether to organize separate schools and curricula for immigrants or to integrate all children based on the majority culture (Pasalić-Kreso 2002:8). Today, the situation in BiH is one in which in each region the majority nation pushes an assimilative concept for the minorities, while the political elite of the majority nation fights for full educational and schooling autonomy.

The governing force behind the introduction of national subjects like history is the concept of adequate education. The term refers to the internationally recognized right of minority groups to education in their mother tongue and according to their own cultural and religious beliefs. This is meant to respect and promote school, community, and national pluralism which for the latter imply that it is preserved by a compulsory training of minority students in the language, history, geography, and culture of the majority group in addition to education reflecting the minority's needs. According to Bozić (2006:12), in BiH, however, the concept of adequate education acquires has different implications. First, it does not apply, at least not in practice, to minority groups, but rather it is designed to meet the need of constituent peoples – Bosniaks, Croats and Serbs. Second, adequate education is commonly interpreted as complete autonomy in all educational matters indicating no compulsory training in the language, history, and geography of the constituent entity where minority returnee students attend the school, that is, other, other constituent groups.

Traditionally, BiH has been characterized by multiethnicity, multiculturalism, unity, and common life; so the appearance of extreme segregation in the educational system is for many hard to believe. Even though nationalist forces insist on separating children into special national schools to follow different curricula and to be taught by teachers of the same nationality, it is important to recognize that a divided educational system is not a prerequisite for the survival of national identities. Moreover, nationalist forces neglect the fact that, to build a personal identity, a person must undergo multiple levels of identification – from global to national, social, and sexual to individual (Banks 1994). Their focus lies solely on national identity based on ethnicity. Fears are used as arguments against integrating schools. Insisting on a divided educational system serves solely to allow them to advance their personal interests and take advantage of a transitional society without clear notions of what is appropriate.

So far, international initiatives in BiH have focused mainly on establishing an integrated school system. The question remains whether such a goal is realistic. Also, from other ethno-political conflict settings, integration by itself is not perceived as the primary peace-building tool. In Northern Ireland, for example, less than 10% of students attend integrated schools. Authorities have rather focused on establishing links *between* schools to overcome the inter-communal divide, an approach that the OSCE seems to be slowly adopting in BiH after the limited success so far in problem areas like Mostar. The concept of Education for Mutual Understanding (EMU) was not established as an extra subject but rather mainstreamed into the whole teaching process (Fischer 2006:320). A possible way for BiH might be to incorporate similar concepts or modules of peace education into the curriculum. As promising as it sounds, one still has to bear in mind that the educational system in BiH is highly fragmented and that decisions on educational matters seem to be decided by politicians based on geopolitical issues rather than on substantive discussions on how to develop a high quality, relevant, efficient world class education system. Although an integrated educational system seems difficult to achieve at this moment, it does not mean that it is not achievable. As attempts to establish links between schools (in the form of curriculum) have been evident, so should links between teachers be incorporated. Reforming pedagogy—the *way* history is taught—should take priority in many contexts over curriculum revision, especially when resources are scarce. As a strategy, pedagogical reform is attractive because it may be less controversial or threatening than attempts immediately after conflict to change historical narratives through curriculum reform. However, pedagogical reform is most effective when

combined with curricular and textbook reform which would require a more centralized and unified educational system.

One should not be surprised that for instance critical thinking and active participation are not embedded in the educational system in BiH. BiH is a good example of a country with its own educational history and competence now under a pressure from the international, global arena to change its educational direction. To change educational policies, curriculum structure and content from a socialistic centralized system in any other desired direction is a long-term process. Of course, if local politicians supported it, it could be done relatively quickly, but insofar as they oppose such change, it could be a very long-term process, if indeed it ever develops. What is important in the present situation is to get an in-depth picture and knowledge of what is taught, but also how it is taught, and to develop a foundation for constructive, multicultural and relevant reforms. The wish for any educational change promoting more liberal values in education and education for democracy would in the best situation preferably come from within BiH and not be forced upon it.

