

# Frame factors for primary school teachers

*A study from Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina*

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## **ABSTRACT**

The purpose of this study is to explore how frame factors can affect teaching. The study is about the primary school teacher in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Through locating the frame factors influencing primary education the research question is addressed through three research objectives. The location of the study is Sarajevo and the data collection sites are two primary schools.

A qualitative research approach was applied, designed as a case study. The concepts included in the theoretical framework provide the study with tools to analyze the relationship between the micro levels of education; represented by the teachers, with the macro level; represented by a state level framework law.

The presented findings are based on the analysis of six in-dept interviews with teachers in one school, further these were analysed in relation with a law on education that was adopted in June 2003 at the state level. The findings from this study indicate that there are a number of regulating factors that influences the character of the frames surrounding primary school teachers in BiH. This study found that teachers own motivation, the school code and the schools' perceived scope of action to affect the teachers.

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## **ABBREVIATIONS**

BiH	Bosnia and Herzegovina
FBiH	Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina
FL	Framework Law on Primary and Secondary Education in BiH
IC	International Community
ISSA	International Step by Step Association
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OSCE	Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe
RS	Republika Srpska

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# 1. SETTING THE STAGE

## 1.1 Introduction

In one of the plenary sessions of a conference addressing the challenges of the ongoing educational reform in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH), a local researcher asked: “How do we get from here – to Sara?”<sup>1</sup> Sara is a counsellor working in a primary school that is well known within the education sector in Sarajevo because of her school’s progress and success in adopting aspects of the ongoing reform on education in BiH. The question posed indicates that the researcher recognized a gap between this school and the overall situation in the schools of BiH.<sup>2</sup> The question further developed into a theme that addressed the future actions and steps that are necessary in the education reform in BiH.<sup>3</sup> The school Sara is working as a counsellor in one of the primary schools from which this study has collected data.

The geographical position of BiH, its historical, economic and socio-political development is related to and dependant on trends and developments in the region of Southeast Europe. Transitional and reform process has been a common denominator for the region since the fall of the Berlin wall. In addition to these transitional processes, BiH is facing the reconstruction of infrastructure and recovery of economic capacities due to the war activity during the period from 1992 to 1995 (Faginovic, 2006).

Education suffered tremendous damage during the conflict that devastated BiH. More than half of the country’s school buildings were significantly damaged. While many teachers continued to provide basic instruction under enormous stress, it was also the case that many teachers left their profession, and even the country, during the conflict. The legacy of the

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<sup>1</sup> All the names that are presented in this thesis are pseudonyms in line with the negotiated informed consent.

<sup>2</sup>In the Bosnian language, in the two recognized scripts: Bosna i Hercegovina , Босна и Херцеговина. The official name of the country in English is Bosnia and Herzegovina. In this thesis, BiH will be used as synonym for the official name of the country.

<sup>3</sup> See Appendix E, Table E3, Bosnia and Herzegovina on the EU path: Education an Indispensable Key to a Stable Future [Save the Children, UNICEF, and the Open Society Fund BiH], Sarajevo, 11.12.08.

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conflict was a divided and fragmented country with political leaders who have treated education as a means of sustaining ideology and promoting politico-cultural identity, and focus more on ethnic differences than on similarities. That the primary focus of post-war education reconstruction was infrastructure and hardware instead of “softer” issues such as curriculum and teaching quality is understandable (Stabback, 2007).

The current reform of education in BiH has a multifaceted character as can be seen in the objectives, goals and action plans that the reform contains. The challenges, in particular for the education sector in post-war BiH, have been seen in relation to the following factors:

- During the war and in the post-war educational reconstruction phase, three parallel curricula, each one to represent the heritage and ideology of the three constituent peoples in BiH (see section 2.2), emerged;
- The General Framework Agreement for Peace (GFA) generally referred to as the “Dayton Agreement” created a complex administrative structure in the country (see section 2.2). With fourteen ministers of education, this structure has resulted in numerous education policymaking authorities with no state-level mechanism for a countrywide policy dialogue;
- Politicised education policies;
- The existence of a large International Community (IC) effort in the education sector, until late 2002, was purely project-based with no coordinating strategies (almost three hundred NGOs working in BiH in 2001-2002 listed ‘education and training’ among their areas of interest) (Stabback, 2007).

Stabback (2007) argues that in order to understand the political and social environment in which the post-war education policy was formulated, consideration must also be directed towards the terrible conflict that created it. Pasalic-Kreso (2008), in addressing the war and post-war impact on the education system in BiH, is referring to a few positive cases at the primary school level, of schools that represent examples of how to *oppose* harmful educational policies and equip children adequately for life in a democratic society. She further argues that:

[...] to initiate change in the long chain of educational systems, the best place to start is in all likelihood with the teachers. They are the ones who are in a position to promote change instead of waiting for official instructions from institutions that have become infected by nationalism (Pasalic-Kreso, 2008: 371).

One of the questions that have been of central importance in this study is what framework to analyse it in? While reading the arguments from local researchers, for example, Pašalić-

Kreso (2002; 2004; 2008), acknowledging the progress of positive cases within the education system that clearly are opposing educational policies, it is evident that the priorities according to the current policy situation are in conflict with the perceived condition of the education system in BiH.

Further, reading from and about the history of the educational policies in BiH, call for a critical approach in the reading of arguments and positions. It was, however, through reading critical articles from academics like Pašalić-Kreso (2008) that I established a profound curiosity of the circumstances the teachers in this context are operating in.

For a foreigner and an outsider to understand pieces of the context that is surrounding the primary school teacher in BiH, can explore political newspapers and read that post-Dayton BiH has proved to be incapable of carrying out social reforms at the state-level (Dèrens 2008) and that education is the least reformed sector in the present BiH society (OCI, 2008). Stabback (2007) states that it is understandable that endemic problems in a range of areas of public policy were left to a later time in the post-war reconstruction process in BiH.

The point I am trying to make is, that there are a great number of “voices” can tell us something about the system context in which the teacher in BiH is operating, yet the teachers’ voices at the school level are relatively understudied. Hargreaves (2003) has said that “all teachers’ voices are worth listening to, however marginal or unfashionable they may be [...] first as a fundamental principle of humanity. Second, as a principle of democracy within research and policy, to listen to the voices of those whose lives are managed and assigned meaning by others deserve to be heard with attentiveness and sincerity” (Hargreaves, 2003:16). The purpose of this study is to present a contribution that has listened to the voice of the primary school teacher in BiH. The framework for the conversation and the tools to analyse the outcomes will be presented in the chapters of this thesis. The overall aim of this study is to provide an answer to the research question that is posed in the following paragraph.

## 1.2 Research question and objectives

The research question which will be addressed in the study is as follows:

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*What constitutes the frame factors for the primary school teacher in BiH?*

In answering this question, a few concepts need to be explained. The main concept in the research question is the frame factor. A frame factor is understood in this study, as the externally decided factors that directs, constrains or provides for opportunities for the teacher (Johnsen, 2001; Lundgren, 1999; Arfwedson, 1991).

The frame factor is further a central part of the theoretical framework that enables an analysis of what is possible and/or not possible for the teacher at the primary school level in BiH. I borrow from Engelsen (2006), when it is stated that the sum of the influence and the teachers and learners perception of the frame factors can tell us something about the potential scope of action. Based on the above considerations the aim of the thesis is to explore the following research objectives. First, to be able to locate the scope of action, it can be divided into two sizes; a subjective and an objective size. To locate the subjective size, the following research objective is stated.

*What is influencing the teachers' own perceptions of the frame factors?*

The objective size of the scope of action is located by exploring the second research objective.

*How are the teachers affected by the formal frame factors?*

At last, the sum of these sizes need to be brought together in order to answer the third research objective in this study.

*What can this tell us about the potential scope of action for the teacher?*

The scope of action is what is possible for the teacher. It is located in the boundary between the education system and the school. The character of this boundary will be determined by the structure of the relationship. Thus, the size of the scope of action is relative and the measure of it is not straight-forward. Berg & Wallin (1983) who developed the term argued that the scope of action can be determined by the influence of three factors: the individual school code, the surrounding frame factors and the individual teachers' capacities.

### 1.3 Justification of the case

In my perspective it is important for policy makers and donors in education to be aware of how the situation is for teachers in the education system they are working to change and implement changes in. This does not only deal with how to be able to be empathetic about this profession, but also in order to make affordable investments in the situation for teachers and students in the schools. The education system and society in BiH has gone through several phases and forms of change over the latest twenty years, so to focus especially on the teacher and upon the wider circumstances the teachers are working have been deliberate related to the perspective I keep. BiH provides a unique case to research in terms of its administrative and political structure, and here it seems to be an agreement that this uniqueness is also one of the greatest barriers for the recent education reform.

### 1.4 Structure of the thesis

The thesis is divided into six chapters. The first chapter is this introduction. The second chapter is concerned with presenting a contextual and policy framework. This framework consists of some of the most central elements in the surroundings of the primary school teacher in BiH. It includes a presentation of the policy framework in this thesis. The third chapter consists of the theoretical background to this study. The fourth chapter presents an overview of the methodological choices made in the collection of the data for the thesis.

The fifth chapter unfolds the presentation of the findings from this study, where the first step of connecting the empirical findings with the theoretical framework is made. The second step is presented in the sixth chapter, where the presented and analysed findings are seen in relation to each other, in order to further connect the analysed empirical data with the theoretical assumptions.

## 2. CONTEXTUAL AND POLICY FRAMEWORK

### 2.1 Introduction

Brinkmann & Kvale (2009) argue that to get valuable answers in a qualitative study using interviews, the prejudices and knowledge the researcher has adopted are crucial. This chapter provides a brief introduction to the context with emphasis on the primary school teacher, the education system, aspects from the current education reform and a presentation of the policy framework for this study.

### 2.2 Bosnia and Herzegovina

BiH (51 209.2 km<sup>2</sup>) is located in South-East Europe, on the western part of the Balkan Peninsula.<sup>4</sup> The capital is Sarajevo and the population of BiH is estimated to be 3.935 million people (United Nations Statistics, 2007). The neighbouring countries are Serbia, Montenegro and Croatia.



**Figure 2.1** Map of Bosnia and Herzegovina

From <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/bk.html>

According to the Constitution of BiH (1995), the country is the home of three ethnic constituent peoples: Bosniacs, Croats and Serbs. Regardless of identity, a citizen from BiH is identified in English as a Bosnian. There are seventeen officially recognised minorities in BiH. The largest groups of these minorities are Albanians, Roma and Jews. Three variations of the Slavic language, formerly recognized as Serbo-Croatian, are spoken.<sup>5</sup> The former education system of Yugoslavia recognised three official languages and nine national languages, although in practice, only one of these three official languages of Serbo-Croat was spoken before the war. Now three national languages are recognized (Bosnian, Croatian and Serbian), and two official scripts are used and taught in BiH's schools, Latin and Cyrillic (Pašalić-Kreso, 2008).

The political and administrative divisions that arose in BiH during the last war (1992-1995) were retained in the Dayton Agreement of 1995. Dayton established a structure of five public administration levels: state-entity-canton-city-municipality.

The two entities in the decentralized and divided BiH, from 1995, are the Republic of Srpska (hereafter referred to as RS) and the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (hereafter referred to as FBiH). Brčko District was later, in 1999, declared an independent district, a de facto third entity (see Appendix B). While the RS is highly centralized, the FBiH is a highly decentralized federation consisting of ten cantons. Some cantons are predominantly Croat and some predominantly Bosniak; the RS is predominantly Serb (Pašalić-Kreso, 1999; Stabback, 2007; Torsti, 2007; Agency for Statistics of Bosnia and Herzegovina, 2008).

Today, the political situation in BiH can be described as a federal democratic republic. The former political system in BiH reflected that of the former Yugoslavia. Until 1992, BiH was a part of the former Yugoslavia.<sup>6</sup> For most of the 1990s, the states that broke away from the former Yugoslavia were one-by-one battlegrounds for the worst violence in Europe since the Second World War. The conflicts left the region deeply divided and economically weak

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<sup>5</sup> Prior to the 1990s, one language with local variations was recognized in the Balkans. Due to nationalistic policies in BiH, this is now recognized as Bosnian, Croatian and Serbian. I will further refer to this as Bosnian.

<sup>6</sup> The state of Yugoslavia was created after the First World War, in the period of the Second World War; it was part of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY). I will refer to both these time periods as the former Yugoslavia.

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(International Centre for Transnational Justice (ITC), 2009). BiH, much like other eastern-European countries, has faced a brief period of transition from the socialist system to capitalism. In BiH, this was interrupted by a brutal war, leaving social systems and infrastructures damaged or destroyed, including the education system (Pašalić-Kreso, 2008).

### **2.2.1 Post-Dayton BiH**

Comprehensive reform processes are currently taking place in BiH with the goal of making BiH into a stable and sustainable government that can be integrated into Euro-Atlantic structures [the European Union]. The reform process is still slow. A major challenge for the social and economic development of BiH is the complexity of its political and administrative structure inherited from the Dayton Agreement of 1995 (The Royal Norwegian Embassy in Sarajevo, 2009). The complex administrative and organizational structure of BiH was then designed with an emphasis on establishing an ethnic compromise that could stop the war, and that now proves less suitable for providing for efficient decision-making in the country's transitional phase. Economically, BiH is in a situation with high unemployment rates, due to a lack of growth in the economic sector (Fishpool, 2003).<sup>7</sup>

Within BiH and internationally, actors have recognised that the current constitutional framework makes it virtually impossible to complete ongoing reforms, and discussions on constitutional changes taking place between the various political parties in BiH (NEBiH, 2009). Nationalistic political parties are still representing political power in the various mono-ethnic territories that BiH consists of (Dèrens, 2008). This division has had serious implications for education, because it has resulted in a proliferation of major educational authorities, and it causes a lack of unified standards in school practices and financing (OECD, 2006).

Since the aftermath of the last war, the educational system in BiH was marked by confusion. Since then, schools have mostly become mono-national, especially in the central parts of the country. Only a few of the major cities are still multi-national; Sarajevo is one of these (Pasalic-Kreso, 2008).



## 2.2.2 The capital Sarajevo

Sarajevo is the capital of BiH.<sup>8</sup> It is the largest city in the country with a population of around 579,000 (2003 estimate from BiH Statistic Agency). Sarajevo is situated at the boarder that splits BiH into the RS and FBiH. While the municipality East Sarajevo belongs to RS, Canton Sarajevo is one of the ten cantons in the FBiH and consists of nine municipalities.<sup>9</sup> The schools this study collected data in, belong to the same municipality, located in two different suburbs. The demographical situation for Sarajevo has changed dramatically since the start of the 1990's.

While the population size has about the same amount as it had prior to the war, the demography has changed. Dèrens (2008) state that the current population of Serbians in Sarajevo count only 20 000, as opposed to around 150 000 before the war, and that Bosniacs also has left the city. The new citizens of Sarajevo arrive from smaller villages, from the RS and other small cities. Where Sarajevo used to have a strong urban identity, has now been replaced by a latent conflict between the "old settlers" and the new arrivals. Torsti (2004) refer to this as a Bosniac dominance that is continuously growing as other nationalities leave and do not return.

In Canton Sarajevo, primary education hold 42000 pupils, in 69 schools with 3263 working teachers (estimate from 2004). The education sector of Canton Sarajevo is administered by two institutions: Ministry of Education and Science and the Pedagogical Institute, Sarajevo. These institutions present one legal entity with one budget (EU/IBE, 2005).

## 2.3 Primary education in BiH

In the RS and the FBiH, education is provided at four levels: pre-school, primary, secondary and higher education, including upper-secondary schools (Appendix A). Education in both

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<sup>7</sup> Ratings from the Europe Review (2003/04) set the unemployment in BiH to count around 400.000, which represents 39.4% of the working age population.

<sup>8</sup> In Cyrillic: Capajevo

<sup>9</sup> Names of the nine municipalities: Centar, Hadžići, Ilidža, Ilijaš, Novi Grad, Novo Sarajevo, Stari Grad, Trnovo, Vogošća.

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entities of BiH does not vary in terms of the structure. Primary education has been compulsory in the RS for nine years, whereas in the FBiH it varies between the cantons (Batarilo & Lenhart, 2007). The subjects offered in primary school are the mother tongue, social studies (history and geography), mathematics, local history and general knowledge, art, music, sports and, depending on the schools, religious education (Muratovic, 2000).

The education administration in BiH adheres to the political structure and is conducted at five levels; state, federation, canton, municipality, and school level (see Appendix B). The RS has kept central control of education and remains centralized with one Ministry of Education (MoE). Whereas in the FBiH, all cantons have passed their own laws on primary education and are administrated from ten MoE's at the canton level, and one at the federation level. The state level MoE is supposed to keep a coordinating function. With fourteen ministers of education, the education system remains fragmented and highly politicised. This has led to an immense increase in educational bureaucracies and is an extremely expensive and inefficient system for such an impoverished country (Pašalić-Kreso, 1999; Unicef, 2008; Davies, 2006).

The legal status of the education system in BiH is complex. The tendency towards decentralization became noticeable in the national policy of the former Yugoslavia in the 1970s and 1980s. Kolouh-Westin (2004), in a study focusing on primary school curriculum and textbooks in BiH, argues that although the educational administration and the legislation aims at a high degree of decentralization in FBiH, in practice, the education system remains highly centralised. The argument is found in the hierarchical educational management, and in the centralised formulation and implementation of the curricula and syllabi (Kolouh-Westin, 2004).

During the war, education continued to function in what has been named "war-schools". As many teachers were forced out of their homes or had to flee the country, an urgent lack of teachers appeared. The World Bank registered that more than 8000 of "wartime volunteers" started teaching during the war (The World Bank, 2004). Russo (2000) has added that "in retrospect, many educators in Sarajevo believe that the war forced them to develop new approaches in working with students and required them to adopt new teaching methodologies. Faced with wide-spread death and destruction, teaching became more honest

and real in contrast to pre-war times, when the emphasis was on hierarchy and the teacher-centered approach” (Russo, 2000: 122).

### *Two schools under one roof*

The practice of housing “two schools under one roof” started as a temporary project in mixed cantons of BiH, mixed between Croats and Bosniacs. Today there are still 56 such schools in existence. Children in these schools must enter through separate doors, use separate floors of the building or simply attend the school in shifts. Many parents accept these divisions and some even insist on them. However a significant proportion of parents do not agree with the policy of dividing and segregating school children (Pasalic-Kreso, 2008). Gundara (2008) argue that attempts to develop intercultural understanding and common citizenship in BiH entail bringing children who identify themselves as Bosnian, Croatian and Serbian into the same school where they will share the same learning materials. Gundara further address the importance for professional abilities and capacities of teachers in complex societies, such as BiH, to work effectively as anti-racist and intercultural professionals. These opportunities are not recognized as optimized. This necessitates intercultural teacher education at both initial and continuing education levels (Gundara, 2008).

## 2.4 Teachers in BiH

In the academic year of 2005/2006, the total number of teachers working in BiH primary education was 22 258. The pupil-teacher ratio was 17.2 pupils per teacher. The number of teachers without adequate qualifications in BiH is reported as going down steadily. However, in some parts of the country, there is still the lack of teachers of foreign languages, mathematics, arts and some specific professional subjects. Although within any particular level of the education system teachers carry out the same tasks, their salaries vary across BiH. Generally, teachers’ salaries are lower than the salaries of other budget beneficiaries (EU ICBE, 2008).

