

## NATIONAL IDENTITY IN THE BOLOGNA PROCESS

### NACIONALNI IDENTITET U BOLONJSKOM PROCESU

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#### *Abstract*

The aim of this paper is to consider national identity as a form of collective self-awareness and an important element of the general and humanistic education, in the educational reform based on the standards of the Bologna Process. This consideration starts from the Bologna Declaration which states that the educational reform will respect different cultures, languages and national educational systems. The question arises whether this is truly possible, knowing that the causes of this reform concept are related to the adjustment of education to the neoliberal development strategies in the world, and to the processes of globalization and European integration. Education is subjugated to the market needs and educational institutions are required to subject themselves to strict rationalization and narrow specialist professionalization. Thus, teaching is separated from the process of education and the field of culture; it diverges from the humanistic values and contents, which are crucial for the development of the individual and collective identity and the progressive role culture has in society. This paper illustrates the level of presence of relevant content in the reformed curricula of the faculties of teacher education in Belgrade and Zagreb.

#### *Sažetak*

Predmet ovog rada je razmatranje nacionalnog identiteta, kao oblika kolektivne samosvijesti i bitnog činioca općeg i humanističkog odgoja i obrazovanja, u reformi obrazovanja prema standardima Bolonjskog procesa. Pri tome se polazi od Bolonjske deklaracije gdje je ukazano da će se u reformi obrazovanja poštovati različite kulture, jezici i nacionalni obrazovni sistemi. Koliko je to zaista moguće kada je poznato da su uzroci ovog koncepta reforme vezani za prilagođavanje obrazovanja neoliberalnoj strategiji razvoja u svijetu, procesima globalizacije i eurointegracijskih procesa. Obrazovanje se podređuje tržištu, a od obrazovnih ustanova se zahtijeva stroga racionalizacija i usko specijalistička profesionalizacija. Time se obrazovanje razdvaja od procesa odgoja i svijeta kulture, ono se rastaje od humanističkih vrijednosti i sadržaja koji su odlučujući za razvoj individualnih i kolektivnih identiteta i progresivnu ulogu kulture u društvu. U funkciji ovog rada, ilustrativno se ukazuje na zastupljenost relevantnih sadržaja u reformiranim studijskim programima učiteljskih fakulteta u Beogradu i Zagrebu.

#### 1. Baselines

National identity and education have a common ancestor: both stem from the culture of a particular nation and are developed through the all-encompassing processes of the social development, including entire cultural value systems. As a form of collective self-awareness, national identity is an important factor of the general and humanistic education. Ever since Joseph Ernest Renan's work in the late 19th century /1/, regardless of the different theoretical concepts, the understanding of national identity has been based on recognition of certain common characteristics of members of a particular nation which differentiate it from other nations (language,

race, religion, ethnicity, mythology, culture, territory etc) /2/. Nation has its identity, but so do other social groups, and it has been claimed that the network society as a "new form of society" /3/ has its own identity. National identity plays an important role in the processes of socialization and education, especially in the process of primary education; it is instrumental in helping young people gain knowledge about ways of life in a certain community, its values and particularities, adapt to circumstances and other people and form their own as well as social behavior through social interactions. In these contexts, social interaction helps people learn and develop cultural patterns, mutual solidarity as well as the awareness of belonging to a particular nation.

On the other hand, in every existing society (as a universal product of civilization) education is determined by its social milieu, economic development, cultural values, ideological goals and social needs. From that we can conclude, as Nietzsche noticed, that the "aim of education is: to live and act in accordance with the most noble aspirations of one's own people" /4/. National identity and education require constant re-evaluation of cultural values, which often results in conflicts between tradition and innovation. The modern society (i.e. the society of the scientific and technological revolution, digital economy, mass culture and mass consumption, highly developed communication systems and global social networks) offers a variety of different cultural values and educational content. In this modern society, national identity and education strive inherently to establish a dialectical connection between local cultures, universal values and global cultural processes, thus prevailing over ethnocentrism and isolation and establishing conjunctive relations which result in creation of the common cultural spaces and new educational forms. In addition, changes in culture are dictated by the tendencies of the modern society: a meritocratic system of values and a technological concept of education are being established, thus subordinating education to the market needs and global division of labor. This is the context in which national identity is considered within the ongoing European higher education reform, which is conventionally referred to as the Bologna Process /5/. The basic cause of reform in the Bologna Process is related to the adjustment of education to global neo-liberal strategies of development, to the demands of the modern division of labor as well as the Euro-integration processes. This reform of higher education is transnational in character, and corresponds to the great social changes of the late twentieth and the early twenty-first centuries which are determined by the process of globalization, expressed through the "kroz ubrzani razvoj ekonomskih, političkih, naučnih veza između ljudi i naroda u svetu" /6/. Therefore, the Bologna Process is causing a great division in public opinion all over Europe: there are those who support and propagate it, and those who criticize and challenge it.