In this sense, more attention and action should be devoted to the hidden curriculum which can undermine even the most progressive pedagogical solution. With different interpretations as a result of this hidden curriculum, the education system in BiH must draw conclusions from mistakes made by other countries two or three decades ago and take into consideration the newest academic and practical solutions. This requires more attention to teachers and their unification. The following section seeks to assess their role and potential in improving the educational system in BiH.

PART V: TEACHING - A PROFESSION UNDERGOING CONSTANT DEVELOPMENT

The role of teachers

Even though there have been some improvements in regards to the educational reforms, the critical question remains how things are communicated in the classroom: this largely depends on the attitudes and skill of the teachers, particularly history teachers, but also on the quality of teaching material, including textbooks. One can only support Ann Low-Beer's view that democracy calls for "independent thought, reasoned argument, and recognition of the diversity of views. This requires a revolution in methods of teaching and learning, and in the minds of teachers, a much longer and slower process than changing textbooks" (Low-Beer 2001:5).

As noted earlier, censorship does not solve the problem and will not change mindsets. Students can benefit if they are introduced to different perspectives. The key challenge is to make them question interpretations of history and social context and to empower them to think critically. According to Fischer (2006:321), BiH not only needs a reform of the framework educational structures; the country needs also a change of values. Hence, a change of pedagogic practices is absolutely necessary. International organizations should therefore focus much more on the teachers and their training. "Only if teachers are prepared to challenge students' perceptions and make them "think", is change likely" (Fischer 2006:321). While this study illustrates the importance of involving local stakeholders like teachers, it does not neglect the fact that the structure of the educational system and the sociopolitical environment in which it operates are as important if long-term change is to be implemented. Further, the importance of sustained attention to curricular development with significant collaboration with teachers and local school officials around sensitive subjects such as history is an essential key.

How to teach democratic values?

According to Finkel and Ernst (2005) there are three sets of factors related to teacher characteristics and the instructional context that may significantly influence students' attitudes, particularly in countries undergoing a democratic transition where students may have little opportunity to encounter pro-democracy messages elsewhere in their lives. First, they suggest that students in civics classes will be more likely to internalize positive attitudes

and values about democracy when their teachers appear credible. Second, attitude change is more likely when teachers use active forms of teaching such as role-playing and group decision-making. Finally, some studies have shown that gains in civic knowledge and improved attitudes about democracy may occur when teachers foster an open classroom climate that encourages the free exchange of ideas and opinions and where frequent discussions of controversial issues are held.

In the absence of new content materials, teachers who are trained and supported to teach in new, more open ways can guide students in analyzing old textbooks to explore how the earlier narratives supported injustices or can utilize less traditional materials such as newspapers, memoir, poetry or novels. Moreover, teachers in BiH should aim at inclusive education which not only acknowledges student's background, culture and tradition, but also their specific learning styles (Lasley and Matczynski 1997). Some individual differences are bigger than any group differences, be they gender, race, nation or religion. Such an approach will encourage the development of liberal, creative and multicultural students who are critical consumers and creators of knowledge. Without this determination to create an inclusive educational environment for all, current and future pledges to democracy and multiculturalism will remain superficial.

Classrooms need democratic management with teachers who accept that students have a right to express their own opinions, which may differ from the teacher's. Unfortunately in BiH much of the education is based on fact-based learning, a legacy left from the Communist era, which left little space for students to reason their way through to their own conclusions. In this sense, Bosnian schools are neither teaching students how to be problem-solvers nor helping them learn to live and to work cooperatively with others. It is true that, as long as there exist mono-ethnic schools, students from different ethnic groups do not get to know each other, thus reducing the possibility to develop and appreciate liberal values such as tolerance, trust and equality. Moreover, it is evident that these conditions will require long-term efforts by multiple actors, including teachers and their unification in teachers' unions. Still at the moment the focus should be on teaching these liberal values in every way possible.