In general, teachers in the lower grades of primary school cover all subjects. A common terminology for these teachers is translated to the English classroom teacher. The education

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of teaching personnel for these first four grades is performed at the Academies of Pedagogy and the Pedagogical and Teachers' Faculties for the duration of two to four years depending upon the subject combination.<sup>10</sup> An exception is teachers of Religion and English classes. Religion teachers are formed and prepared for school teaching at special higher education institutions. English teachers attend Faculty of English at the University. From grade five, separate subjects are taught by specialized teachers in specific subjects. Education of teaching personnel for the upper primary school is mainly realized at teachers' faculties lasting two or four years (Pašalić-Kreso, Muratović, Rangelov-Jusović & Trbić, 2006).

Teachers are employed in a school by the principal on the basis of a vacancy ad published in public newspapers. The vacancy ad states the requirements an employee should meet. Following the expiration of the period for which the ad is open and after considering documentation submitted by applicants, a decision is taken on the best candidate. A teacher is a civil servant and does not have any particular status.

In order to take up employment in a school, a teacher has to meet the requirements laid down in the Book of Rules on the type of qualifications of teachers and associates in schools. In the course of their further work, the teacher is obliged to undertake vocational training in the technical, methodical and pedagogic-psychological field in different ways – individually, within a group or collectively, in order to get points for extension of his/her licence after a period of four years. The way of obtaining licence for work in vocational schools is regulated by law (ETF, Unpublished Desk Research, 2009).

Pedagogical standards regulate the issue of the number of teacher's classes. All employees in upbringing-educational institutions have a 40-hour workweek. A class teacher is to spend 24 hours a week in the educational process (and in activities related to it). Additional 12 hours are foreseen for preparation for classes and 4 hours for other duties (vocational training,

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<sup>10</sup> Pedagoška akademija,

teacher on duty, administrative duties and the like). It is necessary to be sensitive if a class is attended by a student with difficulties in his/her development. The standards do not foresee special time for this type of preparation.

### *Pedagogical institutes*

There are seven pedagogical institutes in BiH, which are responsible for the professional development of teachers in BiH. The in-service training of teachers consists of obligatory collective and individual professional development. This development concerns methodology and instruments to be used for the assessment, identification, and progress monitoring as well as ensuring efficient application of pedagogical standards. The inspection of teachers in BiH is conducted by advisors employed at the Pedagogical Institute (Batarilo & Lenhart, 2007). The institutes are formed within the MoE and financed in the FBiH by the ministries. Pedagogical Institutes are expert advisors to the MoE. Teacher training and professional development are also offered by various "other" programs and projects carried out by local and international non-governmental organizations and the International Community (IC). A report from UNICEF also found that the majority of pedagogical institutes in BiH have organized some forms of educational trainings for teachers with support from the NGO sector (UNICEF BiH, 2008; Batarilo & Lenhart, 2007; Pašalić-Kreso, Muratović, Rangelov-Jusović & Trbić, 2006; Ministry of Civil Affairs, 2008).

### *School staff*

In a research report from a focus group study interviewing primary school principals in Sarajevo, the pedagogue is described as an educational scientist. The focus group interviews found that the schools that had psychologists and a pedagogue were a major resource in improving school climate and potentially relationships with parents and students (Kadic & Powell, 2008). In addition to teaching staff, each school is required to have a counselor, also known as a pedagogue (Russo, 2000). The responsibility of the counselor/pedagogue is to work with pupils, parents and teachers, as well as administrative responsibility, to represent as a member of the boards at the school, and in cooperating with institutions in the local community. The counselor/pedagogue is working according to the pedagogical standards.

Pedagogical Standards ensure equal baseline conditions for the development of student's capacities, emphasizing cognition, student's needs and social commitment. The pedagogical

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standards regulate the number of classes and groups, school space, equipment and school accessories. This includes access to rooms, adapted toilets, and transportation. Maximum and minimum number of pupils in one class, in regular schools the maximum number of children varies from canton to canton and between entities, from 32 to 34 children. The standards also regulate the composition of the expert staff in a school; pedagogues, social worker, psychologist and other special needs experts. The cost for children in social need *should* be covered by the Centre for Social Welfare (UNICEF BiH, 2009).

At the moment, teacher training is not standardized in BiH. Teachers are not licensed systemically, as professionals in their respective domains, and there have been no financial or any other instruments developed to act as incentives to encourage improvement in the competitiveness based quality of teachers' work (EU ICBE, 2008).

## 2.5 Current reform of primary education in BiH

The education system at all levels in BiH, are currently in a process of ongoing reform. Following BiH's membership of the Council of Europe in 2002, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) got the mandate to the education reform in BiH. This means that an international organisation is responsible for the reform effort of education in BiH. The OSCE Mission established a department dedicated to supporting the education reform process in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) in 2002. The country's post-war, fractured and divisive education policies were clearly detrimental to the Mission's goal of helping BiH evolve into a democratic, stable and secure state upholding all human and constitutional rights (OSCE, 2002).

The reform effort includes all four levels of the government (state, entity, canton and municipality) and was launched with the "Message to the People of Bosnia and Herzegovina", a document representing the content and basis of a social reform. For the education sector it includes five promises to the people of BiH, goals and recommended actions in the reform effort of the education sector (OSCE, 2002). This document describes five pledges [promises] to the people of BiH. These pledges are to ensure a quality education system in BiH.

At the homepage for OSCE in BiH it says that a "far-reaching reform is designed to bring BiH's education system in line with European standards, by instituting changes to legislation, curriculum, teaching methods, funding and management structures. And further, that the OSCE is co-coordinating the reform process. Various working groups and an expanded forum on education, including agencies and organizations with expertise in education, as well as donors, are all working together to implement the necessary changes. The groups work closely with local education officials and experts. The webpage of the OSCE in BiH state the following.

Education cannot be viewed as a simple issue of public administration reform, and the weaknesses of the current system cannot be solved through simple technical assistance with expert support. The lingering wartime politics of separation which underlie the current divisions must be acknowledged, and school- and student-level solutions aimed at bridging divided communities, promoting a culture of tolerance and a respect for diversity, must be further developed and supported (OSCE, 2008).

From the reform effort, the adoption of the state-level Framework Law on Primary and Secondary Education in BiH (June 2003) (hereinafter referred to as FL) has been acknowledged as one of the notable steps forward in the reform of education. Although there are still some inconsistencies in the implementation process (Perry, 2005). Elementary and secondary education is partly harmonised at the level of BiH through the adoption of the FL, although nine-year education is not equally implemented in all parts of the country.

The FL represents the main policy framework for this thesis. From the reform effort, the adoption at the state-level FL has been acknowledged as one of the notable steps forward in the reform of education in BiH. Furthermore, as a result of the research question guiding this study, the FL will be a central theme in the remainder of this study.

## 2.6 The framework law on primary and secondary education in BiH

The FL represents the guiding principles for primary education and came into adoption by the signing of the 14 ministers of education in BiH (June, 2003). The FL consist of thirteen sections, these are the regulations of: basic principles, levels of education, rights and obligations for parents, public and private schools, role and obligations of schools, school autonomy, educational standards, authorities responsible for establishing educational

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standards, education system management, surveillance and supervision of the implementation of the law, protection of rights and transition and final provisions. The FL is the only law on education in BiH applicable to state level. The FL provides the frame with which other laws on primary and secondary education need to be in accordance. The FL is the basis for creating all other documents regulating the educational process in the country.

### **2.6.1 Implementation of the FL in Canton Sarajevo**

The FL states in article 1 that the principles and standards defined and based on the law may not be reduced. The Implementation of the FL start to take place as the entity, cantonal, and district laws on education are harmonized with the FL.<sup>11</sup> Exact details about the harmonization process on the laws are only available in the local language.<sup>12</sup> In Canton Sarajevo, the Assembly of the Canton Sarajevo, at 22 April 2004 adapted the Law on Primary Education of Canton Sarajevo (LP, 2004 cited in Abdulovic, 2008).

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<sup>11</sup> The FL use the term to *harmonize* for the process of the implementation of the legislation at the entity, canton and district level in BiH. What it means is that the law is transferred from a state-level law through a consolidation process at these levels.



## 3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

### 3.1 Introduction

In the following chapter the theoretical framework will be introduced. First I will introduce the reasons for emphasising the didactical approach. Next, concepts for analysis from Basil Bernstein is introduced, followed by the frame factor theory. The frame system model (Figure 3.3) is explained and further contextualized to the context of BiH. The final section in this chapter introduces theories on how to measure a teacher's scope of action.

### 3.2 A general didactical approach

The research question guiding this study concerns the teacher and teaching. The research objectives are aimed at finding out what frame factors are affecting the teacher in the classroom. The general analytical didactical approach is focused on analysing the circumstances for teaching within the education system. It is within this approach this study is situated.

Didactics translates as the art or science of teaching, and the term originates from the Greek word *didáskein*: to teach. The field of didactics deals with how teaching takes place, what the content of teaching includes and on what foundation this context is decided upon (Imsen, 1999). According to this definition of didactics, the focus is on the content of teaching (the what), the teaching methodology (the how) and the overall function education is portrayed to have in society (the why). Within the field of didactics, some authors argue that the field divides between the analytical and the normative perspectives (Imsen 1999, Arfwedson 1994). The analytical perspective is taken when seeking to *describe* the situation in which teaching is taking place. The normative perspective is arguing in what manner teaching *should be* conducted. The latter often includes arguments opposing or supporting learning theories from psychology.

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### 3.2.1 Organizational features of the school

The complexity of the pedagogical reality can be manageable through concepts and elements of focus. The school is perceived as a social institution that is historically and culturally rooted. When social scientists have employed the concept of the social system to study the school, they are referring to it as a set of related elements that work together to attain a goal (Imsen, 1999). This definition is similar to how we can define an organisation; a group of people or other legal entities with an explicit purpose and written rules.<sup>13</sup>

Organisational theory is theory to explain behaviour and dynamics in organisations; it explains the activity in a school, for example, by looking at the interplay between pupils, teachers and the leadership. Conceptualizing the school as an organization can be useful and provide a better understanding of the role schools play. Moreover, the material and cultural content of the organisation is taken into account (Imsen, 1999). It is in the organisational components of the school, that Sarason (2002) finds the predictable failure of educational reform. According to Sarason, the failure to reform education becomes obvious for two reasons. The first is that reforms often fail to address the power relations in schools. The second reason he gives is that most reform efforts do not perceive the components of the reform as being part of a complex system.

When a reform only addresses parts of the complexity, the efforts rarely reach down to the classroom level (Sarason 2002, cited in Hargreaves, 2003). According to Sarason, when an educational reform seeks to implement new methodology, this attempt will be undermined if factors that also affect teaching are not taken into account. Thus, if an educational reform effort seeks to change the methodological approach of teachers, this will fail if it does not at the same time address the development of professional quality in teachers' skills and competence. According to Sarason, teacher development and professionalism must be a concern alongside the change related to teaching content and approach that is planned for the school.

Arfwedson (1991) reminds us that from a didactical perspective, the realities in schools are managed by rules as opposed to natural laws, thus the rules can be changed. According to

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<sup>13</sup> From, <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/organization>

him, the critique and discussion regarding the school that appears in its society presents the *conditions* for change but not the *premises* (Arfwedson, 1991). The general didactical approach is found suitable when the focus is to analyse the factors that are influencing teaching. How to theorise the content and conduct of teaching? Basil Bernstein provides useful concepts.

### **3.2.2 Bernstein's concepts as a tool for analysis**

The first to introduce the concept “frame” in educational research was the sociologist and linguist Basil Bernstein (1971). Bernstein's interest is concerned with exploring the ways in which social structures influence pedagogical practice. Bernstein's frame concept relates to the relationship between the curriculum and pedagogic practice. With Bernstein, the frame refers to the “degree of control teacher and pupil possess over the selection, organisation, and pacing of the knowledge transmitted and received in the pedagogical relationship” (Bernstein, 1971: 205). In other words, the frame identifies the character of the boundary between the curriculum and pedagogical practice. Pedagogical practice with Bernstein is identified as a fundamental social context through which cultural reproduction-production takes place (Bernstein, 2000). This study explores such pedagogical practice, the one which appears between teachers and learners in the classrooms of schools.

#### *Framing and classification*

The concepts of framing and classification can be useful in identifying the structure and relations between how the school and its content are organized. Further, these concepts can be used to understand the degree of control between the internal and external frame system (Figure 3.3). In this view, the content and organisation of education is perceived to be under some degree of social control. The concepts of classification and framing were established by Bernstein to be able to translate power and control into principles of communication (Bernstein, 2000). Classification refers to what, framing refers to how; their meanings are to be put together. Framing further refers to the control of communication in the pedagogical relationship, for example, between pupil and teacher. Classification is concerned with the organisation of knowledge into curriculum (*the what*), whereas framing is related to the transmission of knowledge through pedagogic practices. Bernstein argues that changing the strength of the boundaries could change society through the schools (Bernstein, 2000). Two

types of curriculum codes are outlined through the concept of classification: collection and integrated codes. The first refers to a strongly classified curriculum; the latter, to a weakly classified curriculum. Strong classification refers to a curriculum that is highly differentiated and separated into traditional subjects (content must be kept apart); weak classification refers to a curriculum that is integrated and in which the boundaries between subjects are fragile (content must be brought together). The boundary between the curriculum (*the what*) and pedagogical practice (*the how*) is defined as either strong or weak. Weak framing entails a range of options whereas strong framing entails reduced options (reduced degree of freedom). Bernstein used the curriculum code to analyse the way in which the shift from collection to integrated curriculum codes represents the evolution from traditional to modern society. Bernstein's analysis of the pedagogic discourse and practice is the foundation for linking micro educational processes to the macro sociological levels of social structure and class and power relations (Sadovnik, 2001). The organisational structure of the school, according to Bernstein, is resistant towards reform initiated change and is often mentioned as the conservatism of the school (Arfwedson, 1991).

With these concepts, we are approaching the field of curriculum theory. The code switch from collection to integrated curriculum code that Bernstein is addressing, is referred to in Arfwedson (1991) as the shift of knowledge paradigms. Arfwedson argues that it is of central importance to address the questions of "who owns the school?" and "what character does the school's knowledge have?" Arfwedson conceptualized Bernstein's curriculum code shift as the changed perception of the function of schooling as viewed from a societal perspective. The changed relationship between the student and society and the position of the material and formal theories of knowledge is illustrated in Figure 3.1.

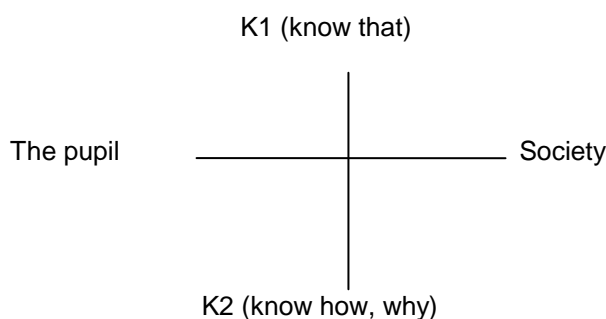


Figure 3.1 The relationship between the school and society

K1 and K2 in Figure 3.2 represent Arfwedson's two knowledge categories. The relationship between the pupil and society with K1 is founded upon reproduction and is teacher-centred. K1 is representing the "know that" paradigm and is dominated by traditional pedagogy. The knowledge the pupil obtains within this knowledge paradigm is often defined as "school knowledge". The pupil's role is hereby to learn the material knowledge; the more exact reproduction, the better grade. The teacher's role is thus to make sure the material knowledge is transferred from the teacher to the pupil. According to Arfwedson, K1 has dominated all kinds of schooling, and the classroom in the formal sense suits this traditional pedagogy. K2 situates the pupil in the centre and the aim of schooling in this knowledge paradigm becomes production instead of reproduction. Learning is perceived as a process of participation and production. Within this perspective, one of the most influential thinkers has been John Dewey.

Arfwedson's argument is that it is possible to determine what kind of roles and identities are dominating an education system, by identifying the learning theory (know what or know how, why) and the perceived function of education (production/reproduction). Both the pupil's and the teacher's roles can further be defined by looking at these variables.

### *Pedagogical identities*

Bernstein identified four pedagogical identities related to the why of education, as earlier mentioned, the function of education in a society. With this model, Bernstein accompanied the international policy debate in education – of whether it is the market or the state that should manage the content and discourses in the school, and if it is knowledge or socialising [upbringing] that is the school's most important function (Beck, 2007).

Two of the pedagogic identities are centred; two are de-centred (see Figure 3.2). The centred identities have a focus in the past (although a different past) and are built upon a central, national discourse. The de-centred identities are built upon a local context and focus upon the present (although a different present). The four positions represent different approaches to regulating and managing change, cultural and economic.

These different approaches to the management of change are expected to become the lived experience of teachers and students, through the shaping of their pedagogic identities (Bernstein, 2000).

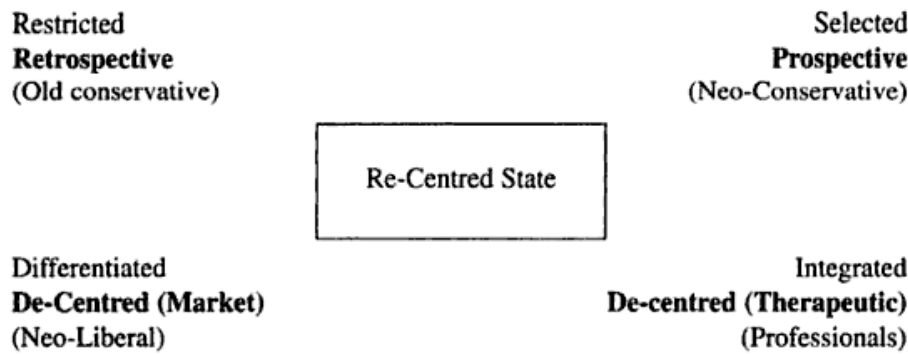


Figure 3.2 Pedagogical Identities (Bernstein, 2000:67)

1. Retrospective pedagogic identities (RI) are shaped by national religious, cultural, grand narratives of the past. The focus direct a strict control over discursive inputs of education that is the curriculum contents, not the learning outputs. The focus lies in stabilizing the past and projecting it into the future.<sup>14</sup>
2. Prospective pedagogic identities are formed like a retrospective of the past. The discursive base of prospective identities has a different focus and bias than the RI because this identity is constructed to deal with cultural, economic and technological changes. It locates the output of education as a transferable capital. This identity requires state control over both inputs and outputs in education.
3. De-centred pedagogic market identity, differentiating, efficiency, competition and pedagogy with economic rationality, efficiency, neo-liberalistic perspective
4. De-centred therapeutic identity is produced by complex theories of personal, cognitive and social development, often labelled progressive. Integration is learning by doing and developing the identity of the pupil.

I will use the pedagogical identities as a founding to ask questions to the analysed empirical data in this study, concerning the creation of pedagogical identities in the boundary between the external frame system and the internal frame system (see Figure 3.3) in BiH. The shift from the collection code to the integrated code is often seen in relation with the shift in pedagogical identities.

Through the concepts from Bernstein, an attempt will be made to link the micro educational processes at the school level to the macro sociological levels in which primary education in BiH operates. The macro sociological level is in this study represented by the FL and the

<sup>14</sup> Bernstein writes in 2000: 'We might find RI's projected in the official arenas of societies now fragmented or segmented after the collapse of totalizing regimes, e.g. Russian Federations, Balkans (Bernstein, 2000: 67).

other control organs functioning at the education system level. The frame factor theory represents a framework to be able to locate the boundaries of the relationship between the pedagogical practice of the teachers and the system (Engelsen, 2006).

