

## The representation of a nation in the Youth and History survey in post-war Bosnia and Herzegovina

A research project *Youth and History: a comparative European survey on historical consciousness and political attitudes among adolescents* was carried out in 27 countries in 1995-96. About 30 000 adolescents answered to the same questions concerning their ideas, among others about history, politics and history teaching.

Bosnia and Herzegovina did not participate in the research due to fact that there was a war in the area.<sup>1</sup> The manipulative use of history has, however, been characteristic to that society during the last ten years, and it was therefore considered worthwhile to include Bosnia and Herzegovina into the *Youth and History* research later on.

Consequently, in the autumn 1999, I set out to collect the *Youth and History* data in Bosnia and Herzegovina. *Youth and History* provided a suitable comparative method to investigate empirically contents of historical consciousness and political attitudes in the post-war situation of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The sample and data collection have been explained elsewhere,<sup>2</sup> here we only need to say that the analysed sample consists of 907 cases. In the sample the pupils have identified their nationality as follows: 360 stated they were Bosniaks, 218 Croats, 311 Serbs and 7 others, 11 have not answered to the nationality question.<sup>3</sup>

In the Youth and History survey "Nation" was one (together with "Europe" and "democracy") of the essential concepts of modern socio-political language to be studied in the light of historical consciousness. Nation was seen as a historically laden concept and therefore part of historical consciousness of people. Thus, by studying the contents of the concept we can also study the nature of historical consciousness.<sup>4</sup>

In Bosnian society the notion of nation has been an essential element of daily life during the last decade. That is obvious from any analysis of media, schoolbooks, societal institutions

1 The Dayton peace agreement was reached in November 1995.

2 TORSTI, PILVI (2000): "«Peace-loving and similar». Youth and History – Explorative Study of the historical thinking Among the Adolescents in Bosnia-Herzegovina." Master Thesis. University of Helsinki; TORSTI, PILVI (2001): "A Youth and History Survey among the Three Bosnia Ethnic Groups and their Relations to Europe." In: LEEUW-ROORD, JOKE VAN DER (2001; Ed.): *History for Today and Tomorrow. What Does Europe Mean for School History?* Hamburg: edition Körber-Stiftung (EUSTORY Series Shaping European History; Vol. 2), S. 58-70.

3 In the analysis I will refer to the mean values calculated from the Bosnian sample and to the values of European data presented in the Youth and History main report. The Bosnian data is in my possession. It should be noted that the European samples were already collected in 1995-1996 while the Bosnian data was gathered in 1999.

4 ANGVIK, MAGNE; V.BORRIES, BODO (1997; Eds.): *Youth and History. A Comparative European Survey on Historical Consciousness and Political Attitudes among Adolescents*. Hamburg: Körber-Stiftung, S. A136.

and so on: Bosnians have lived in nationally divided reality.

In the following I will analyse the representation of nation among the young Bosnians in the Youth and History survey by first asking, "what is nation" (1.) based on the answers of the pupils. Then I will continue to consider the duties and rights of nations (2.) and see whether Youth and History results give us any hints about the historical and future significance of nations in pupils' minds (3.). Before concluding the paper, I will end with a short analysis of the associations that Bosnian pupils have between the concepts "Nation" and "Europe" (4.).

### 1. *What is a nation?*

In the question about the representation of nation, pupils were asked, "What are your views on nations and national states?" Thus the question immediately put together the idea of "nation" and "nation state" which in the Bosnian case further complicates the analysis of the question for the pupils are most likely not to think that a nation equals a state based on the reality of their home country.

The items included "Nations are born, grow and perish in history, just like everything else", "Nations are natural entities, unified by common origin, language, history and culture", "Nations represent a will to create a common future, despite cultural differences in the past", "The claims of national groups for a state of their own was one main cause of wars in recent centuries", "National groups have the right to go to war to make their own state", and "National states should give an essential part of their sovereignty to a supranational organisation". Thus, the first three items were definitions of nations while the other three deal with the role of a "nation" in the past and in the future. As noted in the original Youth and History report, some of the items are in conflict with one another but none clearly contradicts one another.<sup>5</sup>