Training the teachers

There have been several projects designed to train teachers and educators in new methods and new curriculum approaches compatible with a democratic and multicultural society. Teacher

training is only one of several tasks of the Pedagogic Institutes. However, earlier reports have pointed out that limited resources and expertise of these institutions have prevented them to fulfill this task (Spaulding 1999). As a consequence, teacher training has not been tackled sufficiently. There is no doubt that the process of training teachers in modern techniques is a long endeavor and urgently needed. This holds true especially for those teachers who have been doing their job for some time and therefore have established routines in knowledge-based teaching which ensured that their authority was never questioned. It is evident that strong support is also needed after training. In regards to the Pedagogic Institutes they more often assert control over teachers rather than giving them confidence (Low-Beer 2003:4).

In regards to the education of new teachers in BiH, the emphasis is more on the content of knowledge than the method of teaching. Subjects covering general professional education (pedagogy, psychology, didactics, methodology of teaching, methodological practice etc.) are insufficiently represented and, if they are, it is mostly in the final year of schooling¹⁵ (Pasalić-Kreso et.al.:173). Student at teachers' faculties "acquire knowledge in narrowly specialized subjects and general education subjects in PP and DM in parallel, without trying to master knowledge and skills on how to transfer their specialized education to pupils in a way that meets the needs of young people and society as a whole. They most often complete their formal education without knowing how to combine the two elements. The old attitude still dominates, namely that a good expert in their field does not require additional PP and DM education" (Pasalić-Kreso et.al.:173). When students in addition are rarely offered a chance to ask and suggest, it is likely that they will not develop skills of critical thinking which they should transmit to their pupils so that the vicious circle of passive fact-based learning is avoided.

Well-educated teachers are a prerequisite for good instruction and better schools. It is important to provide more opportunities for the teaching profession to prepare for the constantly changing demands made on schools and education in general. The teaching profession has changed; there is now greater emphasis on consultation and teamwork. Teachers participate in the development of new methods of instruction, teaching materials, and courses of study. It is evident that teachers must be guaranteed enough time to prepare for these varied tasks.

¹⁵ Teachers for primary school are prepared in secondary vocational teacher training schools and in two-year post-secondary Pedagogical Academies. Those who teach in grades 5-8 must have college or university training, and those who teach in grades 9-12 must have full university preparation - at least 14 years of study plus subject qualifications, usually in two subjects (Spaulding 1998).

Moreover, it is important to recognize the teachers' individualistic characteristics and experiences. Perhaps it is not impossible for teachers in transitional societies to incorporate new content and methods of teaching into their classroom, but still it is important that their needs are understood and that new methods, such as providing the space and opportunities for teachers to have some of the difficult discussions among themselves before trying to facilitate the discussions among their students, should be found to support them.

...[H]istory teachers generally are under enormous pressure in post-conflict societies to play too many roles – from psychologist and guidance counselor to conflict resolution expert and mediator. Education reformers, especially those from the outside, also typically expect teachers to be agents of fundamental social change. Yet evidence from Northern Ireland shows that teachers are not comfortable being leading agents of social change, and they doubt that anything they teach can counter what the history students learn at home. In the most extreme cases, in highly charged political contexts where adopting new teaching methods or texts may lead to threats to teachers' physical safety, they will be especially likely to shy away from innovation (Cole and Barsalou 2006:11).

Even though this statement applies to Northern Ireland, it is fully applicable to Bosnian society. Teachers in BiH are facing the same problems. In a society where the economical situation is very unstable, the salaries of teachers are low and, given the risk of losing their jobs in case of integration of two "separate" schools ("two schools under one roof"), it is more difficult to mobilize teachers in the name of the public good rather than their immediate self-interest. Therefore, one of the key challenges is to create incentives for teachers' involvement in civic activity and free them from the burden of ethnicized politics. This is crucially important for the future of BiH and its democratic development.

