CAN EDUCATION HELP INTEGRATION IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA?:
RETHINKING THE INTERIM AGREEMENT

by

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ABSTRACT

Social psychologists have introduced the contact hypothesis as an instrument for conflict resolution. It rests on the assumption that direct contact between hostile groups will lead to reconciliation. Using the contact hypothesis, this thesis explores the effectiveness of multi-ethnic schools in Bosnia and Herzegovina in bringing students together and in increasing their mutual tolerance and understanding. Because minority returnee parents did not have trust in curricula and textbooks used in the area of their return, they were given a choice to opt for the curricula of so-called “national subjects” that reflect their ethnic backgrounds. Although it is uncertain to what extent the introduction of “national subjects” encourages return, there are twenty five schools in BiH where “national subjects” are organized for returnees. Focusing on two sets of face-to-face interviews with students, parents, and teachers in the Popov Most School in Eastern Bosnia, this thesis explores how contact under this condition (unrevised or partially revised curricula and textbooks for “national subjects”) may affect integration in schools.

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Grant to them the Fatherland of their desire, and make them again citizens of Paradise.

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**To Ives Conze and
his unconditional friendship**

INTRODUCTION

1 Background

The League of Nations incorporated education provisions in all Peace Treaties signed after World War I, protecting the right for national minorities to obtain elementary education in their mother tongue and to preserve their cultural and historical heritage. The Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes¹ signed the Peace Treaty in Saint-Germain in September 1919, making a commitment to equality before the law for all people.² However, the Kingdom accepted the provision of equality in principle but rarely observed it in practice. The Socialist Federative Republic of Yugoslavia, established after World War II, translated the principle of equality into practice. The full equality of nationalities with the other Yugoslav nations³ was not, however, the result of the international conventions and treaties; rather, it was a “natural” consequence of the active participation of the constituting nationalities in the Socialist Revolution and in the National Liberation War.

However, in the course of the National Liberation War against a foreign occupation between 1941-1944,⁴ the Yugoslav community was not a monolithic block

¹ On 01 December 1918, Prince Regent Alexander declared the creation of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes. The state was meant to be a constitutional, democratic parliamentary monarchy under the Serbian Karadjordjevic dynasty; these principles were outlined in the Corfu Declaration, signed in 1917 by the Serbian government and Yugoslav Committee (representatives of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes from the Habsburg territory). However, the creation of the new state reflected Serbian predominance, alienating the Croats and Slovenes. In 1929, after a Parliamentary crisis that culminated in the assassination of the leader of the Croatian Peasant Party, Stjepan Radic, during a Parliamentary session, King Alexander suspended Parliament and declared a royal dictatorship (Kingdom of Yugoslavia), which lasted until the outbreak of WWII.

² Gabor Janosi, Education and Culture of Nationalities in Yugoslavia, Studies, no. 4 (Beograd: Medjunarodna politika, 1965), p. 8.

³ Yugoslav nations were Croats, Macedonians, Montenegrins, Slovenes and Serbs. The term “nationality” corresponds to national minorities; in Socialist Yugoslavia, however, national minorities were on an equal footing with nations. Nationalities were Hungarians, Germans, Albanians, Roma, Italians, and Slovaks etc.

⁴ Croatia was an ostensibly independent state in alliance with Hitler; Bosnia was annexed by Croatia; and the rest of the country was occupied by Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany, with some territories bordering Hungary and Bulgaria being allocated to those countries by Hitler as a reward for supporting the Axis forces.

forming resistance against the aggressors, but rather it was cut along the ethnic divide, with some nations and nationalities waging a civil war against each other.⁵ Thus, socialist reforms of the education system, whereby “national feelings of the students [were] not impaired,” was primarily driven by an ideological force, namely the establishment of “positive relations” among hostile ethnic groups who fought each other in the 1941-44 civil war, and aimed at spreading Yugoslav patriotism.⁶ To this effort, schools played a decisive role, especially in the realm of ideological education.

The fall of Communism brought about the rapid decay of Yugoslavia, creating a cluster of new independent states, one of them being Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH). Today in BiH, like in any country in transition, the status and treatment of national minorities as well as constituent peoples⁷ is assessed against, *inter alia*, a practical application of the principle of equality before the law. For example, the equal access to adequate education of minority groups is one of the indicators of the level of democracy. So-called adequate education ensures that minority groups are educated in accordance with their cultural and religious beliefs. Present Bosnia and Herzegovina could not, however, escape the *precedent effect*, where the past serves or appears as a model or example for the present actions. On the one hand, BiH much resembles the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes—the status of minorities has an international bearing, with the International Community, under the auspices of the United States of America, guaranteeing minority rights and incorporating them into the peace treaty,

⁵ There were three major warring factions: Ultranationalist Serb movement, Chetniks; Ultranationalist Croat movement Ustashe, and Tito's Partisans (both Communists and non-Communists). The 1941-44 civil war was waged mostly between Serbs and Croats, with some Bosnian Muslims siding with Croats. In many aspects, the recent Yugoslav war resembled the civil war during WWII.

⁶ Janosi, *Education and Culture of Nationalities in Yugoslavia*, p. 12.

⁷ The constituent peoples (Serbs, Croats and Bosnians) are equal as groups in the whole territory of BiH. Thus, in the entity of their return, returnees are minorities only in the numerical terms.

the Dayton Agreement.⁸ On the other hand, the present BiH bears a resemblance to Tito's Socialist Yugoslavia, with education being used as a tool for, *inter alia*, reconciliation among hostile ethnic groups after a protracted and bloody war (1992-1995).

The Dayton Agreement that ended the 1992-1995 war divided Bosnia and Herzegovina along ethnic lines into two semi-autonomous entities: The Federation of BiH (Federation) shared by Croats and Bosniaks/Muslims and the Republika Srpska (RS) run by Serbs. In addition, the Federation is further divided into 10 cantons/provinces. Each entity has its own government, parliament, police and armed forces. As a result, this ethnic division has affected the education system, which is fragmented into thirteen jurisdictions. Therefore, the International Community (later the IC),⁹ responsible for observing the implementation of the Dayton Agreement, has embarked upon education reform, including, but not limited to, securing equal access to education for minority returnees, the establishment of integrated or multi-ethnic schools,¹⁰ and depoliticization of the education system. Although the International Community has shifted its focus from return to quality of education, its original conviction that "adequate education" could serve as a magnet for refugees and displaced people in the process of return has not lost its currency yet. According to the Dayton Agreement, "the early return of refugees and displaced persons is an important objective of the settlement of the conflict in Bosnia and Herzegovina."¹¹

⁸ Dayton Accord/Agreement was signed in Paris, 14 December 1995, bringing the end to the Bosnian war. The agreement has military and civilian aspects. The implementation of the latter has been supervised by the U.N. appointed High Representative (OHR).

⁹ In general, the IC refers to all international organizations (governmental and non-governmental) present in BiH.

¹⁰ Integrated, multiethnic or common schools are terms used interchangeably throughout the thesis.

¹¹ Dayton Agreement, Annex 7, art. 1, in OHR, Bosnia and Herzegovina: Essential Texts, 3rd revised ed., with an Introduction by Wolfgang Petritsch (n.p.: OHR, 2000), p. 51.

In other words, return of refugees and displaced persons to their pre-war homes can facilitate interethnic contact, which in turn may lead to reconciliation among hostile ethnic groups in BiH. This argument has intellectual roots in contact hypothesis, which states that direct contact between two hostile groups is likely to alter negative attitudes and perceptions, a *sine qua non* for reconciliation. To this effect, education plays an important role: schools are suitable for the effective implementation of a state's integration policy, because they represent the entire population of children, whose critical mind is not completely lost to inter-group intolerance. Furthermore, as an incentive for interethnic contact, the introduction of separate education in common or multi-ethnic schools helps create a more friendly environment for the minority groups: "a conception of separate education prescribes a range of educational outcomes as desirable for some particular social group distinguished according to religion, ethnicity, or the like."¹² This pluralist aspect of education reform in BiH is centered around so called "national subjects," such as mother tongue, literature, history, geography and religious instruction, introduced by the *Interim Agreement on Accommodation of Specific Needs and Rights of Returnee Children* (later the Interim Agreement).¹³

2 Research Question

This thesis addresses the primary question: *Does the teaching of "national subjects" in multi-ethnic schools help or hinder integration among students in multi-ethnic schools?*

¹² Eamonn Callan, *Creating Citizens: Political Education and Liberal Democracy* (Oxford; New York: Clarendon Press, 1997), p.163.

¹³ The Ministers of Education of each entity signed the Interim Agreement in Sarajevo, on 5 March 2002.

3 Hypotheses

3.1 Operationalization of the Concept of Integration

This thesis tries to assess the effects of “national subjects” on the integration process amongst returnee and non-returnee students in the multi-ethnic school of Popov Most in Eastern Bosnia. Integration is measured by the following indicators: students’ inclination to form friendships with members of “other” group; students’ proclivity to cooperate in class activities; by quality (absence of bullying, for example) and frequency of extra-curricular activities organized by the school; by parents’ willingness to interact with parents of other ethnic groups, just to name a few. In order to delineate integration from assimilation, I examine how the content of “national subjects” may affect students’ ethnic identity. This ethnic identity is defined as the automatic identification with a particular entity/canton/BiH and national symbols, for example. Thus, I employ two tools for studying students’ integration in the multi-ethnic school of Popov Most: an analysis of “national subject” textbooks’ content and monthly interviews with students and teachers as lectures progress throughout the first semester of the year 2003-2004 (four visits in total).

The cluster of “national subjects” includes the following school courses: geography, history, mother tongue and literature, “nature and society,” and religious instruction. Specifically, I critically analyze the introduction of “national subjects” seen from the views of different educational stakeholders, with an emphasis on the local stakeholders. In other words, the thesis explores to what extent the introduction of “national subjects” contributes to the increase of inter-group contacts in schools, i.e. integration. According to contact hypothesis, interethnic contact can decrease stereotypes and reduce mutual alienation amongst students of different ethnic backgrounds.

Furthermore, I analyze the content of textbooks used for teaching “national subjects” in order to see if there are positive stereotypes depicting “in-group” members and negative or biased representation of “out-group” members.¹⁴ My research covers the Popov Most multi-ethnic school, Eastern Bosnia, where Serb students are identified as “in-group,” while Bosniaks, who are returnees and minorities in the numerical terms, are identified as “out-group.” Positive stereotyping is the ascription of “noble” characteristics (real, imagined, or exaggerated) to a group of people, usually by members belonging to that group. Positive stereotypes amongst students are partially derived and reinforced by the presence of ethnocentrism in school textbooks, which is defined as “attitudinal orientation that inclines one to condemn the culture, language, and customs of another ethnic group as inferior and ‘wrong.’”¹⁵ I would expand this definition by identifying ethnocentrism as the predominance of culture-national elements of one group, such as national symbols (flags and coat-of-arms), national myths, religious values, and national victories/defeats in school textbooks, in this case the “national subjects” textbooks. I weigh the *predominance* of ethnocentric elements against the *absence* of culture-national elements of “out-group.”

Although the Interim Agreement allows returnee parents to have their children taught according to the curriculum of their choice, some of Popov Most returnee parents provide their children with the RS textbooks. As a result, it is not uncommon that two siblings have textbooks printed in different entities; nor it is unusual that one student uses both the Federation and the RS textbooks. Thus, since some, if not all, minority Bosniak students actively use the RS textbooks and are taught by two Serb

¹⁴ In BiH context, “in-group” defines the members of a dominant group of a specific entity or canton (in the thesis Serbs); the “out-group” term refers to minority returnees (in the thesis Bosniaks).

¹⁵ Pedro Ramet, Nationalism and Federalism in Yugoslavia, 1963-1983 (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984), p. 22.

teachers, I analyze RS textbooks and explore if there are positive and negative stereotypes, depicting “in-group” and “out-group,” respectively. My focus is on two aspects: how “national subjects” textbooks of the dominant group (Serbs) affect the minority students (Bosniaks); and how contradictory content found in Serb and Bosniak textbooks may affect students’ behavior. Specifically, I look at the nature and society textbooks for the grade four and five, since their curricula include the studies of history, geography and culture. I try to examine whether this educational setting—“national subjects” with different curricula and textbooks for returnee and non-returnee students taught by a non-returnee teacher—has a potential to increase integration among students, or whether it generates conflicts or assimilation among students.

3.2 Hypothesis

If textbooks used for teaching “national subjects” in multi-ethnic schools use elements of positive stereotyping in portraying “in-group” and negative stereotypes in depicting “out-group,” then the teaching of “national subjects” may adversely affect integration among students in multi-ethnic schools.

4 Methodology

The research material used for this thesis is divided into primary and secondary sources. The former includes various documents and agreements on education in BiH, OSCE archival materials (statistical reports, questionnaires and weekly reports) and interviews with educational stakeholders. The latter includes, but is not limited to, school textbooks for “national subjects.” I have secured permission from the OSCE to cite from their unpublished and working materials. In addition to the OSCE questionnaire, I have designed two questionnaires—*Questionnaire on Students’ Integration in Multi-Ethnic Schools in Bosnia* and *Questionnaire on Parents’ View on Multi-Ethnic*

Schools in Bosnia—as a tool to measure the degree of integration in the targeted school at the end of the 2002/2003 and the first semester of the 2003/2004 academic years. Focusing on a particular age group of students (7-11), I use the questions from these questionnaires for open-ended interviews

4.1 Primary sources

a) Documents and Agreements

In order to analyze major educational concerns of returnee parents in the light of existing educational legislation in Bosnia and Herzegovina, I analyze the *Primary Education Law in the Repulika Srpska*, and the *Primary Education Law in the Federation of BiH* (available in both Bosnian/Croatian/ Serbian and English). In addition, I look at the Framework Law on Primary and Secondary Education in BiH, which is to be adopted by the House of Representatives and the House of Peoples. I also look into the *Constitution of the Republika Srpska* and the *General Framework Agreement for Peace in BiH*, known as the Dayton Accord. The latter functions as a standard for observing the general social, political, and economic climate of the country, with a special emphasis on Human Rights (Annex 6) and Refugees and Displaced Persons (Annex 7).

The research question centers around the *Interim Agreement on Accommodation of Specific Needs and Rights of Returnee Children*, which I analyze in the light of each ethnic group's effort to preserve its national identity (in both the local language and English). *Textbook Agreements* (removal of potentially offensive material from textbooks) are indispensable for my textbook analysis. For the modalities and time frame of education reform, I use information found in the *May 10th 2000 Education*

Declaration and Agreement. Some of the mentioned material is accessible on www.osce.org, while others I received from the OSCE.

b) Archival Material(unpublished OSCE material)

For a concise introduction to OSCE's objectives, strategies and coordination structure for education reforms, I consulted the *IC & BiH Education: Policy & Initiatives*. It also summarizes the content of the key agreements on education and outlines the priority for the OSCE Education field staff. In addition, I use the *OSCE Audit Questionnaire on Employment and Education from the Human Rights Aspect*, which also offers a comprehensive database on primary and secondary schools in the covered area.¹⁶ The questionnaire consists of six parts¹⁷ and asks 48 questions in total. The completion of the questionnaire was coupled with the OSCE follow up interviews with each school principal.

Relevant information obtained from interviews with school principals as well as with returnee parents in the Popov Most and Jelec areas before the 2002/2003 academic year are summarized in the *OSCE Weekly Reports*¹⁸ (June-August 2002). These weekly reports outline first initiatives in and obstacles that the OSCE faced while making the first preparation for integrated schools (reopening of multi-ethnic schools, for example) during the summer of 2002. In addition to the *OSCE Weekly Reports*, of

¹⁶ The town of Foca/Srbinje is located in Eastern Bosnia, the RS. It has three elementary schools and one secondary school, each of them having branch schools in some surrounding villages. One Bosniak school in the village of Ustikolina (the municipality of Gorazde in the Federation), was covered as well. In total, five schools were covered.

¹⁷ Education; Religion and Education; Language; Employment and Education; School Board; OSCE and Education.

¹⁸ As opposed to *OSCE Weekly Reports*, there are *OSCE Education Department Weekly Reports* too. The former is used to denote relevant information compiled by Education Officers within the Human Rights Department in 2002, while the latter are reports by the Education Department, established in early 2003.

Please see the list of interviewees in the Appendix 2.

2002, while the latter are reports by the Education Department, established in early 2003.

invaluable importance for the research were *OSCE Education Department Weekly Reports*, statistical reports on integrated school, and reports on textbook revisions, all kindly provided by the OSCE Education Department.

c) Interviews

As mentioned early, OSCE Weekly Reports contain relevant information obtained from the OSCE interviews with the local educational stakeholders in the area of Foca/Srbinje and are cited in the thesis as such—OSCE Weekly Reports. It is important not to confuse these interviews with the interviews conducted by author. Some differences between two types of interviews are outlined below.

i) OSCE Interviews

Qualitative findings collected through face-to-face *interviews* conducted with returnee and non-returnee parents, students, school principals, and education experts were the main research tools. The OSCE interviews with five school principals were conducted in the period between June and August, 2002. Each interview lasted on average 40 minutes and none of them were taped. In addition, in order to assess returnee parents' trust of multi-ethnic schools and to familiarize myself with their educational concerns, I also consult the OSCE interviews conducted with returnee parents: ten parents from Jelec and Popov Most villages were interviewed. Interviews with parents were not taped, and lasted for 30 minutes. Whereas the OSCE interviews with school principals were conducted individually (one interview for one school principal), interviews with parents were joint interviews (five parents for each interview, two interviews in total). In contrast to the author's interviews, the OSCE interviews did not require ethics clearance. All interviews mentioned were held in the following places, Foca/Srbinje, Popov Most, Jelec, Kalinovik and Ustikolina. All places, except

Ustikolina in the Federation, are situated in the RS. Whereas the school principals were Serbs, returnee parents were Bosniaks, with the exception of Ustikolina, where the parents were Serbs.

ii) Interviews by Author

As opposed to the OSCE interviews, which were treated as archival material in the form of *OSCE Weekly Reports*, I conducted field interviews in the period between June and December 2003. All my interviews were reviewed and approved by Carleton Ethics Committee, May 2003.¹⁹ I interviewed the former Prime Minister of the Republika Srpska and current Minister of Foreign Affairs of BiH, Mladen Ivanic at the Canadian Forum on Southeastern Europe, Ottawa, 23 January 2003. The interview was taped and lasted for 35 minutes. Because Mr. Ivanic was a public figure, I was not required to secure ethics clearance for his interview: nevertheless, he granted me permission to cite him in my thesis. Among other educational stakeholders, who participated in my interviews (parents, students, teachers and education experts), only students and parents were granted anonymity. All interviews were taped and lasted the minimum of sixty minutes.

I placed an emphasis on open-ended interviews with students of Popov Most and observation of their interaction as a tool to assess the degree of integration. I conducted the first interview with parents, students and the teacher at the end of the academic year 2002-2003 (June 2003) and followed it by monthly interviews in the 2003-2004 academic year (September-December 2003). Whereas in the academic year of 2002/2003, there were eleven students (six Serbs and five Bosniaks), this year, the number of both returnee and non-returnee students increased to twenty two

(eleven Serbs and eleven Bosniaks).²⁰ Only students in the grades 3-5 were interviewed (thirteen students), while first-year students who registered this year (six and seven year old students) were excluded from my research.

4.2. Secondary Material: Original Language (Serbian/Bosnian/Croatian)

I analyze the textbooks used for “national subjects” in order to establish a relationship, if any, between integration and “national subjects” textbooks. I seek potential ethnic stereotypes and explicit or latent ethnocentrism. Special attention is paid to a tendency to exaggerate interethnic differences and ignored similarities. For the textbook content analysis, I use RS textbook for the “nature and society” subject, the reason being research convenience.²¹ I compare those textbooks for nature and society for the fourth and fifth grade prior and after the 2003 Inter-Entity Textbook Revision.

5 Outline

The thesis is divided into three chapters. Chapter One—*Contact Hypothesis: Literature Review* provides a theoretical framework for the thesis. It addresses social identity theory and contact theory in the search for a potential answer to my research question: *Does teaching of “national subjects” in multi-ethnic schools help or hinder integration among students in multi-ethnic schools in Bosnia and Herzegovina?* In other words, contact theory argues that a specific condition should be created for interethnic contact, and for the Bosnian case, this specific condition is the introduction of “national subjects” for returnee students. However, this “specific condition” has limitations and some modifications to it are necessary to make it more conducive to a long-term interethnic peace and integration. One of those modifications is the elimi-

¹⁹ Please see the list of interviews in the Appendix 1.

²⁰ This increase is the result of the change in the length of elementary education in the RS, as opposed to the increase of the number of returnees. In the RS, the time spent in elementary school increased from eight to nine years. As a result, many six-year old children, who were supposed to register in the first grade next year, started school this year.

²¹ The “nature and society” textbooks introduce concise history, geography and culture to the fourth and fifth-grade students.

nation of both negative and positive stereotypes from school textbooks, i.e. curricula reform.

Chapter Two—*On the Interim Agreement on Accommodation of Specific Needs and Rights of Returnee Children* looks at the present education system in Bosnia and Herzegovina and tries to explain the root causes of some of the outstanding issues, such as politicization and fragmentation. Specifically, this chapter critically addresses the Interim Agreement, an instrument introduced to accommodate specific needs and rights of returnee students. Furthermore, this chapter examines the potential impact “national subjects” may have upon integration among students in multiethnic schools, as well as its necessity in the view of different education stakeholders.

Chapter Three—*On the Content of “National Subjects” Textbooks* is based on a comprehensive textbook content analysis. It addresses the problem of history teaching within the “national subject” framework. The main focus of this chapter is the analysis of popular ethnic myths and stereotypes present in school textbooks before and after the 2003 textbook revision. This analysis, coupled with a comprehensive history background, serves as the foundation for distinguishing two important concepts: controversial and falsified chapters of the common BiH history. The political and ideological messages found in the textbooks are compared with the cumulative results of interviews with students.

CHAPTER 1

Contact Hypothesis: Literature Review

This chapter outlines the premises and arguments of social psychologists for effective conflict resolution. More specifically, it addresses the contact hypothesis, which is based on the premise that a direct and controlled contact between hostile groups may lead to the reduction of stereotypes and lead to reconciliation. This analysis is placed within the educational context, underlining the formative role of textbooks with both positive and negative stereotypes. In the following chapters this analysis will be used to explore the effectiveness of an educational measure—"national subjects"—introduced in Bosnia and Herzegovina in order to increase contact among Serb, Croat and Bosniak students in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

1.1 Social Psychology; Social Identity Theory

Social psychologists perceive conflicts as multidimensional due to the dual influence of objective and subjective factors.²² The former includes power, territories, resources, allies, and socio-institutional environment, while the latter takes account of personal or group perceptions, needs, views, values, beliefs, expectations, attitudes, cognition and aims. According to Morton Deutsch, both subjective and objective factors must be considered, if one wants to make sense of conflicts.²³ Although social psychologists recognize the need to consider both objective and subjective factors, they tend to direct their focus more towards the latter. This is because "in-group solidarity and out-group hostility as well as cognitive factors, such as stereotyping, escalate the conflict through ineffective communication and contentious tactics."²⁴ In addition, subjective factors are significant because animosity between in-group and out-group members usually starts long before and continues long after a military conflict

²² Ronald J. Fisher, The Social Psychology of Intergroup and International Conflict Resolution (New York: Springer-Verlag, 1990), pp. 3-4.

²³ Morton Deutsch, "Subjective Features of Conflict Resolution" in Raimo Vayrynen, ed. New Directions in Conflict Theory: Conflict Resolution and Conflict Transformation (Newbury Park, California: Sage, 1991), p. 28.

²⁴ Marie-Josée Lafleur, "Integrated Education in Northern Ireland: Can It Lead to Reconciliation?" (M.A. Essay, Carleton University, 1999), p 25.

is terminated. For example, in Bosnia and Herzegovina, subjective factors—stereotyping, prejudice, and consequent discrimination—perpetrate animosity and hinder reconciliation between three ethnic groups, Bosnians, Croats, and Serbs, despite the fact that the war ended seven years ago. The most convenient and effective way to promote these stereotypes are school textbooks, especially history textbooks, where “historiography war” continues long after military conflicts end. In addition, so-called “parallel” or “street” education, such as family and media, also plays an important role in instilling certain stereotypes among in-group members. Thus, social psychology has developed social identity theory and contact hypothesis as instruments to explain conflicts and arrive at effective solutions to inter-group disputes, paying a special attention to educational settings.

The concept of social identity is complex. As Iver B. Neumann argues, “identities are always bound by context, and the same speaker may activate very different representations of the same others when the context changes. Identities are fluid not only across time and space, but even as they pertain to the same subjects at the same point in space and time.”²⁵ In explaining social identity, Eliot Smith applies a self-categorization theory. Self-categorization is a “view of oneself as a member of a socially defined group or category”²⁶ as opposed to personal identity, which comprises personal properties, such as personality traits, physical attributes, etc. Although self-categorization may appear quite simple compared to personal identity, which can at

²⁵ Iver B. Neuman, “European Identity, EU Expansion and the Integration/Exclusion Nexus” in *Alternatives*, 23, 3, 1998, p. 400.

²⁵ Eliot R. Smyth, “Social Identity and Social Emotions: Toward New Conceptualizations of Prejudice” in Diane M. Mackie and David L. Hamilton, ed., *Affect, Cognition, and Stereotyping: Interactive Processes in Group Perception* (San Diego, California: Academic Press Inc., 1993), p. 301.