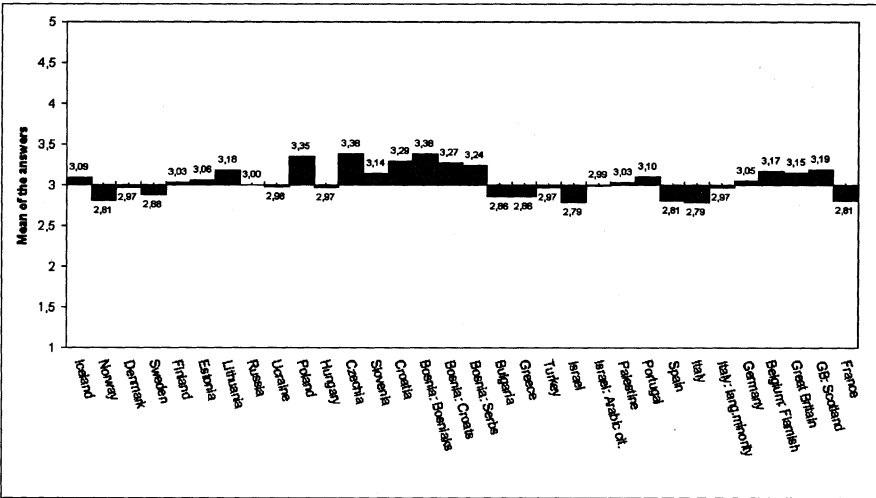
What, then, does "Nation" represent for Bosnian pupils according to their answers? First, we can look at the three first items, the definitions of "nation". As in most countries in Europe, young Bosnians supported the most the Herderian definition of nations as natural entities unified by common origin, language, culture and history ( $m=3.43$ ). The support expressed by the Bosnians was, however, among the lowest, only Belgium (3,27), Slovenia (3,28), and Welsh (3,39) youth had lower values than the Bosnians. Inside the Bosnian sample the Croats show slightly higher support for the idea ( $m=3.52$ ) but the difference is not significant.<sup>6</sup>

The Bosnians supported all the three definitions of nations almost similarly ( $m=3.29$ , 3.43, 3.31). In the international comparison their support for the idea that nations grow and perish just like anything else in history ( $m=3.29$ ) was very high as can be seen in Graph 1.

5 ANGVIK; V.BORRIES (1997; Eds.), S. A 137.

6 ANGVIK; V.BORRIES (1997; Eds.), S. B 364.

This suggests that in the multicultural Bosnia the pupils are more prepared to see "nation" as something changing in time. Such interpretation is further supported by the highest support (in the entire overall sample) of the Bosniak pupils ( $m=3.38$ ) for the definition: for Bosniaks the idea of nation has been the most complicated one for decades.

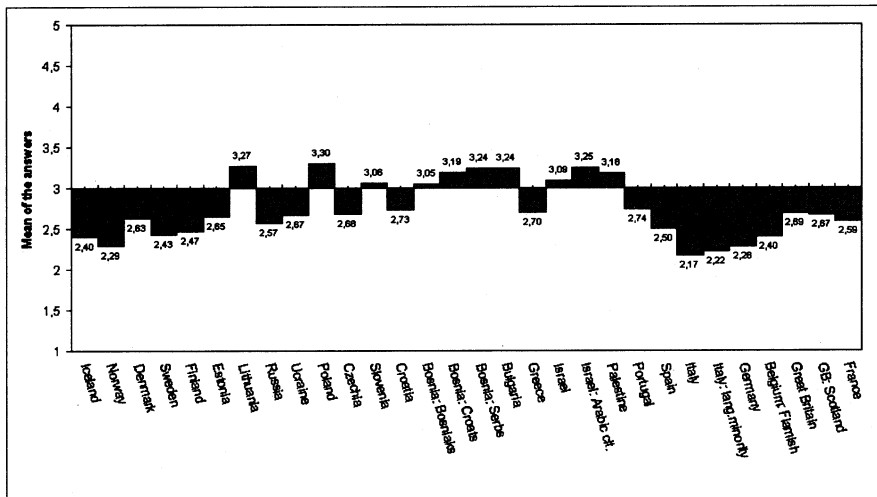


Graph 1: Concepts of nations: nations get born, grow and die.

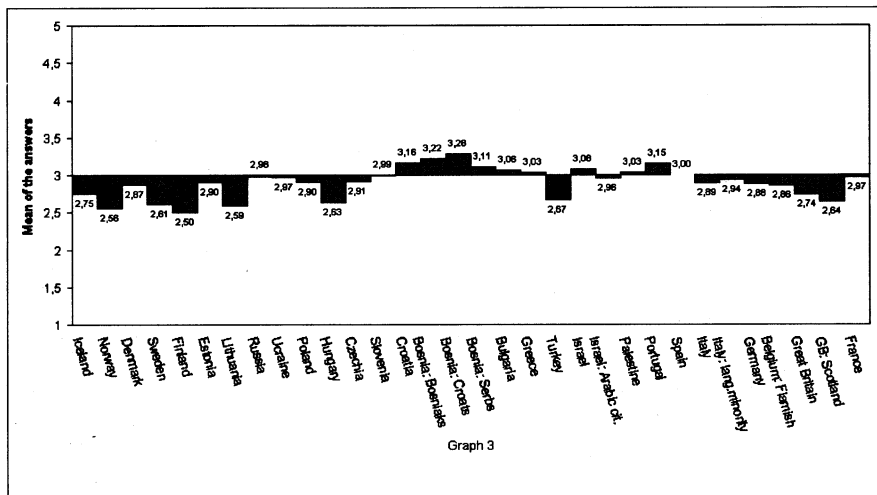
Thus, we have seen that regardless of their national group young Bosnians consider all the different definitions positively without being too excited of any of them.