According to Perry (*forthcoming*), two problems remain in regards to textbook selection and practical use. The first is the restriction of freedom to select and use the best of the newly developed textbooks. If a book is not formally accepted and mainstreamed into the educational system, it is likely that it will not be the focal point for lessons. The Ministry of Education in RS still only approves and allows one textbook to be used for any given course and grade – teachers are left without a choice. In addition, the selected history textbooks do not meet the criteria set in the Guidelines. The situation in the Federation is not any brighter; publishing options and practices vary, and often teachers have very limited opportunity to review all available textbooks (not just those the MoEs have approved) and select their favored option. Especially in the Croat-majority cantons, the trend has been to further limit

teacher input in the review process, and to limit the number of approved textbooks. “As a result, there is no guarantee that the best of the new and modern textbooks are actually being used – or that teachers even know that they exist” (Perry *forthcoming*). The educational practices are clearly fundamentally different in the two entities, indicating lack of coordination and different agendas.

Second, facing the absence of modern curricula and the almost universal absence of teachers trained in modern approaches to teaching history implies a limited value of modern multi-perspective textbooks. This means that, although the very best books are available for use by the teacher, the full value of the book will be lost if the curriculum has not been properly developed (Perry *forthcoming*). Similarly, if teachers accustomed to rote-learning methods and a mono-perspective approach to the “truth” of history use textbooks that are supposed to be used in a student-centered classroom in which multiple different sources are encouraged and critical analytical exercises are integrated into suggested lessons, these textbooks will fail to have their full impact. It is therefore evident that such textbook reform efforts, while a useful aid in education reform, are not sufficient to end divisive school practices.

Organizing teachers

Where there does not exist a modern state, there does not exist a modern society, and without the latter it is impossible to develop a contemporary and quality education system. The pessimism is epidemic, reflected in the formula *nothing cannot be done, so nothing has to be done*. However, it is important to note that one need only visit schools in the country and talk to students, parents, and teachers, to see that in general they want better schools, and recognize the politicization of education to date. In this sense, Bush and Saltarelli’s “two faces of education” could be reframed in BiH as the “two voices of education”: those in the political sphere that continue to spread fear, division, and segregation, and those who actually walk through school doors each day, and recognize that the current educational practices are not likely to provide quality, access, and social cohesion.

The civil sector is a core element of society which aims to assert universally binding democratic values, experiences, and principles. These include the principle of multiethnicity and interethnic tolerance, the principle of transparency in decision-making, and the principle of decision-making by democratic majority – which requires citizens, in this case teachers, to

organize themselves in accordance with their shared interest – instead of “national consensus”, i.e., ethnicity. In addition, it is important to recognize the difference between teacher’s needs and their responsibilities.

It has been a mistake on the part of the international community to think that by promoting the NGO sector in general, a civil society would emerge. This has led to a neglect of key civil society actors such as trade unions for teachers. Organizations or associations for teachers can be potential building block of a democratic culture of tolerance, moderation and compromise. The involvement of teachers in the associations of civil society is a major pathway to the development of a commitment to negotiation and compromise – as well as a didactic exercise increasing political and organizational skills and other forms of social capital. Even though teachers constitute a small part of the complex system, their role should not be underestimated. An old expression by Hesiod says that “if you add a little to a little, and then do it again, soon that little shall be much.” Perhaps this could be one of the key guidelines for the organization and training of teachers in BiH.

However, it is important to stress that civil society is not a panacea. It cannot solve Dayton’s underlying ambiguities and transcend the separation of the country into distinct ethnic territories, but this is not to argue that its contribution to peace and democratization is not vital. On the contrary, the growth of a healthy and variegated civil society is inevitable for the long-term democratic development of the country. Still one cannot overlook the fact that the development of civil society is intertwined with the creation of a responsive and transparent state structure (Belloni 2001:177-178).

