

**FORMATION OF THE CIVIC EDUCATION
POLICY AS A DISCURSIVE PROJECT IN POST-
2000 SERBIA**

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Abstract

The introduction of civic education to Serbian primary and secondary schools in 2001 marked a beginning of an all-encompassing education reform that followed the country's 2000 'democratic revolution'. In the context of a socio-political shift from various authoritarian regimes, including the 1945-1990 state socialism and 1990-2000 nationalist authoritarianism, the policy set the tone for future changes that were designed to support democratisation of Serbia, and assist its 'return to Europe' (Birzea, 1994). A part of the broader programme for democratisation of education and education for democracy in Serbia, the policy enabled various discursive elements constitutive of the desired post-2000 ideology to enter the national educational discourse. This thesis explored its formation.

I approached the policy as a way to explore the beginning of Serbia's first proper post-communist reform, and analyse the actors and ideologies that had shaped it. I used Ball's notion of policy-as-discourse and conceptualised civic education policy as a part of a discursive project of creating a 'new Serbia'. Using elite interviews and documentary analysis, I explored its formation and development, its place in the wider reform, and its relation to religious education, (re)introduced at the same time. Combining the elements of Fairclough's critical discourse analysis, and elements of Bourdieu's social theory, I looked into the meaning and function of civic education as a part of the ideological construction of the future Serbia, as well as capital used to position Serbia favourably in the global field in the early days of its educational transition. Within the wider transition literature, I attempted to establish a comparison between Serbia's 'belated' post-communist transition, and educational changes happening across formerly communist countries of Central and Eastern Europe in early-to-mid 1990s. I also explored the applicability and usefulness of the recent theoretical developments in the transition literature that go against the conceptualisation of post-communist transitions as modernising projects, and argue instead for a focus on unique transformations that happen as a result of a meeting between globally dominant and desirable discursive elements and local contexts.

I conclude that the discursive elements of the Serbian civic education policy were used as capital by Serbian policy actors to ensure their better positioning not only in the global, but also in the national field, as suggested by differences in the ideological construction of the policy discourse in different fields. This prompts a concern with the concept of various 'policyspeaks', as recently explored by Halász (2012) and Steiner-Khamsi (2014). I argue that as a part of a discursive project intended to construct post-2000 Serbia, civic education policy worked more towards eradicating the undesirable ideology of violent nationalist authoritarianism, than towards eradicating the ideology of communist authoritarianism. In this sense, the specificity of the context proved important for the shape and meaning of a post-communist reform and ideologies that it was designed to propagate. However, instead of rejecting modernist concepts of transition and democratisation, I advise a future focus on careful unpacking of their context-dependent ideological-discursive constructions.

List of abbreviations

CE – civic education

CDA – critical discourse analysis

CoE – Council of Europe

DEEDC – *Democratisation of Education and Education for Democratic Citizenship* (a key civic education policy document)

EDC – Education for Democratic Citizenship

OSF – Open Society Foundation

RE – religious education

SOC – Serbian Orthodox Church

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction: the ideological significance of the Serbian 2001 civic education policy

Opening remarks

The introduction of civic education to schools in Serbia in 2001 was a policy that marked the start of the country's first 'modern' democratic educational reform, following decades of authoritarian regimes. As such, civic education policy formed an aspect of an all-encompassing ideological overhaul of the Serbian society. Its exploration opened the door for the examination of various ideologies that were to be promoted, and others that were to be suppressed in this moment of transition, and of various (groups of) actors who were carriers of these different ideologies. In this project, I viewed it as a policy that kick-started the country's first post-communist education reform 'proper', after Serbia's transition from communism had involved a decade-long near-authoritarian regime, which stifled reforms towards democracy and a market economy, experienced at the time by most other post-communist European countries.

Serbian experience of communism had its conclusion in 1990. The dissolution of the then Yugoslavia to which Serbia belonged, and the ethnic wars that followed, overshadowed any actual negotiation of the ideological collapse, or

the establishment of new political and educational institutions. With the society plunged into wars, international isolation and economic sanctions, and oppressed by an authoritarian regime of Slobodan Milošević for the length of the 1990s, it was not until October 2000 that Serbia had what has been called a 'democratic revolution' that prompted a number of reforms in all public sectors.

The abandonment of a political ideology, initially that of Yugoslavian state socialism, and then of Milošević's nationalist authoritarianism, was followed by a comprehensive reform of the educational system, a reform that was to legitimise the new democratic government and join Serbia with many other ex-communist countries on their way 'back to Europe' (Birzea, 1994; Kruszewski and Kruszewski, 1994). The reform started with the return of religious education to schools and the introduction of a new subject, civic education, as its alternative. Officially a part of the wider strategy of the new Ministry of Education for 'education for democracy' in Serbia, civic education policy was also dubbed in media a 'quick-fix reaction' to what was perceived as a political decision to allow the Serbian Orthodox Church (SOC)¹ back into the public sphere, after its sixty-year long exclusion that started with communism and continued into Milošević's regime.

¹ In the rest of the text, I will be using the SOC and 'the Church' interchangeably. This is due to the relative religious homogeneity of Serbia (excluding Kosovo), and the fact that it was primarily the Serbian Orthodox Church that appeared in the literature and media as the original lobbyist for the reintroduction of religious education.

² I make a distinction here between a 'late modern' and a 'post-modern' era. Although my use of

Although civic education policy was a part of a modernising project, its introduction, and my studying of it a decade later, took place in a 'late modern'² era, in which no policy could be considered in isolation from international educational trends and imperatives. Thus a fertile ground for exploration of the relationships between national and supranational bodies, individuals and institutions, and locally relevant and globally distributed educational agendas, was offered. Combining elements of Bourdieu's social theory with discourse theory, I approached the field of policymaking as a canvas portraying the ways in which policy discourse was constructed through different relationships of power and capital exchange in a national field, and the ways in which ideological properties of the policy discourse were used to increase national capital and affect future power configurations in the global field.

Bearing in mind that this policy kick-started the country's first comprehensive post-communist reform, I combined the policy exploration tools with scholarship on post-communist reform and transition, and on the influence of globalising and internationalising factors on national policy development, especially in 'newly democratised' societies. In both of these strands, I made use of the linguistic turn in policy sociology of late modernism, of which Taylor (2004) speaks. This meant treating policy as discourse, and exploring the usefulness of the recent post-communist transition scholarship's notion of 'transfer of discourse' (introduced as early as 2000 by Steiner-Khamsi), to

² I make a distinction here between a 'late modern' and a 'post-modern' era. Although my use of discourse theory might invite assumptions of the latter, I refer to the contemporary modernity in which the phenomena I research, as well as my approach to them are situated, as 'late', to mark the validity of categories and paradigms, even if I see them as fluid and in need of critical examination. I further explore this distinction in chapter 3, in relation to recent research on post-communist transitions and transformations.

examine the interplay between what I termed local and global educational discourses, and the related process of the national policymakers' positioning in the global education field.

Apart from illuminating some of the actors, processes, and motivations behind the introduction of this specific policy, I had hoped to add to theorisation of early educational reform in the post-communist context, join the Serbian example with scholarship developed around other European ex-communist countries, and build on recent, post-modernisation-oriented developments in post-communist studies. In addition, I sought to combine policy sociology with critical discursive approaches to studying policies in 'transitioning' and globalising contexts, with the view to refining conceptual tools that might assist in the exploration and theorising of the national policy makers' agency in the context of international influence on national policymaking.

Various meanings of the Serbian civic education policy

In planning this research project, I found that the introduction of the civic education policy in Serbia reflected two issues in particular, often found in literature on the early days of post-communist educational reform. One is the nature of the relationship between the various actors in the decision-making arena, where the political exchange sometimes takes precedence over transparency, especially bearing in mind the still-unfounded institutions of

transparent decision making. The other issue concerns the framework for the various agents' actions and interactions – the space for defining and building of educational ideologies, opened in the wake of the previous ideology's collapse. A limited number of theoretical studies in Serbia have touched upon these issues in studying of the civic education policy, but rather one-sidedly. Some authors have viewed it as a 'natural' move in a society entering an era of democracy and political pluralism, whilst others have criticised it as a symbol of Eastern European countries' acceptance of Western ideas, leading to negation of their own cultural and historical identity. One example of a mid-way approach is Baćević's (2003) theoretical consideration of RE/CE introduction as the new government's demonstration of symbolic capital towards both the more 'traditionally' and more 'progressively' inclined sections of the Serbian public. Even such an approach, however, relies on some polarisation in the treatment of the topic.

My idea was for this DPhil research project to provide a fresh look at the CE policy. I focused on its development as the first step in the post-Milošević educational reform or the first post-communist reform 'proper', and as a part of the 'education for democracy' initiative, proclaimed by the then Serbian government as one of the main goals of that reform. I decided to focus on its early appearance and its symbolic properties with regard to signalling the direction of the reform, and to take it as a point of departure for the exploration of the interaction of the various actors in the early reform, and the ideologies that they were propagating. It was of course necessary for me to reflect on the appearance of religious education in this context. And although I could not

avoid some dualism between seemingly opposing ideologies of ‘Europe, democracy, progressivism’ and ‘nationality, tradition, conservatism’ therein created, especially as it characterised much of the then public debate in Serbia, I did not take a theoretical and methodological approach to the subject matter of the introduction of civic education with this polarisation in mind.

As the start of an educational reform conducted by the first post-communist democratic government in a (South)Eastern European country, I expected this case to share many commonalities with other Central and Eastern European³ (CEE) countries and the beginnings of their respective reforms that took place in the 1990s and that gave rise to what I term the first wave of the literature on educational changes in post-communist transitions. In that respect, I draw on said body of literature, make comparisons where appropriate, and claim some contribution to it. However, owing to the specific socio-political circumstances of Serbia’s ‘delayed democratisation’, I did not expect the models built on educational reforms that followed directly in the fall of communism to readily lend themselves to the analysis of the Serbian case.

Seeking to get at the nature of various actors’ relationships and agency in the education field, and the various ideologies on which they were drawing in the construction of the policy, I have combined the concept of post-communist transition in education with a discursive approach to policy study. On a higher level of abstraction, I have aimed to reflect on the relationship between

³ ‘CEE’ is, similarly to ‘Eastern European bloc’ or ‘post-communist bloc’, a homogenising shorthand for a fairly diverse context, used for reasons of convenience, although I will discuss later in the text the possible implications of using the geographical terms to denote political and ideological concepts.

democratic transition and globalisation, and the idea of educational policy convergence in democratising and transitioning countries, as well as to incorporate an argument that the convergence remains at the level of language, but not practice. I will now briefly look at the various aspects of the civic education policy, that enable the exploration of the above themes, and enable a theoretical and conceptual contribution to said fields.

‘Symbolism’ of the civic education policy

I mentioned earlier that there had been suggestions over the years that civic education was a quick reaction to a sudden and seemingly unplanned return of religion to the schools; the Reform White Paper, for example, makes no mention of religious education. One possible way of looking at the introduction of religious education, and civic education as its alternative, was to consider the normative vacuum, said to follow the demise of a society’s prevailing ideology: in this case a combination of pre-1990 state-socialism and post-1990 nationalism. Uncertainty about which of the sometimes conflicting values to promote, or the state of *interregnum* (Bunescu *et al*, 1999), was often encountered in the post-communist context, and the re-emergence of religion then attributed to anomie (Durkheim’s breakdown of social norms and values) that needed fulfilling, or even to the nation-building character of the many social and educational reforms in post-communist societies, many of whom had the dominant church as an important historical factor in collective identity

formation. As this was certainly the case with Serbia, it could have been offered as some explanation for the (re)introduction of RE.

As for civic education, it had appeared in other CEE countries as a political/ideological subject during communism, designed to instil Marxist values in students, and it was usually among the first subjects to be eliminated in the process of the ideological 'purging' of the curriculum post-1989. Later on, various versions of education 'for democracy' appeared across the CEE context, introduced within the countries' wider curricular reforms, but nowhere as a structural opposite to RE, and nowhere introduced with such haste as in Serbia. In the Serbian case, there was some incongruity between the new Ministry's declared long-term dedication to education for democracy, and a hurried process of the curriculum-and teacher-training development for the hastily introduced CE. The absence of a carefully developed strategy to implement an apparently major policy that, unlike RE, was announced by the White Paper, suggests that this might have been a 'symbolic policy', in the sense in which Taylor *et al* (1997), or Rizvi and Lingard (2010) use the term: a policy lacking in detail, non-operationalised, and usually introduced for purely political reasons. Here, the most widely publicly speculated reason was to appease the sections of the Serbian public (NGOs, academia, media) who fiercely protested against the (re)introduction of RE.