When moving from the definitions of nations to the roles and functions of nations, namely to the three latter items of the nation question, we find two interesting results in the international comparison. In the European overall sample the idea of national groups having right to go to war to make a state, and the idea that national states should yield their sovereignty to supranational powers, were both rejected (moverall=2.68, 2.88). Among Bosnians, however, both items were supported ( $m=3.14, 3.21$ ).<sup>7</sup> As can be seen in the Graph 2 and Graph 3 the Bosnian values were among the highest in the question of rights to go to the war and the highest when talking about yielding sovereignty to supernatural organisations. Cautious interpretation would suggest that young Bosnians see national groups having the right to go to a war for their state and *therefore* would be ready to give the sovereignty of national states to multinational powers.

7 ANGVIK; V, BORRIES (1997; Eds.), S. B365.



Graph 2: "National groups may fight for own state."



Graph 3

Graph 3: „National states should yield sovereignty.”

There were no significant differences between the national groups.

The relation supranational power versus national state was also questioned when the pupils were asked about the voting behaviour. One of the items to vote for or against was "Reduce the power of the European Community giving more power to the national states". Generally Bosnians were quite undecided on it (m=2.01) but the Bosniaks (m=1.91) sup-

ported the idea the least ( $m_{\text{Croat}}=2.07$ ,  $m_{\text{Serb}}=2.08$ ), in fact their mean was fourth lowest in the entire sample after Belgium ( $m=1.80$ ), Italy ( $m=1.82$ ), and France ( $m=1.87$ ).<sup>8</sup> Thus, it is clear that the Bosniaks would not be ready to give national states more power at the expense of EU and rather support the idea that national states should yield their sovereignty to supranational powers (such as EU).

Finally, we can look at the representation of nation by looking at the question of importance where among other things the pupils were asked about the personal importance of "my country", "my ethnic group" and "religious faith".

Before analysing the results, we must analyse what is actually asked here in the Bosnian context. We are here interested about the representation of "nation". In Bosnian context "national group" and "ethnic group" have been used as synonyms. In the local language the word "narod" refers to "nation" or "people" and Bosniaks, Croats and Serbs are seen as forming the three "narods" of Bosnia and Herzegovina e.g. in the constitution of the country. Thus, question of the importance of the ethnic group can be interpreted as meaning the same as the importance of national group in Bosnian context.

What about "my country"? Bosnia and Herzegovina is by definition a multi-national state (consists of three equal nations). The pupils' understanding of the word "my country" can of course be questioned: do they think of Bosnia and Herzegovina or the entity in which they live (the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Serb-Republic) as "my country"? Do the Croat pupils associate "my country" with Herceg-Bosna?

Finally "the religious faith" is interesting in the context of the representation of nation for that is the clearest distinction between the national/ethnic groups of Bosnia and Herzegovina which speak the same language (different variants of it) and have similar Slav-origins.

In the single item level, all three items are considered important by young Bosnians. "My country" ( $m=4.24$ ) is for them fourth most important when compared to all Europeans, only Greek ( $m=4.36$ ), Turkish ( $m=4.59$ ) and Palestinian ( $m=4.29$ ) youth considers "my country" more important than the Bosnians. There are no differences between the three Bosnian groups.<sup>9</sup>

The picture is similar in relations to the importance of "the ethnic group": only Greeks ( $m=4.20$ ), Palestinians ( $m=3.93$ ) and Arab Israelis ( $m=3.99$ ) give it even higher importance than the Bosnians ( $m=3.90$ ). Among the Bosnians the Serbs ( $m=3.95$ ) and Croats ( $m=3.98$ ) emphasise the importance of "ethnic group" slightly more than Bosniaks ( $m=3.84$ ).<sup>10</sup>

The importance of "religious faith" is also comparatively very high among Bosnians ( $m=4.04$ ) and again the same countries have even higher figures: Greece ( $m=4.35$ ), Turkey ( $m=4.37$ ), Arab Israelis ( $m=4.13$ ) and Palestinians ( $m=4.30$ ). Among the Bosnians, Croats consider the importance of religious faith higher ( $m_{\text{Croat}}=4.24$ ,  $m_{\text{Serb}}=3.95$ ,  $m_{\text{Bosniak}}=4.01$ ).<sup>11</sup>