One should not dwell on just the negative aspects in the education sector in BiH. There have been some positive developments, which is worth mentioning. The teachers’ organizations ability and will to cooperate and to build up multi-ethnic organizations serve as positive examples for all forces that challenge the destructive nationalism and segregation politics in BiH.

In the FBiH, there are two teachers’ unions operating on the federal level –the Independent Teachers Union of Primary Education (ITUPE) and the Independent Teachers Union of Secondary School (ITUSS) while in RS there is only one – the Trade Union of Education, Science and Culture of Republika Srpska (TUESCRS).¹⁶ All of them have the role

¹⁶ Up until the war in 1992 teachers had their Teachers’ Association, which brought teachers together, organized some forms of professional development - lectures, promotion of new text books etc. (Pasalić-Kreso et.al.:174).

to safeguard the rights and interests of their members, encourage cooperation among them, and strengthen professional and trade union awareness. The Teachers' Unions also work to improve teachers' training and continuing education for its members. They serve as a forum for informed discussion of current trends in education and promote and encourage progress and innovation in teaching and education. The Unions work to ensure that primary schools and secondary schools always have the most capable teachers, student counselors, head teachers, and assistant heads. In this way, the Unions are supposed to encourage quality in teaching and continuity in education. In practice the situation is far more complex. Schools in BiH enjoy an appropriate degree of autonomy in terms of the hiring teachers and other staff, and freedom of work for teachers. In addition, schools respect the freedom of teachers to use teaching methods they deem appropriate, "in appreciation of the standards and sustainability of the existing forms and methods in the teaching process and application of new ones" (Ministry of Civil Affairs 2008:13).

The fact that there are three independent trade unions for teachers instead of one national union reflects the deeply fragmented society and the politicization of education. Even today Bosniak and Croat teachers' trade unions have not reached an agreement to constitute a unified trade union federation (see Muñoz 2008). The cooperation between them is therefore vital to unify teachers and create solidarity.¹⁷ Moreover, the teachers' unions have evolved to be some of the best functioning unions in BiH which is why their commitment and work is so important. Both ITUSS and ITUPE are active participants in the establishment of a common national curriculum, and they seek to assure that the administrative responsibility for the educational sector is to be found on a national level. One of the main challenges has been to get the organizations at the cantonal level to view themselves as active participants in a binding, federal community. This is due to nationalist forces in the cantons who are trying to push the organizations into "having as little as possible to do with Sarajevo" (Eilertsen 2002).

ITUPE and ITUSS are in practice operating as one union. They have the same demands, the same opponent, and they often meet each other in negotiations. Moreover, the common offices which are to be found in eight of the ten cantons induce the two unions collaborate in

¹⁷ Report from Utdanningsforbundet in 2002 shows a resistance by Croatian teachers in Tomislavgrad to cooperate with ITUSS, emphasizing the importance of their own Croatian trade union for teachers. Moreover, a trend of tension between the different leaders in the unions was evident.

common tasks.¹⁸ In this way they are building a fellowship and enhancing the notion that the cooperation has its basis in fundamental, common interests. The involvement of teachers in the associations of civil society is a major pathway to the development of a commitment to negotiation and compromise-as well as a didactic exercise increasing political and organizational skills and other forms of social capital. It would be possible to stop the external efforts to involve teachers in the educational reforms, and to simply allow the educational environment to evolve in ways dictated by domestic officials. However, this would continue the status quo, ensuring that schools and curricula remain largely mono-ethnic, and that the separation of students according to curriculum remains inherent in the system.

¹⁸ The opening of these offices is a result from a solidarity project (1998-2001) with teachers' unions, mainly in the FBiH, initiated by Utdanningsforbundet in Norway.

PART VI: CONCLUSION

Where does BiH stand?