### **3.2.3 Frame factor theory**

The concept of frame was extended from Bernstein with Dahllöf (1969) and elaborated in Lundgren (1972) in the frame factor theory. Urban Dahllöf and Ulf P. Lundgren are regarded as the founders of the frame factor theory (Lundgren, 1972). This theory was developed in the 1970s, and represented a sociological perspective for analysing the influence of the state upon the reality in the school. The theory was influenced by Basil Bernstein's early work, ideas from structural functionalism, social anthropology and neo-Marxist conflict perspectives. Lundgren's main question is why teaching turns out the way it does.

A frame factor is defined as the factors that can limit and to a certain extent determine the teaching process (Lundgren, 1972). The sum of the frame factors constitutes the framework surrounding a school. This theory was used as a tool for analysing and understanding the school reforms that were initiated in the 80's and 90's, in Sweden and abroad. The frame factors constitute a framework that enable or make actions impossible (Lundgren, 1999).

Lundgren (1990) defines that there are mainly three regulating frames affecting the school: economical-, legislative- and the ideological- frames. Evaluation has later been added as a fourth frame. The sum of the influences from these frames that are defined at the system level creates a scope of action in the school. The influence from society upon the classroom is perceived to take place through four systems: a goal system, an administrative system, a regulating system and an evaluating system. These four systems influence the education system to various degrees through their position to control, limit and regulate activity in the school. How these conditions are perceived relates to a certain extent to how the teacher and pupil perceive the frame factors (Engelsen, 2006).

In her adapted frame factor approach, Svingby (1979 cited in Imsen, 1999) argued that Lundgren's frame system theory put too much emphasis on the formal frames and that he gave away the teaching profession as strictly determined by the formal and central frame factors (Imsen, 1999). In Svingby's frame factor model, more locally defined frame factors

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were added. This included the pedagogical perspective of the teacher, as she found this factor to affect teaching to a larger extent than the formal frames.

The frame factor approach has influenced one way of looking at the pedagogical reality in schools. Johnsen (2001) developed a Curriculum Relation Model (CRM), where the frame factors appear as one of eight inter-relating aspects affecting teaching and learning. According to Johnsen, the frame factors represent those factors that are not directly involved in the teaching process but that indirectly affect it, either as restricting, guiding or providing opportunities for the teachers. Johnsen further argues on the process of educational development towards inclusion; the professional quality of teachers is a central frame factor. The prevalence of qualified teachers as well as the quality and perspective of their education are important frame factors (Johnsen, 2001). Johnsen and Svingby's approach is thus less deterministic in that they put less emphasis towards the formal frames and more attention to the individual teachers' capacity and influence.

The frame factor theory provides a framework to explore the scope of action at the school level, related to the structure of the relationship with the wider societal context of the school. It provides for a tool to analyse the process of the implementation of school reform or other relevant changes in the education sector. In this study, the term frame factors will be used as the externally decided factors that direct, constrain or provide opportunities for the teacher. The sum of the frame factors will tell us something about the teachers' and the schools' potential scope of action (Berg & Wallin, 1983; Dale, 1999; Johnsen, 2001; Lundgren, 1999).

### **3.2.4 Frame system model**

The frame system model (Figure 3.3) illustrates a simplified overview of the frame factors, agents and the distribution of power that is seen to influence and form the activity in schools. Arfwedson (1991) recognizes two frame systems surrounding each individual school: the external and the internal frame system. The external frame system represents the education system and includes the legislative, financial and ideological frames. The internal frame system is unique to each individual school and thus, will influence the school accordingly. This local frame system is seen to be affected by the school code, parents expectations, the pupils' backgrounds and moreover the socio-cultural situation of the



neighbourhood. The school code (see section 3.4.1) is seen as an active and retroactive factor to the situation in the classroom. This model and its theoretical background will be used as a framework in locating the frame factors for the primary school teacher in BiH.

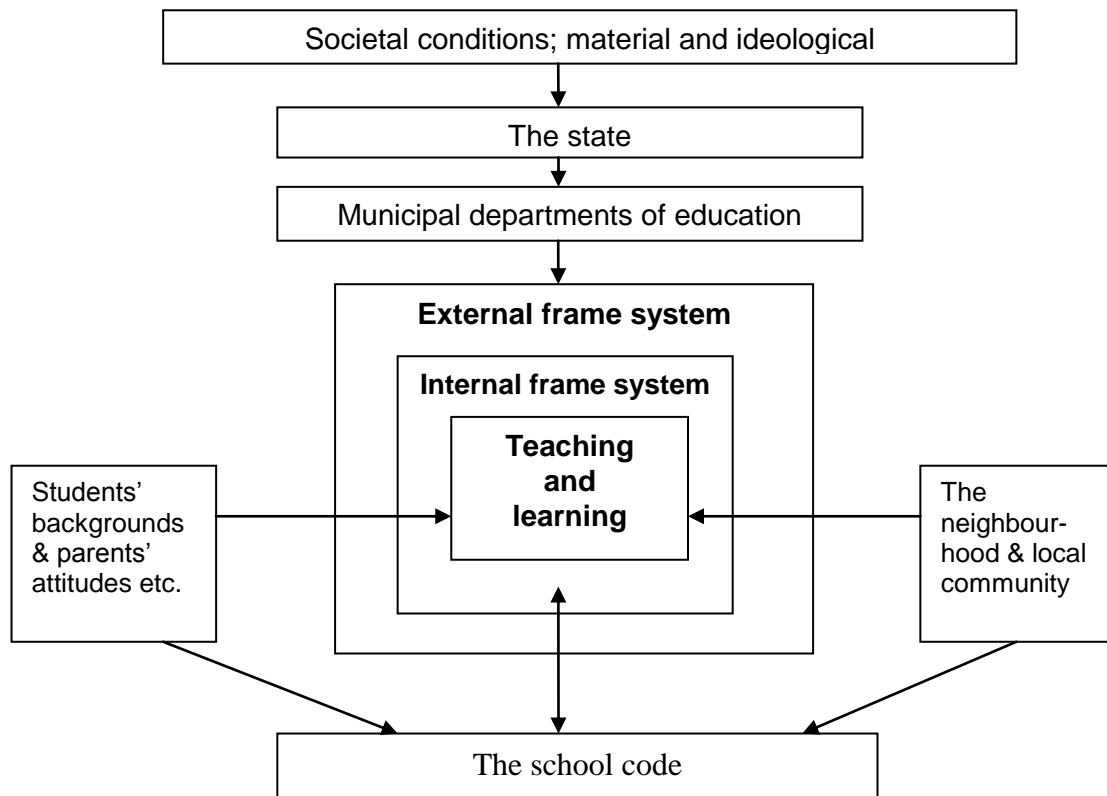


Figure 3.3 Frame system model by Arfwedson (1991) as cited in Engelsen (2006)

### 3.3 Contextualising the frame system model

This section will contextualise the frame system model (Figure 3.3) in order to analyse the conditions affecting the teacher in BiH. The model provides for a tool to analyse the differences between schools within the same (local or system) context. According to Figure 3.3, schools that are situated in the same country (state) are seen as belonging to the same

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external frame system. The local variations represented by the internal frame system will, however, determine more of the situation for each individual school (Arfwedson, 1991). The structure of the education system in BiH is mentioned as extremely fragmented (section 2.2). This has implications for how we can use the concepts within the model.

### **3.3.1 The external frame system: legislative, economical and ideological frames**

In the frame system model (Figure 3.3), the education system is represented as the external frame system. While Arfwedson includes the state, municipality and material and ideological social conditions, Lundgren (1983) divides this frame into three segments: the legislative frames, the financial frames and the ideological frames. Later, evaluation has been added as a fourth frame, due to the trend of national (and international) assessment tests (Lundgren 1999). The education system exercises influence on schools through the various control features governed by the authorities in the education system. At this level we find laws, legislations, the curricula and reform initiatives.

#### *The legislative frames*

The legislative frames influence the school and its operations through laws and guidelines that the schools are set to follow. Policy documents and laws on education represent the legislative frame, describing official educational rights, duties and general aims, as well as the curriculum content. National education acts and curricula often have a set of different aims and goals that do not necessarily correspond to each other. They are often a compromise between different interests and ideas (Johnsen, 2001).

The FL (2003) describes the principles, rights, duties and obligations of education at all levels in BiH (section 2.6). In the first article of the FL, the responsibility to implement the reform is divided between three actors: the educational authorities competent to organise education in BiH (the competent educational bodies), the institutions registered for providing educational services in accordance with the laws in BiH (the schools) and other expert institutions. Thus, education authorities, together with the schools are responsible for providing the facilities the FL mentions.

### *The financial frames*

The financial frames on the education system level form the physical situation in schools, the organisational frames and the management and regulation of the staff. In practice, this relates to the buildings and classrooms, access to didactical materials, teachers' salaries and the composition of the school staff. These frames are seen to have an impact on the pedagogical situation of the school (Lundgren, 1983). Arfwedson (1991) argues that the financial aspect within an education system is a socio-political aspect out of reach for a didactical analysis. Johnsen reminds us that economics is the most discussed – and complained about – of the frame factors. And that what is too often forgotten is that “the division of available economic resources depends on what priorities are made by central as well as local politicians and officials and in some cases also by the school management” (Johnsen, 2001: 266).

In the FL, primary education is stated to be obligatory and free of charge for all children. It obliges governmental bodies to take necessary measures to ensure established conditions for free access to primary education and equal opportunity to participate in the education process without discrimination of any kind (UNICEF BiH, 2009).

During the period of obligatory education, authority governmental bodies are obliged to take necessary measures in order to ensure conditions for a free access and participation in education to all students, especially in the regard of ensuring access to free textbooks, handbooks and other didactic material (FL, 2003: 6/7).

At the state level in BiH, there is no institution which provides funding for education. And as mentioned in section 2.2, BiH is divided into two entities: the FBiH and the RS; there are five levels of authority for the education system: State/Entity/Cantonal/Municipal/School-level.

At the entity level in the FBiH, the Ministry of Education and Science has no management responsibilities for schools or universities (see Appendix B). In the RS, the entity the Ministry of Education and Culture provides funding for all levels of education (Izvorski, 2006). As stated in section 2.2, the FBiH consists of ten cantons. The ten cantonal Ministries of Education are in charge of primary, secondary and tertiary education in their respective cantons. At the cantonal level, the financial responsibility is distributed to the municipality. The municipality, thus, is the school owner in the FBiH, BiH.

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The decentralized organisation of education in BiH contains noticeable differences in the economy as the respective entity/canton varies. This will influence the situations for the schools accordingly. As a result of this, salaries for the education sector are relative to which part of BiH they work in (Duilovic, 2004).

It seems impossible to state that all schools in BiH are situated within the same financial frame. What the availability of resources means for the pedagogical activity in the schools will be relative to several factors. However, when addressing the objective frame factors, noticeable differences exist within the education system in BiH at this level.

The municipalities in the FBiH are responsible for budgets funding the schools related to the number of pupils, pedagogues, other experts, teachers, as well as the non-teaching staff. Each municipality has financial responsibility for the schools in their school district. Even though the FL ensures free education, the situation is arguable. Primary education is not free, and parents must pay for: textbooks, handbooks, notebooks, school supplies, transport etc. (Jović, 2006; cited in Abdulovic, 2008). The pedagogical standards that were mentioned in section 2.5.2, relate directly to this frame. These standards are set to regulate the number of classes and groups, school space, equipment and school accessories, as well as regulate the composition of the expert staff in a school, by assessing needs the schools have related to the pupils' social situation.

The pedagogical situation in a school is not necessarily restricted by the financial frames it operates in. This can be found, for example in research on schools within the same school district (Imsen, 1999). What might determine the pedagogical situation to a larger extent are the ideological frames in the education system.

### *The ideological frames*

The ideological frames are, according to Lundgren (1983), the frames created by the curriculum. How the curriculum is structured and what it contains will have an influence upon the situation for teaching and learning. This includes the main goals and content of the curriculum, the testing and evaluation practices to assess the objectives of the curriculum and the underlying pedagogical philosophy. This frame is, according to Lundgren, the strongest influence the state has on the schools (1983).

In BiH, the term curriculum does not directly translate into the Bosnian language. A translation of the term curriculum is *plan i program* [plan and program/curriculum] (Stabback, 2007). Since the end of the socialist era and communist rule, there have been three periods of curriculum renewal in BiH: 1990 - 1992, when curricula were 'nationalised' by the three main ethnic groups; 1992 until the end of the war in 1995, when the three curricula began to diverge; and the post-war period, during which three separate curricula were consolidated (OECD, 2001). This consolidation process is still going on.

In BiH, the curriculum is divided into subject syllabi. The curriculum defines the subjects (and their amount in hours per week/year) that are to be taught in the (I-VIII) grades of primary school. To aid the implementation and evaluation of the curriculum process, the Standards and Assessment Agency (SAA) was established. It is a World Bank education project, stating that as the BiH situation, it is neither possible nor politically acceptable to aim for 'a unified curriculum' -- it is possible, acceptable, and educationally useful to aim for shared standards, especially in terms of student outcomes (OECD, 2001: 20). The OECD report further notices that as the designing and implementing of the curriculum in BiH is the strict prerogative of the FBiH and the RS, it is difficult to speak about curriculum or standards in the BiH context as no generalisations can be made (OECD, 2001). The question remains whether there have been any attempts to assess the student outcomes in BiH?

### *Evaluation*

Lundgren (1999) has added evaluation as a fourth frame surrounding the teacher in the school. This mirrors the trend, and one might also call it a movement of international comparisons of education outcomes. When it comes to evaluating education outcomes, BiH has not established any experience with such assessments (Kleintjes & Knappers, 2007). While there have been attempts to establish standards and assess these, by the Standards and Assessment Agency, its implications have been minimal (Stabback, 2007).

### **3.3.2 The internal frame system: local community and the school code**

The internal frame system consists of the schools' physical structure, the organisational characteristics in the school, factors related to the school staff and the shared consensus

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about the school (Arfwedson, 1984). The internal frame system can further be divided in two contexts: the schools' internal context and the local community context (see Figure 3.3). Exploring the content of this frame can reveal some of the particularities that characterise the pedagogical situation and the environment in a school. The internal frame is context bound and dynamic by nature. It changes over time and relates to the situation in the school district (Arfwedson, 1984). The internal frame system consists of the frame factors relative to each individual school.

This frame will influence teaching through the material conditions at the school, the number of teachers per pupil or the architecture of the school building. In the frame system model (Figure 3.3), we saw that Arfwedson (1991) includes the local community, parents' expectations and attitudes, the pupils' socio-economic background and the school code.

### *Local community*

There is reason to believe that the characteristics present in a school's neighbourhood affect the character of the school. A central argument from Arfwedson's empirical research is that the local school mirrors its local community (Engelsen, 2006). His studies found the internal frame system to influence the teachers and their work more than the structure of the education system (Arfwedson, 1986). Both Lundgren and Arfwedson conducted their research in Sweden, where the education system can be perceived as a unified system. The education system in BiH, does not fall under the characteristic of unified, rather the contrary. The model is constructed on the understanding that the external system frame is the same for all public schools. This, as we have seen in the previous section, is not the situation for BiH. It does, however, apply in BiH, in the RS at the entity level and in the FBiH at the canton level.

The FL states that parents are the basic educators of their children. They exercise rights and obligations in accordance with this law and other valid regulations, and have the right and obligation to take care of the education of their children. Further, parents have the right and obligation to participate in all levels of decision-making, regarding issues relevant to the work of the school and functioning of the educational system in general, in the best interests of their children and through their representatives in the school bodies and through their associations.

### *The school code*

The complexity operating in the internal frame system is somehow insuperable, so in order to make it possible to analyse this frame, Arfwedson developed the concept of the school code (1985).

When it comes to opinions on school and teaching matters, consensus among teachers does not exist, more or less the whole scale of possible teacher opinions can be found in every single school. But, some kind of consensus, solidarity to a dominant view seems to prevail – as to how to talk about school and school work, pupils and colleagues (Arfwedson, 1985: 66).

What Arfwedson found from his empirical research was that each school has its own, unique school code. The definition says that it consists of an “aggregate of guiding principles for interpretation and action, embracing whatever is important with reference to work, work environment and general problems of the school” (Arfwedson, 1985). His models and concepts are influenced by the concept of ‘frame’ and framing from Bernstein.

The school code is constituted by the teachers in the school, the history and traditions of the school as they appear in the form of institutionalised rules of the game. According to Arfwedson, the school code is also influenced by the characteristics of the local community. The school code does not exist as such but rather as a dynamic set of guiding principles within the school, conceptions about what may or may not be possible or suitable. In this sense, it is not a factual thing, and might not be possible to reconstruct from the outside.

Arfwedson explains the resistance inherent in the structure of the school by addressing the implications of the hierarchical nature of the organisation, namely that the hierarchical organisation in schools contributes to the (often recognized) resistance in implementing reforms initiated from outside. He sees this resistance as a necessity for teachers, in order to counterbalance or compensate for the complex reality that teaching represents. This is also mentioned as the protectionism inherent in education systems (reference). Another aspect of the school code is that it is a principal factor in teacher socialisation. Gradually, new teachers establish a relationship with the school code. And, rarely do teachers manage to change the school code (Arfwedson, 1985).

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### 3.4 The scope of action

In the previous two sections of this chapter, the two frame systems surrounding the school have been explained, alongside the concept of the school code and the frame factor.

According to Engelsen (2006), the result of an analysis of the frame factors is the school and teachers' scope of action. This concept [*translated from Norwegian: handlingsrom*] was originally developed by Berg & Wallin (1983).

The scope can be found in the boundary between the external and internal frame of the school. It is not a straightforward size and can be difficult to measure. Berg & Wallin argue that the scope of action is determined by the individual school code, the frame factors' character and the individual teachers' capacities.

To be able to utilize the scope of action, Berg & Wallin state that teachers need to have knowledge about the curriculum, about the schools' organisational features and about various forms of school development processes (1983). From this, the scope of action can be said to be what is possible for the teacher. And, according to Engelsen (2006), teachers, learners and schools will perceive this scope differently. According to Dale (2005), some teachers will perceive themselves as actors and thus play a more participatory role in shaping and utilizing the available scope of action. Other teachers will perceive themselves more passively and utilize their own scope of action to a lesser extent.

Dale (2005) assumes that the professional character of a school will depend upon the teachers' capacities. To illustrate and conceptualize the professional teacher, he has developed a competence triangle to illustrate that teachers' practice operates at various levels (see Figure 3.4). With Dale, C1 is the ability to conduct teaching (the 'right now' in the classroom, choices and actions). C2 is the ability to plan teaching and conduct the necessary follow-up work connected to the activity, evaluations, reflections etc. C3 is the ability to reflect wider upon the character of teaching. This involves critical reflection concerning schooling, i.e. the position of teachers in society or the content of the curriculum. According to Dale's assumptions, a professional teacher can operate and manage the practice at all the three C's.



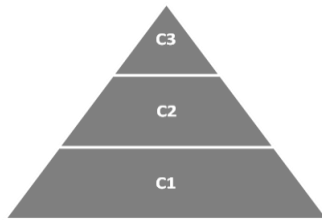


Figure 3.4: The Three Competences (C1, C2, C3)

## 4. METHODOLOGY

### 4.1 Introduction

This chapter deals with research methodology. The chapter presents how the study was conducted in seven sections. It shows the sample, the research approach and design, a presentation of the methods used, and finally a discussion of quality and ethical issues in qualitative research.