8 ANGVIK; V.BORRIES (1997; Eds.), S. B355.

9 ANGVIK; V.BORRIES (1997; Eds.), S. B 299.

10 ANGVIK, V.BORRIES (1997; Eds.), S. B 300. Note that the item was not allowed in to be asked in Turkey.

11 ANGVIK; V.BORRIES (1997; Eds.), S. B 300.

## 2. *The rights and obligations of "ours" and "theirs"*

A central part of the representation of "nation" is the question of "us" and "the others". Youth and History data allows us to look at the right and the duties of nation(s) in this context from two angles: a question of an area dispute between "my country" and neighbouring country, and the questions related to the immigrants, to "the others".

In the so-called Newland question pupils we asked: "Suppose that the imagery territory Newland was occupied by your home country A from 1500 to 1900. From 1900 until today Newland has been occupied by country B. Your country A wants to have Newland back, and puts forward several argument for its case. How much weight would you give these arguments?" The arguments included "The people of Newland speak our language and share our culture", "Newland was under our control for a longer period (1500-1900) than it has been under the control of B (1900-1994).", "Settlers from our country came to Newland in the year 1500 whereas people from B did not settle in Newland until 1900", "When asked, the majority of the people of Newland say that they would prefer to be controlled by us to be controlled by B", "B took Newland from us by war in 1900, which was an unjust act", "An international peace conference has examined the case, and recommend that we shall have Newland back", "We have the military power and we will use it to get Newland back under our control".

Based on the previous question we can assume that young Bosnians associate such expressions as "your home country", "us", "our control" with their national (ethnic) group. Thus, the entire question of the fate of Newland can be analysed from the point of view of the role of the nation.

### *a. Fate of Newland*

In Bosnia and Herzegovina units and collectives of people have been formed in an extreme way during last ten years with different types of criteria. The disputes that have appeared in the political rhetoric during and after the war have concentrated on four issues: ethnic issues, territorial issues, religious issues, and language issues. The perception of collective identity (and thus the representation of nation) and the legitimisation of violence are clearly central when talking about these disputes.

Therefore, the question of the "imaginary territory" of Newland can be considered as one of the most important ones in the whole research from the Bosnian point of view. It can give us important indications of the historical and political understanding of the young Bosnians in relation to the arguments that have been central in their society. Here we will concentrate on the national perspective of the question.

Generally, Bosnians clearly support the most three arguments that would return the Newland to their own country. Perhaps not surprisingly, after the Dayton agreement that

despite all its complications did stop the war, "the recommendation of the peace conference" is supported the most ( $m=3.51$ ). Pupils also consider "the unjust loss of Newland 100 years ago" ( $m=3.44$ ) and "the self-determination of the people in Newland" ( $m=3.41$ ) as important reasonings for claiming the territory back.

The classical representation of the nation, belonging to a national group, "the common language and culture of people from the country A and people from Newland" was the least important argument for the Bosnian pupils ( $m=3.15$ ). Among all the Europeans the Bosnians were among the ones showing the lowest support for the common language and culture argument. The argument was the third most supported argument for the re-annexation of Newland among Europeans in general.<sup>12</sup> Thus, we can conclude that for Bosnians the classic national reasons, the common language, culture and heritage, would not be among important reasons for re-annexation. This could easily be explained by the nature of Bosnian "nations"; they share language, culture and heritage.

Inside the Bosnian sample the three national groups do not show great differences. Only the "The duration of control in the distant past" –argument is supported by Bosniaks ( $m=3.34$ ) and Croats ( $m=3.27$ ), but rejected by the Serbs ( $m=2.97$ ). In turn, the Serbs support the most the argument of self-determination of the people ( $m=3.46$ ) of Newland.

This clearly points to the position of the Serb-Republic. If the long control in history was supported as an argument, there would hardly be any reasoning for the existence of such a "Serb-country" within Bosnia for the areas of RS were until the recent war occupied almost equally by the Bosniaks and Serbs. The republic itself is a new creation. Thus, it seems that this item in fact reflects how the young Serbs argue from the point of view of their today's society. This idea is further supported by the fact that the Serbs give the greatest support to the argument of self-determination of people. In other words: rather than any control in history, people themselves should be able to choose where they want to belong to.

#### *b. Rights of the "others"*

The discussion about "the others" in the Youth and History research was based on the question block of immigrants and their rights. In addition to that, in a question asking pupils for their voting decision one question related to the immigrant issue was asked.