One of the controversial issues of the Bologna Process is drawing attention to the possible endangerment of the cultural identity by unification and standardization of contemporary culture, which forces out different national cultures, collective and individual identities, humanistic values and the educational heritage of a civilization. The same is often said of globalization:

"Globalization brings the possibility that (nations) will lose their cultural identity. This occurs as a result of acculturation and assimilation" /7/. The following issues are essential for considering national identity within the Bologna Process: social and philosophical foundations of educational reform and humanistic values which have a prominent role in the Bologna Process. In this context, this paper indicates the presence of relevant content about national identity in the curricula of teacher education faculties in Belgrade and Zagreb, which have been reformed according to the standards of the Bologna Process. These universities are of great importance because they have a significant role in shaping national identity as their function is to educate teachers and educators who will work with the young at the beginning of their organized education.

On the other hand, these faculties have a strong influence on profiling other teacher education faculties in Serbia and Croatia, and in the wider surrounding region because they serve as a role model to others. All of this indicates their great influence and responsibility for the education of teachers and educators, and indirectly on overall primary education and upbringing.

## **2. Socio-philosophical basis of the Bologna Process**

Among a variety of discussions on the Bologna Process, little attention is paid to social and philosophical foundations of this higher education reform. Every societal reform, including the reform of higher education must be viewed in the context of: a) socio-economic and ideological-political environment and b) aims of the reform which are based on certain philosophical principles and values, for "aims are based on philosophical trends and schools of thought. Therefore, higher education requires a reconsideration of its aims" /8/. Education depends upon the social environment in which it exists through a multitude of different connections and processes. As almost all recent educational reforms have shown, educational reform cannot be complete if it is not implemented concurrently with the reform of other social systems to which education is directly related. In addition, education should be considered in a broader social context which goes beyond the borders of one state, because it is a/the universal legacy of civilization. This is why educational reform must have corresponding relations with other educational systems, as well as with modern scientific achievements. According to the Bologna Process, the reforms of higher education often

ignored these parameters. This reform is uniform and identical for all Europe, and in its design and implementation "differences between academic cultures" /9/ have not been taken into account. The socio-economic, social, ideological, political, ethnic and even culture-specific characteristics, which are different in every European country have not been respected and the processes and tendencies expressed by them have not been sufficiently analysed. Therefore, the experience shows that in different countries and regions of Europe the pace and quality of implementation of the aims of the Bologna Process is uneven and the degree of success of the reform varies in degree from country to country. Judging by the objectives and content of the reform of higher education in the Bologna Process, it is evident that the philosophical basis of this reform is the neo-liberal philosophy of economic development and pragmatism. Neo-liberalism opposes state intervention into the economy, protectionism, high tax rates etc. The state's role should be "limited to the functions of protecting all citizens against violence, theft, and fraud, and to the enforcement of contracts, and so on" /10/.

This economic doctrine expresses the individualistic philosophy of development in service of globalization of capital, for, as Bourdier notices that: "neo-liberalism is a Utopia of exploitation without borders" /11/. On the other hand, pragmatism, as a philosophical concept, indicates that the practical benefits and actions are the main criterion for assessing whether cognitive statements are meaningful and true (J. Dewey, Ch. Peirce, W. James). In pragmatism, ideas are good only if they have value, and only the idea which is useful can be true. According to these philosophical doctrines, and the economic practice based on them, it is evident that the society is reduced to the market and a man to his economic role, to Homo economicus; entrepreneurial initiative is glorified and profit is valued more than man. Essentially, this is a subordination of all human and social forces to instrumental mind and rationalization, which appears also as a form of modernization and dehumanization. Man is reduced to a one-dimensional creature, "a monadized individual sealed under seven seals in its imaginary worlds" /12/. The neo-liberal philosophy of development expresses the interests of globalised capital in the virtual world of global economy and the monopolar world order. In this world "education and knowledge are separated from upbringing and culture" /13/, which contributes not only to the destruction of the cultural identity of small nations, but also of the universal cultural values in the modern world.