However, regardless of the fact that all policies can be considered symbolic and political to a certain degree, I decided to employ a more theoretically sophisticated notion of 'symbolic' with regard to properties of this policy. I

chose to conceptualise of the policy as discourse, allowing me to examine the efforts of the new political and educational elites to discursively legitimise Serbia's first modern democratic government and the anti-authoritarian and anti-nationalist principles they proclaimed. Such a conceptualisation has also allowed for exploring an endeavour to discursively join Serbia with 'Europe' through the 'harmonisation' of its CE policy with the Council of Europe's then Education for Democratic Citizenship initiative. The 'symbolic' nature of the CE policy was translated into my conceptualising it as a part of a discursive construction of the 'new Serbia', and demonstrative of the new Serbian government's discursive capital. I then entered the field aiming to explore the origin of this policy and the actors involved, their relationship and agency in both the national and the international field. Whilst the complete explanation of my conceptual framework is offered in chapter 3, I briefly discuss some of the key terms below, and provide an introduction into my understanding and use of policy as discourse and as capital in this study.

Policy as discourse, policy as capital; reform as a discursive project

The policy-as-discourse approach treats policies as constitutive and not solely as representative, of the social reality. I accept Fairclough's (1985; 2003) view of discourse as a semiotic aspect of social reality, with a particular focus in research on the linguistic part of the overall semiosis. Viewing a policy as discourse means that we do not treat it as a solution to an existing problem, but construction of the reality *and* the problem, so that the solution which is offered

in a reality thus constructed seems inevitable. Drawing on Foucault, Ball (1993; 1994b) notes that policies, seen as discourse, establish the time and the place, the subject matter, the rule of the game, establish who can say what and with what authority (Ball, 1993: 14). Within this paradigm, Bacchi (2000) adds, actors cannot be seen 'simply' as policy advisors or advocates, as no one stands outside of discourse, so actors are seen instead as being in a powerful enough a position to perform the 'authoritative allocation of values' (Rizvi and Lingard, 2010: 8), or to challenge it.

I regard educational reform as a broad, all-encompassing change of the educational system, occurring as a result of the need to legitimise the new governance and respond to wider changes happening nationally, regionally and globally (Karsten and Majoor, 1994), and especially to signal the commitment to a new ideology following a significant socio-political change (Weiler, quoted in Gaziel, 2010). In this thesis, I have focused on its construction, and I treated it as a way of articulating a new educational ideology, and producing specific policies that would attend to the particularities of actualising it. Policies have been seen as governing prescriptions of what can and should be done, empowering and disempowering texts. A policy has been treated as an ideological construct that serves to, among other things, legitimise a certain version of the social reality in prescribing values, and constructing roles, relationships, and identities.

Bearing in mind Ozga's (2000) insistence on the context in which policy is made and its relation to it, I have treated civic education policy as a part of the

ideological redefining of Serbia's system of education, an ideological project (Fairclough and Wodak, 1997: 279) of discursively creating a 'new Serbia'. This ideological-discursive project involved creating both a new ideology – and through discourse of the policies that are a part of it – constituency for it, its values and identities. In a way it was the process of building a hegemonic (in a Gramscian sense) project, where ideologies are not imposed, but live through subjects' willing (or at least unwitting) internalisation of them.

I should point out that I subscribe to a 'broader' understanding of ideology (Eagleton, 1991), by which I mean a systematic, socially organised and distributed system of beliefs and normative prescriptions about social reality. Entering the field, I did not presume to know what this new ideology that was being constructed was, but instead I looked to explore what the desirable and undesirable elements of it were, and whence they came. I also did not presume, despite referring to Serbia's education reform as 'democratising'⁴, that Serbia's transition was transition-to-democracy, but instead I have treated it as a movement from one phase to another in the process of discursively establishing the hegemony of a new ideology, with educational reform seen as a part of this process that served to legitimise the new ideology through the construction of a new educational discourse, discourse that would in turn materialise this ideology.

⁴ I want to highlight that I use concepts such as 'democracy' and 'democratisation' here to reflect the policy and reform discourse, and not my own teleological assumptions with regard to the reform.

Finally, the concept of capital has been borrowed from Bourdieu, as I see ideological-discursive formations – linguistic articulation of an ideology in speech and text – as demonstration of discursive capital (related to Bourdieu's notions of cultural and linguistic capital), traded in educational and political fields for social, economic, and political capital. In combining the concept of capital with the view of policy as discourse, I seek to theorise policy formation at the level where it enables us to see how an educational discourse is ideologically constructed but also explore how particular actors are positioned in the field in which this happens. I theorise that the actors' possession and use of various types of capital both determine their own position in the decision-making process, and viewed collectively, affect national capital, and global positioning of the nation-states. Below, I introduce the actors that I have considered relevant agents in this exploration, and then proceed to carve out a space in the post-communist scholarship to which the examination of this particular case makes a contribution.

Actors and interactions in the civic education policy discourse

Despite what authors such as Tomiak (2000a; 2000b) speak of as political pluralism's effect on the multitude of constantly changing ideas on where the society and education should be headed in a post-communist context, these contexts tend to be characterised in literature by an ideological dualism that offers either tradition, good old pre-communist days, looking to one's history on one hand, or modernisation, progressivism, and the future (in) Europe on the other. It was almost too tempting to simply apply this dualism to the

apparent incompatibility created between religious and civic education in Serbia. Furthermore, even the anti-Milošević coalition that took the victory in 2000 elections was dominated by two political parties that embodied this dualism very well. The 'progressive' party ended up at the helm of the new 2001 Ministry of Education, with the conservative party constructing the shadow cabinet. One could have simply imagined that it was this dualism that led to these seemingly opposing policies. There was no indication, however, that the shadow cabinet had participated in policymaking at all, and, as previously mentioned, I was reluctant to approach the topic in a polarising, potentially oversimplifying manner.

The notion of pluralism of agents and ideas is also brought in by Philips and Kaser (1992), who point out that the early days of transition in many countries came to be defined by personal exchanges, settling of old debts, lack of planning and forecasting, even a particular kind of anarchy (Janowski, 1992; Sandi, 1992). The existence of such pluralism and conflict in the context of the Serbian education reform was not however substantiated by my initial familiarisation with it. Even a preliminary glance at some of the key Serbian policy documents demonstrated, for example, a conspicuous absence of words such as 'nation', and 'patriotism'.

Apart from the seemingly incongruous introduction of religious education, the reform was conducted in an apparently straightforward manner. The first changes were made rather quickly, various international conferences were held in Belgrade and key documents published within a year, and the new, all-

encompassing, law on education introduced already in 2003. Such apparent smoothness in dealing with the early reform might have come from the rather one-sided decision-making process, a possibility further reinforced by the claims that the reform was a process 'kept in the family' (Kamenov, 2004: 15). There had obviously been many aspects of it with which the shadow cabinet had disagreed, as most of the elements of the 2001-2003 reform were completely reversed already in 2004 when they took over the Ministry of Education.

Another possibility was that individuals did not have much power before the structures and authorities that dictated the direction of the reform, and had to think within the confines of the discourse already constructed by ideologies that were adopted, adapted, or even imposed. This possibility is offered by the theorisation of the guiding ideology for the policy discourse being adopted at a higher level for reasons of political and financial gain, and creating the paradox of required 'democratisation' of the decision-making in post-authoritarian societies, and ideology-dictated funding that makes for the decision-making still happening from above (Panday, 2002; Gardinier and Anderson, 2010). However, even bearing this in mind, I was not ready to engage in the somewhat reductive conceptualisation of the relationship between national policymakers as the victims or international dictates, as portrayed in, for example, Klees' (2002; 2008) and Ilon's (2008) scathing criticism of international organisations' influence on national policies. Conversely, I also did not want to treat the national policymakers as engaged in a process led by knowingly taking advantage of foreign funding.

I was instead interested in exploring the agency and position of the collective actor category of the Serbian policymakers, as well as of individuals comprising it, and of those who contributed to the construction of the then reform discourse, but perhaps had little or no agency in the making of the policy itself (opposition, commentators, critics). In addition to the educational elite (minister of education and his deputy) and the members of the expert group for the Democratisation of Education and Education for Democratic Citizenship in the then Ministry (authors of key policy documents, and civic education curriculum developers), other actors included in the research design were some representatives of international organisations in Serbia, as well as the members of chief NGOs. I briefly provide the rationale for their inclusion here.

International actors are impossible to neglect in the exploration of the policy formation not only in a post-communist context, but in any policy study conducted in the globalising era. In the case of this particular policy, there were also international initiatives for education for democracy and for human rights, and their promoting bodies, to take into account. The concept of 'international actors' is by no means a homogeneous entity, and I was aware of the body of literature dedicated to the significantly different missions of the various organisations, and the nature of their interaction with nation-states. But since I was concerned with the national policymakers' side of this interaction, and their adoption and/or appropriation of a global educational ideology (such as that of education for democratic citizenship) in a local adaptation of a global educational discourse, my focus was on the policymakers' own construction of

their work and their relationship with international actors whom they recognised as influential and agential. I hence did not seek to apply the scholarship on international influences on national policies directly on to the conceptualisation of the national policymakers/international community relationship, but instead allowed for it to inform some of my methodological choices, such as interviewee sampling, topics for interviews, and some of the analytical categories.

The second group – a collective actor category – is that of NGOs. This group is especially significant in the case of a civic education policy development, as civic education, particularly in post-authoritarian societies, tended to be the province of various international NGOs who organised seminars, teaching materials, and training programmes in ‘educating in democracy’ in many CEE countries. It very often happened that these were either international organisations (INGOs) coming from America, or local NGOs funded by some American organisations. This is why Carothers (2002), one of the major critics of the ‘democracy promotion business’ identifies CE as one of the items on the democracy promotion checklist. Further, Steiner-Khamsi (2002: 201) identifies CE policies in post-communist contexts as examples of the manner in which US-based agencies’ influence national policies with concepts (such as civil-society-building) that are often not even considered core concepts for civic education in the original society.

During the 1990s, NGOs in Serbia became a sign of an emerging civil society and they played, according to numerous authors (Levitsky and Way, 2005; McFaul,

2005; 2007; Fisher, 2006), a crucial part in overthrowing the authoritarian regime and building of a democracy. This was a similar case with some other countries, for example, Croatia, Georgia, Ukraine, or Slovakia. One major Serbian NGO that I looked at has been particularly involved, especially post-2004, in the development of the CE materials, teacher training, and more recently evaluation of the course (Baucal *et al*, 2009). Additionally, the Reform White Paper boasted an excellent co-operation between the governmental and NGO sector, due to the many members of the cabinet having had an NGO background. However, the boundary between the different groups (politicians, academics, NGOs) is not always perfectly clear in the post-communist context (Polyzoi and Dneprov, 2003), and as Vetta's (2009) robustly researched account of NGOs in Serbia shows, the connection between politicians and various NGOs founded during the 1990s to attract foreign funding and support renders these boundaries even more blurred. During Milošević's regime, local NGOs were keeping connections with political parties of the democratic opposition, and serving as one of the main channels through which the international community was communicating with, and supporting (logistically and financially) the opposition to the regime (Vetta, 2009; Merkel and Croissant, 2004). With such a strong position in entering the period of democracy, it was necessary to include them among the actors who would have added to the conceptualisation of the guiding ideology of the reform.