In the Bosnian context the immigrant approach for "the others" is, however, problematic. The multinational society has made the others who are part one's own society much more central than "the others" in a sense of being immigrants. We will have a quick look at the Bosnian results on the immigrant items anyway.

The immigrant question was formed: "People in many countries discuss whether immigrants (people from abroad) should be given full citizenship including right to vote. Which immigrants should – in your opinion – have the voting rights in parliamentary elections in your country?" The items ranged from "none" to "all" including reasoning based on cultural

12 ANGVIK; V. BORRIES (1997; Eds.), S. B 230.

assimilation, law-abiding, victim-nature of immigrants, and loyalty of immigrants to one's country.

Generally, Bosnian would grant the right to vote for immigrants based on different reasons more easily than Europeans in general. In all positive items their mean values is higher ( $m_{\text{Bosn}}=3.79, 3.86, 3.65, 3.51, 3.12$ ;  $m_{\text{overall}}=3.54, 3.65, 2.94, 3.48, 2.59$ ), and in the item stating that civil right should be granted to the victims of oppression Bosnian give the highest support of all.<sup>13</sup>

Similar positive thinking towards immigrants was also clear when young Bosnians were asked about their voting preferences: they rejected the strongest the idea of voting for the reduction of immigration having the lowest value ( $m=1.75$ ) in the entire sample ( $m_{\text{overall}}=2.14$ ).<sup>14</sup> Thus, young Bosnians consistently support the rights of immigrants. Whether that could be interpreted as the openness towards "the others", or simply a result of the recent past when many Bosnians have in fact found themselves or their family members as immigrants and therefore would wish good treatment for immigrants, can of course only be speculated. Definitely young Bosnians are not thinking about their peers belonging to other national groups of the country as "immigrants" – in fact had this been a national survey there should have been a similar question concerning "displaced" and "returnees" instead of immigrants.<sup>15</sup>

Finally we can simply note from the question of importance of different things that for the young Bosnians "solidarity with the poor in own country" was considered of very high importance ( $m=4.20$ ). Only Greek ( $m=4.36$ ), Turkish ( $m=4.59$ ) and Palestinian ( $m=4.29$ ) youth considered it even more important.<sup>16</sup> Thus, young Bosnians seem to see "us" as responsible for the well being of "our" fellow countrymen.

### 3. *The historical and future significance of a nation*

As argued in the beginning of the chapter the nation as a concept is understood as historically laden by definition. Thus it is assumed that all the opinions and definitions of nations are historically constructed and that there is historical narrative behind the present-day attitudes towards history. In addition, few questions in the Youth and History survey also allow us the study the actual interest and concentration the pupils claim to have for the history of nation and national group.

In a question asking about the concentrations of history lessons one of the eight items was "We learn to acknowledge the traditions, characteristics, values and tasks of our nation and

13 ANGVIK; V.BORRIES (1997; Eds.), S. B 347-B348.

14 ANGVIK; V.BORRIES (1997; Eds.), S. B 354.

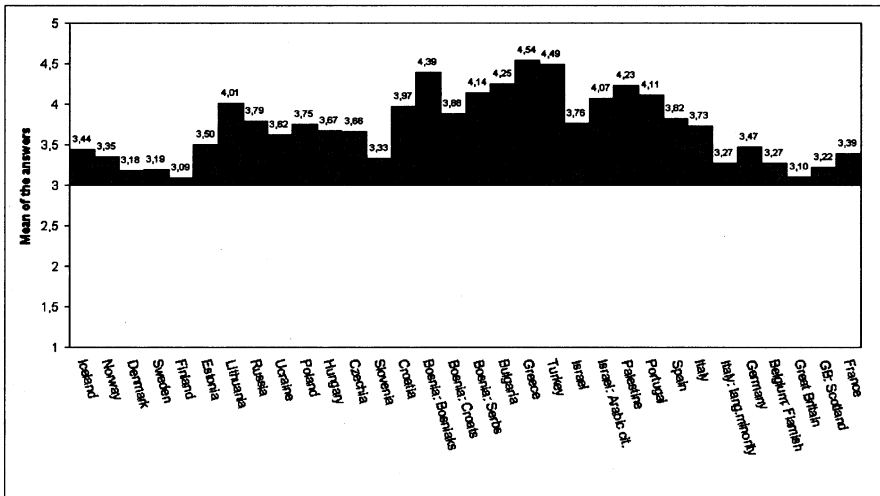
15 "Internally displaced" people are those who have left their homes during the war and now live elsewhere (usually in the other entity of Bosnia and Herzegovina). Returnees are those either returning from abroad to their pre-war homes or those returning from one entity to the other entity where they now belong to the minority.