### **3. National identity and humanistic values in the Bologna Process**

As a form of collective self-awareness, national identity is an important factor of universal and humanistic education. It is created through the process of socialization, at first by learning the mother tongue and adopting the culture, and later the symbolic and material elements of one's nation are adopted through education. Intense processes of construction or reconstruction of national identity emerge in a time of great social changes, particularly in the processes of creating the state, as it was expressed in Europe during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, but especially at the end of the twentieth century, when the communist federations fell apart and nation-states were created on the same territories. Therefore, construction of national identity is not an end in itself, "it is not identity itself, but a means to create the state." /14/ All over the world, the beginning of the twenty-first century saw great social changes expressed through the process of globalization and reflected in all segments of society. In Europe, there have been major socio-economic and political integrations embodied in the European Union, where almost all countries which are not members of the Union attempt to become a member as soon as possible. These processes are also accompanied by reconstruction of national identity, and various forms and contents of political socialization are instrumental in search for and establishing a European identity. In its essence, the reform of higher education in the Bologna Process functions as element of European integrations and the construction of European identity. Thus, national identity is no longer primarily in service of creating a national state, but in search of European identity. That is why the national identity in the Bologna Process may be considered in two ways: on one side as a reduction of national characteristics to mere preservation of ethnic characteristics, and on the other, as the pursuit of European identity. The Bologna Declaration points out that education reform will respect "the diversity of cultures, languages, national education systems and university autonomy" /15/. Later, in the supporting documents of the Declaration and in the processes of reform, this principle was not evident because it was reduced to ethnic characteristics – something each nation needs to take care of individually if it considers it to be in its interest. Priority was given to the standardization of national education systems which will serve the neo-liberal strategies of social development, global social processes and European integration. Therefore, the Bologna Process started

from centralized political structures uniformly, through a campaign and is binding for all, thus not respecting the cultural and linguistic specificities particular countries and their educational systems. What is more, not even the specific nature of certain educational scientific and artistic disciplines has been respected, as the entire reform process was based on the assumption that the entire education system can be reformed by using the same methods-teaching medicine, electrical engineering, world literature, applied arts etc. Everything has been subjected to quantification. Adhering to the norms and calculations of study load, students would no longer be able to read the textbook of anatomy, the Iliad or War and Peace. For the Bologna Process, a page is a page, no matter what you read. And how to quantify the higher educational institutions engaged in the creative process (music, theater, visual arts, etc.)? All this has devastating consequences, especially for Social Sciences and Humanities and the overall creative work /16/. Only a few countries (Great Britain, Germany and Russia) have managed not to include some of their universities in this process, mainly the most prestigious ones which are of great national interest. There could not have been a complete departure from Jaspers' principle that "University is an expression of the people" /17/. University, regardless of its ownership structure, belongs to a nation, but also tends to include what is supranational, seeks truth and serves humanity, because humanitas is the spiritual being of University. By its nature and its humanistic mission, University cannot be reduced to a political dimension. However, the Bologna Process has allowed the political convention to call into question the educational and humanistic missions of University, which, alongside the entire higher education system, have been redefined and adjusted to the neo-liberal development strategies in the world, to the processes of globalization and European integration. Discussions about the content of national identity and humanistic values in the Bologna Process contain two diametrically opposed viewpoints, which generally refer to the relationship between tradition and modernity. According to the first viewpoint, which is generally held by the promoters of the Bologna Process and some intellectuals from the field of technical sciences, "gazing into the past" presents an obstacle to regional and global integrations, and constant referral to tradition will slow down the "Europeanization". The second viewpoint is contrary to the first and it is mainly represented by the intellectuals of socio-humanistic provenance. This view suggests that tradition is a part of the

spiritual being of a nation and that it should be valued and respected, and even, if necessary, re-assessed. The issue of national identity, which can be understood as "a process of identification" /18/ is considered in this context. Tradition fosters cultural identity and cultural diversity. Education and learning, among other things, should help people be more aware of their roots. As Dositej Obradovic once said: "First learn about your own backyard, then about England" /19/. This will help people find their place in regional and global processes and enable them to learn about, understand and respect other cultures. Knowledge of other cultures contributes to the development of awareness of common elements in the heritage of mankind. This dialectic of getting to know one's own roots and heritage as well as the heritage of others, contributes to learning about oneself. This is the way and the process of seeking common values, which is the basis for the "intellectual and moral solidarity of mankind" /20/.