The collective agent seemingly absent from the investigation includes practitioners, students, their parents, local community and businesses, and other potential stakeholders. Although this collective actor appeared in the

policy discourse, it served more as an audience at whom statements were aimed, and as an object that the policy constructed, rather than the agential participant in the policy formation. As this thesis examined the policy formation and introduction, with the focus on decision-makers and setting of the educational course, the exploration of policy discourse construction in schools was left to a future study. In terms of the representatives of stakeholders' participation in the decision-making process, there was little evidence of this, at least with regard to civic education, other than the so-called Conversations about the Reform, organised throughout Serbia in 2002. More on these will follow later, but for now suffice it to say that education for democracy, as conceptualised by the CE policy, did not appear as a theme or a demand voiced during these Conversations.

There is a potential explanation for such absence of the public's input in developing and constructing the policy discourse. As in other formerly communist and authoritarian societies, 'democracy' was a powerful imagery that brought down the *ancien régime*, rather than a closely developed set of particulars and party platforms (Wydra, 2008). In that sense, Serbian voters who brought down Milošević did not vote for a specific programme, but voted against Milošević and for the ideal of democracy, which did not necessarily incorporate 'active citizenship' (a very awkward phrase in Serbian). Secondly, and probably more tellingly, a number of studies on civic education conducted in Serbia over the last decade, indicate that parents and students – and frequently teachers themselves – are still not entirely sure what 'civic education' exactly is nor what it is meant to achieve (Maksić, 2003; Stojiljković,

2003; Joksimović, 2003b). It was thus unlikely that the policy-makers were responding to demands and expectations of the Serbian public when they decided to begin the long overdue reform with what seemed to be a rather alien concept.

With this in mind, I used the introduction of civic education policy as the means of exploring the ideology (or ideologies) that entered the education field with this policy discourse. I was interested in the interaction among domestic actors in the educational and political fields, and between domestic and international actors, as well as how the process of the global educational discourse adaptation – if that was the case with CE policy – affected the positioning and interaction of actors within the national field. I kept in mind the country's newly gained 'freedom' and 'pluralism' in decision-making and asked whether choices made were actually a consequence of pluralism of opinions and ideas, or whether they were imposed or conveniently copied (Silova, 2010b). Overall, this thesis offers then an examination of various actors' agency and interaction in the process of the educational discourse construction at the start of a post-authoritarian educational reform, and an exploration of the ideological-discursive project of which the reform was a part. In the next section, I justify its relevance and contribution to the scholarship concerned with educational change and policymaking in other post-communist contexts.

The continuing relevance of post-communist studies

Interest in post-communist educational reforms in Central and East Europe still survives, more than two decades after the fall of communism. The majority of the countries that once belonged to the communist 'bloc' are now members of the EU, and others aspiring candidates. Most of the countries in both of these categories have achieved some level of market economy and democratic governance, yet empirical studies indicate that their classrooms continue to resonate heavily with communist legacies (Froumin, 2005; Muckle, 2005). Perhaps this is attributable to the oft-quoted prediction of Dahrendorf (1991) that following the fall of communism, it would take six months for political structures to change, six years for change of economic structures, but that it would take sixty years for change in culture and mindset to take place (cited in Birzea, 1994; Hallak, 2000).

In his review of educational changes in countries undergoing post-communist transition, Heyneman (1998) similarly suggests that education reforms of those countries would likely be slower than reforms in other sectors, since education reforms involve the long and complex process of changing the entire philosophy underlying curricular, pedagogic and teacher-training solutions, not to mention those of structural and institutional nature. In addition to these explanations, which draw on a modernist view of changes as a transition from authoritarianism to democracy, there have also been some recent studies attributing the strong residue of socialist practices in schools to the change

being reflected merely in rhetoric, but not in practice (Steiner-Khamsi, 2004b; Gardinier and Anderson Worden, 2010).

One of the first authors to use the concept of post-communist transition in education was Birzea in *Educational Policies of the Countries in Transition* (1994). Birzea noted that, despite the diversity in their historical development, and somewhat different paths taken in their political orientation post-1990, countries transitioning from state socialism all had in common some version of democracy. In addition, Birzea observed that most of the reforms he looked at were led by what he called a 'myth of Europe', a hope of 'return' to the European community from which these countries had been isolated during the half a century spent behind the Iron Curtain.

If we were to remain within this paradigm, we could say that today, almost twenty years after Birzea published his slim volume, most of these countries have fulfilled this purpose by entering the EU and by seemingly successfully completing their transition. The above caveat, however, is necessary because of the growing body of literature suggesting that the various societies' apparent convergence to a certain standard required to be 'welcomed back to Europe' was little more than the adoption of the required 'speak', while the social and educational practices essentially have remained more or less unchanged. This 'post-modern' strand of the transition scholarship is one of the strong factors contributing to the continuing interest in education reforms and policies in post-communist Europe.

The 'incompleteness' of the post-communist transition field

It is not only the emergence of a new paradigm during the last few years that warrants the rekindling of interest in the post-communist studies. Even in its heyday, scholarship on education reforms in the post-communist transition from authoritarianism to democracy was lacking in cases of societies whose transition may have been less than straightforward. For this reason, their educational changes, if there were any substantive ones, were of little interest to authors who sought to examine the different societies' trajectories after they abandoned communist totalitarianism/authoritarianism. Serbia falls into this group of post-communist societies. As Gilbert *et al* (2008) point out, due to the events that marked the history of the Balkans in the 1990s, Balkan countries have mostly been looked at in terms of ethnic conflict, nationalism, and failed states, while the fact that they were essentially post-socialist countries was almost neglected, and they rarely found their way into studies dealing with post-communist transition.

I saw the absence of these countries from the transition literature as having left open a space to be filled with a different case that would perhaps be something of an outlier among the established models and experiences – suspending for the moment criticism of the potentially homogenising effect of any such model. Shedding some light on a case of a 'belated' transition was, I believed, also of possible merit in introducing any new elements that could be utilised in adjusting the models, and exploring how, if at all, a ten-year delay would have

had an effect on changing the outlook on post-communist transition policymaking. In addition, it seemed opportune and appropriate to research the different experiences of transition at a time when the field was experiencing something of a revival, based largely on an argument against the homogenisation of this experience.

From post-communist transition to post-communist transformations

What I called earlier the 'first wave' of the scholarship on education reforms in post-communist transitions, developed during the 1990s, was largely exploratory in character, as various authors aimed to document the ways in which different countries of the former communist 'bloc' dealt with the challenges of changing their educational systems so that they corresponded to the new economic, political, and social values, as well as tried to define and conceptualise new guiding ideologies. Some themes common to these various descriptions and explorations were, as Birzea noted in 1994 and later in 1996, and subsequent studies conducted in most of the formerly communist countries confirmed, democratisation, decentralisation, liberalisation, and pluralism. Political pluralism was reflected in a multiplicity of ideological options, and of actors, including international actors, created by the break up of the former ideological system. Break-up of the system did not mean the dissolution of ideology, so there was also a conflict between the old and new, the traditional and modernist, with a romantic attitude towards the pre-war past, including the re-emergence of nationalism.

In addition to descriptive studies, there have been a few attempts at conceptualising and predicting the post-communist educational experience through the construction and application of models of educational change in countries' transition from communism to democracy and a market economy. These models, mostly developed during the 1990s by focusing on a few select CEE countries, offered little space to be tested against the Serbian case. One factor that did not allow for much room for testing them was that the majority of them tended to deal with macro aspects of the reform, the structural aspects of the education system and the policy-makers' and practitioners' coping with the challenges of democratisation. Those studies that offered closer insight into the early days of the reform, however informative, tended to be rather descriptive narratives with little analytic potential.

After these studies conducted from a modernist point of view, where 'transition' came to mean 'transition to democracy', calls have begun to appear for the deconstruction of the transition model. Authors have demanded a change in discourse from 'educational transition' to 'educational transformation', to denote the variety of paths different societies have taken, due to their specific cultures and circumstances, after the demise of communism. These transformations have been, according to the main proponents of this paradigm (see Silova, 2009; 2010b; Steiner-Khamsi, 2004b) a result of a 'transfer of discourse' (rather than practice), and the diminishing importance of self-referentiality (Schriewer, 2003), translated into an employment of common buzzwords across CEE reforms, effecting in change

that is not as homogeneous as the seemingly uniform post-communist reform rhetoric might have us believe.

Power and agency in post-communist studies

My thesis contributes both to the exploratory scholarship of the early-to-mid 1990s, where it adds to a more descriptive consideration of the early days of a post-communist reform, and to the post-modernist developments of the 2000s, where the focus is on the language and rhetoric of policies and reforms, and the symbolic and discursive nature of policymaking. Whilst the contribution to the first strand is more contextual, any major theoretical contribution to the scholarship is found in extending the later transition scholarship's conceptualisation of national policymakers' agency, and its use of 'discourse', so as to go beyond 'language' and 'rhetoric', thus exploring the usefulness of the 'transfer-of-discourse' concept. My use of policy-as-discourse actually equates the transfer-of-policy with transfer-of-discourse, but I commit to a more in-depth exploration of the national actors motivation and interactions. In addition, by using the concepts of capital, particularly what I term 'discursive capital', I aim to move the conceptualisation of national policy-making from a superficial adoption of global policies and trends into a creative and dynamic act of capital demonstration and positioning both in the global and the national fields.

Outline of the thesis

The thesis is organised as follows: chapter 2 introduces the historical, political, and educational context of Serbia, and it also sets up the scene around the wider context and meaning of civic and citizenship education. I follow it in chapter 3 by the review of the relevant literature in the area of the post-communist transition in education, and a gap in the latter that justifies the exploration of the Serbian case is discussed. The space for its contribution is justified both in terms of content, a new case and an introduction of the potentially novel elements to the scholarship, as well as in terms of methodology and concepts, as I offer innovative ways to approach the subject of policymaking in a post-communist and globalising setting. In the second part of the chapter, I explain my theoretical and conceptual framework which combines the critical discourse approach with Bourdieu's social theory. This outline of the conceptual framework carries on into the chapter 4, where it serves to introduce and account for my methodological choices. In addition to explaining my preparation and conduct of field work, and the subsequent treatment of data through the construction and application of a particular analytical framework, I discuss questions of ethics, validity, and appropriateness, as well as limitations. Finally, in this chapter, I consider the position of the researcher in a 'critical' study, and attempt to adapt various research concepts and standards to the specific epistemology of the case at hand.

The thesis presents two findings chapters. Chapter 5 lays out the historical narrative of the introduction and development of civic education, as constructed predominantly in interviews, and a result of a thematic and content analysis, with the findings stemming from the more detailed discursive analysis of documentary and interview data left for the chapter 6. In chapter 5, I draw out the most pertinent themes and categories, agents and relationships, before proceeding, in chapter 6, to illustrate a discursive construction of various elements of the policy and reform that I chose to explore: agents, actions, relationships, goals and priorities, desirable and undesirable ideologies, and explain how these relate to the actors' position in the field, their agency, alliances, and power.

Chapter 7 provides a discussion of findings, in which I go back to questions asked and spaces opened in the first two chapters, and relate my findings to these gaps. I examine the appropriateness of my approach, both in terms of scholarship to which I was contributing, and in terms of the theoretical and methodological framework. I reflect on both answered and unanswered questions, expectations met and subverted, merit of my study, and space opened for future research. Finally, in the conclusion, I provide a short summary and reflect on the limitations of my study, as well as open up some questions about the relevance of the concepts of post-communism, and potential extension of my theoretical and conceptual tools to other research areas.

CHAPTER 2

Serbian civic education policy and 2001-2003 reform in context

Introduction

The following chapter provides the contextualisation of the Serbian 2001 civic education policy and the start of the 2001-2003 reform. In it, I give a historical overview of the Serbian state, its education, and its ideological trajectories leading to the 2000 democratic revolution. Within the overview, I seek to highlight Serbia's experience of communism and immediate post-communist circumstances, so as to substantiate the argument of the importance of context and of moving away from homogeneity in the studying of the post-communist experience. Next, I consider the appearance of the Serbian civic education policy in the European context of the renewed interest in civic and citizenship education, and reflect on the meanings and forms of the subject in ex-communist countries. I conclude by looking at the way in which Serbian CE policy has been treated within Serbian scholarship, and the space left open for its treatment with a different approach.