One of the research objectives of the thesis is to learn about teachers' perceptions of the frame factors. A qualitative research approach has guided the study. In order to get an understanding of how teachers perceive to be affected by the frame factors, fieldwork with semi-structured interviews was applied as the main data collection method. In order to gain more qualitative information on the circumstances surrounding primary school teachers in BiH, I observed classrooms and interviewed people at several levels: principals, pedagogues, advisors and professors. Thus, both classroom observations and semi-structured interviews were used for the data collection. This chapter describes the planning process and the use of these methods in the field. I recognize three main limitations to this study, and these will be presented and discussed.

### 4.2 Presentation of the data collection sites

This study has collected data in two sites: two primary schools in Sarajevo. Both schools were sampled by both convenience and criteria. Convenience- because it was made possible through a local researcher, and criteria- because both schools met the one criteria I had for sampling collection sites i.e. a primary school that to some extent was a special case related to the reform effort in the education system in BiH.

This relates to the pre-established notions I had about the current reform efforts on the education system in BiH. The following is a short description of the two schools, with an emphasis on information that qualified the schools as relevant to my fieldwork. Both schools

are situated in the same Municipality in Sarajevo (Novi Grad), though in separate suburbs. Both of the schools I was able to conduct fieldwork in have been portrayed as “positive examples” related to the situation and one might call it, health of the education reform in BiH. The particularities of the schools that can be translated into numbers are listed in Table 4.1.

### **4.2.1 School 1**

Through cooperation with the OSCE, the first primary school has been mentioned as a “model school” in the current reform measures in BiH. Thus, School 1’s work has been mentioned explicitly in reports by the OSCE, acknowledging the school’s efforts and achievements in adopting aspects of the legislations operating in the education system in BiH. The neighbourhood surrounding the school is described as less privileged, relating to the number of incomplete families and the low overall socio-economic situation (Dzemidzic, 2007). This particular contextual situation is interesting in relation to the efforts that the school has made. School 1 has been mentioned for their child centred pedagogy and for actively enrolling and integrating Roma children in the school. In a report on enrolment issues in BiH from 2007, OSCE report the following:

A few dedicated school directors visit their local Roma communities regularly, form relationships with children before they begin school, and make sure that they have adequate school materials, clothes, and food. [...] These schools have achieved remarkable results, going beyond the letter of the law to ensure that all children complete their education. These cases, however, contrast starkly with those in which the authorities are less concerned about the opportunities denied to Roma children living in their communities (OSCE, 2007).

School 1 in Sarajevo, has organized catch-up classes and examinations for people of all ages for the past six years, has received no financial support either from the Cantonal Ministry of Education or from the local municipality, which under Cantonal law is required to finance such education (OSCE, 2007).

I have no reasons to doubt the particularities of School 1 in the preparatory phase of this study. However, I was advised that it could be more illuminating to look at other schools, as School 1 has already been under “limelight” quite a few times. It was not until I came to Sarajevo and had discussions with the teachers that I understood how this had come about.

## 4.2.2 School 2

The school district surrounding School 2 is special because the location of the school is situated on the boarder that split BiH into RS and FBiH. This entails a multi-ethnic population represented within the school district however; the number of students from the RS is decreasing related to the building of an additional primary school in the RS. The curriculum is organized according to the particular ethnic orientation in the school. School 2 is one out of five schools in BiH to offer the subject of Religion to all three constituent peoples; this entails Roman Catholic, Islam and Christian Orthodox. School 2 was officially opened in the school year 1985/1986. After 1992 the school was completely destroyed due to war actions. Pupils and school staff continued schooling in improvises spaces (rooms) on several locations in the local community, this provisional practice lasted for ten years. In 1994 the school got a new name from the Executive board of the Municipality. USAID took over the reconstruction of the school building. The pupils returned in the school building at the outset of the school year 2002/2003.

It was moreover, related to both my personal understanding as well as the pre-conceived knowledge that I had gathered on the current status of the education reform, that I considered it as potentially more fruitful to discuss and ask people that were working in schools that were mentioned as positive cases.

Table 4.1 Case description of data collection sites and number of interviews

	<i>School 1</i>	<i>School 2</i>
Number of pupils	574	552
Number of teachers	39	33
Classes	25	26
Pedagogue*	1	1
Social worker**	33%	33%
Grade***	I-VIII	I-VIII

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*Interviewees*


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Teachers	6	0
Principal	1	1

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\*See section 2.4 for the distinction between teacher and pedagogue \*\*The social workers in both schools were also hired in two other schools, [to indicate a 33% position of employment] See Appendix E for dates for the interviews. \*\*\*School 1 and 2 will by the school year 2012/2013 teach classes of grade IX students.

### 4.3 Qualitative inquiry

Qualitative inquiry cultivates the most useful of all human capacities: the capacity to learn (Patton, 2002:1).

Deciding to conduct a qualitative inquiry in this study was guided by the research objectives and the research problem of this study. The theme of this study is the primary school teacher in BiH. The purpose of the study is to understand what the primary school teacher in BiH are influenced by from the structures of their education system, but most importantly how they perceive their position as teachers.

The decision to conduct fieldwork for this study came from two which purpose was to learn from the teacher and other experts and professionals working in school, about how they perceive their possibilities and constrains as teachers.

Bryman (2004) state that the qualitative approach stresses the understanding of the social world through an examination of the interpretation of that world by its participants (Bryman, 2004). The strengths of qualitative studies should be demonstrated for research that is exploratory or descriptive and that stresses the importance of context, setting and participants' frames of reference (Marshall & Rossman, 2005).

This study is designed as a case study of primary school teachers in BiH. Stake (1994) holds that the case study design is not a methodological choice but a choice of object to be studied. The value of a case study can be to inform us of conditions that are rare or unusual and thus not easily studied in any other way (Cozby, 2003). Gall, Gall & Borg (2007) argue that the

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case study is an in-depth study, of one or more instances of a phenomenon in its real-life context that reflects the perspective of the participants involved in the phenomenon. The case study involves fieldwork in which the researcher interacts with study participants in their natural settings, aiming to learn about the phenomenon from the perspective of those in the field (Stake, 1994). There are certainly several ways of defining conduct of a case study. This study have research objectives that calls for inquiry of a subjective nature.

The approach of this study is of an *etic* nature that strives to comprehend the *emic* perspective. Patton (2002) state that it is a methodological challenge to do justice to both the *emic* and the *etic* perspectives during and after fieldwork. These terms originates from anthropology and is commonly used in fieldwork related social sciences. The terms define that there are mainly two perspectives that can be taken in studying a social reality; either from an *emic* (insider) or an *etic* (outsider) perspective (Lindlof, 2008). If you see the terms from another perspective, the *emic* perspective is how the participants view the phenomenon, while the *etic* is the viewpoint of the researcher interpreting the context as an outsider. Drew (2008) add a third perspective in addition to the *emic* and the *etic* – a negotiated perspective. “Negotiated data requires a discussion between the researcher and the participants on each perspective/perspectives” (Drew, 2008:188).

For what the social scientist realize that while the outsider simply does not know the meanings or the patterns, the insider is so immersed that he may be oblivious to the fact that patterns exist. What the fieldworker make of this tension depends upon their personal capacities (Wax, 1971, cited in Patton, 2002:268).

There are no doubt several relevant issues between the insider and the outsiders perspective. This distinction between approaches presents a two-edged sword of either ignoring or recognizing patterns that are constituting the social reality of a phenomenon or issue. The criticism of the *etic* approach in anthropology said that the *emic* perspective was the approach that would yield meaningful knowledge.

## 4.4 Procedure

### 4.4.1 Research permission

Identifying an appropriate study area and contacting relevant people and authorities to obtain the necessary research permission are critical steps in research (Gall, Gall & Borg, 2007). Scheyvens & Storey (2003) state that there are at least two levels of permission that needs to be negotiated in order to conduct fieldwork: documentation and gatekeepers. Of these two levels of permission, this study managed to approve the fieldwork only at one level - through one local gatekeeper (Scheyvens & Storey, 2003). I wish to address two main explanations for this.

The first relates to time. Three months prior to the fieldwork, in late August 2008, the planning of this study started taking place. Through e-mail contact between Sarajevo and Oslo, between me and my gatekeeper, the access to School 1 and School 2 was negotiated. At this time I asked my gatekeeper and a local researcher; a former student at the Comparative and International Education masters program- if a formal letter of approval from the Ministry of Education in Sarajevo was necessary. The feedback I got from them was that this was not necessary and that the principal's local approval was sufficient. At this time, I read through the methodology chapters a few students from BiH, who had the University of Oslo that had been doing their fieldwork in BiH, and found that a letter of approval from the Ministry of Education normally took four to five months (Pavlovic, 2005; Varunek, 2006; Dzemic, 2007; Abdulovic, 2008). I decided to go through with the fieldwork without the official permission, supported by the gatekeepers approved access.

Applying for an official approval to conduct fieldwork is entwined in the ethical character of a research project. The second issue relates an evaluation of the potential implications of the study. In this study, there are two aspect that can counteract the limitation of not having a official research permit. One, the duration of the study was relatively short. And two, the people I wanted to ask questions, or talked with were all adults and I made it clear that the participation was voluntary. These two aspects relates to the scope of the study, which is relatively minimal. Either way, I was more aware about being explicit about the details of my study when I had the first meeting with the principal and the pedagogue in the two

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schools, by explaining the objectives of my study, the duration of my stay and answering “what I wanted from them”.

### *My local gatekeeper*

My gatekeeper was first introduced in the very first paragraph of this thesis. She is currently working as a pedagogue in School 1 and was the one who made this study possible. There is a potential bias embedded in collecting data in her workplace. The character of this relationship might have biased the fieldwork. It became visible for me mainly in two aspects. For one, related to my lack of skills in the Bosnian language, she was acting as an interpreter towards most of the staff and children at the school that I could not communicate with in English. This often positioned me as her visiting friend, and not to say that this relationship is a limitation in itself, however it might not even be possible for me to understand how this might have affected the teachers. On the other hand, this connection made it possible for me to engage into conversation with a far higher number of educators, researchers, teachers and trainers outside of the school, than I would have managed if I were solely on my own.

In interviewing the principal in School 1 and in School 2 I had translation assistance from my gatekeeper. She further arranged and made it possible for me to interview the advisor from the pedagogical institute, with her as an interpreter. The familiarity between my gatekeeper and these three interviewees includes a potential element of bias. To alter this in best possible way, I asked seemingly neutral questions that I interpreted as not putting either of the people present in the conversation under stress.

#### **4.4.2 Fieldwork**

The fieldwork in Sarajevo took place over a period of six weeks, from November 4<sup>th</sup> to December 13<sup>th</sup>, 2008. I spent more time in School 1 than in School 2, due to the connection with my local gatekeeper who works in School 1. A complete list of the dates and duration of formal data collection in School 1 and School 2 is listed in Table 4.2.

It was the pedagogue/counsellor in School 2 that became my contact person in this school. She was also the one who had approved of my presence in the school. In the first meeting we had we talked about our background, my research, her position as pedagogue and other



specifics and details about the school. The further planning of classroom observation in School 2 was arranged with her assistance. She was in this sense negotiating my further access to the teachers' classrooms.

### **4.4.3 Sampling**

Trust is important in qualitative interview research (Weis, 1992). It is important to establish oneself as a trustworthy member of the community before attempting to conduct interviews. My initial plan, which I communicated to my local gatekeeper and the pedagogue in School 2, was to first spend time in some of the classrooms in both schools, followed by interviews with teachers in both schools. The criteria I had for sampling for the interviews was that the teacher would be able to communicate with me in English. Both schools have English teachers and also other teachers who knew English, so in the outset – this criteria had the possibility of being a valid criteria. However, this did not turn out as I had planned. As illustrated in Table 4.1, this study is based on the interviews from only six teachers, and two principals. The limitation for the study as a result of this sample size, will be further discussed in section 4.6.2. However, the assumptions of why this sample size is so small has two main arguments from my stand. Weis (1992) that argues, that as a researcher and in entering other peoples culture or organization, you will be what people in the field choose to define you as and you have little control over this since you are entering their cultural totality - they are not entering yours.

### **4.4.4 The interview sample**

In this study the interviewees were primarily teachers (6 formal, prearranged and taped interviews). The sample also includes interviews with two principals and the advisor for primary school teachers from the Pedagogical Institute in Sarajevo. The data from the fieldwork furthermore include field notes (see list of \* in appendix E).

The interviews were conducted in the second half of the fieldwork in which the first interview took place after two weeks in the field (see list of dates, Table 4.2). My first interviewee agreed to have a follow-up interview, two weeks later. The duration of the

conversations varied from forty to ninety minutes.<sup>15</sup> The setting for the most of the interviews was at the school's premises, in the nearest available classroom or office. I had one interview in a nearby cafe of convenience to the interviewee.

While in the field, I kept the recordings and notes on secure premises and made back-up. Four of the interviews were fully transcribed while in the field. By listening to the conversations I was able to make suggestive notes of instances where I could have asked more defined follow-up questions, or phases where the conversations could have benefited from keeping the silence one or two seconds longer.

I transcribed all the interviews myself to ensure accuracy. Brinkmann and Kvale (2009) note that a reification of the social interaction in an interview may be strengthened by transcribing (2009). After each interview I noted down important non-verbal happenings that occurred during the interview. In retrospect these notes mainly dealt with reconsidering the questions that was asked for how they 'worked' in the interview context.

Table 4.2: Fieldwork overview

<i>Interview</i>	<i>Observation in classroom</i>
<i>Id, date,</i>	<i>Subject, grade, date</i>
<b>School 1</b>	
Teacher 1, 18.11.08 & 04.12.08	Mathematics, IV, 07.11.08 & 18.11.08
Teacher 2, 24.11.08	English, III, 06.11.08
Teacher 3, 26.11.08	English, VIII, 12.11.08 *
Teacher 4, 27.11.08	Bosnian, III, 18.11.08 Romska Musika 18.11.08 **
Teacher 5. 10.12.08	*
Teacher 6, 10.12.08	English, IV,III, 14.11. 08 & 19.11.08
Principle 1, 10.12.08	Pupils council, 14.11.08

<sup>15</sup> Interview and conversation are used interchangeably in the chapter even though I am aware of the interview is a special form of conversational practice

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**School 2**

The first meeting with the Pedagogue, 11.11.08

Interview with the Principal, 12.12.08

English, VI,	13.11.08
English, III,	13.11.08
Computer room lesson, VIII,	13.11.08
Bosnian language , I ***,	19.11.08
Gymnastics, VI & VII,	19.11.08
Mathematics, III	21.11.08
History, IV	21.11.08
Mathematics, II	21.11.08
Bosnian Language, I***	22.11.08
History, VIII,	05.12.08
Reading lesson, II	06.12.08

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*Note:* \* This English class was an ‘observation class’; where the teacher invited colleagues, the principal and the pedagogue – to attend a lesson that was prepared as an ‘observation class’, in order to get feedback from them on their lesson. This was part of their internal professional development \*\* This lesson was an extracurricular activity, organized by two teachers, a ten year old initiative, the content of these ‘classes’ were concerning the Roma’s culture and history. \*\*\* Indicates that these classroom observations were with the same teacher.

## 4.5 Data collection

This section presents how the data was collected in this study. The data collection methods were classroom observation, semi-structured interviewing and document analysis. The preparations for the data collection procedures are presented, including the interview guide and the purpose for entering classrooms for observation.

### 4.5.1 Observation

Marshall & Rossman (2006) describe observation as the systematic noting and recording of events, behaviours and artefacts in the social setting chosen for study. The observation

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record is frequently referred to as field notes; detailed nonjudgmental, concrete descriptions of what has been observed. The course of doing observation can range from highly structured, detailed notation of behaviour to a more holistic description of events and behaviour. Observation is not necessarily only taking place in a planned setting, observation notes can play an important part in an interview study, with the interviewer noting down body language and other non-verbal happenings. The complexity in human behavior is one of the challenges related to this method. Marshall & Rossman further argue that observation is a fundamental and highly important method in all kinds of qualitative inquiry (Marshall & Rossman, 2006: 99).

The reason for entering the classrooms as a non-participant observer was to familiarize myself with some of the codes of conduct in a Bosnian classroom context. Recognizing that I have a seemingly broad research question, the plan for the observation was to support my interview data in the process of understanding the teachers' context.

I negotiated access to the classrooms through my gatekeeper in School 1 and the Pedagogue in School 2. During the classroom observations I was able to try out various ways of noting down the procedures of the lesson. To retain a degree of consistency I used a check-list of variables that I especially looked for during a lesson. Exceptions was when I entered a teacher's classroom additional times, then I was able to notice other happenings. The content of conversations I had with teachers in the observation presence was noted down in a observation note book. And as I was overlapping the observing and interviewing, I could explore the conversational topics in the interviews.

My "anonymity" as a visitor varied. In some classrooms I was invited to participate in the dialogue that was going on between the teacher and the pupil's, this was typically in the higher grades, where the pupils got to practice their English (see Appendix E for list of classroom observation).

In retrospect, there were two main so called "lessons to learn" from observing. The first was how I entered the classroom. I found it more fruitful to meet the teacher a couple of minutes before the class would start, to introduce myself properly, tell about the reason for my interest and walk to the classroom. I recognized that this removed some degree of the 'mystery' of the contrary, just being introduced after the lesson has started, walking in as a

total stranger, before sitting down to take notes, in the very back of the classroom. I provided to the teacher, a note that briefly explained the study and who I was in English and Bosnian. This note had two purposes; the first was to be open about my intentions, while the second was my intention – to invite the teacher to be interviewed.

#### **4.5.2 Semi-structured interviewing**

Interviews can have explorative or hypothesis-testing purposes they can be primarily descriptive and seek to chart key aspects of a subject's lived world. I chose to interview the teachers mainly of the reason to enforce an in-depth understanding of how they perceived their position and opportunities as teachers. The qualitative interview is typically much more like conversations than formal events with predominated response categories. The method is according to Marshall & Rossman (2006) based on the fundamental assumption of all qualitative research: to let the participant unfold their perspective on the phenomenon of interest, inviting the participants to provide the emic perspective (Marshall & Rossman, 2006).

Interview knowledge is produced in a conversational relation; it is contextual, linguistic, narrative and pragmatic (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2009:18). One major advantage of the interview is adaptability. The skilful interviewer can follow up ideas, probe questions and investigate motives and feelings. The responses in the interview can be developed and clarified and does not need to be taken at face value.

Before the interview would start the interviewee was given an example of the informed consent (Appendix F) and we read through this together. The signing of this form took place either in this stage or after the interview had seen the end. In this phase we clarified whether it was okay to use a digital tape recorder. I was able to tape all but one interview. The interview that was not taped was because of the setting for the interview was in a noisy cafe.

In the interview situation with the principal in School 1, where my gatekeeper worked, it felt more like I was interviewing both of them, even though my gatekeeper only translated and did not participate in answering. I feel that I have reasonable grounds to trust my gatekeeper's professionalism in these settings: Both in relation to the personal character I

interpret her to have as well as the fact that she has undertaken research and is well aware of the ethical aspects of doing qualitative research.

The transcribed interviews were translated into text according to what was said in the conversations. Organized chronologically the text consists of the formulated questions, the follow-up questions and comments alongside the answers made by the interviewee. In the conversations, there were instances of words and extracts that could not stand on their own due to a lack of meaning. These were however included in the final transcript as I see it valuable to acknowledge the hurdle it sometimes was to conduct the interview in a second language.

‘I am so glad to talk with somebody that understand what I mean [...] now I know that language is not some barrier to communicate what you mean’ (Teacher 1, 20.11.08).