#### **4. National content in the curricula of the Teacher Education Faculties in Belgrade and Zagreb**

Teacher education faculties educate teachers and educators who will work with the young at the beginning of their organized education. These teachers will, through the processes of education, help the students gain their first knowledge and adopt attitudes about their social identity and values which are important in their social environment. This knowledge about and attitudes towards the national identity which are acquired in childhood tend to remain for life in their behavioral and cultural patterns. What kind of knowledge they will gain and the attitudes they will adopt largely dependents on their educators and teachers. Therefore, educators and teachers must be well educated for their professional and humanistic mission, which mostly depends on the teacher training faculties. On the other hand, teacher education faculties in Belgrade and Zagreb have a strong influence on profiling other teacher education faculties in Serbia and Croatia, because they are able to provide the best teaching staff and the optimal work conditions. They attract most attention and have the highest student enrollment numbers and they serve as role models to all other teacher education faculties. All this shows their great influence and responsibility for teacher education and, indirectly, not only primary but also the overall education. The organizational structure of teacher education faculties in Belgrade and Zagreb is very similar. Both have accredited degree programs in tune with the standards of the

Bologna Process on all three levels of studies (Table 1), and the Teacher Education Faculty in Zagreb also has a curriculum for acquisition of competence(s) for subject teacher /21/. Further, both faculties provide the possibility of attending the study programs outside

their offices: the Teacher Faculty in Belgrade has branches in Novi Pazar and Vrsac; the Teacher Faculty in Zagreb has branches in Petrinja and Čakovec. The curricula of these faculties are diverse and provide many different modules and subjects or courses /22/.

	TEACHER EDUCATION FACULTY IN BELGRADE	TEACHER EDUCATION FACULTY IN ZAGREB
UNDERGRADUATE STUDIES Bachelor's Degree	- Basic Academic Studies: <i>Teacher education curriculum</i> (four years) - Basic Academic Studies: <i>Curriculum for Pre-School educators</i> (four years)	- Pre-School Teacher Education Curriculum - <i>Program 980</i> (three years)
GRADUATE STUDIES Master's Degree	- Graduate Academic Master Studies: <i>Lower Elementary Teacher Education Curriculum</i> (one year) - Graduate Academic Master Studies: <i>Pre-School Teacher Education Curriculum</i> (one year)	- Graduate Teacher Studies with modules - <i>Program 903</i> (five years) - Teacher Studies with Foreign Languages - <i>Program 835</i> (five years)
POSTGRADUATE STUDIES PhD	- Doctoral Studies: <i>Methodology in lower elementary teaching</i> (three years)	- Postgraduate Doctoral Studies: <i>Early childhood upbringing and mandatory education</i> (three years) - Postgraduate Doctoral Studies: <b>Contemporary primary school</b> (two years)
PROFESSIONAL TRAINING		- Curricula for acquisition of competences for subject teachers

Table 1 - Curricula

Subjects or courses in these faculties are structured differently, and depend on the curriculum and modules. The first thing that attracts attention is the fact that the Teacher Education Faculty in Zagreb has more courses (Table 2) because it offers a larger number of programs and modules. This is particularly evident in the number of elective courses (a total of 251), although they are not all included into the curriculum at the same time.

This large number of subjects supports the thesis often used in the analysis of the Bologna Process that "the unity of teaching and research is being replaced by a series of crash courses (one semester courses)" /23/, and that the splitting of scientific fields and their reduction to one-semester subjects leads to fragmentation of scientific units and their simplification which ultimately provides students with superficial knowledge.

GROUPS OF SUBJECTS	TEACHER EDUCATION FACULTY IN BELGRADE		TEACHER EDUCATION FACULTY IN ZAGREB	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
SERBIAN LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE	23	7.44		
CROATIAN LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE			72	11.13
SOCIO-HUMANISTIC STUDIES	132	42.72	196	30.29
NATURE AND SCIENCE STUDIES	43	13.92	78	12.05
ART STUDIES/COURSES	38	12.30	120	18.55
INTERDISCIPLINARY STUDIES/COURSES	18	5.83	15	2.32
FOREIGN LANGUAGES	40	12.94	120	18.55
OTHER	15	4.85	46	7.11
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>309</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>647</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 2 – Structure of Subjects