16 ANGVIK; V.BORRIES (1997; Eds.), S. B 299.



society.” Bosnians reported great concentration on the national traditions and values. Their value ( $m=3.61$ ) was fifth highest in the entire sample after Greece ( $m=4.02$ ), Turkey ( $m=3.95$ ), Arab/Israel ( $m=3.81$ ) and Palestine ( $m=3.82$ ). Among the Bosnian sample the Croat pupils in particular emphasised the national-traditional emphasis of history lessons ( $m_{Croat}=3.75$ ,  $m_{Serb}=3.59$ ,  $m_{Bosniak}=3.55$ ).

In a question asking about pupils’ interests for history of different geographical areas pupils were asked to consider “the history of your immediate locality”, “the history of your region”, the history of BiH/own country”<sup>17</sup>, “the history of Europe”, and “the history of the world outside Europe”. The Bosnians reported generally relatively high interests for history of different areas. The greatest interest they claimed to have for the history of their own country/BiH ( $m=4.18$ ). There is a significant difference inside the Bosnian sample: Bosniaks ( $m=4.39$ ) report much higher interest for the history of Bosnia and Herzegovina than Croats ( $m=3.88$ ) or Serbs ( $m=4.14$ ). In fact, Croats are as interested in the history of their own region ( $m=3.86$ ) and even more interested in their immediate locality ( $m=3.97$ ) than in the history of their country. The unusually high interest for the history of their country among Bosniaks in the international comparison is illustrated in the Graph 4.



Graph 4: Interest for the history of one's own country.

The results clearly illustrate that the Bosniak pupils identify mostly with Bosnia and Herzegovina as “theirs”, while in particular the Bosnian Croat pupils emphasise the immediate locality and region more. Had we asked from the Serb pupils the same question that was asked among Croats and Bosniaks, the interest for the history of BiH instead of “your

<sup>17</sup> Here a very unfortunate mistake in the has to be reported: in the questionnaires used in the Federation of BiH, that is in Croat and Bosniak dominated schools the wording was “history of BiH” while in the questionnaire used in the Republic of Serbs the wording was “the history of own country”.

country” we would most likely have got lower mean value as well.

Thus we can conclude that from the national groups Bosniaks clearly identify with their country by having much interest for its history, in particular the Croats more emphasise the regional interest, in other words the interest for the history of region dominated by their national group. We must, however, remember that the interest for BiH among Croats was also higher than the European average ( $m=3.71$ ).<sup>18</sup>

Finally, we had the block of three questions asking pupils ideas of the characteristics of life in the past and in the future. From the point of view of the representation of nation the relevant characteristic is “life was/will be torn by conflicts between ethnic groups” assuming that young Bosnians see national group parallel with ethnic group. According to the answers of young Bosnians the conflicts between ethnic/national groups have been possible in the past of their country ( $m=3.11$ ) but are unlikely in the future of their own country ( $m=2.83$ ) or in the future of Europe ( $m=2.94$ ). Serb pupils find the life torn by ethnic conflicts more likely in the future ( $m=3.01$  and  $3.07$ ) and in the past ( $m=3.27$ ).

Thus, taken together the idea of “national groups’ right to go to war to make their state”, and the slightly agreed likelihood of the “life torn by ethnic conflicts” among the Serbs (but lower values than the Europeans on average had) and rejection among Bosniaks and Croats, we can conclude that the young Bosnians give national conflicts some significance as historical and future determinants. Based on our data, the significance is, however, very modest.

#### 4. Nation and Europe

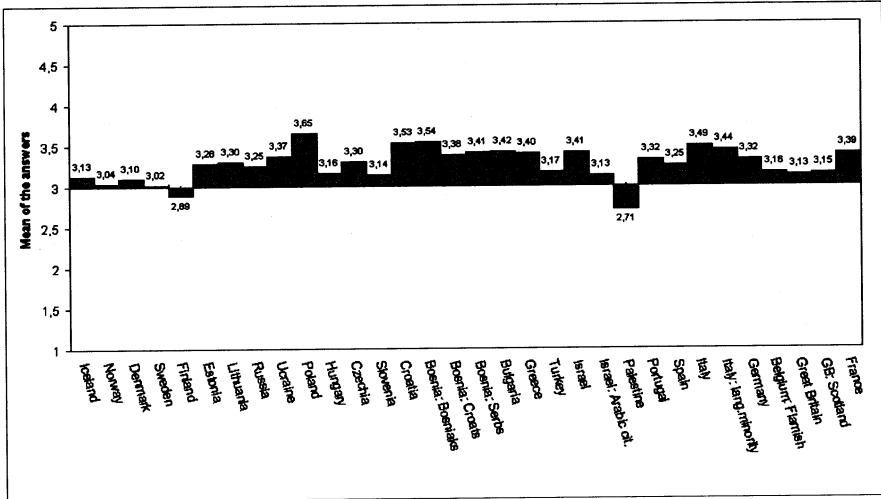
Finally as part of the representation of nation, we will briefly look at the relation between Europe/European integration and the idea of nations.

