

Natalia Martinez Paz

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### REECAS NW Abstract

There are many forces that shape the cultural expectations and identities of communities in many parts of the world, Bosnia-Herzegovina being no exception. However, Bosnia faced a violent transition from a communist federation to an independent federal democratic republic which challenged the traditional historical interpretations of ethnic histories and identities. Today, Bosnia still faces many of these challenges. It also faces the challenges of developing and executing educational policies in a country with very strong local governments, a limited central government and an active international community. The situation continues to become more complicated as the international community coordinates heavily with semi-permanent civil society institutions (usually also funded by the international community) that shape Bosnian domestic public policies at almost all levels, including education.

In my masters thesis I would like to address why there is a disconnect between the reality of how ethnic communities self-identify and how education policies either support or do not support these interpretations. I plan to pay particular attention to textbooks and textbook policies that both the local government and outside civil society organizations create and promote. I will address the origins of this disconnect and why it was able to occur in the manner that it did. My primary sources will be textbooks from a range of periods,<sup>1</sup> supplementary teaching materials produced by civil society organizations and my field interviews and notes from this past summer. My secondary sources are primary data on textbook production and materials on

I will begin by outlining my research methodology and theoretical frameworks. I will explain in detail how I collected my data sources and its limitations. Chief among these limitations are the limited sources available to in both the Croatian and Bosnian National Libraries (a total of 3-4 sources per library from 1950-1989) on history education. Then I will outline how seminal theories on identity formation apply to the Bosnian case. By using Anderson's, and Gellner's works to explore the development of

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<sup>1</sup> My sources were limited while conducting research abroad and the National Library of Sarajevo only had history textbooks from the 1960s, 1970s, and 2000s. Therefore, I am limited to these years.

national identity (through the lens of education) after the 1995 conflict, I hope to better examine education's impact on today's civil society in the Bosnian Federation.<sup>2</sup> It will also be important to examine the relationship between identity formation and its influence on the federation in Bosnia and so I will also include an analysis of how developing and changing identities have also influenced political actors which in turn create and execute education policies at the local levels.

Then I will provide a brief historical overview of the educational policies during Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRJ), specifically focusing on policies which influenced identity politics. This branches beyond history education to include the political establishment of additional national groups and the new political agency it brought with it.<sup>3</sup> I will also include an analysis of history textbooks during this period and include information from interviews with people who went to high school in the 1960s and 1980s.<sup>4</sup> From here, I plan to look at the immediate post-war education policies in the mid 1990s. This includes the shift from a Yugoslav centered identity to nationalized histories in educational materials.<sup>5</sup> These reemerging identities were in many ways transformed, and gained new meaning through this process which redefined relationships between ethnic communities. I expect this to be a good bulk of my paper since I believe it is the most important part of understanding ethnic relationships between communities in Bosnia today.

Since there are many actors which can greatly influence how history education is administered and taught, it is also important to include a section on the outside interests in Bosnian education policy. Chief among them are the projects and programs funded and/or administered by European and American organizations and governments, and

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<sup>2</sup> I should emphasize that I will only be looking at the Federation, which does not include Republika Srpska. They are essentially two completely different states, with separate representative offices at the European Union, different political structures which function separately at the constitutional, legislative, executive and judicial levels. The challenges education policy efforts in Republika Srpska face are different from the federation and are also administered differently. In short, the two regions, regarding education policy, are not easily comparable.

<sup>3</sup> But at the same time as SFRJ was expanding the definitions of ethnic communities and ascribing political representation, it was also pushing a Yugoslav identity in its education curriculum.

<sup>4</sup> Again I am somewhat limited by the range of people I had access to over the summer. I was only able to gather oral histories and interviews from people who went to high school during this period and so I am not able to exactly match the interview years with the textbook years.

<sup>5</sup> The Yugoslav identity was particularly strong in Bosnia during SFRJ as it was the most ethnically mixed region. While other republics did not stress the Yugoslav identity as much, in Bosnia they did because of this intermixing.

those supported by Middle Eastern organizations and governments, particularly Saudi and Iranian funded projects. Both of these stakeholders support particular styles of education and it is important to consider their impact at the local level in both the political and social spheres.

I will then focus on present day education policies in Sarajevo and Mostar, the two largest cities in the federation and both with very different ethnic make-ups. The post-war education policies in Bosnia are complicated as various national and international actors dictate them. The moratorium on teaching Bosnian history after 1991 has left many schools with few guidelines on addressing historical questions and issues pertaining to this period. Due to this, I rely quite a bit on the supplementary teaching materials and reports from interethnic workshops that civil society organizations develop and run throughout the country. I also depend on field notes from conversations with colleagues, friends and international community organizations representatives to fill in the gaps of information since currently there is no actual policy on education at the federal level.

Ultimately, I must address if any of these efforts over the years have had a significant impact on how individuals form their identities. While there is a debate around the degree to which history education matters, the general consensus is that history education in Bosnia has a limited impact on how individuals form their identities. For policy makers, this creates some challenges to creating an inclusive dialogue between youth and efforts for civic participation between divided communities.

I hope that by bringing together an analysis of education policies from the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century to present day combined with first hand accounts of education today, I can tie this back to the transformation of identities and how education may or may not influence identity formation.