More than 150 years ago, in his classic work on representative government, John Stuart Mill warned that when members of different nationality groups in a multiethnic state read different books and, in other ways, maintain alternative sources of information, democracy becomes difficult to establish or maintain. Applying this to the Bosnian context does not seem like an exaggeration. The use of three different history textbooks leads to historical events being interpreted from just one side, “our side”. Moreover, the use of stereotyping in all three history textbooks does not encourage the children in BiH to form even a slightly positive opinion about their neighbors; other nations are pictured as eternal enemies. Through these stereotypes the young students retain an unrealistic attitude about themselves, believe that relations among the peoples in BiH never change, and end up unconsciously fearing neighboring peoples. As noted earlier, historical events are oversimplified and thus liable to political manipulation and the construction of historical myths. There is no doubt that getting politics out of the classroom should be considered a top-priority in the context of education in BiH. Today the manipulation of social memories and rewritten history remain in BiH the most potent instrument of power and a hindrance to true democratic reforms and accession to the European Union.

The greatest problem seems to have been the national question and the rise of nationalism. Croatian, Serbian, and Bosniak nationalisms are all obstructionist to a genuine democracy and an open society. This occurs through the generation of xenophobia and ethnic chauvinism, reflected in the textbooks, which threaten BiH’s stability by “transforming those who are of the ‘wrong’ identity into second-class citizens, contrary to the notion of rights and liberties understood within a democratic framework” (Conces 2002:286). As has been evident in the official history textbooks, there is no effort to embrace the notion of a civic identity as complementary to one’s national or religious identity. History teaching in BiH does not seem to contribute to the training of responsible and active citizens or to the development of respect for differences among people, based on an understanding of national identity and on principles of tolerance. Moreover, it does not seem to enable pupils and students in BiH to enhance their own individual and collective identity through knowledge of their common historical heritage in its local, regional, national, European and global dimension. Instead, most Bosnian kids are growing up knowing only the values of their own community and with a deep suspicion of the country's other two ethnic groups. Unfortunately, little space is given

for students in schools in BiH to reason their way through to their own conclusions, thus limiting their abilities to be problem-solvers and failing to help them learn to live and to work cooperatively with others.

As we saw in ex-Yugoslavia, the suppression of knowledge about historical events does not produce a common history – it serves only to reinforce the social identities of those who fought against each other. The same applies to the current situation in BiH. The suppression of the recent war in history textbooks does not produce a common history and/or the acknowledgement of collective suffering. Unfortunately, in BiH the educational system is set up to preserve the legacy of war, not to counteract it. There is no attempt to confront the complexity of the recent war; this allows the nationalists in BiH to promote their own historical myths and encourage prejudices. In the context of a studied silence, the students in BiH are not introduced to the reality of the war. Nonetheless, they are not taught a history which presents the facts about the past, but rather a mythology that facilitates national identification. Students in BiH commonly expect to learn a singular, unitary “truth” from their teachers, but if there can be only one “official” truth regarding past events, the particular memories of each sub-group will be either denied or repressed, thus making memory a struggle over power and who gets to decide the future.

Segregated classes or schools ensure that threats to the status quo will not be allowed to intrude. Education should have been a part of the Dayton Peace Agreement that ended the war, but in 1995, few understood the damage that segregated schools could inflict in the long run. The educational system is producing three sets of citizens who do not know anything about the others and have no intercultural skills. There is clearly no national unity. As Arblaster (2002:74-75) points out “for the good of the community as a whole to be realized, it is clearly necessary for people to think and act, not simply as self-interested individuals or as members of particular interest groups, but as citizens, as members of the community as a whole”. This holds true for the Bosnian community where children should start thinking and acting as members of the community as a whole, not only as members of a particular ethnic group. In order to do so educational policies have to change; educational reforms have to proceed, including systemic, pedagogical and textbook/curriculum reform.