Similarly than with the concept of nation, the pupils were also asked about their ideas and definitions for Europe, which was assumed to be a historically laden concept. The question was “What do Europe and European integration mean to you”, and the items included “Europe is a geographical expression, no more”, “Europe is a birthplace of democracy, enlightenment and progress”, “Europe is a group of white, rich countries guilty of economic and ecological exploitation of the rest of the world”, “European integration is the only way to peace between nations that previously attempted to destroy each other”, “European integration is a danger to sovereign nations, to their identity and culture”, and “European integration will solve the economic and social crises of the countries in Europe”.

In the overall sample the most agreed idea of Europe was that it is the birthplace of democracy, enlightenment and progress ( $m=3.34$ ). The Bosnians, in turn, supported the most the idea that European integration is the only way to peace between nations wanting to destroy each others ( $m=3.46$ ), and the idea that European integration will solve crises ( $m=3.54$ ). In the international comparison illustrated in the Graph 5 and Graph 6, we can

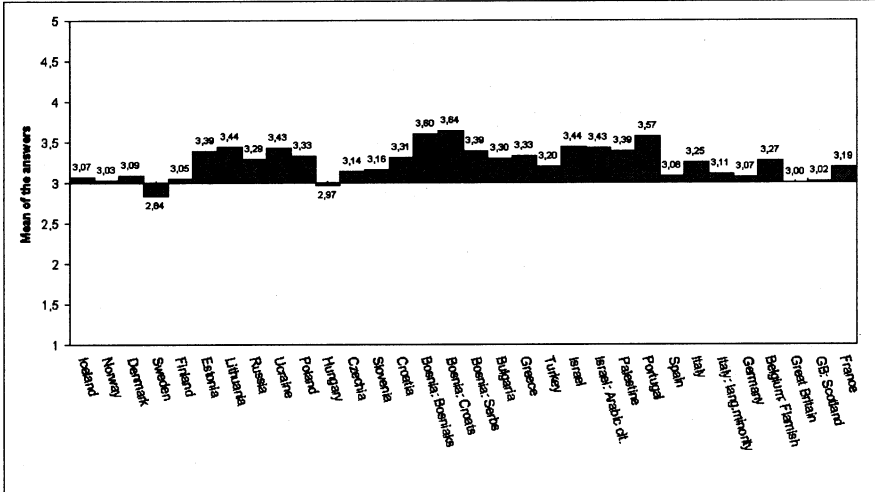
18 ANGVIK; V.BORRIES (1997; Eds.), S. B 143.

see that the agreement of Bosnian pupils with these two ideas is among the highest of the entire sample. Inside the sample the Serb agree less with the idea of European integration solving crises ( $m=3.39$ ) than Croats ( $m=3.64$ ) and Bosniaks ( $m=3.60$ ) yet their value is higher than the European average. Both Croats and Serbs emphasise slightly less the idea of Europe as the only way to peace ( $m_{\text{Croat}}=3.38$ ,  $m_{\text{Serb}}=3.41$ ) than Bosniaks ( $m=3.54$ ).<sup>19</sup>



Graph 5: „European integration is the only way to peace between nations.“

19 ANGVIK; V.BORRIES (1997; Eds.), S. B 370.



Graph 6: „European Integration will solve crisis.“

What can we read out from these ideas? Firstly, Bosnians seem to be clearly agreeing with the idea that the nations have attempted destroy each other and therefore European integration is needed as a peacemaker. Secondly, we can note the sort of anti-nation approach; the integration of Europe is seen as a way to peace and as solving problems which points to a quite positive idea of Europe and negative idea of nations and nation states. All the ideas are strongest among Bosniaks but Serbs and Croats follow the same pattern only with less enthusiasm.

The positive thinking about European integration is further supported by the pupils' answers to the importance of European co-operation and to the voting for the European integration including common currency. In both Bosnian scores are among the highest in the entire sample ( $m=3.46$  and  $2.33$ ). The national pattern is also similar: the Serbs consider European co-operation less important ( $m_{\text{Serb}}=3.35$ ,  $m_{\text{Croat}}=3.44$  and  $m_{\text{Bosniak}}=3.54$ ) and would be more reserved in voting for European integration including common currency ( $m_{\text{Serb}}=2.20$ ,  $m_{\text{Croat}}=2.45$ ,  $m_{\text{Bosniak}}=2.36$ ).