²⁶ Eliot R. Smyth, “Social Identity and Social Emotions: Toward New Conceptualizations of Prejudice” in Diane M. Mackie and David L. Hamilton, ed., *Affect, Cognition, and Stereotyping: Interactive Processes in Group Perception* (San Diego, California: Academic Press Inc., 1993), p. 301.

one point include a wide range of different and even opposing aspects of one's personality, it gains in complexity through the work of subjective factors. Thus, self-categorization may also build upon different aspects of a group's "personality," such as public culture (religion), language, myths, national history etc. Although often this "group personality" is created, shaped, and reinforced by subjective factors, it can also serve as a rich treasury of group stereotypes and prejudices. Whereas some subjective factors seem to be persistent throughout time, for many groups, they appear to be "highly situation specific and episodic."²⁷

Such "group personality," both a source and the product of stereotypes, empowers social or group identity, but never actually overrides personal identity. However, the power social identity exerts over an individual rests in the idea that "salient group memberships constitute an integral part of the self," and therefore any "...group-relevant beliefs (appraisals) will tend to be shared within the in-group via motivated conformity to group norms. In an inter-group situation, my appraisals of the out-group's relevance (threat, etc.) to my in-group are unlikely to be unique to me; instead, all of us in the in-group are likely to see things the same way."²⁸ Eliot Smith's concept of group conformity or "auto-stereotyping"—a perception of in-group as a homogeneous entity through a process of conformity—is consistent with John Turner's concept of collective perception. According to Turner, it is erroneous to explain social identity in terms of *real shared elements*, such as history, language, culture, religion, myths etc., for "members of a social group seem often to share no more

²⁷ Ibid, p. 304.

²⁸ Smyth, "Social Identity and Social Emotions" in Diane Mackie and David Hamilton, ed., p. 303.

than a collective perception of their social unity and yet this seems to be sufficient for them to act as a group.”²⁹

Thus, educational strategy, for example, that promotes multi-ethnic curricula with an emphasis on *real shared elements*, such as shared cultural and linguistic heritage, is based on a common misconception of social categories and, as such, may not be as effective. For example, it may be misleading to believe that acceptance of *real common elements* by all constituent people of BiH will lead to the formation of a common Bosnian identity. It is a collective perception of social unity of each constituent people that matters. This leads us back to Smith’s and Turner’s concept of auto-stereotyping, which best explains the identity crisis in Bosnia and Herzegovina as a process of collective perception.

Eliot Smith argues that auto-stereotyping induces people not only to exaggerate similarities of in-group and depreciate commonness between in-group and out-group members, but “actual attitudes and behaviors will also tend toward homogeneity when a group identity is salient.”³⁰ In Bosnia and Herzegovina, for example, all ethnic communities not only exaggerate in-group similarities, but they also depreciate *shared values*, such as the language, manufacturing inter-group differences. The Bosnia-Herzegovina communities imagine and eventually internalize differences by developing “unique” elements, which are actually derivatives of “shared” elements, affecting their actual attitudes and behaviour. For example, before the war, all ethnic communities spoke one language, Serbo-Croatian; after the war, each community made a claim to the language by reconstructing it and renaming it into three titular

²⁹ John C. Turner, “Towards a Cognitive Redefinition of the Social Group” in Henry Tajfel, ed., Social Identity and Intergroup Relations (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), p. 15.

³⁰ Smyth, “Social Identity and Social Emotions” in Diane Mackie and David Hamilton, ed., p. 302.

“languages,” Serbian, Croatian, and Bosnian. As a result, their actual attitude and behaviour lead to segregation in schools along ethnic lines, for example. This denial of shared elements is especially perceived as necessary when they are shared with a “common enemy.”

The idea of “common enemy” is a building block in the formation of group identity: to Iver B. Neumann, “the forging of a collective identity and the wider process of social integration of which it is a (crucial) aspect hinges on the production of an enemy.”³¹ Equally important, fabrication of both “unique” group elements and “enemy” image is reinforced by the distortion of history, geography, public culture and other aspects of a group’s life, saturated by stereotypes. Eliot Smith argues that stereotyping is not only a cognitive process, but it also involves affects: stereotyping elicits emotions, such as fear, contempt, anger, jealousy etc. These emotions are determined by a specific situation, whereby individual interests or personally experienced injustice translate into group interests and group experienced injustice.³²

This combination of cognitive and affective processes of stereotyping enhances a collective perception of the “enemy.” Janice Gross Stein defines an enemy image as either collective or individual conceptions based on beliefs, theories and hypothesis and real experiences.³³ Vamik D. Volkan argues that groups involved in a protracted conflict eventually establish a psychological boundary, which legitimizes violence against the “others.” In order to justify violence against out-group members,

³¹ Iver B. Neumann, “European Identity, EU Expansion and the Integration/Exclusion Nexus” in *Alternatives*, p. 399.

³² Eliot Smyth, pp. 304-306.

³³ Janice G. Stein, “Image, Identity, and Conflict Resolution” in C.A. Crocker, F.O. Hampson, and P. Aall, ed., *Managing Global Chaos: Sources of and Responses to International Conflict* (Washington: US Institute of Peace Press, 1996), p 94.

in-group members portray them as evil, immoral, dangerous etc., reinforcing “enemy images” and the exclusionary nature of group identity.³⁴

Social theory recognizes the exclusionary nature of identity formation. The categorization of groups into “us” and “other” is a convenient way to simplify the environmental context.³⁵ Thus, all group identity formation inevitably involves exclusion of non-members,³⁶ whereby stereotyping and collective perception of social unity, which are not necessarily based on *real shared elements*, are employed. The same role of simplification and rationalization is ascribed to stereotyping: they render ‘our world more tractable, more manageable...’³⁷ Thus, stereotyping can be defined as the attribution of specific positive or negative characteristics to a group, which are often inaccurate, in order to make sense of our environment. As a result, an in-group member perceives his/her group favorably and interprets actions of out-group in negative terms.³⁸ These processes create a perception of “others” as rigidly homogeneous—they are all the same—and inhibit an observer from appraising the actions of the out-group in an objective fashion.

A preconceived perception of the “other” group has a twofold effect. Firstly, the in-group perceiver searches for information that is congruent with his/her preconceived perception of the “other” group and automatically rejects information that runs counter to his/her stereotypes. Secondly, stereotyping of the “other” group shapes in-group perceiver’s interaction with an out-group member in such a fashion that it either

³⁴ Vamik Volkan, The Need to Have Enemies and Allies: From Clinical Practice to International Relationship (New Jersey: Jason Aronson Inc., 1988), p. 121.

³⁵ Marie-Josée Lafleur, “Integrated Education in Northern Ireland,” p. 5.

³⁶ Iver B. Neumann, “European Identity, EU Expansion and the Integration/Exclusion Nexus,” p. 399.

³⁷ Marie-Josée Lafleur, “Integrated Education in Northern Ireland,” p. 28.

helps the latter form new stereotypes or confirms already established prejudice about the former. Furthermore, a hostile action is anticipated from “them,” and a preemptive attitude is fashioned by the in-group member, an attitude that is often as aggressive as “their” actions, imagined in the in-group member’s anticipation. This reciprocal behavior is more pronounced among groups involved in military conflicts. In addition, a perception of threat fosters cohesiveness and solidarity of the in-group, which in turn increases hostility toward the out-group.³⁹

There are many categories and subcategories of social identity, with some of them being more rigid than others. Thus, rigidity of a group identity is due to prolonged conflicts between two groups: the longer the conflict, the stronger identification with a particular group; the stronger the group identification, the more salient social comparison and exclusion of non-members.⁴⁰ However, at the beginning of this chapter, we saw that inter-group hostility continues long after conflicts end, making the correlation between social identity and longevity of conflicts weak. Rather, hostility can be affected by both the perceiver’s self and the situation, established prior or after a conflict. Let us take an example from BiH: the return process is partially hindered by discrimination against returnees. A slow process of return in Bosnia and Herzegovina may be explained by Eliot Smyth’s model of prejudice as a social emotion. It would look as follows:

Appraisals: Croats receive less construction aid than Bosniaks/Muslims
 (*perceiver’s self*—the life without international aid is harsh)
 (*situation*—Bosniaks/Muslims receive the aid that is denied to Croats)

³⁸ Steven J. Stroessner and Diane M. Mackie, “Affect and Perceived Group Variability: Implications for Stereotyping and Prejudice” in Diane M. Mackie and David L. Hamilton, ed., Affect, Cognition, and Stereotyping (San Diego, CA: Academic Press Inc., 1993), p. 65.

³⁹ Ronald J. Fisher, The Social Psychology of Intergroup and International Conflict Resolution (New York: Springer-Verlag, 1990), p. 42.

⁴⁰ Marie-Josée Lagleur, “Integrated Education in Northern Ireland,” p.28.

leads to

Prejudiced emotions: Croats feel anger and resentment towards Bosniak/Muslim returnees

leads to

Discrimination: Croats want to prevent Muslims from returning home by intimidating them...

To Lewin K., negative stereotyping of the out-group is a form of “social illusion.” Individual perception of “reality” is contingent with the “reality” created by a social group to which that individual belongs; thus “reality” is a relative concept. He argues that “probability that his judgment will be right is heightened if the individual places greater trust in the experience of the group, whether or not this group experiences tallies with his own.”⁴¹ In addition, Lewin K. acknowledges the strong pressure the group exerts upon an individual, including our beliefs of right and wrong. To illustrate this view, I shall again take an example from Bosnia and Herzegovina. The immediate war experience, which is different for each ethnic group, combined with political propaganda, represents a social pressure. It is “natural” that members of each ethnic community employ *autocheck* and embrace stereotyping—any deviation from the “official truth,” which is often prejudiced against the other group, is perceived as a personal betrayal and an insult to national identity and still alive war memories. It is this “socially accepted reality” that needs modification in order to eliminate negative stereotypes that hinder reconciliation between hostile groups.

This preconceived and well-established perception of the significant others is substantially shaped and enhanced by political and academic elites and media. Social psychologists have also studied the role of the political elite and media in forming or eliminating stereotypes. Education and media have traditionally been the most con-

⁴¹ Lewin K., Field Theory in Social Science (New York: Harper and Row, 1997), p. 49.

venient and most effective means for conveying stereotypes in order to create national identities. School textbooks, especially, are the most often chosen tool for channeling stereotypes to the young generation. In addition, textbooks are powerful for the elimination or reduction of potential identity ambivalence. For example, some military conflicts and real or imagined threats have a potential to either weaken or strengthen national identity. This ambivalence is more pronounced among communities that lived in harmony before a conflict erupted. For example, all ethnic groups in Bosnia and Herzegovina lived for over fifty years in tolerance characterized by the highest rate of ethnic intermarriages in the former Yugoslavia; this common and harmonious life in a multicultural Bosnia and Herzegovina led to temporary identity confusion at the onset of the war. In order to reinforce or create national identity, community leaders promoted propaganda based on stereotyping, which in turn evoked threats to national identity of the out-group. In order to reduce the effects of stereotypes created from the “above” as well as by a group member, social psychologists have constructed the contact hypothesis.

1.2 Contact Hypothesis

The contact hypothesis is based on the premise that direct contact between two hostile groups may help reduce negative stereotyping and lead to a better inter-group understanding. It emerged in the 1970s as a response to institutionalized racial segregation in the United States and to the Israeli ideological goal to create cohesion among Israeli Jews of different ethnic backgrounds. The implementation of the contact hypothesis premises is believed to achieve the following goals: to increase readiness to accept others; to change attitudes towards and perception of others; and to integrate minority groups into the majority group. Direct contact, however, is not the only means nor is it in itself sufficient for changing attitudes and perception. Discour-

aging research results, such as reinforcement of prejudices after contact takes place, prompted social psychologists to explore specific contact conditions that are more conducive to positive attitude change. There are two classic statements of the contact hypothesis, both of which address a necessity to manipulate the contact situation in order to produce a desirable result, namely reconciliation between hostile groups and integration. These statements are made by the most prominent founders of contact hypothesis, G. W. Allport and S.W. Cook, whose contradictory views of *inter-group approach* versus *interpersonal approach*, respectively, have established a dichotomy in contact hypothesis. As a result, the contact hypothesis has its limitations.⁴²

Both Allport and Cook attempt to answer the same question: “In what types of contact situations, with what kinds of representatives of the disliked group, will interaction and attitude change of specific types occur—and how will this vary for subjects of differing characteristics?” Allport has developed taxonomy of factors that are friendly to a positive change and examines different aspects of contact situation, such as the quantitative aspect, status and role aspects. His conclusion is that inter-group contact will yield a positive change under the condition of equal status of participants who enjoy institutional support in their pursuit of a common goal. In addition, he underlines the importance of inter-group encounters, whereby participants exhibit typical characteristics of their groups.⁴³

Although seemingly paradoxical, the idea of typicality has its merit. The typicality argument is premised on stereotype studying, which shows that members of one

⁴² Miles Hewstone and Rupert Brown, “Contact is not Enough: An Intergroup Perspective on the ‘Contact Hypothesis’” in Contact and Conflict in Intergroup Encounters, ed. Miles Hewstone and Rupert Brown (Oxford, New York: Blackwell, 1986), p.2.

⁴³ Ibid, p.19.

group tend to seek typical characteristics that confirm their stereotypes in members of other groups. If an atypical member is encountered, he or she is perceived as unrepresentative of his or her group. The strength of typical encounter lies in generalization: if typical contact results in a positive change, then this change will be more effective in producing a greater generalization. In other words, an attitude change towards the out-group as a whole and not just towards out-group contact participants will result from inter-group contact.⁴⁴

Unlike G.W. Allport, S.W. Cook argues in favour of interpersonal encounter under the following conditions:

1. Participants are of equal status;
2. Atypical characteristics of participants that disconfirm the prevailing stereotypes
- 3 Cooperation in achieving a common goal;
- 4 “Acquaintance potential” (getting to know each other as individuals rather than out-group members);

Cook’s hypothesis that an encounter with a contact participant with atypical characteristics that are contradictory to held stereotypes is central to the interpersonal approach to contact hypothesis. Interpersonal contact is premised on the idea that acquaintance may help participants notice and accept similarities they share and thus diminish imagined differences. In addition, the interpersonal approach is closely linked to so-called “color-blind approach.” Similar to the interpersonal approach, the “color-blind” perspective is based on the idea that the judgment of people should be based on the behaviour of individuals and not on that of the group.⁴⁵

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Janet Ward Schofield, “Black-White Contact in Desegregated Schools,” in Hewstone and Brown, Contact and Conflict, pp. 86-87.

However, the limitation of the colour-blind perspective, and, by implication, the interpersonal approach is that they “[do not] not reflect the reality.” To insist on irrelevance of ethnicity or race to one’s behaviour or decision is contradictory to a variety of research, which indicate that people’s positive or negative appraisal of one’s behaviour is dependent on race or ethnicity.⁴⁶ Some psychologists warn against the persistence of inter-group differences. Furthermore, the colour-blind perspective and the interpersonal approach are likely to lead to the formation of taboos and “aversive” discrimination. Aversive discrimination allows in-group members maintain self-concepts as unprejudiced by developing unconscious negative feelings towards the out-group, and, thus, search for non-racial or non-ethnic rationales for discrimination.⁴⁷ In addition to the shortcomings the interpersonal approach shares with the colour-blind perspective, it also displays another limitation, namely weak generalization. In other words, any attitude change resulting from a manipulated contact with the out-group members may not be generalized outside the contact situation.

Although the inter-group approach and the interpersonal approach differ from each other in the degree of generalization, the advocates of both camps agree that contact should be organized and carefully planned, if one wants to improve interethnic relations. In other words, the organization of contact should be centered around specific conditions that are believed to generate a change in attitude and perception. For instance, taxonomies developed by G.W. Allport and S.W. Cook underline the importance of the equal status of participants. It is believed that if members of a minority group enjoy equal status with the members of a majority group, interethnic

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Ibid., pp. 84-85

contact is likely to lead to a better interethnic relation. Although social psychologists tend to agree on the importance of equal status, their interpretations of “equal status” differ. This in turn makes the contact hypothesis difficult to falsify definitively, “for addition of another condition or a re-specification of a condition seems all too easily possible.”⁴⁸

For example, Allport defines “equal status” in terms of equality *within* the situation itself. Specifically, participants’ scholar achievement (if contact takes place within the confinements of classroom) or popularity that stems from non-scholar activities, such as athletic and creativity abilities and personal traits, are regarded as aspects of “equal status.” Many social psychologists, however, misinterpreted Allport’s definition as meaning equality *outside* the contact situation, such as economic, social and educational status of a group as a whole.⁴⁹

The “equal status” debate may appear as a paradox in the light of the inter-group and inter-personal dichotomy. For example, Allport advocates the inter-group approach with an emphasis on *group* typical characteristics, and yet, he argues in favour of “equal status” within the situation, which highlights *personal* characteristics, such as academic achievement. The reverse applies to the interpersonal approach. In addition, “equal status” *within* the situation implies a positive relation between equality and attitude change: the greater equalization in academic achievements between out-groups and in-group students, the greater the opportunity for a positive change in both attitude towards and perception of “others.” And yet, academic homogeneity often leads to ethnic or racial homogeneity due to a strong correlation between so-

⁴⁸ Thomas F. Pettigrew, “The Intergroup Contact Hypothesis Reconsidered” in Hewstone and Brown, p. 178.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

cial/economic status and academic achievements. For example, a variety of research identifies a pattern, whereby the minority tends to occupy a lower economic and social status in society, with their children performing poorly in school.⁵⁰ Hence, equal status *within* a situation has some limitations: the number of academically homogeneous and ethnically heterogeneous contacts would be small in number and thus, with a low potency for generalization.

Whereas a similarity between the “colour-blind” perspective and the interpersonal approach tends to drive the latter more toward assimilation, the inter-group approach seems to be more consistent with the pluralistic approach, which recognizes and respects cultural/ethnic diversity among groups. For example, a school may introduce multi-ethnic curricula as recognition of special values and behaviour patterns of different groups and sub-groups. A multi-ethnic curriculum has a two fold goal: to assist the faculty staff in dealing with a diverse class-room fairly and effectively, sensitizing them to the needs of minority students; and to help students coming from different cultural backgrounds feel more comfortable in a multi-ethnic classroom.⁵¹ In addition to a multi-ethnic curriculum, there are other factors that determine how minority students feel in the contact situation: whether the contact is intimate or causal substantially affects minority students’ integration into the majority group.

Most social psychologists agree that more intimate and enjoyable contact produces positive changes, while superficial contact (even when frequent) is less likely to result in attitude change. Whereas the “equal status” condition is easy to control due to its objective criteria, such as academic achievement, a combination of intimacy and

⁵⁰ Janet W. Schofield, “Black-White Contact in Desegregated Schools” in Hewstone and Brown, p. 82.

⁵¹ Ibid., pp. 88-89

pleasure is subject to a set of variables contingent on the subjectivity of participants and thus, difficult to manipulate. For example, an activity may be perceived as intimate and pleasant for one student and aversive for another. Nevertheless, intimate and pleasant contacts are more effective under an atypical environment, such as camping, school trips and some boarding schools. It is assumed that a wide agenda of activities based on cooperation and common goals with the absence of academic pressure can satisfy personal needs of each and every individual. In addition, those who chose to participate are already inclined to those kinds of activities, making their expectation of “having a good time” favorable to inter-group contact.

An atypical environment, in which social dynamics develop on their own and usually result in social life inconsistent with the real world, such as schools, imposes serious limitations on an important aspect of contact, namely generalization. For example, because school settings are more oriented towards academic achievement, which in turn generates competition rather than cooperation, a change in attitude generated in atypical contact may be generalized to neither contact participants nor to a wider social group outside the contact confinement. This is true only if formal school setting is not consistent with its integrationist practices. For example, students of different ethnic backgrounds may have friendly interaction on a school trip to without letting their prejudices impede their actions, and yet when they return to the classroom, they may activate their existing stereotypes through the utilization of textbooks, for example.

Nevertheless, cooperation as a means to satisfy the personal needs of students coming from different ethnic backgrounds can be organized in public schools. For example, education reforms in Bosnia and Herzegovina are aimed at replacing the conventional frontal teaching by a more cooperative teaching method, whereby stu-

dents interact directly, assist each other, and synthesize their contribution into a final group product. To this end, some elementary schools in BiH (1-4 grades) have enthusiastically introduced the “Step-By-Step” learning method, which allows a higher development of creativity, greater students’ interdependence, and lesser dependency on the teacher. In addition to this cooperative teaching method, the introduction of multi-ethnic curricula may increase satisfaction and the pleasure of the contact within the school framework: multi-ethnic curricula may improve the self-concept, social status, and academic achievements of the minority group.

It is hard to determine the nature of the contact— pleasant vs. disturbing— within education settings, though. Initial contact may be laden with anxiety, which may lead to the confirmation of stereotypes.⁵² Anxiety often centers around the gap between the expectation from the other group and what is actually perceived in a contact situation: the narrower the gap, the greater an opportunity for the positive effects of contact. However, a success or failure of contact in educational settings depends on two factors: the level of prejudice and the age of students. For instance, students with low prejudice and younger students are more prone to a change in attitude after inter-group contact. The cause-effect relation between the level of prejudice and the contact outcomes is, however, ambiguous. For example, it is not quite clear whether a low level of prejudice affects a change or whether contact reduces the level of prejudice.⁵³ However, contact outcomes are unambiguous if contact is unprecedented: contact effects are greater if students have not experienced similar contacts before.

⁵² Marie-Josée Lafleur, “Integrated Education in Northern Ireland,” p.33.

⁵³ S. Reicher, “Contact, Action and Racialization: Some British Evidence,” in Hewstone and Brown, ed., Contact and Conflict, p. 161.

In contrast, students' age seems to have clear-cut effects on contact outcomes. For example, anxiety may be weak among students attending lower grades of elementary school (1-4), but intense among secondary school students. The latter may find themselves in a wider gap between expectation from other students and what is actually perceived in contact. The fact that junior grades of elementary schools are primarily subject to the integration policy illustrates the point; for instance, in Bosnia and Herzegovina, most multi-ethnic classes are formed at the 1-4 grade level. Although interethnic contact in junior grades is more likely to produce a positive attitude change, it has a shortcoming: the lack of cumulative effect. "[T]his cumulative effect involves the successful development of procedures for cooperating in specific activities and their transfer to new situations, so the established modes of inter-group cooperation are recognized."⁵⁴ In other words, if the integration policy is not applied beyond the fourth grade, which seems to be a common practice in BiH, for example, then it is to be expected that students would fall back on their old prejudices.

What is it that makes younger students more amenable to attitude change in comparison to older students? There is a correlation between the age and students' national identity: the older a student, the higher his/her political awareness and the more pronounced national identity is. Older students are more prone to interethnic violence because their ethnic identification is more developed than in younger students. It is the solidarity for members belonging to the same group that make older students less amenable to interethnic contact. This component is reinforced when a reference to controversial political and historical issues is made, especially at early stage of contact. Often, "it creates tension among participants and gives rise to attacks

⁵⁴ Thomas F. Pettigrew, "The Intergroup Contact Hypothesis Reconsidered" in Hewstone and Brown, ed., Contact and Conflict, p.187

and accusations on the one hand, and defensive reactions on the other hand.”⁵⁵ As a result, many social psychologists emphasize the similarity between groups, believing that dissimilarity is the major source of conflict.

In addition, political awareness of a student is to a great extent shaped and influenced by the social atmosphere surrounding contact, one of the critical factors from Allport's taxonomy. This factor encompasses behaviour of “authority,” which refers to official or institutional legitimization of integration. There are three types of societies that promote integration, which employ different rationales for integration; thus they differ in effectiveness of integration policy.

Integration is the most effective if it serves some ideological goals and performs a function of security (Israel); Israeli Jews come from different cultural/ethnic backgrounds but accept integration as a means to achieve national cohesion and, thus increase national security. When policy of integration is endorsed from an ideological conviction but aimed at solving a “national dilemma”⁵⁶ as opposed to national security (the United States), then integration is less effective due to the development of “aversive” and latent racism. And finally, there are societies, like Bosnia and Herzegovina, in which integration neither serves a common ideological goal, nor solves a “national dilemma,” because there is no such dilemma.

Thus, the older school generation may be more attentive to social atmosphere (institutional legitimization of integration) than their younger counterparts. In addi-

⁵⁵ Ben-Ari and Amir, “Contact Between Arab and Jewish Youth” in Hewstone and Brown, ed., Contact and Conflict, p 55.

⁵⁶ “National Dilemma” refers to explicit inconsistency between ideological principles and practices. For example, “American Dilemma” refers to the fact that American self-concept based on ideals, such as justice, liberty and equality, is threatened by racism and discrimination against the Blacks. Summarized in Janet W. Schofield, “Black and White Contact in Desegregated Schools” in Hewstone and Brown, Contact and Conflict, p. 80.

tion, the older students (above grade four) are more likely to feel a salient conflict between social pressure (nationalism from media, textbooks, family, or war experiences etc.) and artificial or semi-voluntary endorsement of reconciliation by the authority. Thus, a change in attitude may not go in a desirable direction, i.e., the reduction of mutual alienation. This is illustrated by frequent scenes of conflict in high schools and universities between hostile groups.

1.3 Conclusion

This chapter has introduced social psychological theories of social identity and conflict resolution, with examples from the context of Bosnia and Hercegovina. Social identity theory identifies subjective factors, such as stereotypes, as a source of inter-group hostility. The contact hypothesis rests on the assumption that direct and manipulated contact may lead to the reduction of these stereotypes, ultimately resulting in reconciliation. Since group stereotypes are promoted and distributed most effectively through school textbooks, and since educational settings are the most convenient for effective implementation of state's integrationist policy, this chapter also addressed the role of school and textbooks in diminishing or confirming existing stereotypes. Auto-stereotyping consists of the exaggeration of similarities among in-group members and devalues that shared by out-group members, affecting actual behaviour and decisions of in-group members, such as the insistence on school segregation.

Because people's appraisal of one's action depends on both personal and group characteristics (ethnicity) displayed by contact participants, it is important to take both into account in planning and controlling contact situations. It is also important to maintain a consistency between a controlled contact situation and the institu-

tional integrationist policy. The latter refers to the willingness of relevant institutions to address the most frequently used channel for disseminating stereotypes to younger generations, namely, textbooks. Otherwise, integration may be effective to a certain degree only among younger students, who are less attentive to socio-political environment and pressure than their older counterparts.