### 4.5.3 The interview guide

When preparing the questions for the interview guide I used some of the concepts and advice from Brinkmann & Kvale (2009) on order, phrasing and sequence. The interview guide was constructed with the theoretical framework as the backdrop to the themes. I have listed the questions that were asked in all the interviews in Appendix C. The interview guide I used included six themes:

Professional background	Expectations
Elements of change	The content and conduct of teaching
Particularities of the school	Assessment/evaluation of pupils

In the interview guide I made it a point to plan the wording of my questions brief and simple. I practiced what Brinkmann & Kvale (2009) defines as introductory, follow-up, probing, indirect, structuring and interpreting questions. The amount and frequency of these varied in relation to the dynamics in each interview. The sequence of the questioning varied, as some of the themes was either introduced naturally by the interviewee, or introduced by questions from me.

For example, a projective question was planned when I asked about how the teacher perceived that others saw their profession. The answer may refer either to the attitudes of others, or it may be a reflection of the interviewees own attitude. A follow-up question is however acquired in order to interpret the answer (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2009).

My introductory question to the teachers dealt with a question of professional background. The reason for this was for one to start with something concrete, and the wording of this question is related to the fact that the education and background can be very different and I evaluate it as interesting to hear what the teachers say about their education and especially how they perceive their own professional background. This question can be interpreted in several ways, inviting the teacher to answer in the manner and extent s/he wanted. I further saw it as important to relate their professional background to the rest of the interview.

## 4.6 Ethical considerations

Flick (2007) argues the relation between ethics and quality seen from three angles; first, quality is seen as a precondition for ethically sound research, second - the reflection of ethical issues as a quality feature of qualitative research and third: doing research according to quality standards may affect ethical issues (Flick, 2007:9).

### 4.6.1 Informed consent

Confidentiality was negotiated through an informed consent form (see Appendix F), also ensuring anonymity. In line with this agreement, the names used in the thesis are pseudonyms as already mentioned. Anonymity in a research project refers to keeping the identity of the respondent from being known by the researcher. In addition to the informed consent, I conducted all the interviews, with the audio recorder as the only external participant. Every researcher has the responsibility to protect participants in a research study including obtaining informed consent, ensuring protection from harm, and protecting privacy. The relationship between the researcher and people participating in a study represent ethical issues particular for qualitative research.

This can deal with balancing between building friendship and acting as a stranger, as this is seen to have the possibility to affect a qualitative research study (Drew 2008).

The quality of the collected data is a responsibility of the researcher and is closely linked to the trustworthiness of the data. Drew (2008) goes that in an interview situation, the researcher should make an effort at not asking questions that are of the kind that can be perceived to be based on a lack of knowledge/ information that disregards the interviewee. Interviewing is indeed a very personal process, and Drew mentions as a key guideline in the qualitative project “not to lead the witness”. While note taking can seem less obtrusive to the interviewee, the planned analysis of the interview material in this study, called for the audio taped conversation. I noticed however, that the conversation that I had informal, was more spontaneous in the sense that the direction of the conversation was not fixed or planned, and it was easier to pick up on what was said and move on to wherever the reply led.

#### **4.6.2 Cultural sensitivity**

In conducting research in cultures not of our own, it can be critical for the researcher to be honest about where s/he is coming from theoretically and personally. This can be important since all behavior observed in fieldwork is interpreted through this biographical lens. The ethical imperatives for conducting research in a culture not of your own, Weis argues, that this kind of research includes to know “who you are” before going into the field. A critical imperative of this is to acknowledge your perspective. Another imperative is to exhibit integrity and it has to do with trust (Weis, 1992). Weis further argues that the length of time spent in the field will in part determine this relationship. She states, and I agree, that the researchers’ job is to record and later analyze, not pass judgment.

#### **4.6.3 Methodological limitation**

I recognize three main limitations to this study. The first relates to transferability. BiH is a federal republic where the administration of education is decentralized and conducted through five levels, administrated further under the authority of fourteen Ministries of Education. The findings presented in this thesis will therefore not be transferable to the whole of BiH. The second limitation relates to language. The third discusses the implications of the small sample.



In Sarajevo, I interviewed teachers that was comfortable with having the interview in English. This might have provided me with a smaller sample than I could have had, if I had used an interpreter in the interviews. The reason for not planning to hire an interpreter came of two reasons. One, my status as an outsider to the context and culture in general made it difficult to plan this in Oslo - as I was not sure whether it would bring about ethical dilemmas for the interviewee with using an interpreter, due to the political situation the spoken language in BiH currently have. Second, in the preparatory phase of planning the fieldwork and data collection in Sarajevo I consulted a few local researchers and they ensured that it would be no problem to have in-depth interviews with teachers in English. Although none of the teachers I managed to interview portrayed that they struggled with formulating what they wanted to say, it is obvious that the depth of the conversations might have suffered from this.

In effect, the sample size for the interviews in this study is relatively small. There is a reason to assume that the perspectives held by the teachers interviewed in School 1 do not represent the whole school. For one, for the simple reason that the sample was only six teachers. Another aspect I interpret to relate to this from one interviewee, when she referred to experiences from the beginning phase, when some of the teachers in School 1 started to implement new teaching and learning strategies in their classrooms:

In the beginning when we started to implement these different strategies, one of these is, for example, when we start the day by sitting in a circle on the floor in the back of the classroom. The other teachers told me: 'you are crazy!' But after a while, when they themselves had participated in some training, they improved (Teacher 1, 20.11.08).

One of the reasons for the size of the sample relates to my sample criteria for the interview and has already been mentioned. The other reason was partly out of my control and relates to my lack of success in interviewing teachers in School 2. I recognize two reasons for this , firstly the teachers I asked for interviews in School 2, answered that they did not have any spare time for it, however flexible I tried to be; two teachers I asked added that the conversations we had had in the classroom included everything they had to share. Obviously this was their choice and something I could not influence. As I had planned to first spend time in the schools and observe, the interviews were planned to take place in the second

half of my fieldwork – and a plan B could not be implemented. Even if I did not manage to interview any teachers, I got to know some of the teachers' classroom situations and some degree of understanding of the potential differences between School 1 and School 2.

The pedagogue in School 2 told me in one meeting we had, that “all the teachers will tell you exactly the same thing - this is a good school”. I am still not sure what this quotation mean exactly, because when I asked for her explanation this did not enhance the clarity. But, my interpretation of it, and the overall understanding I keep of my presence in School 2 is that it might have been due to a fundamental misunderstanding of my intention of doing part of my fieldwork in this school. This has made me reflect over the importance of taking time to make sure that the gatekeepers, or people that is granting you access to a field, are well informed and aware of your objectives and perspectives.

## 4.7 Quality criteria and analysis

Enhancing the quality of a study can be exercised through investigating one object from several perspectives using multiple methods (Flick, 2007). In this study I have used three research techniques to be able to comprehend the circumstances surrounding the primary school teacher in BiH. This can be called an between-method triangulation.

The validity of a qualitative study should be assessed and taken care of at many levels, reformulated into the actions of; investigation, checking, questioning and theorizing (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2009).

### 4.7.1 Validation

The complexities of validating qualitative research need not be due to an inherent weakness in qualitative methods, but may on the contrary rest on their extraordinary power to picture and to question the complexity of the social reality investigated (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2009: 253).

This section deals with various issues of validating qualitative research with an emphasis upon the interview as method. One element of the validation process is for the researcher to develop reflexive objectivity. This entails that the researcher ought to be reflexive about the contributions the researcher can make to the production of knowledge.

“To protect the reliability of data, an interviewer must be especially careful to ask respondents only for data about which they have firsthand knowledge and that they can provide freely and candidly” (Drew, 2002:191).

Brinkmann & Kvale (2009) state that member validation occurs when the researcher provides the subjects of an inquiry with the interpretations, for a discussion of their validity. After the interview I provided the teachers with their signed copy of the informed consent and a description of my research objectives etc. written in English and Bosnian, also written on this piece of paper was my e-mail address, in order for them to have the opportunity to reach me if they wanted. Two of the teachers I interviewed wrote down their e-mail address in return, and told me that I was free to ask them questions or contact them if I needed to.

I took their offer, and provided both these teachers (Teacher 3 and Teacher 6) with the final transcript of their interview. In the e-mail text I asked them if they would like to take a look at it and please get back at me if they saw that I had misinterpreted or misunderstood something in the conversation. One of the teachers sent the transcript back “with a few corrections”. Her e-mail text is re-stated here because I found it valuable in the interpretation process of her interview texts.

“I don’t mind if you use my full name, because I think that all teachers of the world have similar thoughts and dilemmas, and that there isn’t anything to be ashamed of. Thank you for sending me the transcript, it is good sometimes to stop and think of your role. Routine is very harmful in our profession. I must add that nobody have asked me questions of that kind” (Teacher 3, 12.03.09, personal communication: e-mail).

The corrections the teacher had made included some grammatical corrections as well as filling out incomplete sentences. The corrected transcript was useful because some of the text turned out more understandable, due to her corrections. Whether or not people are motivated to contribute with such efforts as Teacher 3 provided, will in return affect the feedback it is possible to get from sending the interview transcript to the interviewee.

Another issue relates to what kind of epistemological perspective the researcher holds. Because, sending a interview transcript for “proofreading” might provide additional dilemmas related to the outcome of the interview.

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## 4.7.2 Analysis and coding

Coding was the first phase of analysing the interview and fieldwork data. Noting keywords from interviews and reading through interview transcripts while noting themes is part of the coding process. Coding is to generate an index of terms that will aid the process of analysis and interpretation (Bryman, 2004). Bryman advises coding to be a process that goes through several phases: initial coding of transcripts and field notes, review of the codes and theorising of the codes. Coding is a mechanism for thinking about the meaning of data and for reducing the amount of data. The interpretation and analysis of the data takes place at a later stage (Bryman, 2004).

The analysis of the interviews can be divided into three phases in this study, the first process of analysis occurred in the interview, the second when transcribing the recorded interview into text and the third, when the interview text were coded and later analysed and interpreted by theorizing the codes through concepts from the theoretical background.

The research diary was undertaken in order to develop reflexive objectivity. I wrote down reflections from observations, conversations and interviews in one research diary. Blaxter, Hughes & Tight (2001) advice the qualitative researcher to divide the notes into four sections: observational notes, methodological notes, theoretical notes and analytical memo. And further, that keeping a research diary is an essential part of undertaking qualitative research, making the researcher prompted to reflect on different aspects of doing research and the researcher's role within the construction of research knowledge (Blaxter, Hughes & Tight, 2001). The research diary was important in throughout the process of analysing the reflections and interpretations in the field.

The coding of the interview transcripts was done by an exhaustive reading of the transcribed text. In this process, I noted main themes in the margin, one interview at a time. In this way, I constructed codes that appeared through the reading of the interviews. I did the coding manually as my amount of data allowed for this. I used the six interviews with the teachers as the main content in the coding phase, whereas the field notes and the other interviews were used to understand or in some way relate to the content and codes of the teachers' interviews. It is difficult to trace where the analysis process began and where coding ended, as I believe these two activities sometimes overlapped.

The analysis of qualitative data is a continuous, iterative enterprise consisting of three concurrent flows of activity: data reduction, data display and conclusion drawing (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Understanding remained a central concept for analysing the data collected in this study. The main purpose of the study is to understand what frame factors are present for the primary school teacher in BiH.

### **4.7.3 Analysis on the basis of hermeneutic theory**

Interpretation is not an occasional, post facto supplement to understanding; rather, understanding is always interpretation, and hence interpretation is the explicit form of understanding (Gadamer, 2004: 306).

Brinkmann & Kvale (2009) argue that the philosophical position held by the interviewer may provide conceptual frames of reference for the knowledge produced by qualitative research interviews. Classic hermeneutics originated in the study of religious texts, law and literature, aiming to bring out the essence of a text from the perspective of its authors. In the larger context of qualitative inquiry today hermeneutics has also come to include interpreting interviews and observed actions (Patton, 2002). Brinkmann & Kvale (2009) further point out that the qualitative researcher can learn from hermeneutics to analyze interviews as texts, and look beyond the here and now in the interview situation. This can be done by paying attention to the contextual interpretative horizon provided by history and tradition.

Brinkmann & Kvale (2009) claims that the interview in principle can be an objective research method in the sense of being unbiased. Connected to hermeneutics, they mention reflexive objectivity, meaning that the researcher is reflexive about her/his contribution to the production of knowledge and referring to Gadamer “that one can only make informed judgements on the basis of prejudices that enable us to understand something”(Brinkmann & Kvale, 2009: 242).

In hermeneutics, prejudice is seen as a condition for understanding. Gadamer (2004) state that “long before we understand ourselves through the process of self-examination, we understand ourselves in a self-evident way in the family, society and state in which we live. And that [...] prejudice of the individual, far more than his judgements, constitute the historical reality of his being” (Gadamer, 2004: 278).

A hermeneutic standpoint would argue that one can only interpret the meaning of something from a certain perspective, position or situational context. Thus, for the qualitative inquirer - reporting the standpoint or perspective is essential (Patton, 2002). Kvale & Brinkmann (2009) state that the task is to recognize the primacy of the question and attempt to make the questions explicit, thereby providing the reader of an interview report with an opportunity to evaluate their influence on the research findings and to assess the validity of the findings.

## 5. PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

### 5.1 Introduction

In this chapter I will present and analyse the findings from the study. The chapter is split in three main sections and each section address the findings and the analysis related to the three research objectives in this study. The research objectives and the theoretical framework are connected and this is reflected in the structure of this chapter. The three sections in this chapter will relate to different pieces of this framework. The research question as such will not be answered in this chapter rather it provides a foundation for the assumptions to be drawn together in the next and final chapter. Professor Adila Pasalic-Kreso told me over coffee one afternoon in Sarajevo last year, that things are going slow with the reform, but that most teachers are aware of it. This chapter presents the

### 5.2 The internal frame system

The first research objective in this study seeks to locate the subjective size of the teacher's scope of action through finding out what is influencing the teachers' own perceptions of the frame factors. The internal frame system is unique to each individual school. This relates to the definition of the internal frame; constituted by the school's neighbourhood, the traditions within the school, parents' attitudes and the pupils background. Arfwedson argued that a school mirrors its local community. In this sense, the local community appears as a frame factor for teachers in the sense that it affects or directs their teaching through their attitudes and involvement. The influences of the internal frame system are not regulated as such. However, schools in BiH have a defined school district. Whether the local community directs, constrains or provides opportunities for the teacher, questions must be asked about the relationship between the school and its local community.

Pupils' backgrounds are reflected in the socio-cultural situation of the family and the neighbourhood surrounding the school. The teachers indicated in the interviews that School 1 was situated in a neighbourhood framed by the low economical and socio-cultural

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resources. The teachers recognized the need for parents to be more present and active in their children's education. When the teachers interviewed in this study was asked about their expectations to their pupil's parents, the answer mostly dealt with how the parents cooperated to the learning situation of the pupil. This question brought about some stories about special pupils in their classes that the teachers assumed would benefit from parental involvement. The interview data did not provide this study with sufficient data about the relationship between the parents and the teachers. However, the school code was somehow a determining factor in School 1's relationship with the local community. The principal told about the recent years of progress with establishing relationships with the local community. This included parental meetings and other arrangements that invited the parents into the school. This role is part of the responsibility of the counsellor/pedagogue in the schools (see section 2.4).

The very first question I posed to the teachers interviewed in this study was concerning the course of their education. Naturally, there were differences in how the teachers were educated and their experiences. The variety of experience for the six teachers interviewed in this study ranged from teaching for fifteen years, to three months. Disregarding their experience, when the question of how the teachers perceived other people's opinions of their profession, the answer point towards a perception of it being a low-status.

### **5.2.1 Social status of the teacher**

To find out about how the teachers' perceived their profession in a societal context, the teachers were asked about how they imagined that people not working in education perceived it.

In general, the teachers responded to this question by referring to other peoples' lack of insight into what their work really included. The general perception was that other people's opinions conflicted with their own individual perceptions regarding their profession. Examples were given by portraying relatives or neighbours commenting on their job as "easy", "effortless" or "amusing". The following transcript illustrates one of the teacher's reflections to the question:

I don't know. Some people think that I only work for four hours, and that I only work when I am inside the classroom. But I am tired of explaining that



I spend the rest of my day, preparing for lessons, checking homework, assignments and thinking – thinking about the ways I can solve some behavioral problems. But generally people don't understand that this job is difficult and responsible. I remember my teachers; they influenced me a lot (Teacher 3, 26.11.08).

The term “traditional teaching” was often mentioned by teachers and researchers in Sarajevo. When this term was used about a teacher, it was referring to the practice of teaching in a way that was common in the former, socialist education system where the teacher-centred and traditional teaching dominated (see section 3.2.2). The teachers interviewed in this study, at one point, recognised the teacher role to have changed in a devaluating direction at the societal level, related to their loss of authority. At another point, the teachers agreed on the perception that education today provides for better opportunities for learners, and that teaching in general is better than in the previous system. Still, what was commonly mentioned, in conference discussions and in the interviews, was that “most teachers are still thinking in traditional ways in BiH” (Teacher 03, 26.11.08).

On the other hand, the teachers' internal frame of reference related to the importance of teaching was contrary to what they believed others thought of it. This can entail that their individual perceptions of their opportunities and challenges as teachers were influenced by this perspective. Common for the teachers that were interviewed in this study was that they presented themselves as committed and caring teachers, with a shared understanding of the function and value of primary education, for all children. Their common perception, at the societal level, that teachers have a low status was often exemplified by comparing the differences between how they perceived teaching today to be with the former system. The teacher's identity in the former system was mentioned as being a “teacher with authority” (Teacher 3, 26.11.08).

In section 3.4, Dale's (1983) argument regarding a teacher's practical and abstract capacities was presented. The capacities were explained with the three C's, to reflect the capacity of the teacher in utilizing the available scope of action. And Dale argued that how teachers perceive themselves as teachers also plays a role in how they shape and utilize their scope of action (Dale, 2000).

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### 5.2.2 How do the teachers perceive their school?

A recurrent theme in the interviews with the teachers in School 1 concerned their understanding that other schools in BiH were different from their school. Teacher 1 had been holding a seminar in a small town close to Sarajevo, and mentioned this in the interview:

I don't know anything of this problem. I went to a city as a trainer, and I saw that one school was Croatian and one Bosnian. We are closed in one city here. And I knew nothing of this problem (Teacher 1, 04.12.08).

It is not self-evident what this quotation means, but the teacher is referring to the practice of segregated schooling where access and curriculum in each school follow the ethnic identity of the pupil; a specific practice of this is called "two schools under one roof" (see section 2.3). What Teacher 1 was saying moreover (in the quotation) relates to the divided character of the education system and the overall society of BiH. What "we are closed in one city here" meant for this teacher was, that she did not, until recently, have knowledge about this specific practice of segregated schooling, in BiH. That she was, now able to reflect around this "problem" and the situation for the pupils in these schools, would put her professional capacities related to Dale's three C's, at the third level. She further reflected the following in the interview.

We are not used to work together; this is the problem in our state. There are so many educational managers at so many different levels. Maybe we don't know the name of our own problem (Teacher 1, 04.12.08).

What Teacher 1 was saying here (in the quotation), relates directly to what most authors write about the challenges in the education system in BiH, the heritage from the Dayton agreement and the characteristic of post-war BiH's political structure. Some of these have been mentioned earlier in this thesis (Pasalic-Kreso, 2002, 2008; Kolouh-Westin, 2004; Staback, 2007; Unicef, 2008). The context of the educational management in BiH is also recognized at the school level, and that the solutions are not to be considered as a quick-fix in any sense of the matter.