### 5. Concluding thoughts

The representation of nation among young Bosnians seems to consist of slightly confused definition about nation, which includes features of common language and culture and is partly understood as a temporal historical construction.

The latter might stem from their historical experience. During Yugoslavia the Yugoslavation was actively constructed parallel to ethnic nationalities. In last ten years, the Yugoslav-

vian nation has made the way for the ethnic nations, which also have gone through constant changes. E.g. among the Bosnian Croats, the general Croathood has been forced to turn towards Bosnian or Herzegovinian Croathood for the government in Zagreb has made it clear that Bosnian Croats are not part of Croatia. Similarly, Bosnian Serbs have started to emphasise their Bosnian Serb nationality for the ties with Belgrade have loosened. Finally, the Bosniaks have been building their national identity to quite some extent because of the pressure from Serb and Croat nation-building projects. From the overall sample it is interesting to note that both former Yugoslav republics Croatia and Slovenia also had relatively high values for the idea that nations get born, grow and die in history ( $m_{\text{Croatia}}=3.29$ ,  $m_{\text{Slovenia}}=3.14$ ).<sup>20</sup> This further suggests that Yugoslavian past has influenced the thinking of the youth about the definitions for nation.

The question of the role of national groups versus that of country is crucially important and interesting in the context of Bosnian multi-ethnic state and the nature of the historical consciousness of the youth there. Based on the Youth and History survey "my ethnic group" was found generally important, but so was "my country". Perhaps quite surprisingly this was true for all national groups. Unfortunately we cannot know whether the Serbs though the Serb-Republic as "their country" and whether Bosnian Croats though Croatia proper when answering to this question. In turn, we can be quite certain that Bosniaks, who considered the importance of my country the highest, were thinking of Bosnia and Herzegovina or the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina as "their country".

The absolute importance of ethnic/national group was further supported when remembering that pupils reported to be concentrating on learning about their nations' traditions and characteristics in history lessons. The Croats emphasised this the most. They also had as great interest for the history of their immediate locality and for their region as for the history of BiH. The Bosniaks had by far the greatest interest for the history of BiH of all the areas, which further supports the idea that for young Bosniaks the importance of national/ethnic group and religion is parallel with the importance of multi-national and multi-religious Bosnia and Herzegovina. Thus, their representation of nation is twofold: ethnic-religious group is important (that is the Bosnian Muslim group) but so is the multi-national country (Bosnia and Herzegovina).

To get deeper in the analysis about the contents and dimensions of the national group one would hope that the importance-question had also included "my language" for that is one of the central issues in the nation building processes among the Bosnian groups.

The ideas relating nations to wars created a problematic picture of nations. The Bosnians supported (unlike Europeans in general) both, the idea that nations should have a right to go to war to make a state, and the idea that national states should give essential part of their sovereignty to a supranational organisation. Thus, nations have the right to go to a war on the one hand, but on the other hand it would be better that even existing nation states would

20 ANGVIK; V.BORRIES (1997; Eds.), S. B 364.

yield their sovereignty. Bosniaks supported the right of nations to go to a war less than Serbs and Croats.

Parallel to previous the Bosnians also considered the European integration very positively and at the expense of nation states. The consideration of Europe and European integration was positive among all the national groups while national groups were seen as having caused conflicts, which European integration can solve. Serbs were generally more reserved in their support for the integration of Europe.<sup>21</sup>

Thus, the idea of young Bosnians seems to be that European integration or some other supranational power is needed to be in between the warring nations. This of course suggests that the current situation and recent past are most dominant determinants in pupils' thinking: they have seen the destructive nature of national groups and how international support was vital for ending the war between national groups. Moreover, a hope for joining the European Union in the future is strongly present in Bosnian public discussions.

Finally, the differences among the national group were of minor nature and should not be over-interpreted. As we have, however, some clear tendencies existed. The Croats emphasised the traditional values of nations and religion slightly more, while the Serbs believed more in the self-determination of people than cultural historical traditions as reasons for uniting lands. Serbs also supported stronger the right to go to war and likelihood of national conflicts in Bosnia. They were less negative about the nations and national states and less positive about the integration of Europe than the other national groups. Bosniaks expressed a picture in which the importance of ethnic/national group and Bosnian and Herzegovina were combined.

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21 I have analysed the different relation of Serbs towards Europe in Youth and History survey elsewhere. It was shown that their thinking was consistent and that they were less interested, more pessimistic and so on in terms of Europe when compared to Bosniaks and Croats. See TORSTI 2001 (as footnote 2).