The dangers and necessities of context generalisation

Before I carry on with the specification of the Serbian context, highlighting the importance of particularities of contexts covered by umbrella terms such as 'post-communist', I wish to acknowledge, nevertheless, the necessity – and to a degree, convenience – of keeping to some generalising terms. These include 'post-communist', as well as the designation of the region under research as 'East European' or belonging to 'Central and Eastern Europe'. I will now briefly look at the different ways of conceptualising the post-communist space, the meanings of East (east) and West (west) Europe, and of what is most often referred to in literature as CEE (Central and Eastern Europe) and post-communist bloc.

Despite the fact that many authors, in their discussions of the region, mention the importance of the specificity of the context (King, 2000; Coffe and van der Lippe, 2009), terms such as 'post-communist bloc' or 'Eastern Europe' still survive. In fact, the entire notion of the post-communist transition is based around some such homogenisation, as the divide is established between 'East', and 'West', and the normative construction of the former 'catching up' with the latter is often taken for granted. Perry (2013) notes how the spelling of these terms also affects the way in which they are seen, with capitalisation implying an ideological conceptualisation of superiority and inferiority, rather than a geographical division, which she chooses to use, by keeping to lower case. Nevertheless, even the use of the terms in a geographical sense is problematic, as some countries might tend to see themselves as more 'Central', and closer to

Western Europe, both geographically and ideologically. Similarly, Balkan countries are geographically situated in the South-East of Europe, and politically and ideologically in some cases quite divorced from the (post-)Soviet space into which they are lumped under the category of the 'East'. Then of course, there are vast historical and cultural differences between the countries belonging to the actual 'East', and countries that were once a part of the Soviet 'bloc'. More recently, Birzea (2012) has noted that CEE countries are increasingly being referred to as 'EU emergent countries', although it is not clear whether the countries that are not accession states belong in this group.

In essence, every conceptualisation of the region will be laden with assumptions and implications, and as these are unavoidable, we can, at best, strive towards as overt as possible a recognition of these assumptions and an explicit statement regarding the rationale behind using a chosen one. In my case, I keep to the CEE acronym, as it encompasses (geographically) the various contexts covered by the relevant literature to which I am making a contribution. Occasionally, some of the authors whose work I review in the next chapter, have done some research on the post-Soviet, post-socialist context of Central Asia, and I acknowledge this, but my drawing of parallels and making of comparisons will primarily be confined to European countries. Also, I accept some homogenisation implied by the use of the umbrella terms, and it is what enables parallels, comparisons, and occasionally generalising theorisation. However, I am strongly supportive of the efforts to theorise and give attention to the specificity of the context and minimise the difference-annulling tendencies of polarising (e.g. East/West) conceptualisations and

categorisations. In the remaining part of this chapter, I set up the context of this study, highlighting the specificities that would help make a contribution to the focus on the later transition scholarship's focus on individual transformations, rather than standardising transitions.

Historical overview of the Serbian context

Although a European country with a long history, Serbia had, similarly to other post-communist countries, had limited experience of democracy. It was founded in the tenth century and was a monarchy until the end of the 14th century, when it was occupied by the Ottoman Empire. It remained, with various degrees of autonomy, a part of the Ottoman Empire until 1878, when it gained independence following multiple uprisings. During the Ottoman rule, the Serbian Orthodox Church (SOC) played an important role as the national, religious, cultural, as well as an educational, stronghold. This history of being the 'guardian of the nation', an important political, ideological, even military actor (Ramet, 1998) consolidated its strong position in the Serbian national mind, since it made a significant contribution to the Serbian ethnic emancipation (Mićunović, 2000b).

The tendency to equate ethnicity with religion seems to persist even today, as demonstrated by studies on civic and religious education, where a small proportion of respondents even go so far as to mark their religious affiliation as

'Serbian' (Maksić, 2003). This is perhaps not surprising in an ethnically highly homogenous country, in which the percentage of Serbian nationals, according to the last census of 2011, was 88%, of which 96% declared themselves Orthodox Christian. This close connection between religion, ethnicity, and nationhood has, however, hindered the society's political emancipation, according to Mićunović (2000b), as the Church never became fully separated from the state. Further to this argument, Komšić (2004) adds that empirical studies show that national-religious affiliations and norms still heavily affect the political choices and decisions of the Serbian people. This is important to keep in mind when we consider the policy/politics nexus in this context, and the Serbian political elites' possible motivation with regard to certain decisions. The position of the SOC in Serbian history and in its people's collective memory offers some justification for its presence and influence in the public domain and the decision-making arena post-2000. It also offers some explanation for the strengthening of ideologies of religion, tradition and nationalism in the aftermath of the death of the prevalent political ideology of communism, that, regardless of the degree to which it had suppressed the former ideologies between 1940s and 1990s, at least kept the SOC outside of the political field.

But before Serbia became a communist society, as part of the Socialist Federative Republic of Yugoslavia in 1943, it had a brief, however limited, experience of democracy. The earliest political parties appeared at the end of the 19th century, whilst Serbia was a monarchy. Its constitutional organisation as a parliamentary monarchy with an elective system continued for around a half a century afterwards, both in Serbia as an autonomous nation-state, and

after the WWI when it formed a part of the newly established Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, renamed the Kingdom of Yugoslavia ('the land of South Slavs') in 1929. There was little chance for democracy to take root, however, as the civil war between royalists and communist insurgents at the start of WWII led to the latter taking power from the royal family and the government-in-exile and gaining public support through their resistance to the Nazi occupation. After the war, Serbia became part of the now bigger, communist, Yugoslavia and joined the ranks of other Central and Eastern European countries that had adopted the same system. Saying that Serbia (or Yugoslavia) had 'joined the ranks' of European communist countries again denies the importance of context, and an increasingly emphasised need to differentiate between various countries that had too often been collectively described as 'post-communist'. Fifty years of a similar political and economic ideology could not have erased centuries of sometimes very different political and cultural experience. What is more, not even that ideology was exactly uniform across the region. The following sections make the distinctiveness of the Serbian context more explicit.

The communist era – Serbia 1945-1990

Some of the specificity of the Serbian context comes from its belonging to a country that had escaped the Soviet influence early (through Yugoslavia's leader Tito's conflict with Stalin leading to Yugoslavia's expulsion from the Cominform in 1948), and was more liberal and more open than other

communist countries in Europe. It was a communist country that was, according to some authors, expected by the world powers to be among the first to break with communism and join the EU (Fowkes, 1999). Apart from having open trading and free travel and cultural exchange with the rest of the world, internally there was not a case of strict central management, as all the six republics comprising Yugoslavia were fairly autonomous. The adopted variant of communism was 'socialist self-management', which – declaratively, at least – placed greater decision-making power on an institutional level in the hands of the people belonging to that institution. Ideologically, the accent was more on 'brotherhood and unity' amongst the different nations living under one supra-national, Yugoslavian identity, than it was on the Marxist and Bolshevik principles.

In education, a series of laws of the 1960s and 1970s increased the decentralisation in decision-making. The state's guiding principle of 'socialist self-management' in which organisations would be owned and managed by the workers was meant to extend to education as well. However, educational institutions remained funded and to a considerable degree managed by the central government, with some instances of more local decision-making, especially within the auspices of community development and parental involvement (Klemenović and Milutinović, 2003). Despite somewhat different socio-political circumstances and a lesser degree of centralisation in the case of Serbia (Yugoslavia), the country still shared a lot of similarities with other European communist countries, for example, in the equal provision of free

education, and in pedagogy that favoured individual work, rote learning, *ex-cathedra* teaching, and teacher authority.

As the subject matter of this thesis is a curricular, rather than a structural policy, the levels of centralisation and school organisation that might have differed between Serbian and other countries' experience of communism can be set aside for the moment. The study of the civic education policy places the focus on curricular and pedagogic matters, and in this, Serbia's communist and post-communist experience is comparable to that of countries explored in the literature of the 1990s. The context-related difference that I consider important is one that comes from the ideological and normative prescriptions of the policy, those involving concepts such as individualisation, critical thinking, tradition, internationalisation, Westernisation, or democratisation. I imagined that the appearance and use of such concepts differed somewhat between post-communist Serbia and other formerly communist contexts, and that this difference might be attributable to the communist Serbia's fairly open relationship to the West, and its ideological focus on 'Brotherhood and Unity' rather than on Marxism.

Where the contextual divergence becomes even more pronounced is in the immediate post-communist context, where some of the above concepts, particularly those of tradition, Westernisation, or democratisation, take on additional layers of meaning, and some others, such as nationalism and religion, become much more salient. As most formerly communist countries were starting a transition from communism to some type of liberal democracy in the

early 1990s, Serbia entered the decade-long regime of Slobodan Milošević. His rule was marked by increased centralisation, gross curbing of political and civic freedoms, an extreme nationalistic agenda linked to Serbia's involvement in ethnic wars, and subsequently, to severe economic crisis, political and cultural isolation, and a tenuous relationship with the West culminating in the NATO bombing of the country in 1999. These circumstances hardly constituted 'transition to democracy', but neither were they entirely authoritarian. I have borrowed the term 'hybrid regime' from the area of transitology, and although it will be conceptualised in depth later in the text, I briefly expand on it below, as it works towards further defining the specificity of the Serbian post-communist experience.

The competitive authoritarianism of Slobodan Milošević – Serbia 1990-2000

Throughout the last couple of decades, various authors have attempted to characterise Serbia's case of delayed transition. Bunce, for example, (2003) has focused on nationalist mobilisation, pointing out that, when coinciding with dissolution of communism it could be helpful, but if it were to happen too early, as was the case with Serbia, it could be harmful and lead to the circumstances that result in delayed transition. Gordy (1999) has also referred to Milošević's regime as authoritarian-nationalist, whilst Rupnik (1995) has described it as a switch from totalitarianism to authoritarianism with a 'brief interlude of democracy and ethnic nationalism as the dominant new ideology' (p. 72). These

definitions are important in ideological terms, as they put the focus on ethnic nationalism, rather than communism, as an ideology to be addressed by 'democratising' policies.

Various authors have also tried to define regimes such as the Serbian in terms of their being complete unto themselves, rather than 'short of' democracy. Levitsky and Way's (2002) 'competitive authoritarianism' is probably most helpful in conceptualising the Serbian regime, to which the educational reform under investigation here was reacting perhaps as much as it was reacting to the communist regime that came before it. 'Competitive authoritarianism', according to their definition, is one where opposition exists and is very active, but is continually suppressed and oppressed. Elections are regularly held and the opposition win seats in the parliament, but through various degrees of fraud, are never allowed victory. Levitsky and Way offer Milošević's rule as one example of this type of regime, and point out that in some cases, as happened with Serbia, this regime can eventuate in democratic transition. Merkel and Croissant (2004) further list some of the conditions for this to happen, including, externally: international pressures, international organisations' financial and logistic support to the local NGOs and the democratic opposition, and the appeal of the EU, and, internally: weakness of the state and elite fragmentation. If this was the case with Serbia, that means that the pre-2000 conditions formed both an international and domestic audience for whom a particular use of discursive resources drawing on ideologies of democracy and anti-authoritarianism would have been intended.

Serbia's educational system was largely unchanged during this period of political and ideological transformation from socialist self-management to nationalist competitive authoritarianism (I add 'nationalist' to reflect the importance of this ideology in Milošević's regime). The system essentially remained as it was defined during the period of 1945-1990 (UNICEF, 2001). The first post-communist Law on Education of 1992 did little in the direction of the post-communist reform towards democracy that was, in various forms, taking place in other countries. The curriculum was purged of the most obvious elements of Marxist ideology, although, as Plut *et al* (2002) note, some vaguely Marxist ideas: collectivism, the nobility of the peasants, the working class, and the poor, were retained in history and literature curricula.

Corresponding with Milošević's ethnic policy, nationalistic tendencies in the curriculum were accentuated (Klemenović and Milutinović, 2003). The curricula for history and Serbian language especially propagated sovereignty and independence of nations, patriotic bravery, suffering for the national cause, and marginalising or even rejecting any notion of individualism, activism, non-conformity, initiative, autonomy, flexibility and dialogue (Plut *et al*, 2002). Administratively, the most significant change introduced by this law was annulling the legacy of the decentralising law of 1974 (Ivanović, 1996) and increasing the levels of centralisation and etatisation.