How teachers perceived their own schools compared to other schools was intended to provide the study with some aspects of the school code at each of the schools, as well as knowledge about the school situation in Sarajevo. As mentioned, the teachers interviewed in

this study are all working in School 1. Even though the overall limitation of having such a small sample has been mentioned (see section 4.6.3) it is also relevant in particular in this section. The subjective size of the scope of action that this study is able to explore will regard the teachers in School 1. What this study found to define aspects of the school code (see section 5.2.3) in School 1 has been extracted from the interviews.

I think this school and some other schools are developing more and faster than others, and I see this as a problem (Teacher 1, 04.12.08).

This school is special because we don't care about nationality, we have an open school. More open than other schools in Sarajevo. It is a good school (Teacher 4, 27.11.08)

The quotations were chosen to introduce this section to reflect the perception the teachers had, concerning school development in School 1. Both quotations are pointing in the direction that that the teachers' sense their school as different compared to other schools, in Sarajevo and overall in BiH. The first quotation is representing the school development in School 1 and the other what this study found to constitute the school code in School 1 – the open school (see section 4.2). The interviewees tended to reflect through similar concepts of pedagogical philosophy, related especially to child-centred education. This also reflects aspects of the school code (section 3.3.2).

At another point, the relationship between teachers' reflections at these two levels can tell us something about the pedagogical identity the teachers' identified with. As we can recall from the theoretical framework (section 3.2.2), Bernstein's four pedagogical identities and Arfwedson's figure to map an education systems "knowledge paradigm" can help to explain this conflict. The use of the term conflict is related to the observed gap between the teachers this study interviewed – and a large proportion of other teachers. This comes from an observation that became present throughout the fieldwork in Sarajevo, being told that most teachers are still teaching in the traditional way. In this sense, it can become a conflict for the mere reason that there are two significantly different ways of teaching that might provide grounds for a collision. From this, it can be argued that at the primary education level, BiH can talk about having several teacher identities (pedagogical identities). The teachers interviewed in this study tended to relate more to the de-centred therapeutic identity.

One of the teachers referred to her personal experience as a parent in another primary school. Through a comparison between “her” own school and the one her children were attending, she labelled the other school as closed, where she put an emphasis on the school’s seemingly unwillingness to change their pedagogy. This assumption does not provide any information about the quality of the pedagogical situation at the other school, but it supports the observation this study has made about the school code prevalent in School 1, as an open school.

In section 3.4, teachers’ capacities in utilizing the scope of action are seen in relation to Dale’s three C’s. C3 is ranged as the highest of competences acquired (Dale, 1990). When teachers are able to operate between the three C’s, means, according to Dale, that teachers are able to: plan, conduct and reflect upon teaching and moreover, the function of schooling in society. This also means to involve a critical reflection concerning schooling, i.e. the position of teachers in society and the content of the curriculum (Dale, 2000).

However divided their professional self-confidence was reported in the interviews, it can be argued that their own opportunities in School 1 are locally defined. Moreover, there appeared a range of critical reflections regarding the fragmented situation in education in BiH. The teachers I interviewed also expressed a lack of trust in politicians, mostly related to educational politicians and the managers of the school system in Bosnia. That the teachers were aware of the various frames and under different educational policies was expressed in the following way by one teacher.

Why didn’t you go see some schools in the rural areas or outside Sarajevo? Sarajevo is so different, and you need to understand that (Teacher 6, 10.12.08).

This quotation is somehow transparent when reading it separated from the rest of the interview transcript. It can however strengthen the argument that differences are acknowledged by the teachers on the relation between the external frame systems surrounding the schools in BiH. This will be discussed in the forthcoming section on the external frame system (section 5.3).

### 5.2.3 Education today

When the teachers talked about their own school and the learning opportunities for their pupils, education was portrayed to include more and better opportunities today compared with over twenty years ago; this related to a perceived greater variety of didactical materials and technical equipment etc. What also became a general consensus between the teachers was their emphasis on the changed relationship between the pupil and the teacher. What made an interesting distinction between the teachers when they answered this question was how they answered the question in one of two ways. Either, by focusing on the course of their own individual development [teachers' have experience] or their relationship to their own profession. One teacher reflected upon the changed nature of learning, stating the example in connection to her own experience as a pupil:

We had to know everything in detail. Nowadays I think it is more important to teach students how to find information and how to develop their learning skills to make them able to learn by themselves. The classroom is not the only place where the children can learn (Teacher 3, 26.11.08).

I asked the question in a straight-forward manner not to impose my suggestions or meanings on the matter. When the teachers reflected about schooling when they first started teaching, this meant, for some of the teachers, education in the former Yugoslavia. Education now was perceived as providing pupils with better opportunities because of better teaching and learning materials, didactical equipment, videos and other technical facilities. The teachers perceived learning today to have changed from remembering to managing skills to learn. The main issue that the teachers saw was coming out of the new approach to learning was for one that they had seen an increase in behavioural problems in their classrooms.

You cannot just teach and go, now. No. You must develop good communication with the pupils and understand how to approach them, and to make them respect you (Teacher 2, 24.11.08).

With altering their perspectives the teachers, by acknowledging a changed relationship between the teachers and learners, tell the story of a perception of schooling with better opportunities related to their position and role as teachers. The question about how the teachers had experienced the changes taking place in education and teaching was found essential in understanding how they perceive education today.

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The teachers I talked with perceived their role as teachers to be more difficult today, more challenging than it used to be. This was uttered through self-reflections regarding their experiences (judgment of skills) comparing the lessons they used to have - and the ones they were currently teaching.

The intention behind asking this question was to get to know how the teachers reflected around what have been mentioned as an ongoing transition from teacher-centred to learner-centred perspective in the primary schools of BiH. If we look at this relationship through the figure drawn by Arfwedson in Figure 3.2 – it is pointing in a direction of such a change. There were four directions in the figure, between the pupil and society, and between the content of the curriculum: know what and know why. If such a shift have taken place, the character of education in BiH would, in Figure 3.2 be closer to the pupil and further away from "the society", and moving away from the know what – to the know how.

Dale's three competences can provide an illustrating example that relates to how we theorize teachers' challenges with changing their approaches. If we remember the three C's model, the triangle shaped illustration characterizing three levels of teacher professionalism; the three levels include a teacher's capacity to, conduct, plan and evaluate lessons, to have knowledge about the content of the curriculum and to be able to reflect on the wider function of education in its society.

What the teachers, moreover, agreed upon was the importance of their job, and the difference schooling could be able to make in their pupils' lives. This relates to an argument that teachers would want more people to understand and acknowledge the importance of their position, or at least for it to correlate more with their own perception of it. This also adds to the body of the formerly presented argument that teachers' confidence in their occupation is strong at the internal level and lower at the societal level.

Teacher 3 considered teaching today to be more challenging in terms of changed attitudes toward learning and an increasing tendency for children to be influenced by negative role models. She mentioned media, games and other negative influences. This had become visible to her through behavioural problems in her classroom. This was supported by Teacher 1, in mentioning that teachers need more training in how to deal with classroom

challenges related to behaviour. Teacher 2 emphasised the communication between the children and the teachers as “very important” for their situation in school.

It seems that some of the implications following the changes in methodology and pedagogical approach have affected the teachers’ and the schools’ focus. Their responsibilities might be analysed to have changed accordingly. The teacher’s recognize their role to have changed, and they see this increasing their challenges and responsibilities. Examples of this are found in the recognizing of pupils’ backgrounds, social history and diverse capacities, mentioning that the pupils need to learn at their own pace.

In this sense, they present one example of change that has been initiated and adopted at the school level, and as seen in the example of lack of criterion, are waiting for more recognition from higher levels of authority. This will be further dealt with in the conclusion of this thesis.

#### **5.2.4 What constitutes the school code?**

The definition of the school code states that it consists of an “aggregate” of guiding principles for interpretation and action, embracing whatever is important with reference to work, work environment and general problems of the school (Arfwedson 1985). Further, the school code is constituted by the teachers in the school as influenced and shaped by the history and traditions of the school (see section 3.3.2). The school code as such cannot be interpreted as a frame factor in the formal sense, as it is not determined externally. The previous paragraphs have referred to aspects of the school code in School 1 through the interviewed teachers. This section presents a brief introduction to some of the guiding principles that this study located in School 1 and School 2.

##### ***School 1: inclusive “school for all”***

*A teacher must study every day because the school is changing all the time. Take the best of the past and make this thing better in the future!  
(Teacher 4, 27.11.08)*

I find this quotation to represent the observation this study recognized while visiting School 1, an open and “ready to be modernised” kind of approach. The management at the school have as mentioned in section 4.2.1, engaged in, what is recognized as an extraordinary

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engagement with, enrolling Roma children in the school district and also providing courses for uneducated parents to learn how to read and write. The teachers portrayed some part of these projects as a struggle with other parents' attitudes towards Roma children. What became most observable in this study were the school's efforts in initiating teacher in-service training.

### *School 2: multi-ethnic "school for all"*

The openness that was recognized in School 1, characterized by a portrayed willingness to change into new methodology and provide inclusive education for all children, was not dominating the school code School 2. In School 2, the interview with the principal in this school brought in a political struggle that had been going on since the school was to be put up again after it was completely destroyed during the last war. The issue relates to the school district, as he told me that:

We are struggling with local politics on this matter. They are building a new school in Republika Srpska now, to have their own school, so the number of pupils from this side [Serbian] is decreasing. We don't want this, but it is not in our hands to do something about it. Parents decide for their children (Principal 2, 12.12.08).

Exactly what these practices entail for the teachers working in these schools is somehow difficult to state from the data collected in this study. During the classroom observation, some of the teachers told me that their focus was not towards ethnicities and differences, the primary focus was learning. It does seem relevant to argue, however, that the implications, in the quotation, deal with challenges related to parents' attitudes in the local community of School 2.

The counselor/pedagogue in School 2 told me that related to projects and programs initiated from external actors, either from the IC or NGO's would not be implemented in School 2 if they recognized that it would not benefit the teaching and learning situation for their pupils. Unfortunately, as none of the teachers in School 2 could be interviewed, the planned comparison between the teachers' attitudes towards, for example, professional development could not be made. It would no doubt have provided the study with more grounds to illuminate the specific character of the schools. The observation I was able to make through the interview with the principal was that this school's school code can be labelled as more



conservative than School 1. Schooling, as we know, in the former Yugoslavia was available for all, with no distinction between ethnicities or languages (section 2.2). The principal's efforts to rebuild the school exactly where it used to be prior to the war have been recognized as an extraordinary effort in relation to the symbolism this is representing related to what was predominantly the situation after the war in BiH, a divided society.

In that both schools are in the position of somehow 'working against' the established attitudes. What proved to make a difference in this was the teachers' relationship to their profession and teacher development, hereby moving to the next section where the teachers' challenges related to their profession are targeted.

## 5.3 The external frame system

The content of the external frame system consists of the frames defined at the state level on the structure of the education system. In this sense, this frame represents the character of the regulations from the education system upon the school. To present the findings located within the external frame system from this study, the three frames that have been applied here are the ones defined by Lundgren (section 3.3.1).

### 5.3.1 The legislative frame and school autonomy

The legislative frame influences the school and its operations through legislations and guidelines that the schools are obliged to follow (Lundgren 1986). Within the legislative frame, this study found school autonomy to constitute a frame factor for the teachers.

This is argued through the schools' ability to provide opportunities for teachers through a degree of freedom, by the FL. How this frame factor is treated at the school level, will furthermore define the circumstances for the primary school teacher in BiH. Inherent in this understanding of autonomy as a frame factor relates to the principal's role in the school.

#### *School autonomy in the FL*

School autonomy at the primary school level in BiH is represented by a certain degree of freedom according to the self-governing that the individual school is given by the FL. This

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study found two relevant boundaries between the school and the external frame system to influence the opportunities for the teachers. The first is regarding the administrative power the local school has through the FL. Autonomy is associated with describing an action or capacity for making decisions without the involvement of others. In the FL, article 41 defines school autonomy. Article 41 in the FL is harmonized in Canton Sarajevo as article 43 in the LP (section 2.4.1).<sup>16</sup> The content of article 41 is the following:

In accordance with the valid regulations *the school* enjoys an adequate degree of autonomy, especially with regard to employment of teaching, expert, and other personnel and freedom of teacher's pedagogic work.

The school shall respect teachers' freedom to perform the teaching in the way, which they deem adequate, taking care about standards and the sustainability of the existing, and application of the new methods in the educational process.

The school gives the teachers optimal support in the course of realization of professional standards in the teaching process (FL, 2003: 12).

The content of the article contains two forms of autonomy: autonomy related to administrative responsibility at the school level, and to ensure the pedagogical autonomy. *The school* in article 41 refers to the management of the school. In BiH, this means the principal in cooperation with the parents' council, the school board and the teachers' council. The management at the school is stated in the FL to ensure professional standards and respect pedagogical autonomy for the teachers. The administrative autonomy relates to the employment of teachers and other personnel, while the pedagogical autonomy of the school is to respect and support teachers in their choices of pedagogical approach, as well as their professional development.

The pedagogical responsibility for the principal is mentioned in the FL, in article 52, as the day-to-day management of the school and for leading the pedagogical activities of the school.<sup>17</sup> To ensure the implementation of article 41, the principal is to ensure that the 'pedagogical freedom of teachers' is respected and that there is 'optimal support in the course of realization of professional standards in the teaching process'.

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<sup>16</sup> The term harmonized is used in the FL and documents describing the legal process of the implementation of the FL

<sup>17</sup> While the FL applies the term 'school director' [Bosnian: Direktor škole], I will use the term 'principal' in this thesis.

The teachers interviewed in School 1 portrayed their opportunities to engage in teacher development as a result of the development in their school (School 1). This was supported by the principal in School 1, as it came out that the joint vision for the school was to build professional competence through seminars and training. The purpose of this was to ensure the provision of a 'school for all' with an inclusive pedagogical approach.

The pedagogue in School 2 shared another perspective with me, related to this 'type of project or program', as she put it: the school did not engage in such programs if they could sense that it would not be beneficial for the pupils. The overall impression I got in School 2 from conversations with a few teachers and with attending classroom observations does not provide me with assumptions about a poor pedagogical situation in the school. I find no reason to argue that their pedagogical profile was different or less child-centred than the one portrayed in School 1. Rather, the attitude towards cooperating with external organizations differed.

What the pedagogue in School 2 mentioned further, was that the principal in the school had a reputation of hiring 'good teachers'. Whatever soundness this comment has in reality, it relates to the administrative form of autonomy as mentioned above. What it furthermore points towards, is the description of the principal's position.

Here, the FL represent the legislative frame and the question is whether or not the school autonomy affects teachers?

### *Professional development, an aspect of school autonomy?*

In order to understand the interviewed teachers' professional background, the first question in the interview guide asked about this (see Appendix C). The reason for connecting this aspect of professional development with school autonomy, relates to how School 1 had managed to establish a culture of professional development. The following quotation is interpreted here to link together what development in the school has meant for the teachers, as an aspect of the argument that School 1 had managed to utilize aspects of school autonomy through focusing on professional development.

Q: What is your professional background?

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I am a primary teacher, and my education is from a pedagogical academy in Sarajevo. I have fifteen years of teaching experience. But I think that what is more important is the development of our school (Teacher 1, 20.11.08).

This may indicate that the teacher perceived development in the school as a more proper answer to the question of her professional background. When the teacher mentioned our school, moreover in the interview this indicated a sense of togetherness related to the “development in our school”. This study maintains the interpretation that, the development in School 1 was not reported as an individual accomplishment for the single individual teacher or the principal initiating the teachers’ attendance in seminars – it was perceived as a result of a joint effort.

The FL states the following on professional development, in article 21:

With the aim of acquiring new knowledge, improvement and professional development, teaching personnel, pedagogues and school headmasters shall be included into obligatory programs of training, improvement and testing. Such programs shall be established by the education authorities in the entity, canton and Brčko District of Bosnia and Herzegovina in accordance with the principles and standards defined by this Law (FL, 2003: 9).

The education authorities are the Ministry of Education (MoE) and the Pedagogical Institute. The Principal in School 1 made it explicit that the projects and seminars they had arranged were not [she emphasised] with help from the Ministry of Education (Principle 1, 10.12.08). Further, the Principal added that the specific practice in the school was a result of the school’s choice of opening up for cooperation with external organizations. The Pedagogical Institute organises and holds seminars for teachers (Canton Sarajevo) twice a year, in August and January (via e-mail communication with my local gatekeeper, 3<sup>rd</sup> of November 2008).

The principal’s statement was further that the development they had achieved in School 1 was accomplished through their practice of “working with themselves” (Principal 1, 10.12.08). This study did not find whether or School 1 had been involved in the obligatory programs for professional development initiated by the Ministry of Education, merely to note that these were not mentioned in specific by the teachers. When I asked about who organised the trainings, the school leadership (the principal) and an NGO were mentioned.

According to the planned structure in ensuring the implementation of the FL (section 3.3.1), the school shares this responsibility with the competent educational bodies and other expert

institutions in BiH. The emphasis on professional development in School 1 can be interpreted as a part of managing the administrative responsibility at the school level - in ensuring the implementation of the FL. To understand the implications of the experience from the in-service training, I will focus specially on this matter.

The interviewed teachers from School 1 reported in-service training, seminars and workshops, as opportunities for them to strengthen and develop their professional skills as teachers. The training and seminars that the teachers had participated in was a result of the cooperation between the leadership at the school and external organizations. The seminars for the teachers were initiated by the principal in cooperation with the teachers and the pedagogue in School 1. A yearly seminar had been established by the principal over the course of ten years, having for all the teachers in the school. These seminars were organised and aimed at enhancing the teachers' professional character in School 1 (Principle 1, 10.12.08). An aspect of this will be discussed further in section 5.3.2, on how the teachers perceived their school.

### *The International Step by Step Association (ISSA)*

The teachers that were interviewed referred to in-service training provided by the ISSA.<sup>18</sup> The teachers mentioned that their opportunities to attend these trainings were voluntary, had no personal costs and were organized on weekends or holidays.

Upon questioning the motivation for the teachers' attendance in the seminars, the general reply from the interviewees was that this related to motivation at a personal level. For example, they simply wanted to learn new approaches in teaching and, as one teacher put it: "they sensed it from their pupils' - that they were bored or lacked the motivation to learn" (Teacher 1, 20.11.08).

The interviewed teachers portrayed various levels of commitment to the ISSA. Thus, the advocacy of the ISSA appeared stronger with certain teachers. Many of the teachers I interviewed were committed and positive when talking about the teaching and learning perspectives they had adapted from the ISSA.

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Briefly put, the ISSA emphasises the teachers' roles as facilitators of learning and is training teachers to manage child-centred and individualized teaching methods (ISSA, 2009). Two of the teachers interviewed had obtained certificates to be trainers for the ISSA and reported experiences from this practice.

One teacher reported that the pedagogical approaches within the school still varied, and that she sensed responses to her "new methods" from other colleagues. The quotation above only exemplifies one challenge related to the complex process of changing central aspects of the schools' operations such as the teaching methodology. Another challenge that was mentioned was the difficult restructuring of their teaching roles from the teacher-centred approach to the child-centred approach. This is discussed further in section 5.4.

As was mentioned in the methodological limitation, this study does not have sufficient data to conclude that all teachers in School 1 had adopted a sense of change in their pedagogical approach. The principal told me that the trainings were "useful for the school for implementing new strategies on how to educate the children in an inclusive, child-centred pedagogy" (Principle 1, 10.12.08).