Thus represented through particular fields, these subjects or courses of teacher education faculties in Belgrade and Zagreb express the character of the teacher education studies in general, which are essentially multidisciplinary in their nature and include a variety of skills which modern teachers and educators need. A more careful analysis of the titles and content of the courses of these faculties would lead to very interesting conclusions. However, the attention of this paper will be focused on the representation of the relevant content about national identity. Such content can be observed in the first group of subjects that deal with Serbian or Croatian language, and then in the courses belonging to the group of Arts, Social Sciences and Humanities. In both Serbian and Croatian curriculum national identity is presented through a variety of subjects, in the context of studying different aspects of language culture and national literature. However, it is interesting that the Belgrade group of subjects that deal with the Serbian language and literature is represented by 7.44 percent, while the Zagreb group of courses dealing with the Croatian language is represented by 11.13 percent. In both cases, the question arises whether this is enough for educators and teachers who will be the first to teach children their mother tongue properly and to direct them to the cultural and national values created in that language. Especially since many authors consider language to be one of the most important elements of national identity (Benedict 1998, Steinberg 1989, Hannerer 1976/1996, Guillourel H. et. P. Michels 1997). The group of Social Sciences and Humanities in both Belgrade and Zagreb is dominated by a variety of pedagogical and psychological disciplines, which is quite understandable, as they form the basis of professional education of educators and teachers. Within this field of studies, we may single out one group of different subjects which, according to their contents and values may be said to belong to the corpus of political education /24/. They are certainly relevant to the question of national identity, but one can note from their titles and content that they also strive towards European identity. This identity is constructed as a function of European integrations, which is essentially the objective of the reform of higher education in the Bologna Process. At the same time these subjects offered to students of teacher education faculties express the character of political education which is not value-neutral. It is an expression of a particular concept of political culture that is "clearly in accord with the ideological concept of government in the state and political influences the state government is under" /25/. In Belgrade, Arts subjects are represented

by 12.30 percent and in Zagreb by 18.55 percent. Thus, in both of these teacher education faculties, they are more dominant than the subjects dealing with the mother tongue (either Serbian or Croatian language). This group of subjects includes various arts: music, visual art, theater, folk arts, etc. within their curriculum, elements of national identity are present mostly in fragments, mostly in music and folklore, through various forms of research, mainly those elements of traditional culture characteristic of the Serbian or Croatian nation. These elements correspond to the projected concept of national and European identity.

### Conclusion

As a form of collective self-awareness and an important factor of general and humanistic education, national identity has twofold aspects within the Bologna Process. The first aspect is the reduction of national identity to its ethnic characteristics, with respect of the diversity of cultures of European nations; the second aspect is the tendency towards creating the European identity, which is in function of both process of globalization and European integration. The main objective of the reform of higher education in Europe, which is conventionally referred to as the Bologna Process, is the standardization of national education systems which will serve the neo-liberal strategy of social development, global social processes and European integrations. Discussions about the content of national identity and humanistic values in the Bologna Process contain two diametrically opposed viewpoints, which generally refer to the relationship between tradition and modernity. According to the first viewpoint, which is generally held by the promoters of the Bologna Process and some intellectuals from the field of technical sciences, national identity and tradition are considered to be static phenomena and each reference to these values creates an obstacle to modern integrations, thereby impeding and slowing down the entry into the European Union. The second viewpoint is contrary to the first and it is mainly represented by the intellectuals of socio-humanistic provenance. This view suggests that tradition is a part of the spiritual being of a nation and that it should be valued and respected, and even re-assessed, if necessary. In order to participate in the process of Europeanization, a nation must know about and be aware of its own roots and cultural heritage. Tradition fosters cultural identity and cultural diversity. Through its philosophy and curricula, education should, among other things, help people learn about their own culture as well as

other cultures for this knowledge contributes to the development of awareness that there are common elements in the heritage of all mankind. The analysis of curricula of teacher education faculties in Belgrade and Zagreb, both of which have been reformed in accordance with the standards of the Bologna Process, yields the conclusion that the relevant elements of national identity may be found in the curriculum for the following groups of subjects: Serbian or Croatian language, Social Sciences, Humanities and Arts. Within the subjects of the Serbian or Croatian language, the elements of national identity can be found in the context of studying different aspects of language culture and national literature. In Belgrade, these subjects are represented by 7.44 percent and in Zagreb by 11.13 percent. In both cases, the question arises whether this is enough for educators and teachers who will be the first to properly teach children their mother tongue and to direct them to the cultural

and national values which have been created in that language. Within the curricula of the Social Sciences and the Humanities, the presence of content with political character which supports and promotes the construction of European identity is noticeable. The group of Arts subjects contains mere fragments of the elements of national identity, mostly in music and folklore, through various forms of expression, and mainly through those traditional cultural activities that are characteristic of the Serbian or Croatian nation. Therefore, at the teacher education faculties in Belgrade and Zagreb, the education of the future educators and teachers is dominated by the content which gives primacy to European identity over the national identity, which is consistent with the attempts to work toward building a European identity, which functions in service of processes of globalization and European integration. And this is the essence of the reform of higher education in the Bologna Process.

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