However, integration is easier said than done. On the one hand, the Ministry of Education may be concerned with the allocation of resources rather than the quality of service rendered to clients-students (textbook quality). On the other hand, schools are usually deficient in resources that train and prepare teachers for new situations, that is to say multi-ethnic classrooms. Teachers, like students, may require training in order to be able to adjust to multi-cultural/multiethnic classrooms. Thus, teachers and school principals should be trained in order to acquire new skills and change old habits and practices. Instead of just issuing administrative instructions and being excessively preoccupied with the mechanics of ethnic mixing, the policy makers should be more responsive to the essential needs of those who carry out the implementation of the integrationist policy.

In the next two chapters, I explore a specific contact condition that is believed to be conducive to attitude change and integration in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Specifically, I address the Interim Agreement and its provision of “national subjects” as a means to create contact among minority returnee and non-returnee students in school (chapter two). The International Community inaugurated this agreement, knowing that returnee parents did not trust “their” curricula and textbooks, which were impregnated by ethnic stereotypes and prejudices, ultimately resulting in open segregation in schools. The introduction of “national subjects” is believed to make returnee students comfortable in multi-ethnic schools and reduce segregation to the minimum. In other

words, students would attend “national subjects” separately but come together in general classes, such as math and gym. However, the effect of this contact situation seems to be counterproductive and ineffective: it leads to more segregation and the confirmation of the existing stereotypes. This is the result of partial addressing the fundamental problem—curricula: textbooks for “national subjects” continue to present biased and distorted facts, which ultimately lead to forming and confirming ethnic stereotypes (chapter three).

CHAPTER TWO

On the Interim Agreement on Accommodation of Specific Needs and Rights of Returnee Children

The following chapter looks into the present education system in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) and tries to explain the root causes of some of its outstanding issues, such as politicization and fragmentation. Specifically, this chapter critically addresses the Interim Agreement, an instrument introduced to accommodate specific needs and rights of returnee students. Furthermore, the chapter examines potential impacts the Interim Agreement may have upon students' integration in multiethnic schools, as well as its necessity in the view of different education stakeholders. Interviews with returnee parents of Jelec and Popov Most, Eastern Bosnia indicate that so-called "inadequate education" may not represent a significant obstacle to return and that the introduction of "national subjects" has limited influence on return.

2.1 Introduction to the Education System in Bosnia and Herzegovina

The present education system in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) is distinguished by two mutually reinforced features: politicization and fragmentation. The former is the legacy of the previous regime, in which a single and dominant political party (The League of Communists) tailored education in a socialist spirit and used it as an instrument for advancing its political and ideological goals. The latter is an enduring consequence of post-Communism military conflict(s) in Bosnia and Herzegovina. After Communism fell apart and the breakup of Yugoslavia brought about the fragmentation of the education system within some of its former republics,⁵⁷ Bosnia and Herzegovina inherited politicization of education from the previous regime. As a result, "today education [in BiH] is a function of achieving goals of ruling political parties or [advancing] interests of an entire nation [i.e. ethnic group]."⁵⁸

In Bosnia and Herzegovina the fragmentation in the education sector mirrors

⁵⁷ Six Yugoslav republics were as follows: Socialist Republic (SR) of Croatia, SR of Serbia (with two autonomous provinces, Kosovo and Metohia and Vojvodina), SR Monte Negro, SR Macedonia, SR Slovenia, SR Bosnia and Herzegovina.

the division of the country, caused by the 1992-1995 war and, with some territorial adjustments, consolidated by the General Framework Agreement for Peace (GFAP), also known as the Dayton Accord. The country is divided into two entities: the Republika Srpska (RS) and the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (FBiH or the Federation). The Republika Srpska has a tendency to the ethnic homogeneity (Serbs) and displays state-like qualities, such as control over its own military,⁵⁹ police, judiciary system, National Assembly (The Parliament), and a highly centralized education system. The Federation, shared by Bosniaks and Croats, also has those institutions but with a significant political difference, namely devolution of administrative power and competencies to cantons (*kanton/zupanija*) (there are ten cantons in total).⁶⁰

As a result, the education system in BiH is shaped by the prevailing political structure of the country. As the Minister of Education in the RS, Gojko Savanovic, explains it, the “political organization of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina is somewhat different from that of the Republika Srpska, and [thus] the education system in the Federation is somewhat different from that in the Republika Srpska.”⁶¹ Hence, there are two different education systems in Bosnia and Herzegovina, one in the RS and another in the Federation. The two education systems have some common problems, such as outdated and too extensive curricula, a shortage of qualified teachers, underpaid and unmotivated teachers, a lack of school equipment, etc. There are,

⁵⁸ Milenko Brkic, pre-war Education Minister in BiH, interview by author, Sarajevo, 03 June 2003. Author's translation.

⁵⁹ The recently adopted Defense Law prescribes a state-level civilian command and control over BiH armed forces. It is planned to bring the same uniforms and patches in the whole country and soldiers would take oath to the state of BiH. However, units are not to be multi-ethnic.

⁶⁰ *Zupanija* is the Croatian word for canton; *zupanije* is the plural form of *zupanija*. Serbs and Bosniaks use the term *kanton(i)*.

⁶¹ Gojko Savanovic, the Minister of Education in the RS, interview by author, Banja Luka, 17 June 2003. Author's translation.

however, educational issues that are present only in one or the other entity, and it is these issues that illustrate the political influence on the education system. For example, the establishment of so-called “two schools under one roof,”⁶² a euphemism for open segregation in schools, is an outstanding issue in the Federation, but is literally non-existent in the Republika Srpska. It is important to note that two political features of the RS—a high degree of the ethnic homogeneity and the centralization of education—prevent the establishment of “two schools under one roof” in that entity. However, another form of segregation—busing children to mono-ethnic schools—is common to both the RS and the Federation.

The political organization of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina should not, however, deceive anybody; multiculturalism and multi-ethnicity in that entity is mostly cosmetic, which is again reflected in the education system. The Federation is divided into ten cantons, some of which are ethnically defined. As a result, there are *de facto* two different education systems in the Federation, Bosniak and Croatian, each standardized and harmonized in the respective cantons. However, the complexity of the Federation’s education system is not so much in its decentralization at the cantonal level; rather, it is further complicated by the entity legislature that gives municipalities some competency in education. Often the ethnic composition of municipalities does not correspond to that of the canton to which those municipalities belong. As

⁶² According to the OSCE statistics, there are 52 schools operating as “two schools under one roof,” mainly located in Zenica-Doboj (Canton 4), Central Bosnia (Canton 6) and Herzegovina-Neretva (Canton 7). In these schools, students and teachers of Croat and Bosniak backgrounds are physically and psychologically segregated along the ethnic lines. These schools have different administrations, separate legal identities, separate school boards and, often, different school entrances and facilities. Despite the fact that the International Community is unanimous in its position to discontinue the practice of “two schools under one roof” and exerts substantial pressure upon both school and political authorities to end this form of segregation, so far, only four schools successfully completed the administrative unification (Zepca and Vares municipalities). Although these schools are far from full integration, they have made a crucial step in that direction: administrative unification includes a common director, a joint administration, a unified school board, common school facilities and entrance etc. The

a result, the phenomenon of “two schools under one roof” has become a common feature of the Federation education system.⁶³

According to the Director of the OSCE Education Department, Falk Pingel, the practice of “two-schools under one roof” was “regarded as *progress* at the time it was established, [because it gave] returnees some incentives to *come back* [to their pre-war homes].⁶⁴ Although the IC “played a mediating role ”in institutionalizing segregation in schools since 2000, believing that it would increase return, today, the policy of “two schools under one roof” has been abandoned by the IC. It took three years for the IC to realize that “such a system only exacerbates segregation.”⁶⁵ What actually happened is that the International Community fell into the national identity trap: segregation in schools according to ethnicity and religion has been advanced and tolerated in the name of national identity regardless of its potential consequences. And the consequences are strong resistance by both educational stakeholders and politicians to administrative unification of “two schools under one roof: “on the third day of the 2003/2004 academic year, the front door of the Novi Seher elementary school near Dobož was set on fire in a protest against administrative unification of the school, which up to September 2003 operated as ‘two schools under one roof.’”⁶⁶

Although both the International Community and national stakeholders convert education into an instrument to serve different, above all political, goals, the former,

International Community attempts to unify these schools through the introduction of the Common Core Curriculum and through planning joint classes and shared teachers.

⁶³ Falk Pingel, the OSCE Education Department Director, interview by author, Sarajevo, 09 July 2003.

⁶⁴ Ibid. Emphasis added.

⁶⁵ OSCE Education Department, “Strategy Paper for Unification of ‘Two- Schools- Under- One- Roof’” (Sarajevo, 20 May 2003).

⁶⁶ E. Beslic, “Zapaljena vrata OS u Novom Seheru,” Oslobodjenje (Sarajevo) 4 September 2003, p. 6. Author’s translation.

at least, attempts to rectify its mistake, whereas the latter happily endorse the segregation of the education system, while at the same time criticizing the International Community for the current situation. According to the pre-war Education Minister and current Professor of Pedagogy at Sarajevo University, Milenko Brkic, “from the very beginning, the Dayton [Agreement] set up the whole thing wrongly.”⁶⁷ According to him, the International Community privileged one ethnic group (Serbs) by granting them a full autonomy in creating their own educational plan and programme and discriminated against Bosniaks and Croats, who “are put in a position to quarrel over either the language or the script.”⁶⁸ Although the Dayton Agreement “helped this very difficult and extensive [educational] structure,” a claim that Serbs are privileged would be justified only if the current education structure resulted in higher education standards and better competitiveness among the RS students.⁶⁹ Since this is not the case, such a claim is an attempt to politicize education and to pass the responsibility to a third party, the International Community.

On its side, the International Community argues that progress and most initiatives should come from the local authorities, blaming them for the slow progress of the education reform. For example, the Education Ministers rarely disseminate relevant information on the education reform to the educational stakeholders and leave a large bulk of the work to be done by the IC. The International Community legitimately fears that “if [it] stops pushing and providing significant financing for the reform process... the education reform will stagnate.”⁷⁰ However, the IC is aware that

⁶⁷ Milenko Brkic, pre-war Education Minister in BiH, interview by author, Sarajevo, 03 June 2003. Author's translation.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Falk Pingel, the OSCE Education Department Director, interview by author, Sarajevo, 09 July 2003.

⁷⁰ OSCE Education Department, “Education Reform Agenda” (Sarajevo, June 2003).

even if it is willing and able to drive the reform, it cannot succeed without support from both political and school authorities. For example, in order to eliminate busing children to mono-ethnic schools located outside their area of return, the local authorities' cooperation, such as the termination of financing the transportation of students, is necessary.

Although local support, especially political, is indispensable for ceasing the practice of segregation, one should be prudent when allowing or urging the political parties to interfere in education, even when it comes to such an important objective, namely de-segregation in schools. It is important to maintain a consistency in the IC's approach towards the political parties in regard to their influence on the education system. There are examples where the IC criticizes BiH political parties for their interference in education, such as school director appointments in Sanski Most by the Party of Democratic Actions (SDA), while at the same time demanding their support for the education reform. For example, the OSCE Mission to BiH sent a letter to the President of the Croatian Democratic Union (HDZ), Barisa Colak, requesting his support for legal and administrative unification of "two school under one roof."⁷¹ Usually, "support" implies instructions by political party leaders to educational stakeholders, such as Education Ministers, affiliated with their respective political parties. This is evident from the following example: the Office of High Representative issued a Directive which reduced BiH HDZ funding by 5%, because its official, Nikola Lovrinovic, the Education Minister in Central Bosnia Canton, did not respect the deadline for the issuance of the instruction for administrative unification of "two

⁷¹ OSCE Education Department, "Education Department Weekly Report" (Sarajevo, August 15, 2003).

schools under one roof' in that Canton.⁷²

The tendency to blame the International Community for the present political situation, which in turn affects the education system, is a fundamental problem in BiH. Equally frustrating is mutual recrimination among constituent peoples on the one hand and between the local authority and the International Community on the other hand. Politically speaking, the whole country is "at the stage of adolescence,"⁷³ there is no political will to accept responsibility for the present (and the past) situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina. In the words of former Deputy Minister of Education in FBiH, Dubravko Lovrenovic, "The Dayton Agreement gave a fifty percent chance to integration and a fifty percent chance to disintegration. Our politicians chose disintegration."⁷⁴ Therefore, the International Community is only partially to be responsible. Unlike the local authorities, the International Community at least attempts to mitigate the effects of the Dayton Agreement by addressing the fragmentation and politicization of the existing education system, for instance. But is it possible to de-politicize education with instruments, such as "two schools under one roof" or the Interim Agreement?

The education structure of the International Community in Bosnia and Herzegovina consists of the Education Issue Set Steering Group (EISSG) and the Education Working Groups (EWG). The International Community also operates through the Education Forum and the Regional Education Working Groups (REWG) in achieving set objectives of the reform. In addition, the main body of the structure, EISSG, exists

⁷² OHR, "HDZ Fails to Implement Education Reforms," cited on 26 December 2003; available at <http://www.ohr-dept/presso/>; INTERNET.

⁷³ Dubravko Lovrenovic, former Deputy Education Minister in the Federation, interview by author, Sarajevo, 20 June 2003. Author's translation.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

within the Institution-Building Task Force, which is comprised of the heads of Agencies, such as OSCE, UNCHR, OHR, UNCESCO, the Council of Europe, the European Commission and the World Bank. Through its extensive field presence in BiH, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) coordinates and facilitates the work of the International Community in the education sector. It has identified critical problems of the education system in BiH and formulated its objectives accordingly. They are as follows:⁷⁵

Issues:

- Lack of comprehensive legal framework
- Fragmentation and politicization of the education system
- Low quality of primary and secondary education
- Lack of standard curriculum and assessment criteria
- Insufficient financing
- Lack of institutions developing the above

Objectives:

- Establishing integrated or multi-ethnic schools
- Harmonizing curricula, assessment standards and accreditation
- Modernizing primary and secondary education
- Reforming the financing system in education
- Creating a legal framework that codifies the above

Each Education Working Group (EWG) is assigned to tackle each issue; thus, there are six EWGs (EWG1-EWG6). This thesis focuses mostly on the work of EWG1, which addresses equal access to and non-discrimination in education. The International Community (The Office of High Representative) inaugurated the *Interim Agreement on Accommodation of Specific Needs and Rights of Returnee Children* (The Interim Agreement) and employs it as a tool for establishing non-discriminatory access to education. The Interim Agreement has introduced so-called “national sub-

⁷⁵ OSCE Human Rights Department, “IC and BiH Education: Policy and Initiatives” (Sarajevo, 2002).

jects,”⁷⁶ enabling returnee parents to choose a curriculum that reflects their ethnic affiliation. In addition to “national subjects,” the Interim Agreement addresses other closely related issues, such as hiring of qualified returnee teachers to teach “national subjects,” the establishment of multi-ethnic school boards, “national subject” textbook revisions, and the removal of inappropriate names, symbols, and objects from schools. The thesis focuses mainly on two aspects of the Interim Agreement: “national subjects” and textbook revision. This chapter explores the former, while the latter will be addressed in the next chapter.

On 5 March 2002, the Ministers of Education of each entity of BiH signed, in Sarajevo, the Interim Agreement, acknowledging “...the increasing number of returnee families, their constitutional rights and the right of their children to receive *adequate education*, and having in mind that the lack of it is often quoted as one of the *main obstacles for return*.”⁷⁷ Two things in the agreement merit attention: the provision of “adequate education” and the premise that the agreement facilitates return in BiH.

2.2 “Adequate Education” for “Minority Returnees”

The Interim Agreement assures “adequate education” for minority returnee children by enabling them to have education in accordance with their cultural, linguistic, and religious beliefs. But in the current political context of Bosnia and Herzegovina, “adequate education” implies more than the preservation of cultural, linguistic, and religious heritage. The Human Rights principle of “adequate education” is abused in BiH in order to legitimize the ideological ideas, namely ethno-nationalism:

⁷⁶ The following subjects are included in the “national subjects” group: language and literature, history, geography, nature and society and religious instruction.

⁷⁷ OHR, “Interim Agreement” (Sarajevo, 2002). Emphasis added.

“politics are... legitimized by history, language, culture, literature and religion etc.”⁷⁸

In the words of the former Primer Minister of the RS and the current Minister of Foreign Affairs of BiH, Mladen Ivanic, “adequacy” means the “*ethnically correct* education system.”⁷⁹ Ethnically correct education implies that children are exposed to a “truth” told from the perspective of the ethnic community they belong. Or in the words of the OSCE Education Department Director, the Interim Agreement helps “returnee children [find] schools which suite their [ethnic] curricula.”⁸⁰

The “adequacy” has been achieved by introducing a group of so-called “national subjects,” such as history, geography, language and literature, the religious teaching (*vjeronauka*) and “nature and society” for minority returnee students. With regard to the “national subjects,” “parents shall be given the possibility to opt for the Entity/Canton or the curriculum of their own choice,” while general subjects shall be taught on the basis of the local curricula of the area of their return. In addition, “returnee teachers shall be re-hired/engaged to teach the group of “national subjects” as a matter of priority.”⁸¹ It is at this point—the introduction of “national subjects” in multi-ethnic schools—that the International Community fell into the national identity trap.

Having defined the term “adequacy” as “ethnically correct education,” which is not just ethnocentric but also exclusionary, this chapter explores the effects of the introduction of the group of “national subjects” upon integration among returnee and

⁷⁸ Luka Markesic, “Problemi nastavnog programa: povijest, religija, jezik, knjizevnost,” quoted in Pitanje opstanka: zajednicki obrazovni sustav za Bosnu i Hercegovinu, a collection of discussions from the seminar on the common education system in BiH, organized at the Franciscan monastery of St. Ante, April 1998 (Sarajevo: Promocult, 1998), p.71.

⁷⁹ Mladen Ivanic, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of BiH, interview by author, Ottawa, 23 January 2003. Author’s translation. Emphasis added.

⁸⁰ Falk Pingel, the OSCE Education Department Director, interview by author, Sarajevo, 09 July 2003.

⁸¹ OHR, “Interim Agreement” (Sarajevo, 2002).

non-returnee students seen from the views of different educational stakeholders, such as parents, the Education Ministers, the IC representatives, and teachers. The next chapter will take this exploration to a higher level by analyzing the content of selected “national subject” textbooks and by studying attitudes and ways of thinking of students using them.

According to their views on “national subjects,” it is possible to categorize the education stakeholders into two camps: those who believe that “national subjects” exacerbate segregation in schools; and those who advance the Human Rights argument in order to advocate “national subjects.” Although the Minister of Foreign Affairs of BiH, Mladen Ivanic, believes that “the existence of ‘national subjects’ is necessary for this phase of the education [reform], he acknowledges a danger that it “can make further divisions” among students of different ethnic backgrounds.⁸² Dubravko Lovrenovic, Deputy Minister of Education in FBiH at the time of the inauguration of the Interim Agreement, believes that the introduction of the group of “national subjects” has a “sedative” effect and cannot help integration and the process of reconciliation.⁸³ The OSCE Education Department Director, Falk Pingel, also admits that the introduction of “national subjects” generates ethnic separation among students.⁸⁴ Fra Ivan Sarcevic, a Professor at the Franciscan Theological Faculty in Sarajevo, regrets the fact that “because of the ‘national subjects,’ including religious instruction, [children] cannot be together in schools.”⁸⁵

⁸² Mladen Ivanic, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of BiH, interview by author, Ottawa, 23 January 2003. Author’s translation.

⁸³ Dubravko Lovrenovic, the former Deputy Education Minister in the Federation, interview by author, Sarajevo, 20 June 2003. Author’s translation.

⁸⁴ Falk Pingel, the OSCE Education Department Director, interview by author, Sarajevo, 09 July 2003.

⁸⁵ Ivan Sarcevic, Professor at Franciscan Theological Faculty in Sarajevo, interview by author, Sarajevo, 25 July 2003.

Although it was the IC (The Office of High Representative) who introduced “national subjects” to returnee parents and students, today, it is reluctant to support the teaching of “national subjects” unless requested by parents.⁸⁶ Because the International Community works to increase school enrollment of returnees in the area of return, it continues to inform returnee parents of the Interim Agreement but welcomes their indifference to it. In addition, the International Community urges that “in schools where integration and accommodation of minority returnee children is already occurring, less emphasis should be placed on the teaching of national subjects.”⁸⁷

The above mentioned practices of the IC indicate that the IC is fully aware that the teaching of “national subjects” may contribute to further segregation in schools. These practices also pose questions whether the Interim Agreement is to address returnee or minority “status” of “*minority returnee*” students and, if both, which one should have a priority? In other words, is the Interim Agreement a temporary or permanent measure? If we assume that returnee students will eventually stop being *returnees* but will remain *minority*, then the Interim Agreement should eventually focus on the minority “status” only. This logic may be used as a justification by some local stakeholders for making the Interim Agreement permanent, if the IC decides to abolish “national subjects.” The Director of the OSCE Education Department does not distinguish one status from the other, because “the constituent peoples have the right to the group of ‘national subjects’ regardless whether they are minority or majority.”⁸⁸ However, the problem does not lie in prioritizing one status over the other. Rather, a flaw of the Interim Agreement is in the introduction of the “*minority returnee*” cate-

⁸⁶ OSCE Education Department, “Pledge 1 Access and Non-Discrimination: Results achieved in 2003 and Priorities for 2004” (Sarajevo, 2003).

⁸⁷ OSCE Human Rights Department, “IC and BiH Education: Policy and Initiatives” (Sarajevo, 2002).

⁸⁸ Falk Pingel, the OSCE Education Department Director, interview by author, Sarajevo 09 July 2003.

gory as such; if all students from the constituent groups have the right to “national subjects,” why is it necessary to distinguish some of them by the label of *minority returnee*? This distinction only produces a negative perception that the Interim Agreement “follows the logic of war solutions and logic of an ethnically divided country.”⁸⁹

It is possible to establish a close relation between “the logic of an ethnically divided country” and the “adequate education” promoted by the Interim Agreement. As mentioned already, “adequacy” means more than the preservation of cultural and linguistic heritage; it encompasses the concept of a politicized ethno-national identity: the lack of universality in applying the Human Rights principle—the preservation of historical, cultural and linguistic heritage—indicates that national identities are politicized. It appears that only constituent peoples of BiH, Serbs, Croats, and Bosniaks, but not national minorities, such as Roma, have the right to “national subjects.” Based on research interviews with the entity Education Ministers and the representatives from the OSCE Education Department, it is not, however, clear whether the Roma students who attend school have the right to “national subjects” or not. According to the Federation Minister of Education, Zijad Pasic, Roma students exercise their rights to “national subjects.”⁹⁰ However, the Minister was unable to provide a concrete example of a school where Roma students learn “national subjects.”

It is interesting to note that the Minister emphasized only one out of five “national subjects,” namely the mother tongue, to which the Roma students are entitled. According to the Education Reform Agenda, Roma language classes are organized,

⁸⁹ Dubravko Lovrenovic, former Deputy Education Minister in the Federation, interview by author, Sarajevo, 20 June 2003. Author’s translation.

⁹⁰ Zijad Pasic, the Minister of Education in FBiH, interview by author, Sarajevo 09 July, 2003.

but only as extra-curricular activities.⁹¹ Taking the exclusion of the Roma people from all aspects of socio-political life into consideration, one can expect that language and culture, *inter alia*, contribute to low school enrollment among the Roma children in BiH. Why do not the Roma children have instructions in their language when it is known that Roma is not related to BiH official languages and that the language may be a reason for their low school enrollment? It appears bizarre that all members of each constituent group, who are all fluent in the three official languages⁹² and face no linguistic obstacles in communication whatsoever, are granted the right to have instructions in their respective mother tongues (official languages). However, the OSCE advisor for non-discrimination and access to education, Jo-Anne Bishop, argues that the Roma language is becoming so marginalized that its very survival is threatened, implying that Roma face no obstacles in communicating in BiH official languages.⁹³ Whether the language is endangered or whether it is an obstacle for school enrolment, the question regarding the Roma language in schools located in municipalities with a significant number of Roma remains legitimate.

A common answer to this question is that there are no qualified Roma language teachers. This argument is only partially acceptable, though. First, these Roma teachers hired to teach the extracurricular Roma language classes can be engaged to teach the language as the curricular subject (mother tongue). Secondly, the IC is financially able to organize training for teachers or even to invite qualified Roma teachers from the region to teach seasonally. It would be more constructive to organize some of the “national subjects” for the Roma communities than it is for constituent

⁹¹ OSCE Education Department, “Education Reform Agenda: An Update, June 2003” (Sarajevo, 2003), p. 6.

⁹² Three official languages in BiH are Bosnian, Croat, and Serb. From the linguistic point of view, Serb, Croat and Bosnian are actually one language with three different standards.

peoples. The former would increase Roma integration into society through the education system, while the latter seems to be more divisive for the constituent peoples.

It is even more interesting to hear that the Director of the OSCE Education Department, Falk Pingel, thinks that the Roma people “have different *citizen* rights, implying that they have no right to the group of “national subjects.” Although he does not divorce the Human Rights principle—the preservation of one’s culture and tradition—from the national identity, Falk Pingel contradicts himself by expressing his hope that BiH education system will eventually place emphasis on different cultures and traditions rather than on three different (ethnic) *curricula*, which are currently seen as the guardians of the national identity. Furthermore, he argues that constituent peoples should have priorities over national minorities in order to achieve “cooperation among and raise educational quality for constituent peoples.”⁹⁴ Is it not necessary to produce cooperation among all ethnic groups in BiH and improve the quality of education for all students, regardless of their ethnic or religious backgrounds and legal status? This differential treatment of national minority vis-à-vis constituent people with regard to the right to preserve their culture, language and tradition, i.e. “national subjects,” illustrates that the Interim Agreement became a politicized instrument.

Furthermore, different perceptions prevailing among different education stakeholders of whether “national subjects” should be a temporary or permanent measure show that the Interim Agreement became politicized in the course of its implementation. In the Interim Agreement, it is unambiguously stated that it is a tempo-

⁹³ Jo-Anne Bishop, OSCE Advisor for non-discrimination and access to Education, interview by author, Ottawa, 09 January, 2004.