Change in the teaching methodology is one of the changes these teachers reported from participating in the in-service training. Based on what the teachers told me, it had given them opportunities to learn new strategies of learning, to share experiences with other teachers, and it had opened up new ways for them to develop their own pedagogical approach.

### **Summary of section 5.3.1**

This section has connected school autonomy provided by the legislative frame (the FL) with what the interviewed teachers' reported as their experience with in-service teacher training. Article 41 from the FL was analysed in relation to what this study found about how the teachers in School 1 found their professional development of central importance. This study will not conclude that it is the delegated autonomy from the FL that per se is providing the opportunities for the teachers related to professional development. Whether or not the

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<sup>18</sup> ISSA is an association of the Soros Foundation, a non-governmental organization (NGO) that is active in South East Europe in particular.

school's autonomy constitutes a frame factor that provides for opportunities for the teacher or not, will further depend on how the designated freedom is utilised at the school level, by the management at the school. The increased autonomy was treated in different ways in School 1 and 2.

### **5.3.2 The ideological frame**

The ideological frame is, according to Lundgren (1986), the frame that the curriculum creates for the activities in schools (section 3.2.3). How the curriculum is structured and what the content of it implies will have an influence upon the situation for teaching and learning.

#### *The curriculum according to the FL*

The principles of the new curriculum for primary school education are defined in the FL. To implement the new common core curriculum in BiH has faced several forms of resistance. The curriculum this study noticed, related to reviewed literature in the theoretical background, is the textbook and teachers' perception of the curriculum. This study did not aim to answer any questions on the exploration of the current status of the curriculum in BiH. What I did aim to pursue, was the teachers' normative response to the straightforward question of: "do you face challenges in ensuring the content of the curriculum?"

In BiH, the curriculum content remains a contested issue. Contested because of the situation the education system has seen in the aftermath of the recent war. In any biography on education in BiH, the organisation of the system is described as fragmented, whereupon the structure is treated as the main obstacle for the development of education in BiH.

The six teachers interviewed from School 1 varied in their responses to the question about the content of the curriculum. The question was asked based on knowledge gathered from the literature review, from reports on the situation for the new curriculum portrayed as overloaded. What was interesting about this matter was three of the teachers were equally satisfied with the content of the curriculum, (subject: English, grade III-VIII), having no objections to it. However, these three teachers uttered a joint concern that the number of lessons per week should be increased; there was simply not enough time to go through all

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the content. This might be a way to say what several others have stated, that the content in the (*annual plan*) curriculum is overloaded in terms of the content.

I posed the question concerning the curriculum to the principals I interviewed. The principal in School 2 responded by expressing full confidence in his teachers both with regards to their pedagogical approach and their realisation of the curriculum. School 2 remains a particular case in the education system of BiH, with a multi-ethnic staff and pupil mass, related to the history, tradition and school district surrounding School 2. In accordance with the FL, School 2 as one out of five in the whole of BiH offers three different subjects of religion, for the parents of the children in their school to choose from (Pedagogue in School 2, field note, 10.11.08).

### *Religion in school*

The school district of both schools in this study is known to reflect a variety of the multi-ethnic population in BiH. As given in the case description in the methodology chapter (section 4.2), School 2 is located at the border between the FBiH and the RS. In the first meeting with the pedagogue in School 2, asking about the vision of the school and how she would describe it to someone that was new to the school, she introduced their practice of providing an option for parents, with segregated classes of religion.

In this school we offer a choice for parents, to decide whether their children will attend religious classes or not. It is optional, and we have all three religions in the school [Roman Catholic, Orthodox and Islam]. We are one of five schools in all BiH who have this practice. Mostly the Orthodox [Serbian parents] prefers to educate their children at home, so in practice almost none of them have religion in school. We have parallel lessons in the subject of religion, so the children that are to attend either class do this in separate rooms (School 2, field note, 10.11.08).

What distinguishes School 2 as a special case, relates to what has been stated about the general mono-ethnic situation in the schools of BiH where students generally attend separate, mono-ethnic schools (section 2.3). Both School 1 and School 2 in this study share the characteristic of operating in a multi-ethnic school environment. School 1 offers only one subject in religion, as opposed to School 2's three options. The FL mentions religion in articles: 2, 9, 10, 34, 35 and 36. Article 9 of the FL is as follows:

Schools shall promote and protect religious freedom, tolerance and dialogue in BiH.



Having in mind diversities of beliefs/convictions within BiH, pupils shall attend religious classes only if latter match their beliefs or beliefs of their parents.

The School cannot undertake any measures or activities aimed at limiting freedom of expressing religious beliefs or meeting other and different beliefs.

Students who do not wish to attend religious education classes shall not in any way be disadvantaged compared to other students.

What partly explains the particularity of School 2, is related to what was mentioned as “strong leadership” at the school. “Strong” related to the persistence the principal and the wider management at the school had exercised when facing complications as the school was to be rebuilt after its total destruction during the recent war.

### **Summary of section 5.3.2**

The variety of what curriculum content is implemented in schools in BiH, still relates to the aspect of ethnicity. In the two schools I visited for this study, differed in the content of the curriculum is related to the reported subject of religion. It is the school owner (the municipality) that ensures and delegates the budget and rights related to the finance of textbooks, and which textbooks to use. This study did not manage to collect such data as how the MoE control the content of the curriculum, merely to note that the teachers I interviewed related to the curriculum through the quality of their textbooks and that they requested more time to ensure the content.

### **5.3.3 The financial frame**

The financial frames at the education system level affect the physical situation of the school, the organisational frames and the management and regulation of the staff. In practice this relates to the buildings and classrooms, access to didactical materials, teachers’ salaries and the composition of the school staff (Lundgren, 1986).

This study does not give grounds to state anything about possible economical differences between School 1 and School 2. However, there were some observable differences connected to the physical situations of the two schools. One aspect of the differences was the size of the school building. In School 2, the school day operated in one shift, while School 1 was operating in two (see Table 4.1), due to the lack of classrooms for the number of pupils in the school. In terms of physical reconstruction after the destruction that took place during

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the recent war, School 2 had been rebuilt from nothing, while School 1 had been fundamentally reconstructed. This creates a difference in terms of the physical situation for the schools. The reconstruction of both schools had been financed by support from international aid.

The interviewees addressed the internal variation in BiH in relation to the teachers' salaries. One teacher mentioned that compared to the overall salary in the country, a teacher's salary was "not that low" (Teacher 1, 04.12.08) and further as an example, Teacher 6 compared the salary with that of a neighbouring city to Sarajevo, where 'they didn't get salaries' (Teacher 6, 10.12.08). This support what was referred to in section 2.4.

### *Fiscal responsibility*

From what we know about the financial frame, the municipalities at the cantonal level within the FBiH can be regarded as the school owners. The municipality grants the school's budgets and further, salaries for the primary school teachers in BiH relates to the location of the school, following the economic situation of the canton the municipality belongs to (section 3.2.1). The two schools in this study are located within the same municipality in Canton Sarajevo, Sarajevo. The local communities surrounding the schools will be presented in section 5.3. Due to an increase, recognised in School 1 and School 2, related to "social cases" the schools in Canton Sarajevo have employed social workers in schools.

### *Composition of the school staff*

The social worker's position in the school is defined in the pedagogical standards in the FL (see section 2.4). The pedagogical standards define a school's rights in terms of special expertise according to the composition of pupils in the school. The pedagogical standards are to ensure 'equal baseline conditions for the development of student's capacities, emphasising cognition, student's needs and social commitment' (section 2.5.2). The pedagogical standard to regulate number of pupils per teacher, social worker per school, related to the needs of the school. The composition of the school staff is regulated within the external frame system, controlled by the Ministries at the municipality level.

In recent years, there has been an increase of employing social workers in the primary and secondary schools in BiH.<sup>19</sup> During the fieldwork, I attended a meeting that was initiated by an NGO to evaluate and discuss the position of the social worker in schools. Principals, pedagogues and psychologists representing selected primary and secondary schools in Sarajevo attended this meeting (field note, 25.11.08). The current practice is that the social worker is employed in three schools at the same time. The practice of employing a social worker to cover three schools related to financial matters. The evaluation meeting addressed to write a report and present it to the Ministry of Education.

The outcome of the meeting was regarding a consensus on the argument for one social worker per school. The reason this is brought in here, is to explain one aspect of the relationship between the school owner and the school. And furthermore, the recognised need to have social workers in schools is seen to represent an aspect of the change in the relationship between society and the schools, in which the school is seen to take a larger part in the upbringing of children, than before.

## 5.4 Specific influences related to the scope of action

In order to locate the scope of action; of what is possible for schools and teachers within their frames they operate in, the question of who decides the content and the conduct of the pedagogical activity is seen to be another valid question.

Attempting to bridge what Bernstein labels the micro educational practice in the school with the macro sociological structures inherent in the education system, this study found the practice of teacher inspection and pupil assessment to influence the character of the relationship between the external and the internal frame system surrounding the school.

The concept of the frame according to Bernstein, refers to the degree of control teacher and pupil possess over the selection, organisation, and pacing of the knowledge transmitted and received in the pedagogical relationship (section 3.1.2).

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<sup>19</sup> Qualified by the degree from higher education in the field of social work. Their responsibility in the school is work with the relationship between the school and homes of pupils.

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### 5.4.1 Teacher inspection

Inspectors come and visit us, stay for half an hour and then give us a mark on our profession. They come to say what is wrong. (Teacher 1, 20.11.08)<sup>20</sup>

The inspection of teachers in BiH is conducted by advisors employed at the pedagogical institute (see section 2.2). The main area of responsibility for the advisor is to follow the work of teachers in schools, to guide and assist them in planning the realisation of the curriculum. The advising takes place through school visits. Of the teachers interviewed in this study, one had experienced this inspection on several occasions. The quotation that introduced this section highlights how this teacher perceived the purpose or result of inspection. During the fieldwork, I interviewed the current advisor from the pedagogical institute in Sarajevo.

A school visit would typically consist of the advisor observing two classrooms. According to the advisor, he would evaluate the activity in the classroom based upon two measures. The first were the criteria for good teaching and the teacher's realisation of the lesson plan. A lesson plan consists of the teacher's written out planned activities and content of lessons. The lesson plans are funded upon the content in the curriculum. The classroom observation would partly be to assess whether or not the teacher managed to succeed in exercising the lesson plan, and also by looking in the pupils' notebooks. The measurement scale for what 'good teaching is', was the standard observation criteria that the advisor had to apply in his position as an advisor from the pedagogical institute.

After the advisor has conducted the classroom/teacher observations, the usual practice was to have an evaluation meeting, first with the principal and pedagogue, and later with all the teachers. In these evaluation meetings, the advisor presents his analysis of the observed lesson, and invites the teachers to discuss his observations and comments. The advisor's experience was that the teachers appreciated being invited to discuss the evaluation and give feedback. This practice, to involve all the teachers in a plenary discussion, was reported by him as a new approach, due to the lack of a pre-described way to conduct school visits.

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<sup>20</sup> The interviewee used the terms 'inspector' and 'advisor' alternately. I will use both terms.

I further asked the advisor what he saw as the main challenge, from his professional perspective, in realising a child-centred education in BiH. The advisor mentioned that the changes initiated by the reform were going very slow, and he further mentioned four main reasons for this:

- Lack of institutionalized pedagogical standards
- Lack of flexibility in the annual plan [curriculum]
- That most teachers are still thinking in “traditional methodology” (see section 3.2.2) (Advisor, 02.12.08)

The criteria the advisor applied in the assessment of the professional character of the teacher in the classroom observations, was of an old kind. According to the advisor, the measure scale needed change. He mentioned that the pedagogical institute ought to define some new scales to measure “good teaching”. The explanation the advisor portrayed himself was the reason that the old scales did not fit with the new methodology (Advisor from the Pedagogical Institute, 02.12.08). The main goal for teachers in relation to the principles of the current reform was, according to the advisor, to place the child in the centre of education.

Teacher 1 had experienced several visits by the advisor and shared with me both a negative and a positive experience. The introductory quotation from the interview with Teacher 1, related to a comparison she made of the practice of the inspectors in BiH, in relation to what she knew about the context of other national education systems, and one of the examples she mentioned was Norway. She juxtaposed her own situation as a teacher in BiH, with the one she would have had if she were teaching in Norway. Her argument was that while the advisor in Norway would seek to advise teachers [she emphasised that this was what she had been told by a professor of pedagogy from Norway], the role of their inspector was to put a grade on her professional competence based on just a glimpse of what was taking place in her classroom.

As we saw in the theoretical framework, Bernstein (2000) argues that how teachers teach can tell us something about power and control functions outside the classroom. The control function from the pedagogical institute found in this study is seen to limit the scope of action for the teacher, related to the lack of modernised assessment criteria.

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It is difficult to argue what kind of influence this aspect of control has upon teachers, as it will furthermore relate to the pedagogical philosophy of the individual teacher. What it does portray is a sense of conflict in relation to the teachers that pursue to teach within a modernized “knowledge paradigm”. The old paradigm is teacher-centred, and the new adheres to a child-centred perspective. The current reform effort in BiH, as reported from the FL, encourages the teachers to engage in new methodology (see section 3.3.1 & 5.3.1). The presented example of the teachers’ and the advisors’ reflections is seen here to represent one aspect of conflict related to the potential scope of action of what teachers at the primary school level need to manage.

When theorizing their perceptions regarding the suspected change of knowledge paradigm at the school level, Dale’s (2000) competence triangle can provide food for thought (see Figure 3.4). We need to agree on one matter first, namely that of when a teacher alter their teaching perspective in terms of the teacher's role this will in consequence mean that the teacher need to reconceptualise their already established capacities as teachers, and construct a new competence triangle. Through the analytical lenses that have been introduced in the theoretical chapter, the old criteria in which the inspector is evaluating the teachers upon, represent a conceptually different competence triangle than what the teachers in School 1 had adopted. The advisor was assessing their profession based on old standards, and - the classroom observation that was conducted happened through an evaluation of the already described criteria. Through Dale's concepts, one could state that the advisor is assessing the C1 and C2 level. What is interesting with this relationship is that according to the FL, the teachers are, in theory, supported by the law when they conduct teaching in the way they see it appropriate (from the aforementioned article 41 in the FL). They are however, restricted from implementing these methodologies related to the outdated practices at the level of the pedagogical institutes.

It seems possible to argue that until the reform of education reaches into the Pedagogical Institutes the advising of teachers will take place upon the traditional criteria. As we saw, Johnsen (2001) include professional quality as a frame factor in her curriculum relation model. If we conclude that the teachers in School1 have seen an increase in their pedagogical quality, the practice of the advisor might be another conflict the teachers need to

manage, however it is not argued here that the advising is the major barrier for teachers in their classrooms.

The teachers interviewed in this study portrayed their didactical capacities as important for what they could and could not do, for one by stating that their perspective and horizon had widened from attending in-service teacher training. The next section deals with aspects of pupil assessment. The teachers interviewed in this study shared a concern for the lack of criteria in the conduct of pupil assessment. In analysing the teachers' reflections around the very centre of the frame system model (Figure 3.3), Bernstein's concepts of classification and framing have been utilised to support the presentation of another conflict found in the boundary between the external frame system and the school.

#### **5.4.2 Biased evaluation?**

The aim of this section is to address the practice of evaluation of pupils from the reflections made by the interviewed teachers in School 1. Evaluation of the learning process is one of the central characteristics of the relationship between the pupil and the teacher. In the FL, on the role and obligations of the school, article 34 states that "a school teaches its students and regularly examines and rates their educational progress, in order to ensure that students acquire an education suitable to their needs and possibilities" (FL, 2003: 10). Further in article 45 in the FL, it is stated that the standards for evaluation of the pupils are defined by the authority educational bodies. The authority educational bodies are the Ministries of Education and the pedagogical institute.

##### *Assessment in practice*

At the primary school level in BiH, the common practice is to assess pupils with explanation marks in the lower grades, I-III. An explanation mark means that the evaluation is in the shape of a descriptive note about the learning progression of the pupil. In grade IV, summative evaluation is introduced to the pupils and parents. Summative evaluation is made by grading on a scale. In the primary school in BiH, this scale ranges from one to five, with five as the top mark. According to the current practice, the criteria the teachers are to evaluate their pupils from, relates strictly to the content of the curriculum. The common practice, according to the teachers I interviewed, is that the pupils are evaluated every day.

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Twice a year, annual school works are reported to pupils and their parents.<sup>21</sup> At the end of grade VIII, pupils receive a diploma which they apply for secondary school education with. Access to secondary school is based on free competition.

### *Lack of standards in pupil assessment*

Assessment, evaluation and testing were used interchangeably by the teachers when they talked about assessment of pupils. The teachers I interviewed were concerned about pupil assessment without any criteria or standards. The teachers' considerations differed in what they were concerned about. Some of them gave me examples from their classroom, typically one student, and told me about the social situation of the pupil and explained that assessment was difficult for pupils that were recognized as low-achievers. This was linked with another concern related to the effects of assessment. Teacher 3 argued that twenty years ago the assessment practices without criteria worked better than today. I present her reflections around pupil assessment:

There is no rule for assessment. Every teacher assesses in their own way. I remember twenty years ago, I asked the children to read, to translate text and answer questions from the text. They could learn it by heart. Today it is different because now I think the learning situation gives them more opportunities; if they are not good in grammar, they can be good in communication and get a mark on this [...]. We don't have any written criteria we have to follow. I must think of my own and even the ways of assessing my students (Teacher 3, 26.11.08).

Can it perhaps be so, that evaluation of pupils is more complex when having a child-centred pedagogical philosophy? Is it more complex to assess students, when their teaching philosophy is based upon child-centred principles? The conflict level between teaching and assessment appeared somewhat higher with the teachers that clearly expressed their philosophy of education that was a child-centred approach.

The practice of student assessment is not assumed to be contributing to making the pedagogic reality child-centred, on the contrary. The practices today are much prone to be keeping the teacher in the centre. The teachers are obliged to conduct assessment of students on a weekly basis. and the criterions are linked to the teachers' personal practice and

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<sup>21</sup> Explain what annual school works is:



towards the curriculum. If the inspector from the pedagogical institute is assessing teachers based on old criteria, what use is it to talk about new standards?

Institutionally, there are no set standards or criteria for assessing students. It would be better if we had these. From my own experience, I know that it is also easier for the children when they know what kind of areas they are assessed by (Teacher 3, 26.11.08).

The argument goes that the portrayed freedom employs a freedom to perform teaching in the ways which they deem adequate. Taking care about standards and the sustainability of the existing, and application of the new methods in the educational process (section 5.1), the criterion by which teachers are evaluated are not in accordance with the content of the FL.

#### **Summary of section 5.4**

To some extent both the practices of teaching presented in this section relates to the relationship between the teachers at school and the central controlling functions upon the education system in BiH. With advisors from the pedagogical institute assessing their work based upon the traditional teaching standards, does not reflect a change at this level and thus, it creates a conflict for the teachers. The assessment practices the teachers are portraying seem to reflect a traditional teacher-centred pedagogy, with evaluations and summative evaluation from grade four at the primary school level. The reform as such, does not appear to have reached down to the institutional level of the pedagogical institute.

## 6. CONCLUSION

### 6.1 Introduction

This chapter will review central arguments from the analysed findings in order to connect these and sum up the thesis. In this section, the presented findings will be reviewed in relation to the research objectives in this study. The frame factors found to affect the teachers in this study will be presented again in this chapter. The structure follows the research objectives in this study.

### 6.2 How are the teachers affected by the formal frame factors?

Public primary schools in BiH are framed within a range of frame factors from the external frame system. Focusing on the selected content of the FL, the influence from the legislative frame, the financial frame and the ideological frames have been analyzed. The findings of this study cannot state definitively the situation for the BiH as a whole, but rather it can indicate some aspects of the relationship between the school level and the system level.