Democracy and democratic reform were concepts rather absent in the Ministry's parlance at the time. Ivanović's 1996 overview of education in Serbia only speaks of democratisation of education after communism in terms of equal

opportunity for equal education. In addition, some authors have pointed out that the proposed “Education for life in a democratic, multinational and multicultural society” programme of 1993 remained unimplemented (Ivić, 2002), and that although UNICEF’s global programme on peace, tolerance and children’s rights did reach Serbia, it was resisted by the then Ministry of Education (*ibid.*).

Educational institutions had no autonomy, head teachers were appointed by the Ministry, and local authorities only had autonomy in matters such as allocation of funds for school maintenance (UNICEF, 2001). Parents, to some degree involved in their children’s education during communism (Klemenović and Milutinović, 2003), were now left out of the decision-making process altogether (Kovač-Cerović, 2002). The legislative framework did not allow for any degree of autonomy regarding the teachers’ profession, and extreme poverty resulted in their preoccupation with issues of basic subsistence (Pešikan, 2004; Ivić and Perazić, 2002). This led to an atmosphere of apathy, although it was occasionally broken by the strikes against the party-defined school governance, usually tied in with the country-wide protests. The existence of such forms of school-based protest serves to reinforce the inextricable connections between education and politics in Serbia, but it also lends some agency to the teachers during the 1990s.

The pedagogy characteristic of Serbia’s communist era continued to be dominant, with a curriculum that was uniform and teaching-based, created around units to be ‘covered’, rather than any definable outcomes. Textbooks,

published by a state-controlled publisher with monopoly over the market were its chief carriers (UNICEF, 2001; Klemenović and Milutinović, 2003; OECD, 2003). The difficulty of bringing about any change was further augmented by a gross deficiency in financing of education, which resulted not only in low salaries for teachers (estimated at \$46 per month), but the decrepit state of schools and lack of basic conditions, such as sewage system and central heating, for a significant proportion of schools (UNICEF, 2001).

In these circumstances, it is not surprising that education was high on the agenda of the first post-communist democratic Serbian government. In addition to this, the increased presence of distinctly undemocratic tendencies in society and in education, goes some way towards creating the context in which the post-2000 reformers decided to pay special attention to 'education for democracy' within their planned changes.

After the 'revolution' – civic education and education for democracy in post-Milošević Serbia

In October 2000, a coalition by the name of 'Democratic Opposition of Serbia' won the presidential elections against Slobodan Milošević, and successfully fought for the recognition of their originally unacknowledged victory in massive street protests. Milošević was ousted from power and parliamentary elections took place shortly after, leading to a coalition government, dominated by the two largest parties that had belonged to the former anti-Milošević bloc.

The new prime minister belonged to a pro-Western, progressive, left-of-centre Democratic Party (DS), and the new president to the conservative, traditionalist, right-of-centre Democratic Party of Serbia (DSS). The former party of Slobodan Milošević had by that time, following his disappearance from the political scene, as well as internal strife, gone through major changes, and, now in a much more moderate form, occupied a small percentage of the seats in the parliament. The only real opposition to the new democratic government was offered by the extreme right Serbian Radical Party (SRS), an intermittent coalition partner of the Milošević regime during the 1990s. This was the political make-up of the country, when, in the Serbian popular mind as well as in the literature, Serbia's transitioning to democracy was overtly acknowledged.

The new government promptly recognised the gravity of the state in which the country was (a ruined economy, non-functioning institutions, fragility of international relations). One of the first public arenas found on its reform agenda was education. The new Ministry of Education and Sports (MoES), formed in early 2001, made up of the members of the DS and a couple of smaller parties with a similar orientation, with a shadow cabinet by DSS, declared the need for a comprehensive, fundamental reform. The MoES credited education with the power to pull forward the whole of the society. The opening statement of the new Ministry's White Paper articulated in this way the vision and mission of the new government and set the tone of the policy documents to follow:

“Education is a priority area for the development of Serbia to facilitate its economic recovery, creation of a democratic society and re-integration into the international community. Considering the years of deterioration of the education system at all levels, the new Ministry of Education and Sports (MoES) has assumed a major role in the reforms that Serbian society is undergoing to the extent that it must provide for new generations to be oriented towards living together in a modern, European, multiethnic country” (p.5).

The paper focused on the shortcomings of what was perceived as markedly outdated educational system still reliant upon ideological and pedagogic principles of both the communist era and Milošević’s regime of the 1990s, and suggested a list of measures to be taken to improve it. Some of the aims of the comprehensive reform, as outlined here, included decentralisation, changes to the curriculum and classroom practice, changes in financing of educational organisations, in teacher training and recruitment, student evaluation and quality assessment for schools, and many others. The ‘new Serbian society’ that education was meant to shape was defined as modern, European, democratic, tolerant and respectful of differences and human rights.

Although the first change introduced was reducing the volume of the curricula, as a measure aimed at securing the successful completion of the school year after interruptions caused by strikes and protests, the first substantive change was a simultaneous introduction of civic and religious education in the first years of primary and secondary schools in September that same year (Reform White Paper). The prompt (re-)admission of the dominant Church to the public sphere after the fall of an atheist regime is a scenario familiar from other former communist contexts. In some cases, such as Poland, authors attributed this to the desire of the newly elected political elite to secure a powerful ally

(Kubik, 1994; Pacochinski, 1994). In the case of Serbia, it has been suggested that the decision to introduce religious education was made as a political favour by the new government to the SOC, who had been lobbying for presence in the public sphere (Ivić, 2000), and that civic education was introduced to counteract this (Smith *et al.*, 2002; Baćević, 2005; Kuburić and Vukomanović, 2006). During the first, pilot, year, both subjects were optional electives: however, in 2002/3 they became compulsory electives as an alternative to one another, which is a status they still have today.

Whilst the White Paper made only one casual mention of the religious education being introduced at the same time as civic education, it proclaimed 'democratisation of education' and 'education for democracy' one of the priorities of the reform. The part of the White Paper dealing specifically with the democratisation of education suggested that Serbia's work in the area be 'harmonised' with similar world-wide programmes, specifically the Council of Europe's Education for Democratic Citizenship (EDC) whose second phase (2001-2004) coincided with the Serbian policy. Education for democracy in Serbia was envisaged as entailing the introduction of the new subject, civic education, cross-curricular activities and extra-curricular activities that would support the idea of educating 'democratic citizens'. Civic education, specifically, was imagined as a subject that would have 'democracy' both as its end goal and the strategy to achieve it, i.e. aim to create a critical, forward-thinking, tolerant citizen, through 'democratic processes' of debate and discussion, critical judgement and peaceful resolution of conflict, previously absent from the Serbian classroom (Reform White Paper). In the next section, I set up a

geographically and conceptually wider context of civic or citizenship education into which Serbian policy was introduced.

The rising concern for citizenship in Europe at the start of the 21st century

Concurrent with, and arguably following from, the general late-modern concern across the developed world about the direction and purpose of education in the century characterised by globalisation, marketisation, and multi-culturalism (Turnbull, 2002; Forrester, 2003; Dahlin, 2010), the last couple of decades have seen the rise and spread of the idea of civic or citizenship education. Civic education has been imagined as holding the potential to imbue in students values, knowledge, and practices needed to make them capable of actively participating in an on-going process that is democracy (Schmidt, 2008). Referring to Plato and the need for educated citizens who will be worthy of involvement in participatory democracy, Crick pleads in his 2007 article on political and democratic citizenship:

“We must take seriously long understood, seldom fully acted upon, ideas of democratic citizenship and promote wider engagement in politics in the manner of active citizens. We should teach such commitments to our young, together with the practical skills needed to experience and fulfil them; and we should try to hold our leaders to the real meaning of the words they easily, too easily, utter”(p. 240).

Since the end of the last century, similar ideas have been strengthened and internationally promoted through the work of organisations such as the Council of Europe, with its Education for Democratic Citizenship (EDC) initiative, and the UNESCO-promoted decade of human rights education. According to Audigier (2000), the author of one of the Council's reports on the subject of EDC, the entire concept of 'citizenship' had not featured very heavily in international agencies' documents, and it was only after the meeting of the heads of state governments in Strasbourg in 1997, and especially the 12 ministers in Krakow in 2000, that the issue of education for democratic citizenship began to gain momentum. The reasons for this, as explained in Audigier's report, and as mentioned in much of the civic education literature (see, e.g. Turnbull, 2002; Crick, 2007; Dahlin, 2010), were increased worries over prevailing apathy, a lack of trust in democratic institutions, the increased individualisation of the modern age, and globalisation with its accompanying risks of xenophobia and racism (also in Forrester, 2003).

It was recognised at these international summits that the individual educational systems of member states could help counter the potential risks to democracies both young and established, by incorporating the idea(l) of EDC. This recognition later extended to the call for national educational systems to actually shape their policies according to the principles of EDC, making way for a sustainable education reform built to support the project of democracy and the post-nation, post-modern citizenship building which would take into account the fluid, multi-cultural nature of a nation-state in the globalised world, and particularly take into account the virtues of tolerance, critical judgement of

the political and social system, and active, engaged, and informed participation (Janmaat and Piattoeva, 2007). In relation to this, the three broad domains of civic education across national policies were national identity, democracy, and social diversity and cohesion (Steiner-Khamsi *et al*, 2002).

The concern with teaching students how to be (good) citizens sprang mostly from the perceived social, political, and civic disengagement in the recent decades, since most of the definitions and conceptualisations of citizenship in the relevant Council of Europe documents and recommendations (Audigier 2000), as well as in literature (see, e.g., Janmaat and Piattoeva, 2007), revolve around the idea of identifying with and participating in a social and political community. This idea(l) of active social and political commitment was to have cognitive (knowledge of legal and political systems and frameworks), affective (internalisation of the 'right' values) and social (knowledge of practicing democracy in all spheres of life and every circumstances) aspects (Duerr, 2000). The goal is to educate students not only in rights, but crucially duties and responsibilities (Audigier, 2000), and for EDC to incorporate civic education, peace education, education for globalisation and tolerance, and human rights education (Duerr, 2000). The concern with human rights has paralleled the UNDP Decade of Education for Human Rights (1995-2004), of particular importance in the context of Serbia, which was, as a post-conflict society, given particular attention in the 2001 Annual Report, as a country that would be expected to heavily incorporate human rights education in its civic education programmes. The second phase of EDC (2001-2004) also came after

the launch of the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe in 1999, that followed the Balkan wars (Forrester, 2003).

Designed to provide civic and political socialisation, the subject of civic education differs from one country to another, depending on the particular needs of the civil society, and the social political, and educational context and tradition – from a greater focus on political education in Germany, to more of values- and ethics-based civic education in Portugal (Birzea, 2004). This is not the place to discuss the relative success that various studies have reported civic education programmes to have had over the past decade worldwide (for examples of some studies that have tried to measure the effect of EDC on students' attitudes and behaviour, see Torney-Purta *et al*, 2001; Kahne *et al*, 2006; Schmidt, 2008; Baker and Thompson, 2010; Daly *et al*, 2010, Doğanay, 2010; Finkel, 2002; Finkel *et al*, 2012). The focus here, rather, was on the conceptualisation and production of a civic education policy, bearing in mind particularly its normative prescriptions.

The appeal of the idea of the potential of education to resolve issues of late-modern uncertainty, and not least the persuasive power of an international organisation initiative, has made EDC at the time very topical even in established democracies fearing the effects of an apathetic youth. In transitioning societies, in the meantime, it has been constructed as an aspect of civil-society-as-panacea promise of transforming an authoritarian society into a democratic one. In his 2004 survey of the various EDC policies in countries around Europe, Birzea notes, for example, that, whilst the principles of EDC are

mostly found to be incorporated in various subjects including religious education, ethics, and social studies, in the context of post-communist Europe, they have merited a separate subject, as the '1990s political changes mandated a greater curricular support for EDC in the form of a separate subject' (p. 36).