⁹⁴ Falk Pingel, the OSCE Education Department Director, interview by author, Sarajevo, 09 July 2003. Emphasis added.

rary educational instrument and that “the two Entity Ministries of Education will immediately engage in finding more permanent solutions for the education of returnees and accommodation of the specific needs and rights of all constituent peoples that will require e.g. the adoption of new education legislation, the production of new curricula and textbooks without any objectionable material...”⁹⁵ Furthermore, from the IC’s instruction—when integration occurs, less emphasis should be placed on the teaching of “national subjects”—it is evident that the IC regard “national subjects” only as a temporary measure.

The Director of the OSCE Education Department underlines that the Interim Agreement is a temporary measure and believes that the “national subjects” will be abolished in multi-ethnic schools, where all students will attend all classes together. As mentioned already, he hopes that in the long run emphasis will be placed on the different cultures and traditions of each constituent people rather than on three different curricula. At this point, there are some encouraging signals coming from the IC: the OSCE is considering shortening the list of “national subjects” by excluding geography and nature and society.⁹⁶ However, only when the local educational stakeholders cease using “national subjects” as an instrument for the adoption or preservation of ethno-nationalistic and exclusionary curricula, then the abolition of “national subjects” will not pose any danger to anybody’s identity.

However, it seems that many local stakeholders do not interpret the term “interim” in this fashion. These individuals make the Human Rights arguments in order to promote “national subjects” as a permanent measure. According to the Minister of

⁹⁵ OHR, “Interim Agreement” (Sarajevo, 2002).

⁹⁶ OSCE Education Department, “Pledge 1 Access and non-Discrimination: Results Achieved in 2003 and Priorities for 2004” (Sarajevo, 2003).

Education of the RS, Gojko Savanovic, “the group of “national subjects” will remain, because every nation has the right to learn its own culture, history, language etc.”⁹⁷ Furthermore, at one point, the Education Ministry of the RS was considering to amend the existing RS law on education by inserting the “national subjects” provision. Similarly, Dragan Covic (Croat), the President of the Presidency of BiH, argues in favour of “the preservation of the individual needs for the maintenance of rights of constituent people for their language, culture, tradition and specificity through *three different curricula*,” i.e., through the maintenance of “national subjects.”⁹⁸

Furthermore, the fact that a recently signed agreement on the common core curricula excludes these subjects “sensitive” to national identity (“national subjects”) speaks for the importance and the potential endurance of the group of “national subjects” in BiH education system. But the question is not whether the existence of “national subjects” is *important* or *necessary*, rather the question is *for whom* it is important? Is the Interim Agreement or “adequate education” important to returnee parents and students? Or is it important for politicians? Partial answers to these questions lie in the validity of a claim that the lack of “adequate education” is one of the main obstacles to return.

2.3 Barriers to Return

The Annex 7 of the Dayton Accord acknowledges that “the early return of refugees and displaced persons is an important objective of the settlement of the conflict in Bosnia and Herzegovina.” By endorsing the agreement, the parties⁹⁹ have

⁹⁷ Gojko Savanovic, the Education Minister in the RS, interview by author, Banja Luka, 17 June 2003.

⁹⁸ OSCE Education Department, “OSCE Forum on Education and Quality Modernization of the Primary and Secondary Education” (Sarajevo, November 15 2003). Emphasis added.

⁹⁹ The Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Republic of Croatia (on behalf of the Bosnian Croats) and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (on behalf of the Bosnian Serbs).

committed themselves to create “political, economic, and social conditions conducive to the voluntary return and harmonious reintegration of refugees and displaced persons...”¹⁰⁰ Since 1995, the priority of the IC was to create suitable political conditions, free of harassment, persecution, intimidation and discrimination on the basis of the ethnic origin, religious belief and/or political affiliation, relegating the education issues almost to insignificance. After seven years of both the local authorities’ and the IC’s inattention to social rights, education has become one of the top priorities on the IC agenda, recognizing that the lack of “adequate education” hinders return of refugees and displaced people. This section will explore whether education is a significant obstacle to return.

Generally, barriers to return can be categorized into four groups: unfavorable economic conditions, an adverse political situation, the psychological state of the returnees (widespread bias and distrust), and the educational issues. The major obstacle for a sustainable return seems to be the employment issue. Return is affected by an adverse economic situation in either the area of displacement or in the area of return. On the one hand, when displaced people (DP) decide to return to their pre-war homes, it is because they are either unemployed or under-employed, and/or because they are evicted from illegally occupied houses (as a result, they cannot afford to pay rent in the area of displacement). Thus, the IC’s programs to rebuild returnees’ houses and the strict implementation of the Property Law substantially contribute to return.

On the other hand, a high unemployment rate in the place of return (the unemployment rate is higher in the RS than in the Federation) inhibits returnees from leav-

ing the area of displacement. In a situation like this, displaced people opt to remain in the area of displacement for the following reasons: they may have a job or some source of income; they are accustomed to urban life (for those who came from rural areas); and they often have their children already registered in school and do not want to interrupt their education. It is pertinent to note that the majority of returns take place in rural areas with branch schools that accommodate only lower grade students (1-4) in combined classes. For this reason, there are a few schools that are reconstructed for returnees but remain empty. For example, there are cases in which a family has two children, one below and one above the fourth grade; if they wanted to return, they would have to send one child to the local school (place of return) and another to the central school in the nearest town, which in turn requires extra transportation costs. More importantly, these parents would be put in a position to send one of their children to a mono-ethnic school, located outside the place of return and dominated by another ethnic group, where it would not be as financially feasible to have “national subjects” organized for one or two students.

As a result, families with children of school age return during the summer in order to finish the reconstruction of their houses and cultivate land, but in the fall, when school starts, they return to a city and leave the eldest behind. Both the IC and the local authorities are aware of this obstacle to both return and education in the area of return. For example, in Konjevic Polje, Eastern Bosnia, the local school, previously accommodating children up to the fourth grade, was extended to grades 5-8, ending the busing children outside the community.¹⁰¹ Often, however, parents continue to educate their children outside the area of return, even if there is the appropriate level

¹⁰⁰ OHR, Dayton Agreement, Annex 7 in OHR, Bosnia and Herzegovina: Essential Texts, 3rd revised ed., with an Introduction by Wolfgang Petritsch (n.p.: OHR, 2000), p. 51.

of schooling for their children, the employment issue often being cited as the reason.¹⁰² For example, the Serb parents, who returned to Kolunic, Bosanski Petrovac (the Federation), work in Drinic (the RS) and continue to enroll their children in the Drinic school.¹⁰³ Although it is not quite clear why parents would necessarily send their children to a school that is located in the area of their work, as opposed to that located in the place of their residence, this example shows how some parents decide on certain educational issues based on their economic situations, nevertheless.

Furthermore, driven by economic concerns, some returnee parents attempt to exploit the Interim Agreement for economic benefits, such as house reconstruction and employment. For example, ten days before the beginning of the school year 2002/03, only two out of five families interviewed were ready to send their children to the Jelec School, located in their place of return, Jelec, Foca/Srbinje in Eastern Bosnia (three students in total).¹⁰⁴ The other three parents conditioned the school registration on special transportation arrangements in the winter for their children or employment in the area of return. Even the two families who decided to send their children to the Jelec school did so only because the children's presence in the school could justify the IC to pressure the local authorities to supply the returnees' households with electricity.¹⁰⁵ According to Milenko Brkic, the Minister of Education in pre-war BiH, as long as the IC does not define standards and norms, such as the critical mass of students entitled to the group of "national subjects," some parents will abuse the current edu-

¹⁰¹ OSCE Education Department, "OSCE Education Weekly Report" (Sarajevo, December 11, 2003).

¹⁰² As mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, parents often decide to bus their children a long distance, because they want to see their children attending mono-ethnic school.

¹⁰³ OSCE Education Department, "OSCE Education Weekly Report" (Sarajevo, December 11, 2003).

¹⁰⁴ RS Law on Primary Education stipulates that a minimum of five children is need for a branch school to be opened.

¹⁰⁵ Human Rights Department, "OSCE Human Rights Department Weekly Reports" (Sarajevo, July-August 2002)

cation system.¹⁰⁶

Perhaps the best example of how the economic factor, combined with other non-educational factors, affect parents' educational decisions and how it may be confused with the educational concern is the alphabet issue. Since the signing of the *May 10th 2000 Education Declaration and Agreement* by the Federation Education Minister and RS Education Minister, the teaching of both the Cyrillic and Latin alphabets is been compulsory in primary schools in both entities. Article 7 of the Constitution of the Republika Srpska stipulates that "the Cyrillic alphabet shall be in official use in the Republic, while the Latin alphabet shall be used as specified by the law."¹⁰⁷ Cyrillic, as an official alphabet, is introduced in the first grade of the elementary school in RS, whereas the Latin alphabet is taught in the first semester of the second grade. The reverse applies for the Federation.

It is interesting to note that the alphabet concern of the interviewed parents returning to the Popov Most village is to a great degree influenced by the existing economic (and political) conditions. First the parents feared that if their children were only taught Cyrillic, they would not be able to adjust to Federation schools, if they had to return to their area of displacement. When asked what could make them return to the area of displacement, the parents just shrugged their shoulders, expressing their helplessness, or, perhaps, indifference. However, this has changed after a year of co-existence with Serbs in Popov Most: a year after they returned to Popov Most, no Bosniak parent seriously considers moving to the Federation. As a result, they do not object if their children learn Cyrillic first. Indeed, some parents try to draw on their

¹⁰⁶ Milenko Brkic, pre-war Education Minister in BiH, interview by author, Sarajevo 03 June 2003. Author's translation.

¹⁰⁷ OHR, "The Constitution of Republika Srpska," in *Bosnia and Herzegovina: Essential Texts*, 3rd ed. (Sarajevo, 2000), p. 93.

own pre-war experience (when they learned the Cyrillic first) in order to find a compromise for their children.

This is not to say that the economic factor is the only impediment to return; the return process is also hindered by unfavorable political conditions, such as a differential treatment of minority returnees on the ground of ethnic origin. Reviewing contentious provisions of the Constitutions of the RS and the Federation in September 2002, the Constitutional Court of the BiH found that in both entities there had been a tendency toward ethnic homogenization and concluded that “a tremendous discrepancy according to the ethnic origin of refugees and displaced persons cannot be explained by the overall severe economic and social conditions...” and that such a discrepancy “...provides a clear proof of differential treatment vis-à-vis refugees and displaced persons on the ground of ethnic origin.”¹⁰⁸ However, the Minister of Foreign Affairs in BiH, Mladen Ivanic, thinks that “political conditions [for return] exist and that from the political aspect, things have changed in the last two years.”¹⁰⁹ According to the Minister of Education of RS, Gojko Savanovic, “in RS there is no threat [for returnees], and everyone who returns integrates normally in [society]. The political situation in the RS is very stable. [However], I cannot affect the mistrust [among returnees].”¹¹⁰

Related to both political and economic adverse conditions are widespread fear, bias, and mistrust, deeply entrenched into returnees’ psychological profile. Ethnic and religious bias is still widespread across all ethnic communities in BiH: it seems, however, that ethnic prejudices are more prevalent among parents than students (at least among younger students, 1-4 grades). This is evident from interviews with both re-

¹⁰⁸ OHR, “Constituent Peoples’ Decision of the Constitutional Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina” in *Bosnia and Herzegovina: Essential Texts*, 3rd ed. (Sarajevo, 2000), p. 135.

¹⁰⁹ Mladen Ivanic, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of BiH, interview by author, Ottawa, 23 January 2003. Author’s translation.

turnee and non-returnee parents in Popov Most. For example, a Serb returnee parent refused to send her seven-year old son to a nearby Bosniak school in Ustikolina, because she believed her son would be bullied by his Muslim classmates because of his Serb name. It is interesting to note that the majority of parents interviewed quote names as an “exposing” difference between Serbs, Croats and Bosniaks. In contrast, interviews with children from the Popov Most School show that they are not concerned about names at all; none of the returnee student interviewed reported having being laughed at his or her name. All of them seem to be comfortable with their own names and the names of their classmates.¹¹¹

Even if returnees are well integrated in their communities, security concerns will remain for a long period of time. For example, a Bosniak returnee mother, who is on good terms with her Serb neighbors in the Popov Most village, is reluctant to send her elder son in the central school in the town of Foca/Srbinje, where there are no Bosniak students at all.¹¹² It is pertinent to note that her anxiety is not generated by the educational issues, such as curricula and “national subjects,” as one would expect. Rather, it reflects her concerns for her child’s safety. Indeed, the parent in question rejects the notion of “national subjects” and insists that her son should follow the RS curriculum and study from the RS textbooks.¹¹³ She believes that separating Bosniaks from Serbs—by teaching the former “national subjects” and providing them with different textbooks—does not help integration among students.

¹¹⁰ Gojko Savanovic, the Minister of Education in the RS, interview by author, Banja Luka, 17 June 2003. Author’s translation.

¹¹¹ Returnee students, interview by author, Popov Most and Foca/Srbinje, 05 June-10 June 2003. Author’s translation. All interviews with students were anonymous.

¹¹² The school of Popov Most accommodates only 1-4 grade students in a combined class. All students above the fourth grade register in the central school in the nearby town of Foca/Srbinje.

¹¹³ Returnee parents, interview by author, Popov Most, 05 June 2003. Author’s translation. All interviews with parents were anonymous.

Although the IC does not see education as the *only* factor that affects return, the Interim Agreement cites it as one of the *main* obstacles to return. However, interviews with returnees of Popov Most and Jelec villages show that the education issue may not be a dominant barrier to return (education in the area of return is another thing). The returnee parents interviewed do not seem to be predominately concerned with so-called “national subjects.” Indeed, returnee parents of the Popov Most village in Eastern Bosnia chose to send their children to the local school (with Serbs) without having prior knowledge about the Interim Agreement. However, just because the parents were not familiar with the Interim Agreement, it did not mean that they did not ask questions pertinent to some of its aspects, such as the language of instruction and textbook content.

Although the lack of so-called “adequate education”¹¹⁴ did not seem so important to prevent return of the parents interviewed, the fact that they inquired about in what language and according to which curriculum their children would study¹¹⁵ shows that their approach to education was partially affected by “political perceptions, created in [their] heads.”¹¹⁶ These political perceptions are often biased. For example, one can often hear from parents questions, such as “will our children study ‘our’ history?” without making any efforts to examine “their” history textbooks in order to see if there is inappropriate content. Just as the lack of adequate knowledge about certain disciplines, such as history or linguistics, makes parents biased against “their” educa-

¹¹⁴ “Adequate education” refers to all principles from the Interim Agreement, such as the teaching of “national subjects,” parents’ choice of curriculum and textbooks, hiring of returnee teachers etc.

¹¹⁵ OSCE Education Department, “OSCE Education Weekly Repot” (Sarajevo, December 11, 2003).

¹¹⁶ Ivo Komsic, “Problemi nastavnog programa: povijest, religija, jezik, književnost,” quoted in Pitanje opstanka: zajednicki obrazovni sustav za Bosnu i Hercegovinu, a collection of discussions from the seminar on common education system in BiH, organized at the Franciscan monastery of St. Ante, April 1998 (Sarajevo: Promocult, 1998), p.71.

tion, ignorance may also impede parents' judgment, making them accept "their" education even though it is inappropriate in terms of textbook content, for example. Whereas the former aspect may lead to conflict and segregation (prevents education in the area of return), the latter is likely to cause assimilation (facilitates education in the area of return). Today, it is common to hear how important it is to enhance the development of critical thinking among BiH students, but it is just as important to find a way to change war-affected political perceptions held by parents, reinforcing *their* critical thinking.

I shall below provide an example of how some parents employ their critical thinking, ultimately altering their preconceived perceptions on education. Although the Popov Most returnee parents interviewed asked biased but common questions about "our history" and "our language" prior to the registration of their children to the local school, a year later they changed their attitudes and perceptions. First, the parents in question stated that they would continue to educate their children in the RS, even if the "national subjects" were abolished, thus diminishing the importance of "national subjects." All of the returnee parents interviewed agreed that "it [was] important that [their] children stud[ied] the Bosnian language, but [they] were ready to [accept the possibility] of the children studying the Serb language and the Cyrillic alphabet."¹¹⁷

Secondly, they do not object to the two Serb teachers, despite the fact that the Interim Agreement guarantees that their "mother tongue will be taught by someone who is educated in the language."¹¹⁸ One parent said that he would rather request an

¹¹⁷ Returnee parents, interview by author, Popov Most, 05 June 2003. Author's translation.

¹¹⁸ Falk Pingel, the OSCE Education Department Director, interview by author, Sarajevo, 09 July 2003.

instructor to teach English than a Bosniak teacher for “national subjects.” Although from the very beginning the parents agreed to have their children taught by a Serb, it is possible that their trust in the Serb teachers has been enhanced by the reduction of their bias towards the RS curriculum and the textbooks.¹¹⁹ For example, they appreciate the fact that all three official languages are the same from the linguistic point of view and that many teachers who now teach Serb, Croatian or Bosnian used to be teachers of what used to be Serbo-Croatian or Croat-Serbian.¹²⁰ Equally important, some parents changed their attitudes towards “their” education after comparing “our” textbook for the nature and society for the third grade with that used by “them,” finding that the two textbooks are almost identical and that there is no inappropriate material in “their” textbook.”¹²¹ This brings me to the curriculum issue.

Having accepted that “language and history are the subjects most exposed to political and ideological influence,” one may expect that the curriculum issue would, to a great degree, influence return.¹²² The above mentioned case illustrates the point: the RS curriculum for “nature and society” for the third grade is similar to that of the Federation, thus building confidence in RS education among returnee parents. In addition, the pattern of parents’ decisions to send their children to multi-ethnic schools in the area of return seems to support this expectation. This pattern shows that most

¹¹⁹ In the 2002/2003 school year, there was only one (Serb) teacher, who taught one multiethnic combined class (eleven students, 1-4 grades). This year, there are two (Serb) teachers, teaching two multi-ethnic combined classes (22 students, 1-5 grades).

¹²⁰ When asked what they think the differences among three official BiH languages were, most of the parents interviewed identified the “accent” and the pronunciation of “ch” as the only differences among the languages. They thought Bosniaks pronounced “ch” more softly than Serbs or Croats.

¹²¹ This is true only for the nature and society textbook (the third grade). A single-mother, whose son attends the fifth grade and studies from “their” textbook for the nature and society, may have a reason to be concerned about textbook content. However, the combination of inadequate knowledge about history and general indifference inhibits the parent from questioning “their” textbook content. The content of this textbook will be discussed in the following chapter.

¹²² Milenko Brkic, pre-war Education Minister in BiH, interview by author, Sarajevo, 03 June 2003. Author’s translation.

returnee children are between grades 1-4, attending combined classes in branch schools.¹²³ It is tempting and, sometimes, misleading to explain this pattern of return by the fact that the curricula for grades 1-4 are similar throughout the entities, which positively affects the parents' attitude toward multi-ethnic schools: this pattern seems to be more related to the nature of return (rural areas) than to the similarities among curricula. Nevertheless, the IC emphasizes the similarity between entity curricula for lower grades of the elementary school in order to encourage the return process. However, the Popov Most case shows that the curricula issue may not be an obstacle to education for returnee children.

It is not my intention to generalize the Popov Most and Jelec findings to the whole country; rather, the aim of this study is to indicate that returnee parents may be more flexible and "rational" (read apolitical) in making educational decisions on behalf of their children than it is generally believed. With some parents, these qualities—flexibility and "rationality"—may be latent and are needed to be explored.

As mentioned earlier, parents returning to Popov Most were willing to accept the RS curriculum for both national and general subjects. Furthermore, there are some parents who voluntarily relinquish their right to "national subjects" and insist that their children follow the RS curricula for all subjects. To be sure, at the beginning of the school year, none of the parents interviewed were ready to send their children to the central school located in the town of Foca/Srbijne, where there are no Bosniak students, for education that goes beyond the fourth grade. Although some returnee parents seem to free themselves from this anxiety, other parents are still concerned with the issue; they are not, however, concerned about the curriculum but rather about

¹²³ According to RS Education Law, a combined class cannot number more than 15 children of differ-

the safety of their children.

This is in contrast to the Jelec case, where the parents refused to send their children to the Jelec School, despite the fact that they had a guarantee from the IC and the RS Ministry of Education that a Bosniak teacher would be hired to teach *all* subjects according to the Bosniak curriculum.¹²⁴ Indeed, the Jelec School would have been mono-ethnic (Bosniak) due to the pre-war ethnic composition of the village (Bosniaks were the majority). This is another example of how economic factors rather than inadequate education affect return. Had the education issues been an obstacle to return, then the Jelec parents would not have had a reason to refuse to send their children to the school in 2002/2003.

2.4 Conclusion

In short, the Popov Most and Jelec cases show that the lack of “adequate education” may not be a significant barrier to return for parents; it is also uncertain to what degree it affects education in the area of return. Although the two cases are not representative for the whole country, they are pertinent and useful for studying other schools. There are other examples across BiH, illustrating the parents’ will and ability to educate their children in the area of return, but we do not know what factors affected parents’ decisions. For example, eight Bosniak students have enrolled in the primary school of “Vuk Karadzic” and the secondary school of “Ivo Andric” in Visegrad. Skelani near Srebrenica and Petkovci near Zvornik, Eastern Bosnia, are another two examples with nineteen returnee students attending the local multi-ethnic schools. In addition, there is an increase in the number of returnee teachers hired. The

ent grades. A teacher devotes 10-15 minutes to each grade.

¹²⁴ OSCE Education Department, “OSCE Education Department Weekly Report” (Sarajevo, 11 December 2003).

greatest increase was witnessed in Bjeljina where ten returnee teachers were hired at the beginning of the 2003/2004.¹²⁵

Although it is evident from the OSCE Education Weekly Reports that both returnee and non-returnee parents seem to be changing their attitudes towards multi-ethnic schools, it is not clear from these reports what caused the attitude change. What did make the Croat parents in Vitez reduce their substantial resistance to the idea of sending their children to the local school with Bosniaks? Or what did make them not to send their children to the school in the first place? Although the OSCE Mission to BiH is characterized by an extensive field presence and organized over 100 consultation meetings with the returnee communities, it still lacks a comprehensive research and analysis of parents' attitudes towards education.¹²⁶ It would be interesting and useful for policy makers to see if other parents' viewed the educational issues in a similar way as the Popov Most and the Jelec parents. Furthermore, it would be instructive to see if there are different attitudes to "national subjects" among returnee and non-returnee parents belonging to the same ethnic group. The Popov Most and the Jelec cases show that the educational issues, such as curricula and language, may not be the major obstacle to either return or the establishment of integrated schools. Are there similar cases in BiH? Do these cases have something in common with those examples where parents demonstrate different attitudes?

All of the parents interviewed agree that their return was not the result of the introduction of "national subjects." It seems that unfavorable economic situation prevailing in either the area of return or the area of displacement dictated their return. In

¹²⁵ OSCE Education Department, "OSCE Education Department Weekly Report" (Sarajevo, 11 December 2003).

¹²⁶ OSCE Education Department, "OSCE Pledge 1 Access and Non-Discrimination: Results Achieved in 2003 and Priorities for 2004" (Sarajevo, 2003).

addition, the prevailing political climate does not ease mistrust and concerns for safety, rooted in the war experience. Furthermore, an analysis of the OSCE Statistical Report on the Implementation of the Interim Agreement partially supports my research results. If we assume that the Interim Agreement positively affects parents' decision to enroll their children in integrated or multi-ethnic schools, then the number of students bused to mono-ethnic schools would decrease with the increase of the number of returnee teachers hired. On the one hand, the OSCE Statistical Report on the Interim Agreement indicates that in some cantons, such as Canton Six, the number of hired returnee teachers increased by 6.67% from 2002/2003 to 2003/2004, while at the same time the number of bused children increased by 10.86%. A similar trend is noticed in other cantons, such as Canton Four.¹²⁷

On the other hand, there are cantons in the Federation where the increase in the number of returnee teachers correlates with the decrease in the number of children bused to mono-ethnic schools. For example, in Canton One, the number of children bused to mono-ethnic schools decreased by 6.52%, while at the same time the number of returnee teachers hired increased by 6.33%. However, these statistical reports are not accompanied by the OSCE comparative analysis in the differences among those cantons. The assumption that “national subjects” are important to parents and that they help return still remains among in the International Community, nevertheless.

According to Milenko Brkic, the introduction of the group of “national subjects” for returnees did not escalate return: “It is only an alibi for those who want to

¹²⁷ OSCE, Education Department, “Statistical Report on the Implementation of the Interim Agreement” (Sarajevo, November 2003).

slow down the education reform.”¹²⁸ Most of the education stakeholders interviewed agree that the introduction of “national subjects” may only create further division and emphasize real of manufactured differences among students in multi-ethnic schools. However, this is not to say that educational issues, such as curricular, are irrelevant to parents. This chapter tried to show that “inadequate” education was not the dominant obstacle to return for Popov Most and Jelec returnees. In contrast, there are cases where returnees decide to return but not to educate their children in the area of return, showing the effects of unsolved educational (curricular) issues. However, those cases also illustrate the complexity of the issue: despite the fact that the Interim Agreement ensures that they have “their” teachers and “their” textbooks, in some places parents still choose to send their children to mono-ethnic schools located outside the area of their return. So where is the middle ground? In the next chapter, I shall analyze textbook content for “nature and society” for the fourth and fifth grades, emphasizing their effects on both returnee and non-returnee students. Does it lead to segregation, assimilation, or integration? Or are all dimensions present?

¹²⁸ Milenko Brkic, pre-war Education Minister in BiH, interview by author, Sarajevo, 03 June 2003. Author’s translation.