One can clearly see a paradox of knowledge in the Bosnian context. Embracing the notion that knowledge is power – the more one knows the more one’s potential or abilities in life will increase – implies for pupils in Bosnian schools that instead of acquiring critical thinking skills and acknowledging the political propaganda, the more they learn about group-

only loyalties and deep-rooted fear of the “other”, the less resistant they become to the political rhetoric. On the other side, the less they know about the history of the peoples in BiH, the fewer incentives they have to fear the “other”.

Education in BiH, especially history teaching, has served as a tool for societal analysis – representing the official views the nationalist parties want to promote and encourage. Curricula and textbooks have committed themselves to fostering a civic culture, but one which is not supportive of liberal democracy. It seems like culture (traced in the liberal values) has appeared to shape democracy far more than democracy has shaped culture. The educational system in BiH is not a place for the promotion of ethnic tolerance and cultural pluralism, not as abstract principles, but as a prerequisite for sustainability and development of BiH society. Instead it contributes to the development of nationalism among the youth. Schools where children of different nationalities attend schools in separate shifts, or the different interpretations of historical events according to the three ethnic groups – are just drops in the sea of conditions which accelerate such a climate in BiH (Praškac-Salčin 2009:476).

Although there is no single way to bring about democratization in BiH, a reliance on institution-building will likely lead to more paralysis and divisiveness. Expressions of solidarity, friendship, and citizenship within multi-ethnic BiH must be nurtured through whatever means possible. One way to achieve this goal is by rethinking how identity, trust, and ethnic nationalism relate to democratization in a deeply divided BiH. The ideas of developing any political and trans-ethnic understanding of the nation are particularly difficult in BiH. Just as in the field of politics, to date little has been achieved in turning education into a tool for developing anything approaching a common Bosnian identity going beyond ethnic particularity.

It is clear that every ethnic group is rewriting history as national history. Especially Croats and Serbs do not see BiH as the main reference point; instead the Serbian and Croatian textbooks have an increased number of pages dedicated to the history of their own national groups living respectively in Serbia and Croatia. History textbooks in every country focus on the history and land which constitute the nation as presently constituted and they inculcate in young people a conviction that that country is the “best” country in the world. Thus, it follows naturally that history textbooks which are prepared for use in Croatia and the RS solely, like those used in BiH, likely will see Croatia and Serbia as the main reference points. As pointed out earlier, the problem is not with the textbooks *per se*, but with the fact that they have been

adopted for use in BiH since for use in BiH, what would be normal would be to keep a focus on BiH. So the function of the history textbooks prepared for use solely by the Serbian and Croatian children has come to be separateness and distinction from the integrated BiH. History education, not only for Serbian and Croatian children but also Bosniak children, has a bigger focus on the presentation of self and the vindication of identity than the recognition of complexity and the search for knowledge.

The dilemma of nationalism has lain at the heart of BiH's effort to build a liberal democracy. The nationalist rhetoric is reinforced in the textbooks and constitutes a great danger to the prosperity of BiH, particularly when acknowledging that schools are among the major influences on young people's identities and on their attitudes towards "the other". The past is often equated with the present in the textbooks, thus leading children to determine the future based on the past. The ideas of national identity and the existence of nations are transferred to the past, even the distant past. However, national identity is both continuous and fluid; indicating that, with time and the right reforms, children in BiH can develop a national identity which derives from shared citizenship, not ethnic identity. In this sense, education can play a positive role in the future and not a negative one like at the present. BiH has after all always been a mosaic of differences that was held together by the binding cement of a common BiH identity and culture.

BiH has undergone significant political changes in the last several decades that require a new kind of educational system that will promote the goals of democracy and a free and open society. The aim should be considered to develop curricular and teaching methods that will help students to understand the rights and responsibilities of citizens in a democracy, to acquire the skills needed to participate as active citizens in their communities, and to internalize a set of democratic values or "habits of mind" that will enable them to help sustain a democratic way of life. The pedagogy to be employed is one that should prompt individuals to seriously consider identities that stem from recognizing the commonalities between "human" beings. Perhaps BiH can get closer to this recognition by adopting intercultural education as a way to liberate itself from received opinion, the sort of opinion that often divides students along certain ethnic, racial, and religious categories.