Civic education policies in the post-communist context

In most post-communist countries, some form of civic education had existed as a subject pre-1989. It was one of the first subjects to be removed from the curriculum in the post-1989 deideologisation, as it had been designed to help foster a kind of citizen desired by that political system, and usually imbued with Marxist and socialist ideas. This is not to say that during the communist era there did not exist practices, such as youth movements, for example, that were rather close in idea and nature to the cohesive, community-participating ideal proffered by programmes such as EDC, or various other ways in which communist education could be said to have been democratic, in, for example, of the equal provision of education, as noted by Perry (2013). So in this way, the removal of the subject or its modification so as to accord with values more suited to the country's new ideological course, could be said to be more of a symbolic than a substantive nature, emblematic of the post-communist societies' often noted desire to eradicate everything that was 'communist', sometimes resulting in, as Wilde (2002) notes, throwing the baby out with the bathwater. Such ideological shift within the concept of civic education was happening in the context of a described 'values vacuum' (Balkansky *et al*, 1999:

90) or even a 'moral panic' (Strajn, 1999: 555), with the pedagogy usually conceptualised with the help of Western (mostly American) educationalists and NGOs dedicated to education for democracy (Vaillant, 2001; 2005; Buk-Berge, 2006; Sayer, 2005).

The approach of different countries to CE during the 1990s depended on their various approaches to the educational reform in general. In Poland, CE appeared as a part of the later wider curricular reform (Slomczynski and Shabad, 2000). In Hungary, it was introduced within the 'man and society' part of the new curriculum, after years of absence of political education from the curriculum, as there was a lack of consensus on the direction of the Hungarian democracy (Folders-Travers, 1995). In Romania, it had had several experimental forms throughout 1990s before taking the form of 'civic culture', which replaced 'democratic culture' due to the latter becoming negatively associated with the period of economic hardships caused by the democratic transition processes in the mid-1990s (Steiner-Khamsi, 2002).

This last point introduces the place and importance of language (the linguistic aspect of discourse) in civic education policies and the different meanings attributed to commonly used concepts with an almost assumed shared meaning. So, for example, in Bosnia, 'education for democracy' is found to refer to the recent past, and the wars and the crimes of other people (Kolouh-Westin, 2004), whereas Doolan and Domazet (2007) conclude that the CE curriculum in Croatia has not really been revised since the 1990s when it was conceptualised to incorporate concepts of patriotism and nationalism and a very localised view

of citizenship. This is an interesting observation, for whilst it might be understandable that the issue of ethnic identity-building was important for the then policy-makers in Croatia, it would have been expected that the later concepts of civic education would involve a more cosmopolitan and multicultural view of the citizenship. However, it is possible that the absence of the need to modify the subject in the light of Croatia's aspirations to join the EU is perhaps indicative of the relative insignificance of the ideological potential of this subject at the time when other socio-economic and educational reforms were constructing the ideology of democratisation and Europeanisation.

Studies on the effects of CE in various CEE countries (see Matrai, 1999; Bunescu *et al.*, 1999), have found little justification for the optimism concerning the purported benefits of the subject. Vaillant's (2001; 2005) research in the Russian context has attributed this to offering ideas and strategies developed externally to policy-makers and stakeholders struggling with concepts taken for granted by their advisors, and to the students quick to observe the discrepancy between what is taught and what is the reality outside of the classroom. Similarly, Buk-Berge (2006) has notes in her critique of the IEA study on civic education in twenty-eight countries (in Torney-Purta *et al.*, 2001) the neglect of the practice among the post-communist countries towards adopting, mostly through bilateral aid agencies, Western models of civic education for civil society building purposes, where both 'civic education' and 'civil society' have usually been imported as working concepts with little regard for the context (Poulsen-Hansen, 2002). Such trends have then been likely to cause a disparity between the theoretical model and actual practice. Sayer (2005: 89) mentions

'hit-and-run know-how' kits for schools as something that used to be common practice in Europe.

Indeed, Finkel *et al* (2012) stress that belief in the power of education to transform a political system informed many Western (many of them American) civic education initiatives that had at one time formed a core of support to emerging democracies, and it is often mentioned that most civic education programmes that have appeared in various post-communist systems during the 1990s have been conducted in collaboration with Western (again, usually American) partners (see for example Tibbitts [2001] for Romania, Tobin [2010] for comparison between Romania and Poland, or Janmaat and Piattoeva [2009] for Ukraine and Russia). One of the rare examples of what has been considered a 'successful' implementation of the 'new democratic values' in the communitarian context is that of Poland, often cited in comparative studies on CE (Stanowski, 1998; Buk-Berge, 2006; Oesterreich, 2009; Tobin, 2010). Its success has been attributed to, among other factors such as the geo-political and cultural proximity of Poland to the West, the already existing culture of civic engagement that had helped bring down communism in the first place, combined with a developed idea about the nature of educational change and desired direction of the reform.

For most other countries, it seems that the notion of civic education has revolved around the general idea of critical thinking, civic engagement, and democratic participation, apparent platitudes not really helped by the language of international policies and recommendations. Audigier (2000) has noted that

such language, similarly to that of the national policies inspired by international recommendations, uses value-laden phrases to paint an idyllic picture of a utopian reality, leaving little space for deliberation and definition of meanings in the specific context, and the subsequent working out of organisational and structural steps towards achieving specific ends. But even where such criticism is present, unpacking of this language has seldom been attempted in literature. In one of the rare studies that deal with the discourse of citizenship education, Nicoll *et al* (2013) point out that the entire discourse of concern for the lack of civic participation and social cohesion is constructed, in a neo-liberal vein, as the fault of the individual, without taking into account various wider power relationships and/or structural constraints, and that education is constructed as solving the problem of 'democratic deficit'. The concept of 'deficit' is also used by Oesterreich (2009) in a discussion of the measurements of democratic knowledge, attitude, and civic engagement by the IEA study (Torney-Purta *et al.*, 1999a; 2001), or by Coffe and van der Lippe (2009) with regard to the Eastern European citizens' need to make up for this deficiency by (re)learning political and civic behaviour. Such views construct 'civic' and 'political' behaviour as being of one and the same kind, and tend to ignore, as Tobin (2010) notes, the different kinds of democracy that different societies, due to local needs and institutional and cultural constraints, might desire.

Scholars in Serbia have also maintained the tendency to not question the assumptions underlying the introduction of civic education, and have instead mostly sought to gauge its effect. With regard to the introduction of the policy, unlike the (re)introduction of RE that has had a somewhat wider treatment in the literature due to the controversy it then sparked, leading to the resignation of two deputy ministers, and a heated public debate between the Church and some sections of the civil society (Kuburić and Vukomanović, 2006), not many authors have given much attention to the background of the introduction of civic education.

Some authors (Stojković, 2010) measured the 'democratic values' of students, and although concluding on the correlation between this variable and factors such as mother's socio-economic status (also found by Maksić (2003) to be a significant variable for the choice of CE over RE) and parents' education, there was in their study no significant difference found between CE and RE students. In other words, democratic values could not be attributed to attending civic rather than religious education. Other studies have examined parents' and teachers' opinion of the subject, in contrast to opinions and attitudes about RE, leading to the conclusion that CE is very seldom chosen as a subject in its own right, and much more often as an alternative to RE for which students, or their parents, do not want to opt (Maksić, 2003; Joksimović, 2003b). These studies have also failed to find any significant difference between the RE and CE students when it came to the change in democratic attitudes and behaviour,

although more qualitative approaches such as Stojiljković's (2003) have demonstrated CE students' appreciation of the subject due to its helping them become more tolerant and better at resolving conflicts.

Most of the studies, whatever their focus, are also interesting in their equating of 'civic' education with 'democratic' education, a point that I believe should not be glossed over. The study conducted by Baucal *et al* (2009) might actually point to the ways in which civic can be understood as communal. In their research it has been found that students of both primary and secondary schools enjoy civic education due to the interactive, conversational approach not taken elsewhere, but even despite it, there was a reported reluctance to participate in civic and political movements, lack of trust in government, with trust being mostly placed in family, friends, and religious organisations. This lack of trust and participation is not exclusive to Serbia, as this is one of the issues that spurred the interest in EDC in Europe in the first place, but the separation between the civically (or politically) engaged and religious *is*, and researching the conceptualisation of CE in relation (or in contrast) to RE in Serbia seemed to me like an opportunity to be taken.

Similarly to wider research on civic education, there have been limited attempts to question the origin of civic education programmes and concepts, or to develop an understanding of the local meaning of the idea of civic/citizenship education as incorporated in different educational systems. In the Serbian context, as mentioned earlier, authors have mostly presumed it to be a 'natural' step in the country's democratisation (Pavlović, 2005), or have treated it as a

sign of the democratisation of education, as the two subjects were the first ever electives in Serbian schools (Bukvić and Pavlović, 2006; Bukvić and Krvavac, 2006). A couple of authors have explored, similarly to myself, the meaning of civic education beyond its conceptualisation within the international citizenship education initiative. Avramović (2002; 2004) has offered – occasionally biased – criticism of its being an ideological vehicle of the post-socialist transition, and Baćević (2003) has explored the anthropological, cultural, and political aspects of policymakers’ providing for the Serbian public the symbols of their embracing the modern, civic, democratic values alongside national and traditional values contained in religious education.

Symbolism and research potential of civic education policies

On the whole, with some exceptions mentioned above, there has been, in Serbia and internationally, a general paucity of studies that have explored the many aspects and meanings of ‘civic education’, and its forms outside of Council of Europe’s EDC recommendations, especially in young democracies, going beyond documenting how universal ideas about it have been translated into local concepts. Despite the entire notion of education for citizenship in the late-modern era engaging ideas of multiplicity and diversity, CE scholarship has tended to be fairly Western-centric and reliant to a large extent on the definitions and measurements used by the 1999 IAE study of the forms that the civic education had taken internationally (in Torney-Purta *et al*, 1999a), even

when these studies are performed by researchers from 'younger' democracies. Although it was not the purpose of this thesis to subvert such tendencies, this does bring up a question of whether the absence of civic education from the tradition of young democracies' educational systems, at least the idea of civic education as promoted during the last two decades, means that the concepts have tended to be adopted and adapted from Western traditions not only in scholarship but also in government policy.

If that has indeed been the case, it is then almost surprising that these adopted concepts have not been better utilised as a way of exploring the 'wholesale democracy packages' [my quotes], mentioned by the more vocal critics of the democracy-promotion/-aid/-development process (see particularly Carothers, 2002; 2008), or 'flags of convenience', a phrase that Lynch (1998: 9) uses to describe concepts that are used by policy makers to attract foreign funding, but seldom actually go beyond the political rhetoric. In less cynical terms perhaps, I saw the absence of such approaches as a missed opportunity to explore civic education (or education for democracy) as an example of more overt efforts of the post-authoritarian governments' towards the reform of education as the part of the whole process of democratic transition. It is this opportunity that I have taken in this thesis.

In the post-communist context, the construction of civic education carries a particularly high potential for being seen as a vehicle for symbols – of societal change and transformation, from the means of educating a citizen fit for an authoritarian, communist society, to an 'ideal' citizen of a democratic, capitalist

society. My approach was to view the civic education policy discourse as constructing an 'ideal' citizen of the future Serbian society, and so a gateway to the exploration of desirable and undesirable ideologies for the future Serbian society. In addition, as it was a policy that kick-started the reform and set the tone for it, it opened a space for exploration of the early reform processes, actors, and interactions, and ideological-discursive formations that were entering the educational field at the time. So in addition to answering the practical questions relating to the introduction and development of CE, I was also asking what it revealed about the wider process of the reform, of what I termed an ideological-discursive project of new, post-2000 Serbia.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I situated the case of Serbia's 2001 education policy historically and culturally, as well as politically and ideologically. Deciding to view the civic education policy as a symbolic launch of the ideological-discursive project of Serbia's post-communist, post-authoritarian, and post-nationalist transformation, I have used this chapter to outline the meaning and form of ideologies of communism, authoritarianism, and nationalism in the specific context of Serbia. In doing that, I have set the scene to which civic education was introduced and Serbia's post-2000 reform kicked off, concluding that whilst treated as a post-communist, transitional, democratising society, there are historical and ideological particularities of the context that have set it apart

from the what could tentatively be called a (post-)communist experience. These particularities will be emphasised in the findings and discussion chapters.