CHAPTER THREE

On the Content of “National Subjects” Textbooks

This chapter analyzes the content of the recently revised RS textbook for “nature and society” for the fifth grade (2003) and compares it with that published in 2001. By comparing two editions, both being subject to revision carried out by the International Community established textbook commissions, this chapter attempts to critically address both local and international approaches towards textbook content and the curricula issue in BiH. All of this is placed within the “national subjects” framework, with the teaching of history being the main focus of the analysis: the introduction of the “national subjects” serves as a façade for teaching distorted history. This chapter explores how this textbook “quality” may affect integration in multi-ethnic schools. It argues that textbooks are a potent and malleable instrument for reinforcing and creating ethnic identities of a specific target group, while at the same time having residual identity effects on non-targeted groups. In turn, the form of their identity may affect their integration in multi-ethnic schools.

3.1 History as a “National Subject:” “Struggle for Privatization of History”¹²⁹

The Popov Most School, which is located in the beautiful resort of “Tjentiste” in Eastern Bosnia, is one of a few schools in BiH currently operating as multiethnic. It is common among some educational stakeholders, both international and local, to categorize all schools/classes that are not *mono-ethnic* as “multiethnic.” Thus, a class of, say, twenty Serbs and two Bosniaks is regarded as multiethnic. These norms are set at a *maximum-minimum* continuum, with the *maximum* end defining mono-ethnicity of a school/class (all students come from the same ethnic group). On the opposite side lies the *minimum* extremity, which determines the multiethnic character of a school/class (at least one student comes from another ethnic group).

This *maximum-minimum* continuum is functional and convenient for obscuring a potential failure to re-establish multi-ethnic or integrated schools and is misleading to the point that the Minister of Education of the Republika Srpska, Gojko

¹²⁹ Dubravko Lovrenovic, Former Deputy Minister of Education in FBiH, interview by author, Sarajevo, 20 June 2003.

Savanovic, does not hesitate to state that “*all* schools in the RS are multiethnic.”¹³⁰ Or to the point that the Director of the OSCE Education Department, Falk Pingel, suggests a similar presupposition: according to him, “mixed schools,” of which nobody talks because they are presumably “so unproblematic,” are “a very common phenomenon in this country.”¹³¹ However, according to Milenko Brkic, the Minister of Education in pre-war BiH, there is a paradox where “we have multiethnic schools, but they are strongly (*naglaseno*) Serbian, Croatian, or Bosniak [in character].”¹³² He admits that he is not aware of any examples of integrated schools, where students attend general subjects together and so-called “national subjects” separately.¹³³ According to the OSCE Education Department, the teaching of “national subjects” was organized in only twenty five schools across the whole country.¹³⁴ The Popov Most School is one of such rare examples, where even the teaching of “national subjects” often, but not always, excludes segregation of students.

If one applies the *maximum-minimum* continuum, then with an equal number of Bosniak and Serb students, eleven students from each ethnic group, the Popov Most School can be characterized as *centered* multiethnic.¹³⁵ There is a sufficient number of students to form two “combined” classes,¹³⁶ where students are placed into

¹³⁰ Gojko Savanovic, Minister of Education in RS, interview by author, Banja Luka, 17 June 2003.

Author's translation. Emphasis added.

¹³¹ Falk Pingel, Director of the OSCE Education Department, interview by author, Sarajevo, 09 July, 2003.

¹³² Milenko Brkic, pre-war Education Minister in BiH, interview by author, Sarajevo, 03 June 2003. Author's translation.

¹³³ Ibid.

¹³⁴ OSCE Education Department, “Pledge 1, Results Achieved in 2003 and Priorities for 2004” (Sarajevo, 2003).

¹³⁵ In the 2002/03 academic year, there were eleven students (five returnee students). As a result of education reform in the RS, the length of elementary school increased from eight to nine years, obliging parents to register their children to school at the age of six. Thus, the number of returnee students was the result of this change, as opposed to the increased number of returnees in Popov Most.

¹³⁶ “Combined” classes are common in branch schools that are usually located in remote areas. A “combined” class must not be confused with a “mixed” class. Whereas “mixed” classes commonly refer to multiethnic classes, the term “combined” refers to a class where students of different age/grade

a class based on their age/grade and not according to their ethnicity or religion. Ethnicity does not separate children in taking part in the recreation activities either. For example, in forming football teams, the students' selection criteria are based on skills and abilities rather than ethnicity. Hence, Serb male students want to play football with a Bosniak student, who is one of the best players in the class.¹³⁷ It is interesting and pertinent to mention the teacher's endeavor to "test" his students' multicultural spirit: he tried to persuade the students to form competing Serb and Bosniak football teams. According to the school teacher, Nedjo Rasevic, students, however, adamantly refused to follow his instruction.

The Popov Most School students intermingled with excitement and joy on their very first school trip to the Foca/Srbinje Park, June 2003, where each student happily accepted a classmate of another ethnicity as a partner for driving a children's toy car, especially if that meant a double drive for them. For many, this one-day trip was a real "adventure," since some of them had never left their isolated villages before (with the exception of returnee students, who were displaced during and after the war). Similarly, at a school party, they rushed to take their seats at a food table, with Bosniak and Serb students randomly sitting next to each other. The importance of these two examples must be stressed: extracurricular activities that reflect student's interests are crucial in reinforcing integration in culturally/ethnically diverse environments.

It would be unrealistic and irrational to expect a perfect harmony among the Popov Most students or any students. The Popov Most students fight too: the Serb

are brought together (usually 1-4 grade students). In these classes, a teacher devotes ten to fifteen minutes to students of each grade.

¹³⁷ Popov Most students and teacher, interview by author, Popov Most, 05 June 2003. Author's translation.

students quarrel with Bosniaks, but also students of the same ethnic group fight among each other. Parents and the teachers do not, however, politicize children's quarrels, rather they think it is "normal," it is a children's world.¹³⁸ When students are left alone, they create an environment that is responsive to their immediate needs and interests: as their interests change, the environment changes too. What may affect this state is something that goes beyond students' immediate will: *what is taught and to whom* may significantly alter students' interests or at least their perception of their interests, ultimately affecting their environment and behavior.

With the above examples, I have highlighted an important aspect of multiethnic schools: what matters here is not only the absence of discriminating criteria in admission requirements, but rather "a learning environment that is genuinely hospitable to the credal and cultural diversity the society exhibits within limits fixed by the constitutive political morality of that society."¹³⁹ Thus, to say that all schools in BiH, which are open to all children irrespective of their ethnic and religious backgrounds, are multiethnic without giving a significant consideration to the learning environment may be misleading.

In separate interviews, the Popov Most School teacher, Nedjo Rasevic, and students' parents were asked to identify the factors that make integration in the Popov Most School successful. The teacher attributed the success to parents' persistent will to see their children integrate, reinforcing the significance of their role for developing a multiethnic/cultural spirit among children. On their side, the parents ascribed the

¹³⁸ Both teachers and parents underlined apolitical nature of children's quarrel; they reiterated it a few times on their own during repeated interviews.

¹³⁹ Eamonn Callan, *Creating Citizens* (Oxford; New York: Clarendon Press, 1997), p.164.

successful integration to the teacher's impartiality.¹⁴⁰ These opinions are significant, because they attest the importance of mutual trust between the Serb teacher(s) and Bosniak returnee parents for effective ethnic integration in the Popov Most School. This brings me to another important aspect of multiethnic schools: the success of a multiethnic school depends on its ability to "elicit trust across the cleavages that divide the society it is supposed to serve."¹⁴¹

In Creating Citizens, Eamonn Callan argues that this trust can be gained by allowing "separate education with which cleavages will tend to correlate," whereby separate education is defined as "a range of educational outcomes as desirable for some particular social group distinguished according to religion, ethnicity, or the like."¹⁴² Hence, the International Community in BiH has introduced the group of "national subjects" in order to accommodate different convictions and ways of life of returnee students. However, the Popov Most example seems to diminish the importance of separate education of this kind in eliciting trust in multiethnic schools. First, unlike their Serb classmates, returnee children (Muslims) do not have specialized religious instruction.¹⁴³ Secondly, some returnee parents either refuse to accept or are indifferent to the group of "national subjects." And yet, they seem to have a sufficient amount of trust in both the RS curriculum and the teachers (Serb).

All parents in Popov Most want to see their children integrate; returnee parents especially are anxious not to have their children "singled out." However, often, their

¹⁴⁰ Nedjo Rasevic, the teacher, and students' parents, interview by author, Popov Most, 04 June 2003. Author's translation.

¹⁴¹ Eamon Callan, Creating Citizens (Oxford; New York: Clarendon Press, 1997), p. 166.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, pp.164-166.

¹⁴³ The Bosniak students do not have religious instruction (*vjeronauka*) because the Islamic Community does not see it as feasible to hire an Imam to teach only five (later eleven) students in a remote area. Parents respect this and do not politicize it.

acts to prevent their children from being “singled out” borders on auto-assimilation. Their rejection of or indifference to separate education i.e. “national subjects” indicates that they are ready, either out of willingness or ignorance, to assimilate into the majority culture (the RS). They may be uninformed of *what* is taught to their children in school,¹⁴⁴ or they may be confident in believing that family is potent enough to shield their cultural and religious characteristics from potential unwanted encroachment. Thus, I assume that the Popov Most returnee parents are ready to be socio-politically but not culturally assimilated.

At this juncture, I would like to hypothesize that textbook content may determine the course and depth of integration in multiethnic schools, such as Popov Most. Ethnic integration in schools may at any point in time develop in one of two possible directions. Firstly, textbook content to a great degree determines whether potential or actual auto-assimilation will eventually translate into imposed assimilation: here we are talking about political assimilation, although cultural assimilation is not excluded either. Furthermore, the quality of textbooks is decisive for reversing the willing assimilation of parents before it becomes deeply rooted.

Secondly, *what* is taught and to *whom* may encourage parents to renounce auto-assimilation practices, if any, and make them gravitate towards separate education. It is pertinent here to reiterate how “separate education” is interpreted in present BiH: the introduction of “national subjects” i.e. “separate education” is abused in order to legitimize the politics of ethno-nationalism. It is done so by creating retrograde, exclusionary, and biased curricula in order to teach “national subjects” in a mono-

¹⁴⁴ Returnee parents seemed not to be familiar with all teaching methods the teacher employed. For example, parents were not aware that the teacher gave separate classes on the Ottoman Empire for Bosniak and Serb students: the teacher released one group of students early (Bosniaks), while the other group (Serbs) remained in the class.

perspective way. Thus, if a multiethnic school allows for separate education, which is reflected in contrapuntal views presented in two types of textbooks (one for returnee and another for non-returnee students), then the space for potential ethnic tension and disintegration in that school is expanded.

For that reason, I shall be mainly concerned with the quality of textbooks in this chapter. The group of “national subjects” was introduced because of the curriculum issues: returnee parents did not trust textbooks produced in the other entity or canton, because they were biased and insensitive to other cultures/ethnic groups. As a result, the introduction of “national subjects” only exacerbates the issue by allowing each ethnic group to continue to shield their unreformed curricula behind “national subjects,” ultimately leading to segregation. In addition, if textbook content is overtly or subtly impregnated with myths and (positive) stereotypes in portraying one ethnic group (the dominant ethnic group in a specific entity or canton), returnee students are likely to uncritically accept the presented “truth.” Of course, this is possible only if returnee students have access to those textbooks. Furthermore, a transition from auto-assimilation to imposed assimilation is facilitated by a method, whereby reinforced positive stereotyping of the dominant ethnic group is not combined with a negative depiction of another ethnic group, a method employed in the 2003 textbook editions, such as Knowing Society for Grade Five by Stevo Pasalic et al., published in the Republika Srpska, 2003.

This study is not suggesting that recently revised school textbooks have been modified with the aim of assimilating returnee students into the dominant culture (in this case the Serb culture). Rather, it suggests that the textbooks are used as a malleable instrument for reinforcing and creating ethnic identities and sentiments of a specific target group (in this case Serbs), while at the same time having residual identity

affects on non-targeted groups (in this case Bosniaks).

In the Balkans, education as a function of enhancing national identity was established already in the early nineteenth century, when politicians and ideologues legitimized the idea of nationalism by history and language. For example, the idea of Greater Serbia, conceived by Ilija Garasanin in his ideological writing Nacertanije, represented nineteenth century Serbia's foreign policy toward South Slav neighbors, especially Bosnia and Herzegovina, and was reflected in the contemporary education system. In his Nacertanije, Ilija Garasanin acknowledges the formative role of history textbooks and suggests that "... [Bosnian] history must be written in a spirit of Slav nationality (*narodnost*) and, above all, in a spirit of national unity of Serbs and Bosniaks [*Bosnjaka*]" Furthermore, Ilija Garasanin argues that "these patriotic works" can free Bosnia from Austrian influence and bring it closer to Serbia. It is unnecessary to say that such "patriotic works" are adapted to particular political goals by ethnic myths and stereotypes; thus he places a special emphasis on "folk songs."¹⁴⁵

Another nineteenth century example that illustrates the importance of education for national identity is confessional schools. It is interesting to note that the idea of "national subjects" introduced in BiH education system (2002) has a precedent in the nineteenth century Austro-Hungary. For example, both Serbs and Croats in Austro-Hungary (present Croatia) tried to shape the education system according to their respective political goals: Serbs to protect their national identities in the face of aggressive Croat encroachment; Croats to fight for their "political state." Thus, minority

¹⁴⁵ Ilija Garasanin, "Nacertanije" in Izvori velikosrpske agresije, ed. by Boze Covic (Zagreb: n.p., 1991) p.75.

Serbs insisted on the continuation of so-called confessional schools,¹⁴⁶ while Croats worked to abolish and replace them with communal schools, where all students would follow the Croat curricula and Croat textbooks. Consequentially, the Austro-Hungarian governor introduced what we call today “national subjects” for the minority Serb students, protecting their right to be educated in their mother tongue and in the Cyrillic alphabet. In addition, the Serb students were taught according to the Serb curriculum and by Serb teachers or priests. One of many consequences of this dual and separate education system—confessional schools vs communal schools—was a phenomenon today known as “two schools under one roof.” Often, students of the Catholic and Orthodox religions attended the same school but were segregated by shifts. Another consequence is that children were provided with “ethnically correct education,” where the role of school textbooks was to make younger generations “to understand and to know the spirit of their language,” as well as “to diffuse the national spirit.”¹⁴⁷ What a striking similarity with the present BiH education.

We have seen how nineteenth century school textbooks were used as a vehicle to either legitimize contemporary politics or to enhance national identity, often leading to conflicts and/or segregation among students. I shall below provide two “empirical” examples from the Popov Most educational setting, which illustrate how education, both formal and “street” education, may potentially translate auto-assimilation into imposed assimilation or may create an environment conducive to conflicts. The first example involves a popular perception that is not necessarily pro-

¹⁴⁶ Confessional schools were not religious, as it is often thought. Rather, they were schools under the Church authority. Although religious instruction was dominant, other courses, such as history and language, were available to students. Since at that time the Church was the guardian of national identity, it is not surprising that these school courses, especially history, were aimed at strengthening national identities of students.

moted in textbooks, while the second example illustrates how the learning environment may divert students' integration from its course. Both examples have the distortion of history in common.

I have witnessed a situation where some students of both Serb and *Bosniak* backgrounds sing Serb “nationalistic” or “Radovan Karadzic” songs or show the Serb sign for victory (three fingers): in this case, the Serb students are carriers of the germ of assimilation, contracted outside the school classrooms. These types of songs and national signs (three fingers) cannot be found in school textbooks: rather, students fell prey to nationalistic propaganda present in media, society, and family. Since so-called “parallel education” or “street education” is not the main focus of this chapter, I shall only point out the potent formative role of this type of education.

However, if stereotypes acquired elsewhere—street education—are brought to and *confirmed* in school, then the formative role of textbooks, no matter how limited it may be in comparison to “street education,” is either abused or not properly exploited. Thus, I shall explore the textbook content, looking for special history interpretations, such as the myth that all Bosniaks are Serbs (or Croats), which may generate potential conflicts or assimilation among returnee students. I have quoted this myth as an example, because it is, subtly or overtly, deeply entrenched in both “parallel education” and formal education.¹⁴⁸

It happened that during one of my school visits, the Republika Srpska soldiers

¹⁴⁷ Vasele Krestic. *Istorija Srba u Hrvatskoj i Slavoniji, 1848-1914* (Beograd: Politika, 1991) pp. 48-52.

¹⁴⁸ This myth is relevant as an example because my focus is on Serb textbooks. It is important to highlight that there is the Croat version of this myth too. Whereas the Serb myth propagates that all Bosnian Croats and Bosniaks are actually Serbs of the Catholic and Islam religions, respectively, the Croat myth states that Bosnian Serbs and Bosniaks are actually Croats, practicing Orthodox and Islam religions, respectively.

were de-mining the area around the Popov Most School and were having lunch in the shades of the school trees. It also happened that one of the soldiers, a Serb, had the same last name as a nine-year old Bosniak returnee student. When he learned that the Serb soldier shared the same last name with him, the student approached his teacher for an explanation. Why was the student so confused with the discovery that Serbs and Bosniaks could have the same last name? It is true that names usually, but not always, serve as cues for telling a difference among Serbs, Croats and Bosniaks, but this explanation does not take us very far.

The answer to this question lies in the teacher's approach to the student's question: he told the student to go home and ask his father for clarification. When I asked the teacher why *he* did not provide the explanation, he said that he did not know what to tell the student. Instead, the soldier in question provided the answer: "We have the same last name because we are *both* Serbs."¹⁴⁹ Since the teacher did not object the soldier's remark, I assume that he too believes in the (Serb) myth that Bosniaks are actually Serbs, practicing Islam. This example shows how some perceptions and beliefs can be deeply entrenched in both the school system and so-called "parallel education," warning that teachers and school principals should be the first to undergo training in critical thinking.

The example of the triadic encounter between the Serb soldier, the Bosniak student and the teacher reveals two important aspects of history teaching in present Bosnia and Herzegovina: *who* should teach history and *how* should it be taught? The two aspects are interdependent and mutually reinforcing, because they are derived from a common and widely accepted misperception of teaching history. Many in BiH

¹⁴⁹ Returnee students, interview by author, Popov Most, 05 June, 2003. Author's translation.

perceive the issue in a simplified form: teaching history is complex and problematic due to controversial chapters. This misperception is the outgrowth of centuries-long historical, political and religious experiences, especially enhanced by the post-war political climate in BiH, where ethnic principles override all others. These historical experiences, which continue to shape political behavior of each BiH constituent people, are embedded in memories of medieval territorial expansion, mutual oppression as well as oppression by foreigners (Turks or Austro-Hungarians), freedom wars, and, finally, rejuvenation of the nation/state, expressed in territorial re-expansion. All these historical and socio-political processes have contributed to the “broken continuities and discontinuities,” allowing nationalistic historiographers to distort history.¹⁵⁰ Today, these distortions are mistakenly or purposely treated as controversies.

There are three major ethnic groups in BiH—Serbs, Croats, Bosniaks—which are constituent groups as well, with each of them asserting the right to their own interpretation of history. Hence, it is common that the symbolic function of history, which is aimed at enhancing national identity, overrides its primary function. Furthermore, this symbolic function, rooted in “ethnic” interpretation of history, juxtaposes three BiH *histories*, making general or common history teaching utopian in BiH.

I shall briefly elaborate on the relationship between the symbolic function of history, which often involves the distortion of history for the sake of the national identity and/or territorial expansion (real or imaginary), and the concept of controversial chapters. It is common in BiH that national identities are exploited for advancing various political goals. It is just as common, but sometimes less explicit, to take the

¹⁵⁰ Srećko M. Džaja. *Konfesionalnost i nacionalnost Bosne i Hercegovine* (Mostar: Ziral, 1999), p. 7.

advantage of proclaimed political goals or principles in order to reinforce national identities. It is sometimes less overt because the exploitation of certain political goals ostensibly stands in a paradox to the protection of national identities. For example, the political goal of ethnic integration is often perceived as a concession made at the expense of national identity: thus, to advocate ethnic integration as a means to enhance national identities sounds like a contradiction. However, if one introduces the concept of controversial chapters as an obstacle for ethnic integration or reconciliation, the ultimate goal of the protection of the national identity is achieved, while at the same time retaining an overarching commitment to the declared political principle—reconciliation/integration.

Thus, in BiH, national identities are believed to be preserved by placing history into the group of “national subjects,” whereas reconciliation is believed to be advanced by not teaching controversial chapters,¹⁵¹ which is also achieved by designating history as a “national subject.” In other words, both the preservation of the national identity and, ironically, ethnic reconciliation have found expressions in “national subjects,” where students are taught national histories, i.e. ethnically correct history, to paraphrase the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mladen Ivanic.¹⁵² Ethnically correct history is often loaded with ethnic myths and legends, i.e. with falsification of historical facts.

I accord a considerable importance in keeping two terms—controversial and misinterpreted chapters—conceptually distinct, even though they are often used inter-

¹⁵¹ It is not to say that controversial historical events/figures are not discussed in schools at all. Rather, they are discussed in schools but separately for each ethnic group, each presenting their own view.

¹⁵² Mladen Ivanic, Minister of Foreign Affairs of BiH, interview by author, Ottawa, 23 January 2003. Author's translation.

changeably. For example, although there are some controversial segments in it, generally the medieval history of BiH is often wrongly perceived as a “controversial chapter,” while, it is more adequate to define it as a “misinterpreted chapter.” Generally speaking, I distinguish two main differences between controversial and misinterpreted (or falsified) chapters of common BiH history. First, there are three constituent peoples in BiH and since their historical developments never drastically diverged into three different and conflicting directions, but rather often coalesced, complemented and conditioned each other, one historical event may be seen as controversial by one ethnic group, but not necessarily for all three. In contrast, misinterpreted or falsified chapters are at one point often different, at least presented as different, for all three ethnic groups. This is not necessarily a result of vastly different historical and geopolitical developments of three ethnic groups, but rather of their respective imagined past, which is often dismissive of the real or imagined past of the other groups, especially if those groups struggle for a common territory. Thus, if a case is “controversial” for all three groups, it is a good indicator that we deal with not a controversial but rather with a falsified or distorted chapter.

Secondly, a controversial chapter usually refers to a single segment of a historical event. Since it is confined to a very specific element, it does not change the historical whole—the event. Thus, whereas a misinterpreted chapter is controversial by definition, a controversial chapter may involve only limited distortion of history, usually confined to a very specific segment of an event. For example, the genocide of mostly Serbs committed by the Croatian Independent State (NDH) under the auspices of Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy during WWII is considered a controversial chapter. Croats do not, however, deny the genocide—the historical whole is not affected—but attempt to minimize the figure of one million of victims, often cited by the Commu-

nists, making only *victimology* controversial.

Unlike controversial chapters, falsified or misinterpreted chapters are not necessarily confined to a specific and single segment of an event. Rather, they involve and distort a number of different fragments that are selectively chosen from either one event or even from across different historical events. These fragments are often connected by an ideological thread, and as such potentially affect the historical whole. Taking this final analysis into account, it is possible to make an argument that places the problem of teaching history in BiH not in the context of controversial chapters, but rather in that of falsified chapters. In other words, the introduction of “national subjects” as a way to avoid “controversial” chapters and thus, to reinforce reconciliation, serves as a façade for teaching falsified chapters, whose ultimate expression dwells in the national identity, territorial claim and national solidarity.

For example, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of BiH, Mladen Ivanic, believes that teaching recent [controversial] history would have “extremely negative consequences.”¹⁵³ Similarly, most of the school principals interviewed in the area of Foca/Srbinje prefer an interim exclusion of history teaching as the most suitable way for reconciliation building (but they also disapprove the introduction of “national subjects”).¹⁵⁴ What they imply by “exclusion of the history teaching” is not a literal removal of the history subject from school, but rather a moratorium on teaching of “controversial” chapters to multiethnic classes. It seems that all three ethnic groups agree not to teach “controversial” chapters until they arrive at “the truth”. Until then, each of the constituent people of BiH will nourish and protect their respective little

¹⁵³ Mladen Ivanic, Minister of Foreign Affairs of BiH, interview by author, Ottawa, 23 January 2003. Author’s translation.

¹⁵⁴ OSCE Human Rights Department, “Audit Questionnaire on Education and Employment from the Human Rights Aspect” (Sarajevo, 2002).

truths. Each of them will have a nationalized history, intolerant to alternative or different interpretations.

When the OSCE Director of Education, Falk Pingel, proposed to the BiH Ministers of Education that teachers from different entities should exchange textbooks as a way to present different views, his idea was rejected.¹⁵⁵ This was an indication of their intolerance for alternative interpretations: however, concerns of the pedagogical character—not to confuse children—might play an important role as well. Unlike the high echelon of the education system, the *OSCE Audit Questionnaire on Education and Employment from the Human Rights Aspect* shows that the school principals interviewed in the municipality of Foca/Srbinje, Eastern Bosnia, are ready, some of them only in principle, to exchange textbooks from the other entity. Question nineteen asked the school principals if they would object to the usage of (revised) textbooks published in the other entity. Four out of five school principals replied negatively to the question.¹⁵⁶

For example, last year, the teacher of the multiethnic Popov Most School, Nedjo Rasevic, attempted to carry out the practice of a two-way teaching, i.e., teaching from both Bosniak and Serb textbooks. However, his practice had some serious flaws. First, he gave only Bosniak returnee students assignments from both RS and Bosniak textbooks, whereas the Serbian students studied only from RS textbooks. As a result, only Bosniaks were introduced, unsuccessfully, to potential critical thinking; unsuccessfully, because these assignments were not related to so-called controversial chapters. Secondly, he taught some of the history chapters, such as the period of the

¹⁵⁵ Falk Pingel, Director of OSCE Education Department, interview by author, Sarajevo, 09 July 2003.

¹⁵⁶ OSCE Human Rights Department, “Audit Questionnaire on Education and Employment from the Human Rights Aspect” (Sarajevo, 2002).

Ottoman Empire, separately for each ethnic group, presenting them with “ethnically correct” truths. It is only at these separate classes for “controversial” chapters that teaching of history at the Popov Most School turns into a “national subject.”