So, how can education be a force for positive democratic consolidation and post-war development in a society that has not yet resolved the root identity and power dynamics that caused the war? The answer to this question is clearly not simple. We have seen how

education, especially history education, can play and has played a negative role, clearly not laying ground for the development of liberal values like tolerance, equality, civic-mindedness and trust. Surely, the success of history education can be judged only in the long term, but it is already evident that it does not serve as a tool for development and enhancing, for instance, democracy, pluralism, and justice. However, BiH has had some positive developments within the educational sector which should not be ignored and should be considered as achievements which require further development. Reforms are after all a long-term project.

The involvement on the part of teachers in BiH should be considered a force for post-war development in this country; still not expecting them to be the only agents of fundamental social change. In the context of nationalist rhetoric, where nationalists create the “true” image of the past, which they then promote in the textbooks, thus leading the history textbooks to contain a “usable past”, a national memory that mirrors the present needs of each of the ethnic groups or its leadership, it is crucial to involve the teachers and devote attention to how they teach the past. Through a redefinition of the past it is possible to redefine national identity. In order to write a history that would support the existence of the united country, the country will require individuals who will look towards the future rather than the past. In order to do so, children have to be encouraged to think for themselves and appreciate the functionality of liberal values, upon which the future of BiH strongly depends. This requires both the training of good and qualified teachers and the solidarity of teachers in BiH, which at the moment still needs further improvement.

What still remains a big challenge in BiH is the fact that teachers in the FBiH and the RS work under different educational practices; while the teachers in the FBiH have the right but very limited opportunity to review all available textbooks, in the RS the Ministry of Education prescribes which books are to be used, reflecting a highly fragmented and politicized educational system. In both cases there is no guarantee that the best of the new and modern textbooks are actually being used – or that teachers even know that they exist. Moreover, the teachers are not given enough support and training. Even though this is one of the several tasks of the Pedagogic Institutes, the fact remains that they more often assert control over teachers rather than giving them confidence. In addition, students at teachers’ facilities are presented more to the content of knowledge than the method of teaching which further influences the quality of the teaching.

What are present today in BiH are a decentralized educational system in the FBiH which does not foster an atmosphere of cooperation and coordination among the cantonal ministries, and a centralized educational system in the RS. In each region the majority nation pushes an assimilative concept of the minorities, while the political elite of the majority nation fights for full educational and schooling autonomy, making it also difficult for the teachers to organize themselves in accordance with their shared interest – instead of “national consensus”, i.e. ethnicity. Despite these challenges, the teachers in both the FBiH and the RS have managed to organize themselves in unions whose work is amongst others to encourage cooperation among the teachers, improve teachers’ training and ensure that primary and secondary schools always have the most capable teachers. Even though the teachers’ organizations serve as positive examples for all forces that challenge the destructive nationalism and segregation politics in BiH, the situation is still one that there are three independent trade unions for teachers instead of one national union, and that schools in BiH enjoy an appropriate degree of autonomy in term of the hiring teachers and freedom of work for teachers, which further restricts the union’s influence in regards to the teachers and the schools.

Whether the current education system and practices contribute to assimilation and alienation as it does in ethnically homogenous areas such as the RS, or foster segregation in mixed areas affected by the return of displaced people, one conclusion is clear – education in BiH is playing a positive role in sustaining prejudices and xenophobia. One can go as far as to say that cultural apartheid is being promoted, clearly indicating that education is an obstacle to the democratic development of the country. In the end it is evident whose interests are served – clearly not the children’s, who are becoming the greatest victims in this zero-sum game among the nationalists.

APPENDIX

Figure 1. Bosnia-Herzegovina: Republika Srpska & Federation of BiH



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