In addition to setting up the context of research, I explored the meaning, symbolism, and scholarship's treatment of civic or citizenship education in general, and in the Serbian context, concluding that there was a strong case for engaging with the conceptualisation and introduction of such policies at a more critical level than has been in the case over the last decade or so. In the next chapter, I delve deeper into the conceptualisation of 'policy' and 'reform', so as to prepare the ground for the exploration of civic education in a more critical and post-structuralist manner. I also review the literature that had treated the democratic transitions and reforms in the post-communist context, and situate my work in it, reflecting in the process on the issue of homogenisation of experience, of which some recent post-communist authors have accused the more traditional approaches, and on the development of my own approach, in which I have sought to draw on both (with dualism loosely delineated) traditions.

CHAPTER 3

The meaning and place of the civic education policy: mapping out the theoretical context and locating the project

Introduction

I wish to use the note about the possibility of civic education serving (or at least being studied) as a rhetorical tool of democratic transition, as a point of departure into an examination of the manner in which scholarship has dealt with the concept of the post-communist transition to democracy over the last couple of decades. I will look at the notions of transition and post-communist educational reform, and examine how conceptualisation of these terms has changed over the years. The change entails a movement from a modernising, developmental paradigm that has treated transition as catching-up, to a post-modern approach that has focused on the particularities of different contexts in which transition was happening. This latter approach has questioned not only whether the previously mostly taken for granted ‘transition to the Western-type democracy’ was really possible, but whether we should assume at all that the journey of transition has an identifiable end-point.

Moving from the current theoretical developments in the field, I identify space for conceptual extension. I then devote the remaining sections of the chapter to the introduction of the theoretical framework that I constructed in order to grapple with what I perceived as insufficiently theorised aspects of the

literature. This lens was a result of combining the theoretical aspects of late-transition scholarship with the use of the view of policy as discourse, offered by Ball in the early 1990s, and increasingly used in policy studies. But first, I wish to address the field to which this study offers its most substantive contribution, and discuss the key concepts, starting with that of 'transition'.

Conceptualising transition

Birzea (1994) has defined transition as a continuous change affecting all life at all times, but specifically in the context of the political and societal transition, such as that in post-communist countries, a discontinuity, a movement from one phase to another, a passage from one social and political system to another, accompanied by anomie and societal learning. Emphasising the (un)known nature of the destination of the journey of transition, Watson (2000) has defined transition as a process of change from one state to another, without necessarily knowing what the 'other' state was (p. 44). He also points out, however, that actors (particularly international aid agencies, economists and educators) involved in the various processes of transition across the world, including that of the post-communist transition, have had a tendency to assume all of the changes to be towards the free market and pluralist democracies.

Working on post-communist transformations in Europe, and post-apartheid transformations in South Africa, and building on the above-mentioned Birzea's

ideas and Badat's (1995) notion of the importance of the wider social and political make-up, McLeish (1998a; 1998b) has defined transition as a process of continual fluctuation, comprised of inter-connected and inter-dependent social, economic and political reforms and factors (see also Pastuović, 1993, and Rado, 2001). Such a view of transition gives justification to my treating of the civic education policy and the education reform it had initiated as a part of an all-encompassing ideological project happening in many fields at once. Coulby (2000) has also focused on the view of educational transition as an integral part (rather than consequence) of political transition, stressing the interweaving of various changes and reforms. He has noted that the interplay of these various changes might have an uncertain end, but also noted some identifiable traits common to most Eastern European transitions: political freedom, economic liberalisation, rise of nationalism, breakdown of the social order, and the renewed interest in the West. A Serbian author has depicted the post-communist transition as encompassing various political and economic reformulations, a cultural shift from the closed, tribal-collectivist society into an open, individual-oriented, pluralist one (Komšić, 2004).

Post-communist transition in Europe has frequently been imagined as dealing with a discontinuity, represented by communism, in the evolution of the political and social systems in Europe, leading to the 'myth of return to Europe' (Birzea, 1994: 30; Bozóki, 2002), or return to 'normality' (Lagerspetz, 1999: 386), to the course of modernisation, as well as return to nation (*ibid.* p. 384). This idea has not only been promoted by Eastern European elites, but also Western intellectuals, thus neatly erasing the diversity of political, economic,

and cultural experience of the many countries now existing under the umbrella term of 'postcommunists' (Schöpflin, 2000). In neglecting these differences, such an understanding of transition as 'return to normality' has treated the former communist era as a common ailment to be erased and corrected on the countries' path towards the ideal of Western modernisation (Blokker, 2005). Occasionally, some authors, such as Karl and Schmitter (1991), or Offe (1991), have warned that the progression from nation-state, through capitalism, to democracy, that was the experience of Western countries, was to be condensed in the case of post-communist countries, and that this 'capitalism without capitalists' (Blokker, 2005) or 'capitalism by democratic design' (Offe, 1991) would, rather than an 'organic' social progression, come to be the project of the elites. A possible consequence of such condensation could be what Mungiu-Pippidi (2006) calls 'democratisation without decommunisation' in her eponymous paper.

There have also been various authors in political theory and 'transitology' or 'consolidology' studies (see Carothers, 2002; Levitsky and Way, 2002; Merkel and Croissant, 2004; McFaul, 2005; Buyandelgeriyn, 2008) who have focused on the difference between the paths that various countries have taken after the fall of communism, coming up with different 'hybrid regimes', as discussed in the previous chapter. However, despite the fact that such attempts at conceptualising difference acknowledged the importance and richness of context, even here the various hybrid regimes have more or less been seen as a stop en route to democracy. Overall, for the greater part of the 1990s and early 2000s, post-communist transition has been interpreted as the death of the only

real alternative to capitalism, marking for some authors a Fukuyama-professed end of history (Fukuyama, 1989), and strengthening the globalising theories about the whole world converging towards the Western system of democracy and neoliberalism. The latter is particularly found in what, Steiner-Khamsi (2000) and Schriewer (2003), among others, call a consensus strand of globalisation theory or the Stanford school of neo-institutionalism and world systems (Meyer and Ramirez, 2000).

Such expectations of convergence have been translated in post-communist transitions studies into an assumption that once the unsuccessful economic and political system had been abandoned, the only option for the countries that abandoned it was to try to build on the ruins of communism a new system, by using the models, and the help and support of their Western neighbours. Bozóki (2002) even mentions the idea of the responsibility of the West to help the post-communists 'return' to where they had always 'naturally' belonged, after having abandoned them to the influence of the Soviet Union. Regardless of whether studies were dealing with notions of 'modernisation', 'democratisation', or 'Europeanisation', their teleological and normative underpinnings have largely been based on the idea of 'success' of transitioning endeavours. Reflecting on this paradigm, Silova (2011b) notes that the fact that some of the CEE countries joined EU has led a lot of authors to proclaim the 'end of transition' – a notion made additionally tenuous if we again consider the idea of transition (as 'change') as essentially a continuous process without a clearly defined end.

In educational research, similarly, it was not until recently that the entire transition-as-modernisation paradigm came to be questioned. Closely following in the fall of communism, there appeared several influential models of transition, such as Birzea's five stages of transition, and McLeish's model of macro and micro transitions emanating, as if in concentric circles, from the demise of the authoritarian system (McLeish, 1998: 10). In early 2000s various authors attempted to adapt Fullan's Triple I model to the post-communist context (in Polyzoi *et al*, 2003b). Although such models did accept that different countries may, due to their different historical backgrounds and their then geopolitical and economic positions, follow the path of transition in different ways, where that path ended was hardly under a question mark: some form of democracy and market economy seemed to be the only options for the CEE countries' 'way back to Europe'. I discuss these models and their recent successors later, but for now I want to look at some ways in which transition in education across the CEE context has been described over the years, even if this did not involve the building of a model with which to explain it.

Transition in education

Apart from the attempts at theorising the macro aspect of transition, the 1990s and early 2000s gave rise to a number of studies that took a descriptive approach to the specifics of the transition paths of different CEE countries, depending on their previous educational development and the very context of change, focusing on any one facet of these various reforms. Referring to the early years of transition in Hungary, but echoing in the reports of many other authors, Halász (2003) has described the period as a state of chaos that eventually yielded a coherent solution, with willingness to take risks endemic to societies in transition when it is 'easier to make high-risk decisions and set ambitious goals' (p.71).

In the Czech and Slovak republics, the emphasis was on structural adjustment (Birzea, 1994), decentralisation, de-monopolisation and de-politicisation of the educational system (Svezová, 1997), with multiple groups of reformists and educationalists working on the proposed reform (*ibid.*), but not always in perfect synergy with politicians (Polyzoi and Černá, 2003). Poland, apart from decentralisation and the introduction of the core curriculum (Pachocinski, 1994), de-ideologisation and calls for radical change, even anarchy (Janowski, 1992), was also specific due to the strong position that the Catholic Church had (re-)assumed in education soon after the fall of communism and thanks to its uncharacteristically (for an atheist regime) important place in the public life even during the communist rule (Mieszalski, 1994).

Hungary went through 'reform of the reform' (Birzea, 1994: 56), after a rather radical decentralisation in the 1980s, and through a change of right-of-centre and left-of-centre governments in a short period of time (Folders-Travers, 1995), settling towards the end of 1990s for some kind of social democracy combined with the free market as the prevailing ideology (Halász, 1997). This was one of the countries that had not experienced a radical reform, but rather a continuation of the trends and reforms from the 1970s and 1980s (Folders-Travers, 1995), an extension of the progressive educational thinking from that period (Kovasz, 2000). In Romania, there was a lag of a couple of years during which nothing much had been done (Birzea, 1994; Birzea and Fartusnic, 2003), possibly due to the absence of clear ideology to lead the policy-makers. Other authors have attributed this inactivity to the lack of planning and forecasting (Sandi, 1992) and a general reluctance to engage before the situation 'got clearer' (Paun and Neacsu, 1994). Russia, meanwhile, after the early attempts at reform in 1992 of the progressive Ministry that consisted of the once radical and alternative educationalists from the perestroika era, went through a largely reactionary period during the rest of the 1990s, characterised by uncertainty, the mix of old and new, and an ambiguous relationship with the West and the Western ideas of education (Polyzoi and Dneprov, 2003; 2010), with the general tendency of the entire society to move, as Goode (2010: 1059) has noted, from 'competitive authoritarianism' to 'hegemonic authoritarianism'.

Although these studies are cited here mainly with the purpose of emphasising the importance of the political context and the pre-transition trends and developments in education, it is nevertheless possible to identify some common

threads between them. Themes that appear across the board include the state of anomie and the break-up of the previous socio-political order which left the door open, at least in theory, for a number of new political and ideological options, resulting either in a state of relative chaos and uncertainty, or the frequent changes in government. Co-existence and conflict between the old and new, the traditional and modernist, with a romantic attitude towards the pre-war past and old values, characterised this phase. With regard to the latter, most societies witnessed the re-emergence of nationalism, and the re-appearance of the dominant church in the decision-making realm. Finally, most contexts revealed the presence of foreign influence, both through professional co-operation and advice, as well as substantial financial assistance and possibly instruction on the direction on policy that came with it (Anweiler, 1992; Phillips and Kaser, 1992; Mieszalski, 1994; Kalous, 1996; Birzea, 1994; 1996; Fowkes, 1999; Coulby, 2000; Schmidt, 2001; Nikandrov, 1997; Muckle, 2001). Even considering an arguable lack of analytical depth of this literature, these commonalities provide a fertile ground for comparison with the Serbian context of the early transition a decade later, in the discussion of findings in the later part of the text. Indeed, using these studies for the purpose of providing the richness and understanding of a context fits more naturally with my epistemological position which goes against the attempt to fit diverse contexts into homogenising models of behaviour with their implications and expectations of prediction.

These studies also support some of the aspects of the transition models discussed below, such as the ubiquitous presence of reform buzzwords (Birzea,

1994): 'democratisation', 'deideologisation', 'decentralisation', whilst highlighting the messiness and adhocness of the policy making process, and the effects of political instability. What is confirmed throughout, however, is that despite the change of governments and apparent guiding ideologies, there was never a serious alternative to the goal of democratisation, marketisation, and the 'return to Europe'. Countries with some form of an authoritarian regime, such as Central Asian post-Soviet republics, Belarus, Ukraine, or Serbia, although going through a form of post-*communist* transition, were never included in these analyses, and were only sporadically mentioned in discussions about post-communist ideologies, such as ethnic and religious nationalism, as in the case of Serbia. This was similarly the case with the transition models created in the 1990s, as they also failed to account for countries in which the transition to communism may have taken less than a straightforward turn to democracy, market economy, and experienced an ambivalent attitude towards 'returning to Europe'.