In this transformation of history into a “national subject” lies the answer to my question addressed at the beginning of this chapter: *how* and *who* should teach history. There is a belief that each ethnic group should have its own history and thus, only those stakeholders identifying with that group and that history should engage in the respective history teaching. That is why the teacher of the Popov Most School was convinced that the father of the student in question and not him, the teacher, was more qualified to provide the answer to the student’s question. However, carrying out teaching according to this principle is not always technically feasible (usually there is a lack of interest among teachers to return and teach in their pre-war areas). Although the Interim Agreement guarantees returnee parents that returnee teachers will be hired to teach so called “national subjects,” we have seen that this is not the case in the Popov Most School, where two Serb teachers teach all subjects. Interestingly, the Popov Most parents do not object.

In contrast to the Popov Most case, there are examples where parents have refused to have their children taught by a teacher from another ethnic group. For example, the elementary school in Srednja Spionica, Srebrenik, near Tuzla, fired a Bosniak teacher, because the parents demanded that the teacher should be of Croat ethnicity. A ten-day protest of Croat parents and students preceded the decision to fire the Bosniak teacher, made by the School Board, the Parents Association and the Cantonal Ministry of Education. A teacher lost her job because of her ethnicity. However, from the newspaper article where this news was featured, it is not clear whether this school is mono-ethnic (Croats) or multiethnic (Croats and Bosniaks). But what is clear from the

article is that the municipality where the school is located did not witness interethnic tensions during the 1992-1995 war.¹⁵⁷

Furthermore, the OSCE statistical report shows that parents seem to prefer mono-ethnic schools to multiethnic schools with teachers of the “right” ethnicity. As already mentioned in the previous chapter, there is no strong correlation between the increase in the number of hired returnee teachers and the decrease in the number of students bussed to mono-ethnic schools. We have seen that in Canton Six, the number of returnee teachers hired increased by 6.67%, while the number of students bused to mono-ethnic schools increased by 10.86% (from 2002/2003 to 2003/2004 school year).¹⁵⁸

The answer to the *how question* is linked with the Popov Most teacher’s practice of giving separate lectures on the Ottoman Empire period, one for Bosniaks and one for Serbs, namely, according to the concept of “national subjects.” In other words, it is understood that history should be taught in such a way that will turn both teaching and learning into the consumption of “archetypical interpretations of history and reality.”¹⁵⁹ If this were not so, then there would be no need for separate history classes, especially for teaching “sensitive” chapters that are usually subject to myth making. The next section will introduce those archetypical interpretations of BiH history, i.e. one of three Bosnian myths, and explore its presence in selected “national subject” textbooks.

¹⁵⁷ Mirza Karic, “Uciteljica otpustena samo zato sto je Bosnjakinja,” *Oslobodjenje* (Sarajevo), 15 October 2003, p. 15. Author’s translation.

¹⁵⁸ OSCE Education Department, “Statistical Report on the Implementation of the Interim Agreement” (Sarajevo, November 2003).

¹⁵⁹ Dubravko Loverenovic, former Deputy Education Minister in FBiH and a historian at Sarajevo University, interview by author, Sarajevo, 20 June 2003. Author’s translation.

3.2 Illusive Chapters from History

The Bosnian military conflicts ended eight years ago with no absolute victory or defeat for either of the three ethnic groups involved—Bosniaks, Croats, and Serbs. A combination of a prolonged but abruptly terminated war, a high number of war victims, extensive destruction, and the political (Dayton) settlement left this country in a state of a protracted war, characterized by Dubravko Lovrenovic, a historian at Sarajevo University, as a “historiography war.” This historiography war will continue to ensure that “old hatreds and atavisms” never die out. Dubravko Lovrenovic argues that the ethnic fragmentation of BiH has enabled each ethnic group to have “the sad privilege to have their own historiography colored by legends and myths.”¹⁶⁰

This historiography war has been especially intensified after the guns were silenced in order to “fix” what was lost or not achieved at both the peace table and in the trenches in the period between 1992 and 1995. Bosnia and Herzegovina refutes a well known cliché that the victor writes history; in this country, a “no winner” state made it possible for each ethnic group, regardless of how much they gained or lost, to write their own history. Hence, the principle *whose myth, his territory* in BiH historiography, an expression of pre-war ideological and actual war assertion for control of land.

This tenet *whose myth, his territory* is especially accentuated because many in BiH are profoundly aware of how myths are “vital both for territorial claims and for national solidarity.”¹⁶¹ Hence, “struggles for privatization of historiography” as a way to consolidate war claims over Bosnia and Herzegovina, with each ethnic group re-

¹⁶⁰ Dubravko Lovrenovic, “Bosanski Mitovi,” *Erasmus*, October, 1996, p. 35. Authors’ translation.

¹⁶¹ Anthony Smith, *Myths and Memories of the Nation* (Oxford: University Press, 1999), p. 58.

inventing new myths or reinforcing old ones. These myths are known as the Bosnian Myths and they all have one thing in common: a pervasive and possessive attachment to Bosnia and Herzegovina: BiH is the land of Serbs, it is the land of Croats, and it is the land of Bosniaks, but it is not the land of Serbs, Croats, and Bosniaks. Accordingly, there are three Bosnian myths: Bosnia as Serb Land, Bosnia as Croat Land, and the Bogumil Myth or Bosnia as the Land of Bosniaks.

Although there are different types of myth with different features, it is possible to define all of them as a mechanism for “bring[ing] together in a single potent vision elements of historical fact and legendary elaboration to create an overriding commitment and bond for the community.”¹⁶² The thinner the bond between a historical fact and legendary elaboration, the more excessive is the dramatization and exaggeration of some elements of truth. The effect of dramatization and exaggeration is often achieved by introducing *supporting myths*: the sum of supporting myths constitutes the *form* of the *greater myth*. This greater myth is usually embedded in a central idea or belief (Bosnia is Croat land, for example), while supporting myths serve as a tool to legitimize that idea. Furthermore, the weaker the linkage between the myth and a historical fact, the more ethnically distinctive *myth motifs* become: the sum of these motifs constitutes the *content* of the greater myth. While myth forms (supporting myths) appear to be durable over time, myth content (motifs) tend to fluctuate in relation to prevailing sociopolitical contexts: thus, it is possible to have a combination of one supporting myth and different myth motifs or two or more different supporting myths with the same motif(s).

¹⁶² Ibid., p. 57.

The main focus of this chapter is the Serb *greater myth*—Bosnia is a Serb Land—its main supporting myths and motifs. This is not to suggest that the other two constituent peoples, Croats and Bosniaks, do not employ their own myths; as mentioned already, there are three Bosnian myths, each one widely and frequently employed by the respective constituent peoples, Serbs, Croats, and Bosniaks. However, I shall provide some justification for singling out Serb myths in this chapter. Firstly, I would like to point out the limits of this research, which is confined to only one out of twenty five multiethnic schools with “national subjects” organized, the Popov Most School. In addition to this limitation, this study focuses on group interaction, involving Serb and Bosniak students only. Although it is unrepresentative, this research is still instructive and indicative for any potential studies on a larger scale, because it examines a multidimensional educational setting, with some of the dimensions being potentially applicable to other BiH schools with the same or different ethnic compositions.

These dimensions encompass both teacher’s and parents’ attitudes toward school textbooks. While some returnee parents secured Bosniak textbooks, others chose RS textbooks for their children. It is not uncommon that two siblings have textbooks produced in different entities; nor is it unusual that one student uses both Federation and RS textbooks. Similarly, the Popov Most teacher gives Bosniak students instructions and assignments from both RS and Federation textbooks. Thus, since some, if not all, Bosniak students (minority) actively use RS textbooks, I shall examine myths and positive stereotypes portraying Serbs and/or negative stereotypes portraying the “other” group, in this case Bosniaks. In other words, I shall see how some of “national subjects” textbooks affect students’ identification with the state or a specific entity, which in turn may direct integration into one of two directions. Will

potential or actual assimilation turn into imposed (political) assimilation? Or, will there be segregation and ethnic tension among both students of different ethnicity?

3.3 Myths and Stereotypes in School Textbooks: Bosnia as a Serb Land

Here, I would like to reiterate the encounter between the Bosniak student and the Serb soldier, underlining the student's inquisitiveness and his subsequent confusion: a nine-year-old Bosniak student was puzzled with the fact that Serbs and Bosniaks could have the same last name. We could easily explain this in terms of the function that the local names have in BiH, that is, to distinguish one's ethnicity. However, to accept this argument would mean to fail to recognize the role that ethnic myths play in socio-political interactions in BiH. It would also oversimplify the complexity of political and ideological factors, which considerably shape the present education system in BiH. For instance, it is disturbing to learn that a school teacher looks at the myth—Bosniaks are Serbs of the Muslim religion—favorably. This myth is one of a few myths that are constructed in order to support the greater myth “Bosnia as a Serb Land.”

This greater myth is embedded in some of major historical, political and ideological writings that conceptualized Serbia's foreign policy in relation to its neighboring countries, especially Bosnia and Herzegovina, in the 19th and 20th centuries. Some of these writings are as follows: Nacertanije by Ilija Garasanin, Srbi Svi i Svuda by Vuk S. Karadzic, and Memorandum by Serbian Academy of Science and Art (1986), just to mention a few. The nineteenth century ideological writings often address territorial expansion, treating Bosnia and Herzegovina as an integral part of Serb national soul and body (the same belief is held by their Croat counterparts, but BiH is the “soul and body” of Croatia). A linguistic principle, whereby all people of

BiH speak one language (the Serb/Croat language) and thus, belong to one nation (the Serb/Croat nation) but practice three different religions, justifies territorial expansion (this principle can help understand why today each constituent group exaggerates differences among three BiH official languages). In addition, justification for territorial expansion, which inevitably negates the political life of other people, is found in historical memories of “golden age” and in the “historical right.” This “historical right” not only calls for the renaissance of a medieval empire, but also justifies oppression of other people by virtue of a successful freedom struggle. For example, “among all the Slav people in [the Ottoman Empire], Serbs were among the first to struggle for their freedom by their own means and strength; therefore, they have *the full right* to continue to complete this task [the renaissance of a Serb Empire].”¹⁶³

The aim of this section is to explore to what extent this greater myth is present, explicitly or implicitly, in RS school textbooks and how they may potentially affect students’ integration. In order to spot this myth—Bosnia is Serb Land—it is necessary to identify its *supporting myths*. Since each supporting myth consists of specific motifs, I shall also explore these myth motifs and (positive) stereotypes that may be derived from them. The motifs are as follows:

- Shared medieval public culture, such as the Orthodox religion
- The heroic and “golden age” of the Serb Empire, invoked and reinforced by the motif of religion
- Foreign oppression and the struggle for freedom

These motifs have found their expressions in the creation of a number of supporting myths, such as: the medieval Bosnian king, Tvrtko I, was crowned in the Serbian Orthodox Church; Orthodox monasteries in Bosnia were founded by the Serbian

¹⁶³ Ilija Garasanin, “Nacertanije” in *Izvori velikosrpske agresije* (Zagreb, 1991), p. 67. Author’s trans-

Dynasty Nemanjic; or that Bosnia-Herzegovina Catholics and Muslims are actually Serbs of the Catholic religion and Islam, respectively. These supporting myths are mutually reinforced and harmonized into a potent mechanism, which supports the Greater Serbia idea, i.e. Bosnia is part of Serb land. As such, they strike a deep chord among the Bosnian Serb community, creating discord in the relations with the other two constituent peoples, Bosniaks and Croats, who are also passionately engaged in their own myth making. I shall now elaborate on these supporting myths and provide alternative views.

A myth is a selective and careful combination of historical facts and imagined past, with an element of truth being the root to the myth. Thus, the greater myth or idea that Bosnia is a Serb Land, goes back as early as Slav migration. The foundation for this idea is found in a historical fact: the Slavs indeed immigrated to the Balkans (territories of former Yugoslavia) in the early seventh century. According to the supporting myth of South Slav migration, the Serbs, a Slav tribe, left their Carpathian habitat and settled in the Balkans in the early seventh century, bringing their name with them, later naming their country according to the tribe name, Serbia. Furthermore, according to this myth, the name Serb(s) is older than the name Slavs, or at least “one of the earliest by which Slavonic tribes were known amongst themselves.”¹⁶⁴ So, what may be the implications of presenting and accepting this myth as the historical fact in school textbooks?

Vuk Stefanovic Karadzic, a reformer of the Serb language and the author of Srbi svi i svuda (All are Serbs and Serbs are Everywhere), a conceptualization of the

lation.

¹⁶⁴ Georgina Muir Mackenzie and A.P.Irby. Travels in the Slavonic Provinces of Turkey in Europe (New York: Arno Press, 1971), p.144.

Greater Serbia idea, uses this myth as a justification to negate the national and political identity of Bosnian Muslims, Croats and Slovenes. For example, he argues that Croats “do not have a national [titular] name,”¹⁶⁵ rather they derive their names from geographical locations, such as *Slavonci* from *Slavonia*. This kind of argument is derived from the myth that the Serbs brought their name with them in the process of the seventh century migration, eventually giving the name to their country, Serbia. It implies that Serbs are the only nation in the Balkans (the territory of the former Yugoslavia) and that all others, such as Croats, Montenegrins, and Bosniaks, are Serbs with the same language and different religious orientation (Ante Starcevic, a nineteenth century Croat ideologist, had the same idea, but they were all Croats).

However, it is unlikely that South Slav tribes brought their names (Serbs, Croats, and Montenegrins) to the Balkans, as it is implied by the myth. Rather, they acquired their names in the process of invasion of the Balkan Peninsula carried out by Iranian tribes. According to John Fine, two Iranian tribes, Serbs and Croats, invaded Slavs in the Balkans but were soon assimilated and *slavicized* by a far numerous Slav population, providing “the names for the resulting medieval populations of the territory that we now call Serbia, parts of Croatia, and possibly Montenegro.” Whereas it is known that the Croats invaded and asserted their rule over Slavs in Croatia and that the Serbs asserted their rule over Slav settlers in Serbia, it is “impossible to determine which parts of Bosnia fell under Serbs, which fell under Croats (other than the northwestern countries mentioned in Byzantine sources), and which remained under nei-

¹⁶⁵ Vuk Stefanovic Karadzic, “Srbi svi i svuda” in *Izvori velikosrpske agresije*, ed. Boze Covic (Zagreb: n.p., 1991), p.85.

ther.”¹⁶⁶

Even though the myth of the Slav migration is disputed by recent findings, and despite the fact that it carries an aggressive message, which negates national identities of some South Slavs, such as Bosniaks, this myth is presented in school textbooks as a historical fact. For example, in recently revised Poznavanje društva za peti razred (2003), the authors argue that of all South Slavs only “Serbs and Croats maintained their names which they *brought from their original habitat*,” whereas the others, such as Bosniaks, Montenegrins, Slovenes and Macedonians, acquired their names later.¹⁶⁷ It is hard to accept that this type of content leads to ethnic reconciliation.

The ambiguity as to of who came first to Bosnia and under what names is, however, offset by the creation of other supporting myths thus, further strengthening the greater myth. One of those supporting myths identifies the Bosnian king Tvrtko I as an Orthodox/Serb, implying that medieval Bosnia was Serb land (Croats claim that he was a vassal to Croatia). In his essay “Bosnian Myths,” Dubravko Lovrenovic provides evidence disputing the myth that the medieval Bosnian King was Orthodox. For example, he argues that the monastery of Mili located in medieval Bosnia, where King Tvrtko was crowned by a Bosnian Church *djed*¹⁶⁸ was confused with the Serbian monastery Milosevo, located in modern Montenegro (this finding also questions the Croat interpretation that he was Catholic/Croat). In addition, in the medieval time, there was a tradition among Serbs to crown their kings in “Petrova Church” or in Zica

¹⁶⁶ Robert J. Donia and Joh V.A. Fine, Jr., Bosnia and Herzegovina: A tradition Betrayed (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), p.14.

¹⁶⁷ Stevo P., Ranko P., and Slobodan Stanojlovic, Poznavanje društva za peti razred (Srpsko Sarajevo, RS: Zavod za udzbenike i nastavna sredstva, 2003), p. 51.

¹⁶⁸ The title *djed* means the head of the Bosnian Church. In this essay, Lovrenovic argues that Tvrtko I was crowned by a Catholic priest: however, during my interview, he stated that he discovered new findings, leading him to conclude that the King was actually crowned by a Bosnian Church *djed*.

or in Pec monasteries.¹⁶⁹

However, the religious orientation of the Bosnian King Tvrtko is still surrounded by historical uncertainties, which further facilitates the creation of myths by all three ethnic groups. These uncertainties are illustrated by two mutually exclusive statements made by a prominent expert on Medieval Bosnia, John Fine. He argues that ever since the Bosnian ruler, Stjepan Kotromanich, had accepted Catholicism in 1347, all Bosnian rulers, including Tvrtko I, with a possible exception of Ostojica (1398-1404, 1409-18), were Catholics. At the same time, he is convinced that Tvrtko I was crowned in the Serb Orthodox monastery, Milosevo.¹⁷⁰ This myth or perhaps a historical uncertainty is also presented in both 2002 and 2003 editions of “nature and society” textbook as the absolute “truth,” but I shall elaborate on some of textbook examples in the next section.

The supposed Orthodox orientation of the first Bosnian King, Tvrtko I, is pertinent to another supporting myth—“One Nation with Three Religions.” This myth is not articulated in school textbooks, at least not explicitly; it is relevant, however, because it is deeply entrenched in so-called “parallel” education (the example of Popov Most School). This myth was established by two Serb ideologists, Ilija Grasanin and Vuk S. Karadzic. According to them, Bosnian Croats and Bosniaks/Muslims are Serbs who accepted Catholicism and Islam in the process of Rome’s propaganda and Turkish invasion, respectively. For example, Vuk S. Karadzic is puzzled by the fact that “all Serbs of the Catholic religion [i.e. Croats] do not want to call themselves Serbs,” as opposed to Hungarians, for example, who belong to both Catholic and Calvinist

¹⁶⁹ Dubravko Lovrenovic, “Bosanski Mitovi,” *Erasmus*, October, 1996, p.31. Author’s translation.

¹⁷⁰ Robert J. Donia and Jon Fine, *Bosnia and Herzegovina: A tradition Betrayed* (New York: Columbia University Press), p. 21.

religions, and yet they are all called Hungarians.¹⁷¹

This myth and its Croat version are the creation resulting from the processes of the conversion to Islam during the Ottoman rule, commonly presented as mono-dimensional, that is to say, medieval Bosnian Christians converted *en masse* to Islam. As a result, we have only Serbs or Croats of three different religions in Bosnia. It is well documented that religious conversions that took place at the onset of the Ottoman era (16th century) were multi-dimensional. I shall only briefly discuss this aspect here. All three religious/ethnic groups converted and reconverted to any of three major religions and not exclusively to Islam. Of course, the scale of conversion to Islam was far more extensive than the conversion to Christianity. Similarly, because of its privileged position in a comparison to the Catholic Church in the Ottoman Empire, the Serb Orthodox Church was more successful in attracting converts than the Catholic Church. Furthermore, conversion into any of three religions was not of a permanent nature; for example, some who once converted to Islam reaccepted one of two Christian faiths. It is this general socio-political environment, such as crypto-Christianity, that provides a necessary flexibility for myth creation. Thus, this multi-dimensional conversion was possible due to existing crypto-Christianity, which resulted from "...superficial, unripe [*nedovrelih*] processes of *islamization*, which was inaugurated by socio-political measures (tax relief)..."¹⁷²

In addition to conversion to or "acceptance"¹⁷³ of faiths in the Ottoman Bosnia, there was another socio-political factor that substantially affected religious distri-

¹⁷¹ Vuk S. Karadzic, "Srbi svi i svuda," in *Izvori velikosrpske agresije*, ed. Boze Covic (Zagreb: n.p., 1991) p.84.

¹⁷² Srecko M. Dzaja, *Konfesionalnost i nacionalnost Bosne i Hercegovine* (Mostar: Ziral, 1999), p 68. Author's translation.

¹⁷³ Robert J. Donia and John Fine, *Bosnia and Herzegovina: A Tradition Betrayed* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), p.44

bution in BiH, namely migration. For example, many Orthodox Serbs were to be found all across Bosnia in the 16th century, whereas in medieval Bosnia they were found only in the Drina Region and Hum. Immigration of the Orthodox Christians was encouraged by the Ottomans in order to populate the vacated land. According to Srecko Dzaja, at different times and places, each religious/ethnic group changed its demographic structure as a result of religious conversions, a prolonged state of war in the Ottoman Empire, migration, deportation, and war looting.¹⁷⁴ Of course, each ethnic group highlights only its losses and grievances, ignoring or minimizing the suffering of others.

In summary, the recently discovered historical evidence related to ethnic names of South Slavs, the religious orientation of the medieval Bosnian rulers and the religious conversion in the Ottoman Era refutes all elements of the greater myth, which creates a perception that Bosnia is Serb land. Now I shall turn to the textbook analysis and explore if these myths are presented as historical facts. I shall also highlight motifs of these myths and derive potential stereotypes. First, I analyze recently revised RS textbooks (the 2003 edition) for “national subject” of nature and society and then compare them with the content of 2001 version, leading to a general conclusion about the success of textbook revisions. Secondly, I argue that these ethnic myths and their motifs present in “nature and society” textbooks published in the RS may create a perception that BiH is a Serb land. I find it interesting that the 2001 textbook content for “nature and society” depicts BiH as a Serb land by portraying the ethnocentric profile of the RS. In contrast, the 2003 edition remains faithful to the idea of Bosnia as a Serb land, while introducing a novel feature, i.e., multi-

¹⁷⁴ Srecko Dzaja, Konfesionalnost i nacionalnost Bosne i Hercegovine (Mostar: Ziral, 1999), p 166.

ethnic/multicultural spirit.

Thus, both textbook versions have mythical or distorted history in common, requiring more thorough revision. All textbook revisions carried out so far exemplify how relevant stakeholders are reluctant to address the root of the problem: in this case, the essence of the problem is not the derogatory names of “others” used in the textbooks, but rather the ideas and perceptions hidden behind myths and stereotypes that continue to be present after every textbook revision. This is despite the fact that from the very beginning, both local stakeholders and the International Community were aware of the fundamental issue: in the Interim Agreement, it is stressed that both *curricular reform* and the removal of any objectionable material should be a permanent solution for the education of returnees.¹⁷⁵

Although the International Community has carried out numerous textbook checks in order to “analyze the content of the manuscripts of new textbooks and accompanying workbooks and determine if they are devoid of objectionable, offensive and anti-Dayton material...”¹⁷⁶ the terms, such as “objectionable, offensive, and anti-Dayton” are still left undefined, in effect limiting the results of revisions. Can we consider presenting myths as historical facts as objectionable material? I think so, especially if certain myths articulate a popular perception about the ethnic ownership to BiH.

The IC attempted to limit the apparent ethnocentrism in school textbooks by introducing four Textbook Agreements in July 1999, December 2001, May 2002, and March 2003. In addition, revision of the ethnocentric content of textbooks was a pre-

¹⁷⁵ OHR, “Interim Agreement” (Sarajevo, 2002). Emphasis added.

¹⁷⁶ OSCE Education Department, “Textbook Agreement” (Sarajevo, 2002).

requisite for BiH accession to the Council of Europe. The IC carried out field checks on compliance with the 1999 Textbook Agreement terms, and from the very beginning, it was evident that compliance would be subject to the good will of local authorities. According to the OSCE assessment, the lowest level of cooperation was in the RS, where the Ministry of Education actually issued instructions contradictory to the terms of the Textbook Agreement.¹⁷⁷

Consequently, the unsatisfactory level of compliance led to the 10 May 2000 Education Agreement, further obliging the Ministers of Education in both entities to continue textbook revisions. The following year, another textbook agreement called for the Education Ministers to form Textbook Revision Commissions. The task of each commission was to review textbooks within their own entity as well as the textbooks from the other entity. However, the work of the commissions has not solved the issue. Even though there has been significant progress in the 2003 revision of the RS textbooks, there is still some material that may be classified as objectionable and harmful to ethnic reconciliation. In the following section, I shall analyze the recently revised textbooks (2003) in order to examine hidden or explicit myths, which reflect an ethnic ownership to BiH.

3.4 The Perception of Bosnia and Herzegovina in Revised Textbooks

Whereas in its first part the textbook of Knowing Society for Grade Five discusses a multi-confessional character of BiH by providing details and illustrations of religious symbols and institutions of all four major religions practiced in BiH, in its history part, only the Serbian Orthodox monasteries are discussed in the context of “our country.” For example, on page 49, where cultural and historical monuments are

discussed, Serb monuments are singled out, discriminating against Croatian and Bosniak relevant monuments.¹⁷⁸ Although some recent historical findings show that in Bosnia “with the Ottoman invasion not only the demographic expansion of Serbs began, but also the expansion of the Serb Orthodox eparchy and monasteries,”¹⁷⁹ the myth—the Serbian Orthodox monasteries in BiH are founded by the Serbian Dynasty of Nemanjic—is presented as a historical fact in the “nature and society” textbook for the fifth grade: “The majority of famous monasteries were built by the rulers and nobles from the Nemanjic dynasty, which ruled the Serb lands for around 200 years.”¹⁸⁰ This type of discussing the Nemanjic dynasty’s role in BiH suggests that amongst all cultural and ethnic groups (of which none is discussed in the history part) the Serbs had at that time the ethnic ownership to BiH; since much of history interpretation in BiH evolves around the medieval time, this type of discussion may suggest Serbs’ claim to present BiH. Furthermore, this myth reinforces the ethnic motif of the Serbian Orthodox Church and the Serbian Empire of Nemanjic, which implies the renaissance of medieval Serbia in the form of territorial expansion.

It is important to highlight the perception created by the myth and its motifs—the Orthodox religion and the renaissance of a Medieval Serb Empire. The theme of Orthodox monasteries combines two political entities—the Orthodox Church and the cult of the Nemanjic Dynasty—into one whole. According to Srećko Dzaja, both of these entities are the symbol of territorial expansion: “By the means of liturgy and under the supervision of the clergy, the memories of the Serb rulers were wonderfully

¹⁷⁷ OSCE Human Rights Department, “IC and BiH Education: Policy and Initiatives” (Sarajevo, 2002).