Based upon the findings in this study, the legislative frame was connected with article 41 in the FL; on school autonomy. This was found to be an important frame factor when viewed in relation to the principal's degree of freedom, related to the pedagogical profile of the school. It can be argued then, that the teachers' scope of action can be influenced by the legislative frames in this sense.

The financial frame surrounding the school was found to directly affect the classroom environment as the promised free education for all, have yet to be fully implemented. Pupils from poorer backgrounds are still not always able to afford note books and pencils to bring to class and textbooks for higher grades in primary school have to be paid for by the parents. School 1 had managed some of the financial complications through support from international organisations of various sources. The teachers themselves also contribute financially to help with this. The composition of the staff in the schools was mentioned in

the findings chapter as a direct result of the financial frame surrounding the school. The ministry of education at the municipal level is in charge of this finance, and further examination is needed in order to fully understand the financial frame surrounding the primary school teacher. The teachers were aware of the internal differences between teachers salaries within the BiH, in what way this is affecting their teaching was not apparent during the course of this study, other than that the teachers perceived this as unfair treatment within the profession.

At the school level, this study found that the potential degree of freedom the school exercises through the legislated autonomy from the FL, affected teachers opportunities. This related directly to the ideological frame surrounding the school. The findings from this study suggests that School 1 and School 2 implemented the ideological frame (through the content of the FL regarding the curriculum) in a slightly differing ways. This related to the specifics of their school district, as found in their difference in School 2's teaching of subject of religion and School 1's enrolment efforts towards Roma children. This was also found to relate to the school code in the two schools i.e. the established agreement of what was possible and not possible in the schools.

The development in School 1 provides us with an example where the schools operations are influenced by both private and public sectors at the external system level. This was found in School 1's collaboration with the ISSA. This cooperation was potentially the grounds for conflict regarding different interpretations of the ideological frame i.e. the reform effort. For example School 1, which is cooperating with sectors working parallel with governmental authorities in facilitating school development and teacher training. This interaction could create conflict between teachers at the school level, in facing disparate aims and goals for education. Even though state reports on the condition of education within BiH, have argued that the activity of the IC and some NGO's are well documented (by the MoE and the pedagogical institutes), the findings from this study can provide some evidence indicating that this is not the case, institutionally.

The practices for certification of in-service training as it now stands, is not acknowledged by the MoE. In effect, this means that the in-service teacher training efforts that the teachers in School 1 had made, is motivated only by the teachers themselves.

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It is plausible to assume that if there were some degree of cooperation between the sectors at the external frame system, that is, the international community, the largest NGO's and the public ministries of education it would be possible to plan for a acknowledgement of their certificates, diplomas etc. This study was not able to locate the cause or attitudes related to this lack of cooperation, though initial impressions points towards different motivations driving the agencies.

### 6.3 What is influencing the teachers' own perceptions of the frame factors?

The findings of this study show the range of scope for action applicable to individual teachers and to institutional bodies. This study found the teachers own perceptions of the frame factors influenced by their own notions regarding the profession they are a part of, both from a societal perspective and a personal one.

At the school level, we have seen that School 1 has utilized scope of action by defining itself as an open school and by cooperating with the local environment, the system level and other external entities that comprise the local school context in Sarajevo. This school code in School 1 had made it possible for the teachers to pursue in-service training, and with this, expand their professional horizons as teachers. This is supported by the teachers accounts of their relationship to the school and the process of development that they had been a part of. Thus, the school development that had been taking place in School 1 can primarily be traced back to the principal's initiative and leadership, however, the teachers' personal motivation also proved to be decisive in the teachers' ability to change their own established educational perspectives.

It appears as though the primary school's function is in a phase of change. This study shows there are a number of factors that indicate this. The first using the schools own definition, is their focus is upon upbringing. The most central factor in the argument is however, the teacher's role. It has been said that the teacher's role can be defined by a number of factors: the contents of the curriculum, the currency of that knowledge, and the social status the teaching profession is perceived to have. The findings from this study indicate a professionalization at two levels; one level is how the teachers consider the profession as

seen from the outside, and the second level is how they themselves consider the teaching profession.

The school's function has changed to become a school which is student centred. This is found in several studies that have looked at inclusion, training and other elements of pupil-centred teaching. The findings of this study suggest that teachers who have participated in in-service training and thus, are trying to implement teaching that has the student in the centre are somehow restricted from doing this by two elements:

The first is the teachers' described difficulties with outdated assessment practices. The traditional practices of pupil evaluation were not seen to fit with the teachers' perspective of learning. Second, from what I interpret of the teacher evaluation practices exercised by the educational authorities, with inspectors still using outdated criteria in their assessment of teachers. This leaves little doubt that the teachers in BiH are not assessed in a manner that supports a notion of change across the education system. This adds up to additional challenges for the teacher in dealing with the discrepancy between the system level and school level, that relate to student assessment and teacher assessment.

For School 1, one might say that their collaboration with external organizations has led them to change their pedagogical profile, and now to be heading in the direction of emphasising child-centred and what Bernstein would label de-centred therapeutic pedagogical identity. The FL and the overall content of the educational reform effort in BiH emphasises that quality education for all children is one of the central goals and aims of the reform.

In one way, certain elements of the education reform currently in progress in BiH can be said to have been implemented at school level by the teachers, in cooperation with the overall management of the school as a whole. What appears to restrict the full implementation at school level are the practices of the institutions at the system level, which have not yet institutionalized a change to fit with the aims and goals of the reform. This was found in the inspector's lack of modernised criteria for assessing the teachers, who portrayed a lack of established pedagogical standards that related to this. Second, the reported lack of established pedagogical standards in relation to student evaluations according to the FL, were read from the external context. The pedagogical institutes, according to the reform

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effort, were supposed to create a standard and an assessment agency that was to define the standards that would provide the basis for student assessment.

## 6.4 What can this tell us about the teachers' scope of action?

The findings from this study leave little doubt that the potential scope of action for the teachers' in this study relate to individual as well as the institutional capacities. It seems that the teachers I interviewed can be said to exercise a lesser amount of control over the selection, organisation, and pacing of the knowledge transmitted and received in the pedagogical relationship. This can further tell us that the pedagogical practices of these teachers in BiH are framed within what Bernstein would label as a collection code. What the teachers most commonly agreed upon for the implementation of the FL and the realization of the reform, was that they and other teachers needed to reconceptualise their teaching. What also became clearer from this study, was that the principals' position and the actions s/he manage to take, in cooperation with the teachers and the pedagogue and the overall staff in the school – can affect the teachers opportunities in relation to their professional freedom as teachers. The argument from this study, is that a teachers' scope of action need to be seen in relation with the principals role and the overall school code.

If we now take another look at the question posed in the very first paragraph of this thesis, posed by the local researcher in the plenary session of the conference discussing the situation of the reform of education in BiH. With having explored the circumstances in which some of the teachers in this school situate themselves, it seems possible to argue that School 1 got to where they are today through a variety of efforts, investments in their teacher capacities, and through hard work towards the local community and the education system. Their attitude can tell us something about their ideology and their capacities. What it is seen to boil down to, is their capacity in utilizing their scope of action; a cooperation at all levels. Between the teachers and the management, between the management and external sector and between the teachers own motivation for altering their pedagogical practices and the reality in their classrooms.

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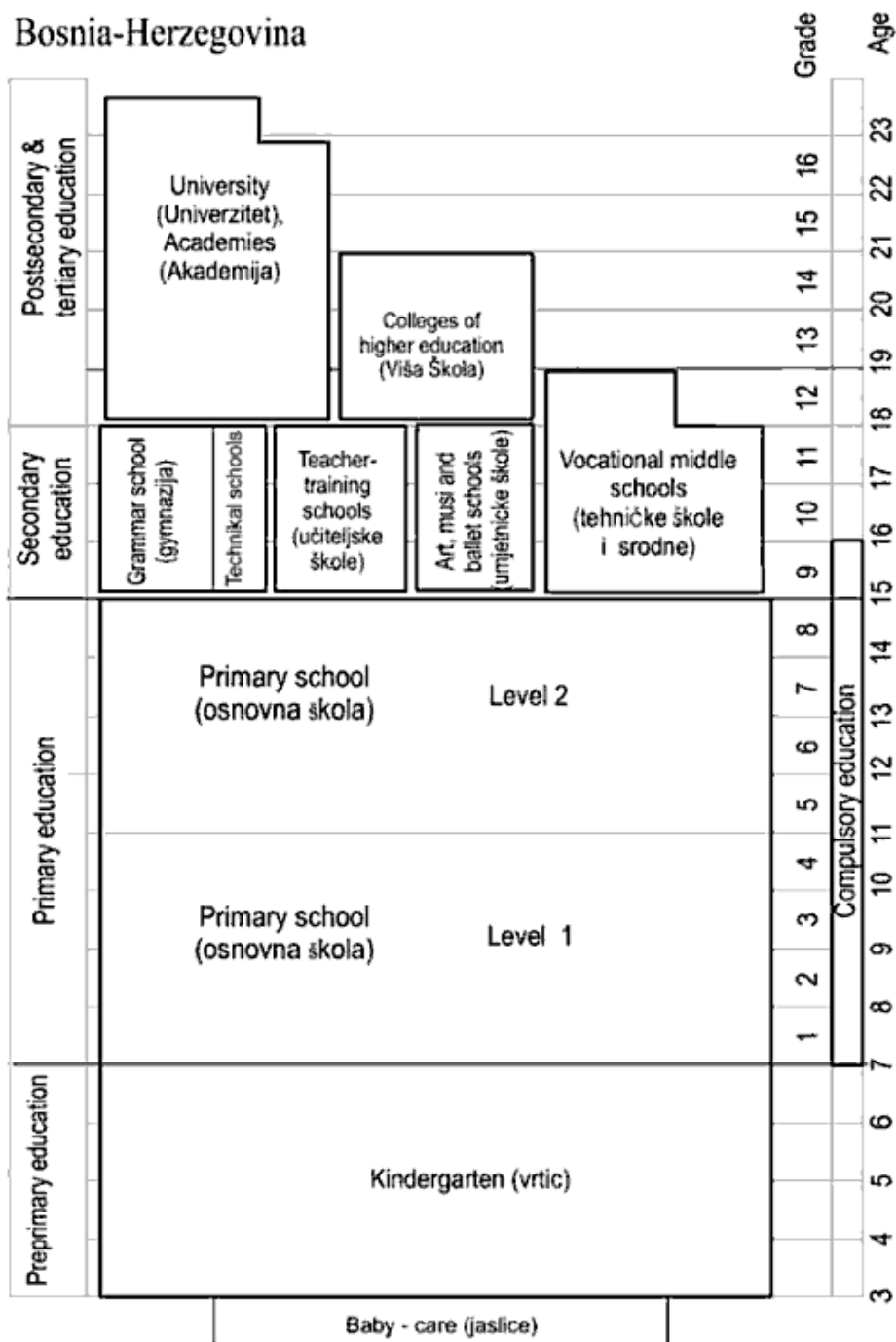
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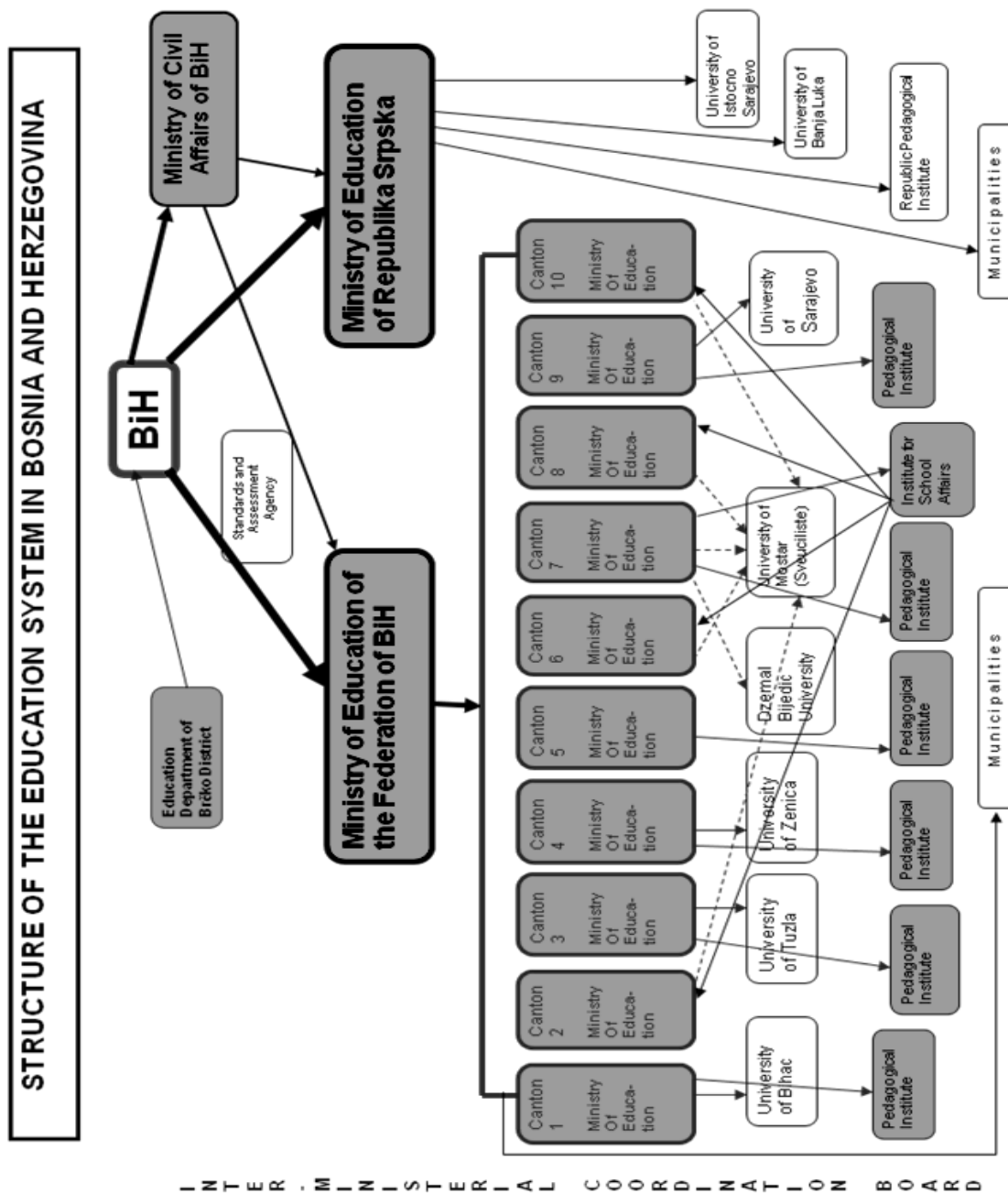
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## APPENDIX A: THE EDUCATION SYSTEM (levels)



Source: Hörner, W., Döbert, H., von Kopp, B. & Mitter, W. (2007) *The Education Systems of Europe*, p 146.

## APPENDIX B: THE EDUCATION SYSTEM (structure)



Source: Pašalić-Kreso, A. (2008) The war and post-war impact on the educational system in Bosnia and Herzegovina, *International Review of Education*, Vol. 54, p 353-374.

## APPENDIX C: TEACHER INTERVIEW GUIDE

1. What is your professional background?  
[Educational background, project certificates, diplomas, extra-curricular activities]
2. Do you recognize any differences between now and when you first started teaching?  
yes: what do you see as the main differences?  
no: what do you see as the reasons for this?
3. Can you remember how you pictured teaching to be, before you started teaching?
4. How do you think it is to be a teacher today?
5. How do you picture your job to be ten years from now?
6. How do you imagine that other people that are not working in schools; see this job?
7. Do you have any particular teacher that you remember?
8. What do you as teacher expect from your pupils?
9. What do you as teacher expect from the parents of your pupils?
10. What do you expect from your colleagues?
11. What do you think that your colleagues/ pupils / parents are expecting from you?
12. What would you say - makes you satisfied/content/happy as a teacher?
13. What challenges do you see are particular for the primary school level?
14. What challenges do you see as particular for this school?
15. Could you tell me a little bit about how you assess your pupils?
16. Could you give an example from the classroom on this?
17. What challenges do you face in realizing the content of the curriculum?  
- How could this situation be better/ improved for you?
18. With which words would you describe yourself as teacher?
19. Where do you see yourself 5-10 years from now?

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## APPENDIX D: PRINCIPAL INTERVIEW GUIDE

1. What is specific/special about this school?
2. Would you care to tell me a little bit about its recent history?
3. Physical conditions; school building, staffroom, classroom
4. How many people in the staff?
5. How many pupils?
6. What do you expect from your teachers?
7. Who is the typical pupil in this school?
8. Which curriculum do you use?
9. Have there been any implementations of change according to the reform?
10. What is your attitude towards projects from the outside?
11. What is the school's relationship with the local community?

### Specific questions in School 1

12. Questions related to cooperation with organizations:
13. When did you start the cooperation with the ISSA?
14. What value do you see in these courses /in-service training?
11. The inclusion of Roma in this school, could you please tell me a little bit about this?
  - Started when?
  - How?
  - Preconditions, special for this school?
  - Specific teacher training/courses for inclusion?

### Specific questions in School 2

12. Typical pupil
13. Typical teacher



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## APPENDIX E: FIELDWORK OVERVIEW

Table E1: Field notes

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<i>Description,</i>	<i>Date</i>
Meeting at the Pedagogical Institute about the role of Social Workers in schools, Sarajevo	10.11.08
Seminar: 'Inclusive Matters in Democratic Societies' Presentation of research on inclusion in education, from: the Universities of: Tuzla, Sarajevo, Zagreb, Belgrade, Skopje, Ljubliana and Oslo	20.11.08
Interview with Professor Adila Kreso, Faculty of Philosophy, University of Sarajevo	28.11.08
Attended 'Evaluation conference of the Child friendly School Project, UNICEF BiH, Sarajevo	01-02.12.08
Attended a lecture at the University of Sarajevo, Comparative and International Education,	04.12.08
Interview with Advisor from Pedagogical Institute,	02.12.08
Attended the conference 'Bosnia and Herzegovina on the EU path: Education an Indispensable Key to a Stable Future [Save the Children, Unicef, Open Society Fund BiH], Sarajevo	11.12.08

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## APPENDIX F: INFORMED CONSENT

Principal investigator: Elisabeth Didriksen, Student at the Masters program of Comparative and International Education

Institution: University of Oslo

Thesis advisors: Gréta Björk Guðmundsdóttir, University of Oslo  
Kendra Dupuy, International Peace Research Institute, Oslo

The purpose of this research is to identify important categories of meaning concerning the role of the teacher in two primary schools in Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina. I will examine the relationship between relevant articles in the Framework Law on Education in BiH.

Participation/Process: Participation consists of one interview, lasting approximately one-hour. This interview will be audio taped, unless otherwise requested by the participant. Privacy will be ensured through confidentiality. Participation is voluntary and the interviewee has the right to break off the interview at any time. The thesis will be available to participants upon request.

### Participant's understandings

- I agree to participate in this study that I understand will be submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Comparative and International Education
- I understand that my participation is voluntary.
- I understand that all data collected will be limited to this use or other research-related usage as authorized by the University of Oslo.
- I understand that I will not be identified by name in the final product.
- I am aware that all records will be kept confidential in the secure possession of the researcher.

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Signature of Interviewee/Date

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Signature of Interviewer/Date