¹⁷⁸ Stevo P., Ranko P., and Slobodan Stanojlović, Poznavanje društva za peti razred osnovne škole (Srpsko Sarajevo, RS: Zavod za udžbenike i nastavna srestva, 2003).

¹⁷⁹ Srećko M. Dzaja, Konfesionalnost i nacionalnost Bosne i Hercegovine (Mostar: Ziral, 1999), p.123.

preserved in folk songs and other oral traditions.” These were the instruments at the disposal of the Orthodox priests for the expansion of the Church’s jurisdiction, which was understood as “a political expansion in the sense of the medieval ideology.”¹⁸¹

The above textbook example shows that to make a claim over BiH does not necessarily involve deconstruction of its multicultural or multiethnic form. For example, the textbook of Knowing Society for Grade Five describes BiH as a multicultural state first and then transfers discussion to the history part, which has no multicultural/multi-confessional character whatsoever, in the context of “our country.” The qualification “our” suggests that the country, irrespectively of its multicultural form, is Serb land. This ethnocentric approach is reinforced by the presentation of myths as historical facts: the myth of Nemanjic monasteries supports and strengthens the greater myth “Bosnia as Serb Land.” A history which teaches medieval Bosnia, or any other historical periods for that matter, in a way that may impact the understanding of present BiH should be revised, reflecting the recent research findings or highlighting historical uncertainties where they exist.

The myth about Nemanjic monasteries in BiH conveys not only a message that medieval Bosnia was under Serb rule for 200 years, but also portrays Serbs as a nation with a “high culture” and literacy, which are ultimate expressions of well-developed Serb Orthodox religion. Hence, a statement in the textbook that Orthodox monasteries are examples of “high culture” and that they were the spring of literacy.¹⁸² It is not intended in this argument to reduce the cultural value and importance of the Serb Orthodox monasteries. Rather, the aim is to find latent or explicit stereo-

¹⁸⁰ Stevo Pasalic, Ranko Pejic, Slobodan Stanojlovic. Poznavanje drustva za peti razred osnovne skole (Srpsko Sarajevo: Zavod za udzbenike i nastavna sredstva, 2003), p. 49.

¹⁸¹ Ibid., p.118.

¹⁸² Ibid., p. 49.

types within the myth. In the light of some findings on low “common people culture” (*pucka kultura*)¹⁸³ and the low level of literacy among both the Orthodox clergy and peasants in medieval Bosnia, this reference to alleged “high culture” and literacy may well be viewed as a stereotype.

Although a low level of literacy among both ordinary people and clergy is acknowledged on page 56 of Poznavanje društva za peti razred osnovne škole, there is still a strong emphasis on the superiority of the Serb culture. This may sound like a contradiction. However, the qualification “superior” must be analysed in the context of present BiH, whereby Cyrillic is the alphabet of the Bosnian Serbs. For example, on page 56 of the Knowing Society for the Grade Five (Poznavanje društva za peti razred osnovne škole), it is mentioned that the first Serb alphabet was Glagolitic, from which Cyrillic developed. Thus, a sense of superiority invoked by the statement that “in [medieval] Bosnia, the Cyrillic alphabet, called *Bosancica*, was used,”¹⁸⁴ may imply that other religious groups, such as Bosnian Catholics and the followers of the Bosnian Church, were culturally inferior to the Bosnian Orthodox Christians (later Serbs). According to Srećko Dzaja, there were two types of Cyrillic in medieval Bosnia, the “Western Cyrillic” (*Bosancica*), widely employed by the Catholic Franciscans and Bosnian Muslims until the end of the sixteenth century, and the “Serb Church Cyrillic,” used by the Serb Orthodox clergy. This is not to suggest that the “Western Cyrillic” was superior to the “Serb Church Cyrillic,” but rather to acknowledge the complexity of the development of the alphabet. Although both versions were known as “Serb letters” or *il carattere serviano*, non-Serb writers of the nineteenth century dif-

¹⁸³ Srećko Dzaja, *Konfesionalnost i nacionalnost Bosne i Hercegovine* (Mostar: Ziral, 1999), p. 142f.

¹⁸⁴ Stevo Pasalic et al., Poznavanje društva za peti razred osnovne škole, p.56.

ferentiated between the Croat (*lingua illyrica or lingua slavica*) and Serb language idioms (*lingua seruiana*).¹⁸⁵

The myth about the Serb Orthodox monasteries being established by the Nemanjic Dynasty in medieval Bosnia is further strengthened by another myth: a medieval Bosnian king, Tvrtko I, was crowned in an Orthodox monastery. These two myths mutually reinforce each other, enhancing the greater myth “Bosnia as Serb Land.” The attribution of a specific religious affiliation to the medieval Bosnian kings adds potency and confidence in the assertion or struggle for control of land; this is especially accentuated in the light of well-established symbiosis and blurring between ethnicity and religion in Bosnia. I have already provided alternative interpretation, showing that Tvrtko was not crowned in the Serb Orthodox Milosevo monastery, but rather in a Bosnian monastery called Mile. Thus, to say that Tvrtko was crowned in the Milosevo monastery because his grandmother came from the Nemanjic Dynasty,¹⁸⁶ implying he was Serb, may be misleading, considering that medieval marriages reflected political pragmatism, where they served as a tool for establishing peace and war alliances. Another example that insinuates that Tvrtko was Orthodox/Serb and that, by implication, the medieval Bosnia was Serb land is found on page 58 of the same textbook, where Ottoman rule is discussed.

In the chapter “Turkish Invasion” on page 58, the authors narrate the looming Kosovo Battle in 1389 and the Serb Knight Lazar’s call for all *Serb armies* to join him in the battle against the Turks: “The Knight [Lazar] tried to bring the *Serb nobles* together and to gather *all Serb soldiers* in order to fight the Turks.” Among the “Serb

¹⁸⁵ Srećko Džaja, *Konfesionalnost i nacionalnost Bosne i Hercegovine*, p.145.

¹⁸⁶ Stevo Pasačić, Ranko Pejić, Slobodan Stanojlović, *Poznavanje društva za peti razred osnovne škole* (Srpsko Sarajevo, RS: Zavod za udžbenike i nastavna sredstva, 2003), p. 56.

nobles” was “the Bosnian king Tvrtko...[and] the Bosnian army was led by Vlatko Vukovic.”¹⁸⁷ It is not my intention here to dispute the king Tvrtko’s presence at the Kosovo Battle, rather to give another example of how King Tvrtko I is presented as an Orthodox/ Serb, suggesting that Medieval Bosnia was Serb land.

The same myth when placed in a different context may reveal different motifs and generate different ethnic stereotypes. On the one hand, when placed in a political context of the Bosnian Crown, the myth of Tvrtko’s Christian Orthodox orientation engenders a motif of a shared public culture—the Orthodox religion—and a stereotype of Serbs as a people with “high culture.” On the other hand, in the military context, in this case the Kosovo Battle, the presentation of the same myth produces different types of ethnic motifs and stereotypes.

For instance, the myth that identifies the king Tvrtko as an Orthodox/Serb and the historical fact that he aided Serbia in the Kosovo Battle invokes certain ethnic stereotypes of Serb people. Tvrtko’s political decision to aid a neighbouring country, Serbia, suggests political solidarity, usually founded in military alliances. When infused with mythical connotations of the king’s supposed religious orientation, this political solidarity assumes a conceptually different meaning. As a result, the political necessity of solidarity translates into the ethnic motif of national solidarity, which further generates stereotypes, such as Serb superiority reflected in the unity of all Serbs.

Other stereotypes derived from this kind of interpretation of history are heroism and martyrdom (especially in the name of Christianity). For example, Jovan Cvijic, nineteenth century geographer, believes that “[Serbs] are enormously invigorated

¹⁸⁷ Ibid., p. 58. Emphasis added.

by the fact that [they] have a long line of famous kings and heroes and martyrs.”¹⁸⁸ As a result of this type of belief, the textbook for nature and society for the fifth grade, 2003, talks only about the contribution of Bosnian Serbs in the resistance against the Turks, without discussing the role of other religious groups in Bosnia.

This pattern of reinforcing the role of only one ethnic group (the Bosnian Orthodox Serbs) has been repeated in the interpretation of significant historical events, simultaneously enhancing the popular stereotypes and creating *different* ethnic motifs. On the one hand, the perpetration of a stereotypical image is maintained by transferring the same stereotypes from discussions of one historical era to another. This is, however, possible only if the pattern of discriminating against the contribution of other religious/ethnic groups is systematically applied. On the other hand, this pattern, in combination with peculiar characteristics that each historical era exhibits, helps invoke new ethnic motifs. Thus, in the context of the Ottoman rule, the motif of oppression is highlighted: there is only oppression of Serbs and only their resistance against the Turkish rulers, generally exaggerating the role of Serbs. For example, the role of *Hajduci* and *Uskoci*, the equivalent of modern guerrilla fighters, have been romanticised and described as “fighters for honour and freedom of their people.”¹⁸⁹ Srećko Džaja, however, portrays these guerrilla groups as bandits and looters who carried out ambush attacks, killed, robbed and trafficked with slaves, without always distinguishing ‘ideological’ friend from enemy.”¹⁹⁰

¹⁸⁸ Stanko Zuljic, “Kriticki osvrt na neke zaključke i poruke J. Cvijica u njegovim antropogeografskim istraživanjima,” in *Izvori velikosrpske agresije*, ed. Boze Covic (Zagreb: n.p., 1991), p. 333.

¹⁸⁹ Stevo Pasalic, *Poznavanje društva za peti razred osnovne škole*, p. 59.

¹⁹⁰ Srećko M. Džaja, *Konfesionalnost i nacionalnost Bosne i Hercegovine* (Mostar: Ziral, 1999), p. 46.

Moreover, above mentioned ethnic myths and motifs found in the 2003 textbook for “nature and society” were also overtly present in “nature and society” textbooks (2001) still used in RS schools at the time of this research (2002), indicating that no progress had been made in the textbook revision (the history part) conducted by the March 2003 Inter-Entity Textbook Review Commission. More importantly, these findings attest how difficult it is and it will be to revise profoundly the history content. Whereas the 2003 Inter-Entity Textbook Commission under the supervision of the IC has been quite successful in effecting revisions of geography, for example, limited actions have been taken in regard to the history content. For example, the Office of High Representative (OHR) has banned the textbook Knowing Nature and Society for Grade Four (2001), written by Stevo Pasalic, without providing an alternative textbook to be used in the interim period while the new textbook was developed for the students.¹⁹¹

Due to limited space in this chapter, I shall only highlight a couple of the central myths extracted from the Nature and Society for Grade Four written by Stevo Pasalic, which was still used in the Popov Most school in 2002, the same myth that I identified in the 2003 edition of “nature and society:” Bosnia is overtly called a Serb state and the King Tvrtko I is identified as Orthodox/Serb. In the chapter discussing the Turkish oppression, the author argues: “after the death of the Tsar Lazar and the king Tvrtko, *Serb lands*, Serbia and *Bosnia*, disintegrated into regions and smaller states.” Furthermore, in discussing the Kosovo Battle, the authors pretentiously state: “*Serb king* Tvrtko I provided *brotherly* aid to Tsar Lazar.” In the same textbook, King

¹⁹¹ OSCE Education Department, “Report on the Work of the Inter-Entity Textbook Review Commission” (Sarajevo, July 2003).

Tvrko is said to be crowned in the Serb Orthodox monastery Milosevo.¹⁹² Thus, the recently revised textbook for the “nature and society” is not different in its content (the history part) from that banned by the International Community in BiH. So, why was the 2003 edition not thoroughly revised or banned too?

This is not to suggest that the 2003 Inter-Entity textbook revision was not effective at all. On the contrary, as a result of the Inter-Entity Textbook Commission’s work, there is a novel element in new edition for “nature and society” (the fifth grade). This difference can be viewed as positive changes in attitude toward cultural, ethnic and religious differences. Although the 2003 textbook Knowing Society for Grade Five invites students to recognize and to respect ethnic and religious identities of other ethnic groups, the effects of a newly instilled spirit of multiculturalism are limited, however, due to the unmodified history content of the textbook, previously discussed. What differentiates the two textbook editions is the application of two opposite portraits of BiH—an ethnocentric portrait of the Republika Srpska (2001/02) and a multicultural depiction of BiH (2003). A common denominator for both textbook editions is the presentation of myths as historical facts, which accentuates the ethnocentrism within the 2001 edition and reduces the multicultural aspect of the recently revised textbooks (2003). I shall first discuss the 2001 edition of “nature and society” textbook.

¹⁹² Stevo Pasalic, Ranko Pejic. Priroda i društvo za četvrti razred osnovne škole (Srpsko Sarajevo: Zavod za udzbenike i nastavna sredstva, 2002), p 83-84. Emphasis added. Author’s translation.

3.5 The Myth of the Republika Srpska¹⁹³ as a Surrogate for the Myth “Bosnia as a Serb Land”

In this section, I shall argue that the “nature and society” textbook published in 2001 omits national symbols of the other two ethnic groups (Croats and Bosniaks) and geography of the other entity (the Federation) in order to instill the political and ideological concept of the Republika Srpska as a surrogate for the Myth “Bosnia as Serb Land.” Along with the omission of certain elements goes hand in hand the exclusivity in portraying its own group (Serbs). For example, last year’s textbook for nature and society (for the fourth grade) omits all ethnic symbols (flags, coat of arms, anthems etc.) of Croats and Bosniaks, presenting only Serb ethnic symbols. Furthermore, a distortion of geography is prominent too: elements of physical geography (rivers, mountains, lakes, etc.) situated only in the RS are highlighted. Similarly, cultural monuments, main cities and natural resources of only the Republika Srpska are discussed. Only when reference to the other entity or other ethnic group helps exaggerate ethnic differences, imagined or real, does the textbook mention Bosniaks, Croats or the Federation.

In addition to the national symbols of the RS, the textbook illustrates the national symbols of the Republic of Serbia, the Republic of Montenegro, and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (presently Serbia and Montenegro). Furthermore, the textbook also emphasizes that the RS “may establish special parallel relations with the Federate Republic (FR) of Yugoslavia and its member republics.”¹⁹⁴ Since only Serbia and Montenegro (“Serb lands”) are discussed while another BiH neighbor, the

¹⁹³ I say ‘the myth of the RS’ because this myth is in the process of making: the RS is presented in “nature and society” as a Serb state in a close connection with Serbia and Montenegro, but totally out of the BiH and regional context.

Republic of Croatia, which also has a “special parallel relationship” with BiH, is omitted, the effects produced here are that the Republika Srpska and FR Yugoslavia are used as countries of reference. This is a blatant breach of *May 10th 2000 Education Declaration and Agreement*, which states that “national subjects’ textbooks which do not refer to BiH are unsuitable for use in BiH.”¹⁹⁵

The reference to Serbia and Montenegro serves as an instrument to create a perception of Serb unity, both the territorial unity and fraternity of all Serbs. This is further enhanced by attaching a special importance to BiH boundaries, both symbolic and real. In *Poznavanje društva za četvrti razred*, 2001, (Knowing Society for Grade Four), elements of territorial and national cohesion are prominent. The textbook attributes two contrapuntal roles to BiH boundaries: to divide and unite Serbs, with the former underpinning the motif of oppression. Thus, students are taught that “by separation of the former Yugoslav republics into independent states, the Serbs became a national minority in the newly independent states, deprived of fundamental rights”¹⁹⁶

Furthermore, the textbook encompasses the concept of the Serb nation as a coherent unit and distinct from other communities (Bosniak and Croat) by comparing the functions of the administrative/entity borders within BiH with those of a common border with Serbia and Montenegro, exaggerating the difference between the two entities and underpinning fraternity between Serbs in Serbia (and Montenegro) and in the RS. Although some politicians from the RS, such as the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mladen Ivanic, like to argue that the idea of joining the RS to the “motherland”

¹⁹⁴ Constitution, the Republic of Srpska, BiH. Article 4 has been amended, reading as follows: “The Republic may, according to the Constitution of Bosnia and Herzegovina, establish a special parallel relation with the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and its member states.”

¹⁹⁵ OSCE Human Rights Department, “May 10th 2000 Education Declaration and Agreement” (Sarajevo, 2000).

¹⁹⁶ Stevo Pasalic. *Poznavanje društva za četvrti razred osnovnu skolu* (Srpsko Sarajevo, RS: Zavod za udzbenike i nastavna sredstva, 2001), p.20.

of Serbia and Montenegro has vanished,¹⁹⁷ the textbook still used in classrooms at the time of this research (2002) shows that this idea has not lost currency yet:

On the Northeast, East, and Southeast, the Republika Srpska borders with its *motherland*, Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. The same [Serb] people live on both sides of the boundary; they have fought for nearly two hundred years to eliminate this boundary. Today this boundary has a *function of uniting*. [In contrast], the border with the Federation has a character of '*internal*' border between two separate entities.¹⁹⁸

There is a striking similarity between the textbook argument and that advanced by Ilija Garasanin, a nineteenth century Serbian ideologist of Greater Serbia. In his Nacertanije, he states:

When two neighboring people want to establish a closer and more intimate union, [then,] above all, as possible as it could be, the border must be open in order to make traffic easier and alive. But Serbia separated itself from its countrymen in Turkey by a Chinese wall... Thus...let crossing points on the border with Bosnia multiply.¹⁹⁹

In addition to the motif of national solidarity between Serbs from both sides of the River Drina and the principle of delimitation of compact territory, the entity of the RS is identified as Serb land outside the BiH and regional context. Thus, students learn only geographic features situated within RS and these of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, implying that "commonness" is sought and found across the River Drina (i.e. Serbia) and reflecting a rejection of a common identification with BiH. Furthermore, the economic development and natural resources (rivers, lakes, minerals etc), and the financial and economic centers are outlined only in the context of "our natural resources," "our cities" and "our economy." This misperception has the same effects as the method of omitting national symbols of BiH and ethnic symbols of the other

¹⁹⁷ Mladen Ivanic, Minister of Foreign Affairs of BiH, interview by author, Ottawa, 23 January 2003. Author's translation.

¹⁹⁸ Stevo Pasalic, *Poznavanje drustva za cetvrti razred osnovne skole* (Srpsko Sarajevo, RS: Zavod za udzbenike i nastavna srestva, 2001), p.13. Emphasis added. Author's translation.

two constituent peoples (Bosniaks and Croats): to endow popular perception of ethnic boundaries and identities with national sentiments, alienating students from the “others.”

In the next section, I shall analyze the effects this textbook may have on students’ perception and understanding of the concept of “our land.” Has the omission of BiH symbols affected their identification with the state of BiH? Has the omission of the ethnic symbols of other constituent people alienated Serb students from other ethnic groups? How did it affect returnee students (Bosniaks)?

3.6 Some Findings from Interviews with Students²⁰⁰

The findings from interviews with both returnee and non-returnee students indicate mixed effects of textbook content biased in favor of one ethnic group. The research sample shows that the textbook has a moderate influence on students’ identification with ethnic symbols. Six Serb students correctly described the RS flag (red-blue-white), but none of them knew the anthem or the coat of arms of the RS. It is interesting to note that those students who claimed to know the RS anthem confused it with the Orthodox Church anthem “*Sveti Sava*.” The majority of Serb students did not know that the RS shares borders with Serbia and Montenegro; nor did they know the flag and the anthem of that country. Thus, the textbook reference to Serbia and Montenegro seemed to be ineffective for Serb students’ identification with the “motherland” across the River Drina. Interestingly, students’ first choice of the “motherland” corresponds to their parents’ view: interviews with the Serb parents in Popov Most

¹⁹⁹ Ilija Garasanin, “Nacertanie” in *Izvori velikosrpske agresije*, ed. Boze Covic (Zagreb: n.p., 1991), p. 73.

²⁰⁰ Non-returnee and returnee students (5), interview by author, Popov Most and Foca/Srbije 05 June–10 June, 2003.

indicate that they did not identify Serbia as their motherland, unless the country was mentioned.²⁰¹

However, the technique of leaving out BiH state symbols and the ethnic symbols of other entity or ethnic groups seems to be quite successful in alienating students interviewed from both BiH as their country and the other BiH ethnic groups. For example, none of the interviewed Serb students knew the coat-of-arms or anthem of BiH, nor could they describe the BiH flag. One identified it as a flag “with lilies,” while other was close in his description (“yellow and blue” colors). The former comment (“with lilies”) indicates that some students tend to identify only Bosniaks with Bosnia and Herzegovina, since the fleur-de-lys is a symbol of a Bosnian Muslim political party (SDA). Furthermore, the majority of Serb students identified only Bosniaks as an ethnic group living in the Federation: either they were ignorant of Croats living in BiH or they thought Croats lived in Croatia.

Furthermore, the research sample shows that discussing geography of only one entity (the RS) does have “desirable” effects on students’ identification with that entity. The majority of Serb students interviewed identified with the RS. One student said that she did not identify with BiH, and another student did not know if BiH was his country. In addition, one Serb student thought that the country has only one entity (presumably the RS). Another Serb student stated that he was from the RS, but he also thought Bosniaks belong to the RS too. The majority of the Serb students interviewed identified Banja Luka as the capital of the RS; only one student thought Sarajevo was the national capital of the RS.

²⁰¹ Popov Most parents, interview by author, Popov Most, June 05- 10, 2003.

In contrast to the Serb students, Bosniak students interviewed failed to identify with either of the two entities or with Bosnia and Herzegovina. All of them have developed a local identity; for example, they claimed that their “country” was Sadici or Tjentiste (the villages where they reside). However, all Bosniak students knew that Sarajevo was the nation’s capital; perhaps this is because Sarajevo was where they were displaced during the war. It is important to note that the Bosniak returnee students were younger (grade one) from their Serb classmates, with the exception of a third-grade Bosniak student who refused to give an interview. Because the Bosniak students did not use the textbook analyzed, it is impossible to assess its effects on the minority students’ ethnic identity. However, a peculiar educational setting—younger students (1-2 grades) share the same classroom with older students (3-4 grades) and thus, they are in a position to absorb what is taught to the latter—seems to support a view that the age of students is the primary factor that dictates how much students can consume.²⁰² As the teacher of the Popov Most School, Nedeljko Rasevic, says “successful integration [among the Popov Most students] is possible only because the students belong to certain age group [grade 1-4].”²⁰³

3.7 Revised Textbooks: The Results of the 2003 Inter-Entity Textbook Revision

I shall now look at the recently revised textbook for “nature and society” for the fifth grade used in the RS (2003/2004), an equivalent of last year’s “nature and society” for the fourth grade.²⁰⁴ This year’s textbook revision was successful in achieving the goal of integrating other ethnicities and cultures in the textbook: the content of Knowing Society for Grade Five, at least its first part, is based on the idea

²⁰² Milenko Brkic, pre-war Education Minister in BiH, interview by the author, Sarajevo, 03 June 2003.

²⁰³ Nejo Rasevic, Popov Most teacher, interview by author, Popov Most, 04 June 2003.

of common heritage, similarities and tolerance of differences, recognising and accepting ethnic identities of all constituent peoples. Whereas last year's textbook stressed only the RS symbols and prominent elements of physical geography in the RS, the 2003 edition illustrates all relevant national symbols of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Federation of BiH and the Republika Srpska.

However, the textbook devotes a special space for detailed description of the RS national symbols, with an emphasis on the RS anthem and a coat-of-arms feature: four Cyrillic "S" letters, denoting the meaning "only unity save the Serbs." For example, in the rubric "For Those Who Wants to Know More," there is an assignment, asking students to "explain the connection between the line from the anthem "unite Serb brothers from everywhere..." and one element from the RS coat-of-arms [i.e. the four Cyrillic "S" letters]."²⁰⁵ This dose of ethnocentrism may be viewed as appropriate, since it is placed within the framework of a multiethnic society, with identities of other ethnic groups not discriminated against.

Another improvement in revising RS textbook for nature and society for the fifth grade is the absence of Serbia and Montenegro as the country of reference. Bosnia and Herzegovina is clearly used as the term of reference, confirming the commitment given in the Education Deceleration three years ago. Serbia and Montenegro are discussed in the context of "Bosnia and Herzegovina and Neighbouring Countries." There is an emphasis that the RS have "special parallel relations" in the area of economy, education and culture with Serbia and Montenegro, but the same is said for the other important neighbour of BiH, the Republic of Croatia:" [t]he Republic of Croatia

²⁰⁴ As a result of education reform, elementary school in the RS now lasts nine years, as opposed to eight years. Thus, the curriculum for the fourth grade is now used for the fifth grade.

²⁰⁵ Stevo Pasalic, Ranko Pejic, and Slobodan Stanojlovic. *Poznavanje drustva za peti razred osnovne skole* (Srpsko Sarajevo, RS: Zavod za udzbenike i nastavna srestva, 2003), p.11.

has special and parallel relations with the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, which enables better co-operation in the areas of economics, education, culture and other activities.”²⁰⁶

Furthermore, neither the RS nor BiH are any longer separated from the regional context. By illustrating the national symbols and by discussing nation’s capitals and other important economic, political and financial centres of the two BiH neighbours, such as Zagreb, Belgrade, Rijeka, Podgorica etc., BiH is situated in relation to Croatia and Serbia and Montenegro. This is in contrast to last year’s version, which treated the RS not only as an entity separate from the regional context, but also in isolation from the BiH context. For example, new textbook edition discusses the geography and economy of the whole country and not only that of the RS.

Again there is an acceptable dose of ethnocentrism, reinforcing the identification with the Serb elements. This is usually evident in the rubric “For Those Who Wants to Know More.” For example, even though both the Republic of Croatia and Serbia and Montenegro are placed on an equal footing (as neighbouring countries of BiH), more knowledge about the latter is required and reinforced. Thus, students are given an assignment to discuss either Belgrade or Podgorica, leaving out Croatia’s important cities, such as Zagreb or Rijeka, which are also discussed in the text.²⁰⁷

It is interesting to note how effectively the textbook has achieved a fine balance in discussing the importance of international and inter-entity/administrative borders. First, students are introduced to the map of Europe, with Bosnia and Herzego-

²⁰⁶ Stevo Pasic, Ranko Pejic and Slobodan Stanojlovic. *Poznavanje drustva za peti razred osnovneskole* (Srpsko Sarajevo, zavod za uzdzbenike i nastavna srestva, 2003), p.30.

²⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 33

vina being located within it.²⁰⁸ Secondly, there are seven maps of present (post-war) BiH illustrated in the textbook, and every map shows entity borders. The importance of entity borders seems to override the discussion of geographical space, though. Hence, the textbook discusses all prominent elements of physical geography (rivers, lakes, mountains) within the context of BiH, emphasising the entity borders cutting through these features.

Furthermore, the textbook content is based on the idea of accepting a responsibility for some consequences of the war, in this case the responsibility for the forced expulsion of people. The textbook recognizes the fact that both sides, known today as the RS and the Federation, engaged in the expulsion of people from their respective territories during the war. Thus, on page 21, there are figures of how many people have been displaced in the RS (420 000, not counting DPs from Croatia and Kosovo) and in the Federation (535 000). And yet, there is a prominent focus given to the fact that Serbs were displaced from the Federation and live now in the RS. This kind of ethnocentrism can be qualified as inappropriate, though. For example in discussing the demography of the RS, the textbook justifiably outlines that “in the Republika Srpska, there is a great number of Serbs displaced from the territories of the present-day Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia, who were expelled during the last war.” However, in discussing the demographic structure of the Federation, there is nothing about Bosniaks and Croats displaced from the RS. Instead, there is an emphasis that “the number of Serbs remaining on the territory of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina is substantially smaller than it used to be.”²⁰⁹

²⁰⁸ Ibid., p. 8

²⁰⁹ Ibid., p. 21.

As opposed to last's year textbooks, where only the cultural and historical characters of the RS were highlighted, this year's edition introduces the RS students to genuine multiculturalism. Religious and cultural symbols and monuments are prominent. Equal number of Christian and Muslim illustrations are presented: three mosques (interior and exterior), as well as one Orthodox monastery and one Catholic cathedral, and a Jewish synagogue. In addition, praying practices of Muslims along with four other Christian symbols are also illustrated. Furthermore, there is a desirable amount of reference to multiculturalism as well as similarities among existing ethnic groups in BiH. For example, in the RS all three languages and two alphabets are presented as equal. A very important account on "commonness" among BiH ethnic groups is made on page 20: "The majority of the population of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the neighbouring countries are of common South Slav origin: many customs are similar, and most of the cultural heritage is common [to all]."²¹⁰

In short, the new editions of the textbook Knowing Society for Grade Five, at least in the first part, shows a success in balancing the multicultural character of BiH and modest ethnocentrism in portraying the RS entity. The regional interdependence as well as the concept of coexistence of all people irrespective of their ethnic or religious affiliation is stressed on page 76. There is a telling illustration of concentrated cycles, each one designating different social and political entities, ranging from the family to Europe, with the RS being placed between the municipality and the BiH cycles. However, the success of this year's revision is substantially offset by the way the history component was presented to students. Whereas geography of BiH was objectively represented, distortion of history remains an issue. As already mentioned,

²¹⁰ Ibid., pp. 22-25.

myths are treated as historical facts. Thus, it is possible to present BiH in a multicultural and multiethnic spirit, while at the same time, subtly and/or explicitly, depict it as the land of one nation, in this case the land of Serbs. In the next section, I shall see how this recently revised “nature and society” textbook may affect students’ identification with BiH, both returnee and non-returnee students in Popov Most.

3.8 Some Findings from Interviews with Students

In order to see if there is any influence of revised textbooks on students’ ethnic identification, I divided ten students into two groups. Third grade students (five students) are placed into the “control” group, because their textbook for “nature and society” introduces no political concepts, such as state, entity, nation etc.²¹¹ The “experimental” group consists of five students in the fifth grade, whose “nature and society” textbook discusses ethnic symbols, political structure of BiH (entities) and national history.²¹² All students were asked the same questions related to the national or ethnic identity, with an emphasis on other ethnic groups not represented in the classroom (Croats, for example).²¹³

All students in the fifth grade identified Bosnia and Herzegovina as “their” country. This is in contrast to the June results, where the same students, with the exception of the Bosniak student, identified the RS as “their” country. Students were asked two types of questions: *How is your country called?* and *Is the Republika Srpska your country?* All students named Bosnia and Herzegovina as their country, and four students provided a negative answer to the latter question. Only one Serb

²¹¹ In the “nature and society” textbook for the third grade, students are introduced to their immediate environment, such as family, manners, responsibilities, nature school, (flora and fauna) etc.

²¹² All students from the fifth grade, with the exception of the Bosniak student, were interviewed at the end of their fourth grade in June 2003, that is to say, prior to the 2003 textbook revision. While the Bosniak student refused to give me an interview in June, he participated in the December interview.

student gave a positive answer to the question *Is the RS your country?* Furthermore, all students in the “experimental” group correctly identified Serbia and Montenegro and the Republic of Croatia as BiH neighbouring countries. This is in contrast to the June results, where students failed to identify the Republic of Croatia as a BiH neighbouring country.

In addition, all students in the “experimental” group correctly listed three constituent peoples living in BiH, but failed to mention any national minorities.²¹⁴ It is interesting to compare their answers to the question *Who lives in BiH?* to that of *What peoples (narodi) live in FBiH?* Three students (one Bosniak and two Serbs) identified the Federation with the Bosniaks only, while two students thought both Croats and Bosniaks live in the Federation. Even though all students in the “experimental” group mentioned Croats as one of three constituent peoples living in BiH and two of them identified the Federation with both Croats and Bosniaks, none of them placed Croats in BiH when asked *Where do Croats live?* All of them answered that Croats live in Croatia. In addition, students tend to be unsure or could not recognize the flag of the Republic of Croatia (only two students were confident). This is in contrast to their ability to correctly identify the flag of Serbia and Montenegro: three students were confident in identifying the flag correctly (two of them recognized the flag of the Republic of Croatia too). Out of three students who were not familiar with the flag of the Republic of Croatia, two of them recognized the flag of Serbia and Montenegro. All students were able to identify the flag of BiH, though.

²¹³ The Popov Most School accommodates only Serb and Bosniak students.

²¹⁴ The question was *Who lives in BiH?* as opposed to *What peoples (narodi) live in BiH?*

Similarly, the majority of students had a difficulty in identifying the Catholic religion as one of four major religions practiced in BiH.²¹⁵ However, all of them were aware of Christianity in general and Islam. Most of students identified the former as “church,” while the latter was identified as either “mosque” or “Bosniak religion.” Two students were familiar with Judaism by identifying “synagogue” as one of four major religions in BiH. Since the textbook discusses and illustrates the national symbols of both BiH neighbouring countries and all major religions in BiH, I assume that a slight difference in students’ knowledge about Croats versus other constituent people (Bosniak and Serbs) is the result of both the teacher’s approach and textbook content.

I would like to reiterate that Poznavanje drustva za peti razred reinforces the Serb element in the rubric “For Those Who Wants to Know More.” For example, students are asked to discuss one of RS towns, although both the RS and FBiH are illustrated in the textbook.²¹⁶ As result, when I asked them to list at least three cities in BiH aside from the capital, all of them named only RS towns, such as Bjeljina, Trebinje, Banja Luka or Prijedor. It is also possible that the teacher does not devote equal amount of time and interest in discussing all constituent peoples, placing more emphasis on Serbs and Bosniaks, since his students belong to these ethnic groups. In addition, it does not seem that the teacher devotes enough or any time to discussion of ethnic minorities, such as Roma. However, what is remarkable in comparison to the

²¹⁵ Students tended to confuse the term religion with worship buildings. Thus, some students answered that the following religions are present in BiH; church, mosque and synagogue. For this reason, it was difficult for me to assess whether they are aware of the Catholic religion at all. Since majority of them were Orthodox, I assume that what they meant by “church” is the Orthodox religion. If they were aware of “other” church, they should have been able to identify it somehow.

²¹⁶ Stevo Pasalic, Ranko Pejic and Slobodan Stanojlovic, Poznavanje drustva za peti razred osnovne skole (Srpsko Sarajevo, RS: Zavod za udzbenike i nastavna srestva, 2003), p. 27.

June interview is that most of students choose the word “Bosniak” when identifying Bosnian Muslims.

The “control” group consists of five third-grade Bosniak students: four of them participated in the June interview. Like the “experimental” group students, all of them identified Bosnia and Herzegovina as “their” country. Interestingly, two Bosniak students gave positive answers to the question *Is the Republika Srpska your country?* One student did not answer the question, while two other did not think the RS was “their” country. I find this interesting, since only one Serb student from the “experimental” group identified the RS as her country. In contrast to the fifth-grade students, who listed both Croatia and Serbia and Montenegro as BiH neighbouring countries, the third-grade students thought that only Serbia and Montenegro borders with BiH.

Another contrast to the “experimental” group was the answer to the question *Who lives in BiH?* Four students thought that Bosnians (*Bosanci*) live in BiH, while only one student said that “Muslims” lived in BiH. Their responds indicate that younger students do not consider ethnic principles in developing their national identities; rather, they tend to identify with Bosnia as a geographical region.²¹⁷ This is comparable to my June findings, when I concluded that younger students had their local identities developed (Sadici, Tjentiste or Popov Most). However, this does not mean that they are totally devoid of political or ethnic concepts. I compared the previous question to that of *What peoples (narodi) live in FBiH?* Three students thought that Bosnians (*Bosanci*) live in FBiH, while two students believed that “Muslims” live in that entity. Thus, these students who identified “Muslims” with FBiH have some un-

²¹⁷ The word *Bosanci* is derived from the word Bosnia and implies all citizens of Bosnia, as opposed to the word *Bosnjaci*, which is the ethnic identity of Bosnian Muslims, as opposed to Bosnian Serbs and Croats.

derstanding of political structure of BiH. In addition, all students said that Serbs live in the RS, failing to place Croats in any of two entities. Not surprisingly, none of the “control” group students were familiar with ethnic minorities living in BiH.

Furthermore, students seemed to be ignorant of any other religions present in BiH but Islam (all “control” group students were Bosniaks). This is in contrast to the fifth-grade students, who were at least familiar with both Christianity (but not necessarily with both the Catholic and Orthodox Church) and Islam. This finding may imply that so-called “parallel” education, in this case family, shapes students understanding of some aspect of their identity, in this case religion. However, there is an influential factor to be considered here: the nature of educational setting that is, a class combined of students of different grades (1-5). It is likely that younger students will absorb some information delivered to older students. For example, three “control” group students successfully identified BiH flag or coat-of-arms. I was present, when the teacher drew the flag and explained its feature in details (triangle, stars and colours). It is unlikely that third grade students would not pay some attention to this kind of presentation.

CONCLUSION

Although, both subjective factors (stereotypes) and objective factors (territory, power etc.) create, maintain or escalate conflicts, the former perpetrate inter-group hostility long after actual conflicts end. This is because subjective factors, especially group stereotypes, substantially contribute to the creation of social identity, which is the identification with a particular social category or group. Furthermore, social identity is empowered by each group's "personality," whose characteristics are found in public culture, language, history, arts etc. This group "personality" is often enhanced by subjective factors, such as stereotypes. Since social identity theory is exclusionary and involves the construction of the enemy image, an in-group perceiver may generate both positive stereotypes of in-group members and negative stereotypes of out-group members. This process usually involves the exaggeration of similarities among in-group members and differences between in-group and out-group. Furthermore, in constructing social identity, one is often exposed to a strong social pressure from his/her immediate environment, such as schools and so-called "parallel" education.

Social psychologists have arrived at the contact hypothesis in order to develop a better understanding of conflict solution. The contact hypothesis argues that direct contact between hostile groups may lead to a better inter-group understanding and the reduction of the existing stereotypes. However, often, contact is not enough to produce positive attitude change. Rather, a special attention should be paid to specific contact conditions, such as equal status of contact participants, common goals for all participants, the institutional support etc. Generally, if all participants are of equal status and work toward a common goal, then they are more prone to reconciliation.

In addition, other factors, such as students' age, may affect contact. For example, younger students tend to be less susceptible to social pressure and, thus, less prone to group appraisal based on social attributes. Another important factor in determining the course of contact is a consistency between an established contact situation and practices of relevant institutions. For example, some schools may undertake activities aimed at increasing inter-group contact but fail due to behaviour of relevant institutions that develop ethnocentric curricula and approve textbooks that generate stereotypical images of in-group (positive) and out-group (negative). This is exactly what happened in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

While both the local educational institutions and the International Community have acknowledged that the curricular issue is the fundamental source of segregation among Bosniak, Croat, and Serb students in Bosnia-Herzegovina schools, at this point, both actors continue to exacerbate the problem by creating contact situations that potentially minimize segregation but perpetrate the state of stereotyping and prejudices. The International Community introduced the group of "national subjects," such as history, mother tongue, geography, nature and society and religious instruction, for returnee students without a complete textbook revision, believing that this provision of the Interim Agreement, along with others, will increase return and, later, help education in the area of return. This in turn would increase contact between alienated ethnic groups and help them develop mutual understanding and acceptance.

On their side, some national educational stakeholders have embraced the provision of "national subjects" as an effective way to legitimate the politics of ethno-nationalism, presenting children with biased and exclusionary curricula and textbooks. How does a contact situation where students of different ethnic backgrounds attend school together but use different and biased textbooks for "national subjects"

affect students' integration in multi-ethnic schools in Bosnia and Herzegovina? At the beginning of the thesis I hypothesized that *if textbooks used for teaching "national subjects" in multi-ethnic schools use elements of positive stereotyping in portraying "in-group" and negative stereotypes in depicting "out-group," then the teaching of "national subjects" may adversely affect integration among students in multi-ethnic schools.*

In the chapter On the Content of "National Subjects" I analyzed textbook content for "nature and society" for the fourth and fifth grades and concluded that history, unlike geography, continues to be the main source of ethnic stereotypes, prejudices, and myth making. Through interviews with students in Popov Most School, I concluded that their perceptions of ethnic identities were affected by the specific type of textbook content. Depending on student's age, the formation of these perceptions may have potential impacts on their mutual understanding and tolerance. For example, when the textbook for "nature and society" discussed only the RS in a biased and exclusionary way, students interviewed identified with that entity and were alienated from other ethnic groups and the other entity, FBiH. In contrast, when students were presented with a revised textbook for "nature and society" and studied them for four months, they changed their perceptions of "their" country. For all students, Bosnia and Herzegovina, rather than the RS, was the first choice of their identity. Thus, my research proves that textbooks for "national subjects" can affect students' perceptions of national or ethnic identity. If biased, ethno-centric, and exclusionary presentation of BiH geography or of a particular entity shapes students' identification, resulting in mutual alienation, then it is likely that biased and distorted history may have the same effects, with even more serious consequences for their integration (the older the student, the more negative effect upon him/his is).

Interviews with both parents and students in Popov Most show that textbook content altered older students' perceptions about their country and other ethnic groups. However, taking the factor of age into account, it seems that textbook formative role is limited in affecting younger students. Popov Most students in the third grade continue to develop the local or geographical identity, which is also partially influenced by their family (religion). By implication, the older the student, the more susceptible he/she is to the ideological/political influence carried out through textbooks.

Although prior to the introduction of revised textbooks, students had a biased perceptions of their country and other ethnic groups in BiH, unreformed curricula did not seem to negatively affect students' integration: according to their teacher and parents, the success of integration is to be in part attributed to the age group the students belonged (1-5 grades). All students interact in both curricular and extra-curricular activities. Some students of different ethnic backgrounds sit next to each other and go home together after school. They all play together in the recess and during the gym class. Those students who said that they did not go home with or sit next to students of different ethnic backgrounds provided the following explanations: their homes are in different directions from "theirs;" or they sit with a person of the same background, because they were either siblings or friends (this friendship had been established before the arrival of returnees).

Furthermore, interviews with parents show that their role in integration is crucial. They stated that they wanted their children integrate and emphasized that children's quarrels were apolitical. If they had some concerns they discussed them with the teacher. Furthermore, some parents spend time with parents of the other ethnic group: those who said that they did not socialize with "them" quoted the lack of time

as the main reason. All parents were at similar level of education and similar economic status. Although returnees tend to be somewhat poorer, some non-returnees are in equally difficult economic situations (unemployed). Indeed, some returnees seem to have some economic advantage of humanitarian aid distributed through the return programs. Thus, the Popov Most case seems to prove that equal status of in-group and out-group members may produce a successful contact.

However, where returnee and non-returnee parents tend to differ is in their approaches to textbooks. The majority of interviewed non-returnee parents (Serbs) believe that textbooks, especially those addressing history, must have “appropriate” content. Furthermore, they also believe that the Orthodox Church should be involved in their students’ education (through religious instructions). Whereas non-returnee parents take “correct history” seriously for their children’s education and believe that the textbook for “nature and society” shapes their children’s identities, some returnee parents seem to be indifferent to textbook content. For example some returnee parents insist that their children study from the RS textbooks in order not to “single them out.” Others do not object if their children use the RS textbooks because they learned that those textbooks were devoid of inappropriate content (“nature and society” for the third grade, 2003). All of them seem to believe that family is capable to shield their culture from any unwanted encroachment.

From the June interview with both parents and students, it was evident that student identification coincided with their parents’ identification (Serb respondents): they all identified the RS as their country, for example. If I assume that parents did not change their perception of the national identification since they were not exposed to any learning processes, then students’ change in perceptions is due to textbook content. Furthermore, the third grade students were not exposed to the content of the

textbook analyzed, and yet they seemed to be able to provide answers to some of my questions. Their responses show that they might have absorbed what was taught to older students (students of different grades attend the same class). Most of them were aware of the RS entity, for example: some even identified the RS as their country. Also, some of them were able to recognize the flag of BiH.

In conclusion, *textbooks used for teaching “national subjects” in the multi-ethnic school of Popov Most (“nature and society”) do not adversely affect students’ integration, despite the fact that they use elements of positive stereotyping in portraying “in-group” and implied negative stereotypes about “out-group.”* However, textbook content may determine the course and depth of integration in multiethnic schools, such as Popov Most. All things being equal, ethnic integration in schools may at any point in time develop in one of two possible directions. Firstly, textbook content to a great degree determines whether potential or actual auto-assimilation will eventually translate into imposed assimilation: here we are talking about political assimilation, although cultural assimilation is not excluded either. Although both Serb and Bosniak students identified with the BiH after the textbook revision, their perception of the national identity may be eventually changed. If students continue to be exposed to biased history of the type discussed in the third chapter at higher grades, then both returnee and non-returnee students studying from such textbooks may perceive BiH in the light of the ethnic ownership of only one ethnic group and accept it as such.

Secondly, *what* is taught and to *whom* may encourage parents to renounce auto-assimilation practices (refuse RS textbooks) and make them gravitate towards separate education, characterized with retrograde, exclusionary and biased curricula, i.e. insist on teaching on “national subjects.” Thus, if a multiethnic school institution-

alizes separate education, which finds adequate expression in contrapuntal views presented in two types of textbooks (one for returnee and another for non-returnee students), then the space for potential ethnic tension and disintegration in the school is expanded. So far, in many schools in BiH, parents' insistence on the teaching of "national subjects" was coincided with their ability to send their children in mono-ethnic schools, eliminating potential conflicts but perpetuating school segregation.

Whereas the Popov Most School does not seem to be the case of either conflict or full segregation—integration and assimilation seem to blend—it is still early to predict which one will predominate. The outcomes will certainly depend on the further textbook revisions, especially those where history of BiH is discussed. Equally important, future textbook revisions should be accompanied by training parents in critical thinking: after all, it is they who decide what textbooks their children will study. Furthermore, the usage of popular attributes, such as multi-ethnic or multi-cultural, in promoting integrated schools should be limited and not overemphasized: these terms seem only to contribute to the current trend of exaggerating inter-ethnic differences in BiH.

How multi-cultural is BiH compared to countries like Canada after all? For example Lester B. Pearson High School in Calgary, Canada, accommodates students who speak thirty five languages other than English,²¹⁸ while all schools in BiH may face a challenge in accommodating the ethnic minorities, such as Roma, but certainly not in accommodating Serb, Croat or Bosniak students who, from the linguistic point of view, speak the same language. While newcomers to multicultural Canada need few years to become fluent in English, BiH students belonging to constituent groups

²¹⁸ Seane Fine, "Classroom Mosaic" in *Family*, September 2003, p.28.

do not face such an obstacle. And yet, extra expenditure and effort is made to organize instructions in their respective mother tongues (official languages), which in turn increase segregation in schools.

The introduction of “national subjects” is not inherently bad. However, “national subjects” are introduced to these BiH groups that, under current political climate, tend to abuse the measure and diverge it from its actual purpose—integration and reconciliation. The introduction of some “national subjects” would be more useful and effective if they are organized for these ethnic groups segregated from society, such as Roma. If some schools in Canada are willing to offer a professional-development workshops in which teachers receive Grade Two lessons in Punjabi in order to make them understand of how difficult it is to study in a foreign tongue, programs in forty four heritage languages, and Black and African cultural studies, then BiH schools should be willing to organize some of the “national subjects” and instruction in their mother tongue for the most needed minority group, Roma. The three constituent peoples, Bosniaks, Croats and Serbs, can easily and more effectively nourish their rich similarities, as well as preserve their own peculiarities outside the frame of the “national subjects,” thus enhancing the positive character of BiH. The negative character of BiH has been already reflected for a long period of time in tragic destinies of its citizens.

Appendix 1

List of Interviews

Bishop Jo-Anne, OSCE Advisor for non-discrimination and access to education, Ottawa, 09 January 2004.

Brkic Milenko, former Minister of Education in BiH, Sarajevo, 06 June 2003.

Ivanic Mladen, BiH Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ottawa, 23 January 2003.

Lovrenovic Dubravko, former Deputy Minister of Education in FBiH, 20 June 2003.

Pingel Falk, Director of OSCE Education Department, Sarajevo, 07 July 2003.

Pasic Ziad, Minister of Education in FBiH, Sarajevo, 09 July 2003.

Rasevic Nedjo, teacher, Popov Most, Foca/Srbinje, Eastern Bosnia, 04 July 2003.

Savanovic Gojko, Minister of Education in RS, Banja Luka, 17 July 2003.

Sarcevic Ivan, Professor at Franciscan Faculty of Theology, Sarajevo, 25 July 2003.

Vukovic Zarko, school principal, "Veselin Maslesa" elementary school, Foca. Srbinje, 06 July 2003.

Respondents with anonymity granted:

Returnee parents (Bosniaks), Popov Most, 05-10 June 2003.

Non-returnee parents (Serbs), Popov Most, 10 June 2003.

Returnee and non-returnee students, Popov Most, 05-10 June, early September, and 11 December 2003.

Appendix 2.

Interim Agreement on Accommodation of Specific Needs and Rights of Returnee**Children**

Given the increasing number of returnee families, their constitutional rights and the right of their children to receive adequate education, and having in mind that the lack of it is often quoted as one of the main obstacles for return, the Entity Ministers of Education of Bosnia and Herzegovina acknowledge the need for accommodation of the specific needs and rights of returnee children within the framework of an agreement that will offer across-the-board interim solutions and guarantee rights of all constituent peoples. The Entity Ministers of Education of Bosnia and Herzegovina agree as follows:

1. All children shall be taught all general subjects on the basis of the local curricula wherever they are or wherever they and their families return (meaning RS curricula in RS, and Cantonal curricula in the Federation);
2. In regard to the so called “national group” of subjects (language and literature, history, geography-in early grades of primary school “nature and society”- and religious instruction), parents shall be given the possibility to opt for the Entity/Canton or the curricula of their own choice. Returnee teachers shall be re-hired/engaged to teach the national group of subjects as a matter of priority;
3. Each Ministry will immediately appoint a qualified official or a team of qualified professionals to deal with the issue of returnee education and systematically monitor the situation in their respective entity. Furthermore, the Ministries will seek to obtain a current overview of the number of returnee pupils and schools/locations where they are educated, problems that they may face and possible solutions for them. The Ministries will engage not only teachers and directors, but also the student and parent population if necessary. These findings shall be shared with the international community in the appropriate venue. The ethnic composition of School Boards shall reflect the composition of the school population where the schools are located.
4. Ministries shall draft a clear set of guidelines and instructions regarding the implementation of this agreement within two weeks of the date of its signature. The content of this agreement should be included within the mentioned guidelines. Members of the International Community will then have the opportunity to review the guidelines and make any necessary revisions and/or suggestions. Once approved, Ministries will provide all school principals and municipal authorities with these guidelines.
5. The two Entity Ministers of Education will immediately engage in finding more permanent solutions for the education of returnees and accommodation of the specific needs and rights of all constituent peoples that will require e.g. the adoption of new education legislation, the production of new curricula and textbooks without any objectionable material, general respect of pu-

pils'/students', parents' and teachers human rights and re-employment of teachers in their pre-war schools. This agreement will remain valid until the above-mentioned conditions are fulfilled.

6. Given the evolving nature of returnees' access to educational facilities, OHR and other members of the International Community reserves the right to oversee the agreement and to make the necessary revisions and set deadlines as needed. Furthermore, both Ministries will be requested to periodically update OHR and other members of the International Community and regarding work pertaining to this agreement.

Mujo Demirovic

Minister of Education, Science, Culture and Sports

Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina

Sarajevo, 5 March 2002

Gojko Savanovic

Minister of Education

Republika Srpska

Appendix 3.

Abbreviations

BiH Bosnia and Herzegovina

DP Displaced Person

EISSG Education Issue Set Steering Group

EWG Education Working Group

FBiH Federation of BiH

GFAP General Framework Agreement for Peace (Dayton Agreement)

HDZ Croat Democratic Union

IC International Community

NDH Independent State of Croatia

OSCE Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe

OHR Office of High Representative

REWG Regional Education Working Group

RS Republic of Srpska

SDA Party of Democratic Actions

UNHCR United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

UNESCO United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization

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