Models of transition in education

Soon after the collapse of communism in Europe, Birzea (1994) constructed a model that attempted to capture developments in most post-communist European countries (note: Serbia was excluded from this analysis). He identified five phases common to most countries: political rupture, break-up of the old system, replacement of the old structures by new ones, stabilisation of the new system and ensuring of its self-regulating capacity (p. 33), with the last

three phases predicted to take longer. In addition to creating this five-stage model of transition, Birzea also sought to pinpoint commonalities across the region and proceeded to identify in all countries White papers that defined the new educational direction around the notions of 'democratisation', 'decentralisation', 'liberalisation' and 'pluralism' (see above). He also classified the changes that had taken place in those few years as rectifying (such as emergency corrective ridding the curriculum of the communist ideology), modernising (including introduction of electives, religious education, and introduction of subjects or contents regarding 'the quality of life': ecology or human rights), or restructuring (decentralisation and financing). Although Birzea conceded that the newly adopted educational paradigms ranged from liberalism to neo-traditionalism, Christian democracy, and nationalism, and that the end-point of transition was not a fixed one, probably in acceptance of democracy as an unfinished process, it was also clear that market economy, together with some form of democracy, was the desired goal of all changes.

A few years later, McLeish (1998a; 1998b), in a volume edited by her and Phillips (McLeish and Phillips, 1998), developed a model to explain the transition process and predict the next phases for countries involved in it, which in this instance focused on any country in the process of transition from authoritarianism to democracy, and in addition to several European post-communist countries, also included the South African transition from the apartheid regime. The model depicted the stages of transition in the form of concentric circles (McLeish, 1998a: 10), ripples produced by the dissolution of the formerly closed circle representative of the authoritarian regime in the

centre. The model described a movement from one stage to the next, with porous boundaries between the stages indicating the non-linear nature of the process and interaction and interdependence between the different stages.

These stages included an interim phase, characterised by uncertainty, followed by the national elections in which national policy is defined; this was followed by provincial elections when the nature of the future educational system would become clearer, a 'macro-transition' or the legislation process, and finally 'micro-transition' or the implementation, ensuring the consolidation of the system and sustainability of changes. Similarly to other transition theorists, such as for example Pastuović (1993), McLeish (1998a; 1998b) noted that since the process of transition involved various political and economic factors, and since there was the inevitable interplay between the reforms conducted in different arenas, the overall political stability would be highly important for how the reform process developed. Already at that time, she stressed that although macro-transition, which happens with the proposed changes enshrined in law, was achievable with comparative success and in a relatively short time, micro-transition cannot be guaranteed. Several years later, reiterating the significance of the political factor and political stabilisation for the stabilisation of the educational transition processes, and confronted with the 'ground-level' reality of the transition, albeit particularly with respect to South Africa, McLeish (2003) highlighted the importance of the practitioners' ownership of the reform.

At around the same time as McLeish and Phillips developed their model, Birzea adapted his earlier ideas, by examining the Romanian example of educational transition and noting various different factors that would affect the process. Birzea's later work has incorporated the notion of the power struggle between the old and the new educational currents, and between easily adaptable communists and insufficiently politicised new intelligentsia. The reform process has been recognised as being either slow and transformative, or more of a 'shock therapy' (Birzea, 1996), and with regard to the character of policies, modernising, corrective, structural, or systemic. Most recently, and with input from Fullan's Triple I model (in Polyzoi *et al*, 2003b), discussed below, Birzea's original stages of reform have been remodelled into those of deconstruction (involving corrective reform), stabilisation (modernisation reform), transformation (structural reform) and co-ordination, during which systemic reform takes place. He has pointed out that the latter two stages have tended to be significantly influenced and assisted by foreign agents, with all stages affected by the wider political, financial, and bureaucratic reform (Birzea and Fartusnic, 2003: 79, 83-5). It is also worth bearing in mind, particularly for the Serbian case, and the early transition changes therein examined, that the deconstruction phase is characterised, according to Birzea and Fartusnic, by adhoc decisions and a lack of understanding of the system as a whole, or the lack of foresight with regard to the entirety of the transformation process (p. 76). I will return to this and other characterisations of the early transition process in the light of my data.

The reference above to Birzea and Fartusnic's work comes from a volume in which, some ten years after the implementation of the initial changes, several authors assembled by Polyzoi, Fullan, and Alchan (2003a) attempted to adapt Fullan's Triple I model of educational change to the post-communist experience of selected CEE countries, analysing the change as a process, rather than an event. This model, consisting of initiation, implementation, and internalisation stages, was applied to the post-communist context with limited success. It was concluded that post-communist changes in education constituted only one facet of the overall societal transformation, and were revolutionary rather than evolutionary. As such, they faced too many intervening factors from the still rather unstable economic and political realms to be analysed in a straightforward, and fairly linear, manner provided by the Triple I model.

Authors like Polyzoi and Černá (2003) noted, for example, that the model proved inadequate in addressing the dynamics of the transformation, the tendency towards re-entrenchment after the initial change, the return to the past, or the fact that some countries go through change with more difficulty than others. Their adaptation incorporated Venda's (1991, cited in Polyzoi and Černá, 2003: 49-53) systems change model which, they argued, addressed more aptly the co-existence of new and old structures and the developing efficiency of the new state. Polyzoi and Černá finally concluded that the post-communist transformation in education would be a multi-dimensional process, as external factors would meet and interact with internal capabilities and adaptabilities. Despite the potential applicability of this hybrid model, however, it has remained largely unutilised in the literature. Indeed, Polyzoi *et al.* (2003b)

noted that despite the unique and far-reaching phenomenon that the post-communist transition was, surprisingly few attempts had been made at conceptualising and explaining it at a theoretical level. This is a valuable observation, as the comparatively scant attention given to this political, social and educational ‘earthquake’ (Cowen, 2000: 1), is perhaps indicative of a wider trend towards subsuming the transition studies under, and explaining the transition process through the general scholarship of globalisation-as-convergence.

Post-post-communism and transition as transformation

In reaction to the prevalence of the modernisation-oriented models of the post-communist literature for much of the past two decades that have implied convergence not only across the CEE context, but between this context and the West, recent scholarship has sought to challenge the modernist view of transition as transition-to-democracy. Later transition authors have begun to point out the limitations of a view that implied that all ex-communist countries have departed from the same point and that with the help of similar one-size-fits-all packages, would achieve the same goal, from which any departure was labelled as ‘dangerous’ and a ‘crisis’ (Silova, 2004; 2010b; Carothers, 2002). In her work during the past decade, Silova has attempted to move away from the teleological, normative understanding of transition⁵ as a process of moving

⁵ See, for example, Rado (2001) who largely equates post-communist transition with modernisation, as he considers changes that are a part of it instrumental in helping the development of a ‘relatively backward region’ (p. 11), or Hallak’s (2000) similar classifications of countries into ‘developed’ and ‘backward’, ‘globalising’ and ‘globalised’.

toward the, if not perfect, then certainly inevitable, idea(l) of the Western (this qualifier in itself being problematically homogenising) democracy and market economy. This has been a move away from an approach which has, she argues (Silova, 2010b; 2011b), constructed the process of transition as progress, or evolution, and divergences from it as mutations or even retardations, thus neglecting the multiplicity and variety of meanings and experiences of transition. Such an approach has, Silova insists, caused the scholarship to focus on predicting the reform trajectories instead of exploring and reading the contemporary world in the multitude of ways in which it exists. She was among the first transition scholars to advocate embracing the uncertainty and multiplicity of experience, the multiple post-socialisms, ruptures and continuities, and to challenge the 'obviousness' and closure-seeking tendencies of the western modernisation projects.

Silova's approach implies that even if one was to accept that the post-communist policymakers have, together with the post-communist authors who studied them, worked under the paradigm of modernisation, and for fear of falling behind, accepted the concepts and ideas developed in the West, these were then, rather than implemented in a uniform way across the board, most likely 'glocalised' or 'hybridised' (Bain, 2010). Such an attempt to reconcile the global influence with the local cultural and historical context would have led to different, still on-going, changes of educational systems, which, argues Silova (2009; 2010b) cannot be explained by the projected linear transition from authoritarianism to democracy, a paradigm of transition-as-evolution that she suggests be abandoned in favour of 'transformations'. Working with the notion

of multiple and diverse 'transformations' would then recognise the myriad ways in which some decidedly homogeneous trends in post-communist educational reforms in the region in the early-to-mid 1990s have interacted with local contexts, agendas, and legacies.

Some authors on transition as a political process, such as Kozma and Polonyi (2004) have similarly argued against the view of 'modernisation', stressing that, despite the rhetoric (or even practice) of modernisation, there has remained divergence coming from inherent cultural differences, which, though perhaps symbolically masked, do not simply disappear. As mentioned in the previous chapter, Mungiu-Pippidi (2002; 2006) has contributed to the diversification of the post-communist context in her predominantly Balkans-focused work, through the exploration of the pre-communist experience of diversity, that she believes had contributed to the diversity of the paths followed after 1990, and a specific form of democracy containing historically developed and influenced elements which might not at all be subject to 'transitioning'. These include 'politicisation' of bureaucratic relationships and the frequent shift in political allegiance, making it difficult to pinpoint political-ideological allegiances; the lack of separation between the dominant church and the state, and the lack of experience of political pluralism. Added to these factors are historical legacies that she identifies as Byzantine, and later Ottoman, such as the absence of political and civil society institutions, dominance of peasant and feudal ownership, and a tendency to act evasively if not dishonestly before institutions of authority. Mungiu-Pippidi has noted that all of the above factors make the post-communist experience of Balkan countries markedly different to that of,

for example, Central European post-communist countries. Such a focus on the particularity of context is what has influenced Kubik's (2013) ethnomethodological approach of 'contextual holism' (p.27) to study of the field, one in which the accent is on the inter-connectedness of all the elements of the system, elements which enable us to study different systems in all their multitude and multiversity, and not in relation to the success with which they have perfected 'Western' practices.

Blokker's (2005) work has similarly focused on the varieties of the post-communist 'democratisation', not only taking into account the different paths that post-communist countries have taken post-1989, but arguing that the apparent convergence of political and economic systems signalled by some of the post-communist countries' entering EU has really only been apparent, and that the transition scholarship should focus on the pluralities and diversification thus introduced into the European Union. The notion of the variety of the post-communist transitions and states was also promoted over a decade ago by authors such as King (2000), who argued against treating the 'Eastern European' space as a monolithic bloc, due to the diversity of both the political systems that once comprised it, as well as the manner of their dissolution. And Schöpflin (2000), for example, introduced the concept of post-communist democracies (with an accent on plurality), a concept that, whilst partly homogenising, still entertained the notion of the post-communist societies' transitioning to the democratic system(s) different from that of the older democracies in the West (in themselves fairly diverse), thus effectively challenging the idea of global convergence.

Transition in education or multiple transformations?

In educational research, a group of authors gathered mostly around Silova and Steiner-Khamsi, started working, at the beginning of the new century, outside the framework in which transition was conceptualised as a teleological, modernising process. These authors have since suggested that the transition literature had been too focused on apparent convergences and similarities in education policies and reforms across the post-communist context to actually notice and explore the many ways in which these were met with local legacies, political and economic circumstances, and the ideological climate. The transformations-based approach of these authors is indicative of a postmodern (although the approach was never explicitly labelled this way) concern with plurality and diversity.

Such a postmodernist turn in transition studies is perhaps most clearly articulated in the title of Silova's edited volume *Post-socialism Is Not Dead* (2010). This approach is post-modernist in the way of its at least questioning if not outright rejecting the homogenising narrative of transition-as-democratisation or transition-as-Westernisation. In the volume, Silova has criticised some transition models, such as that of McLeish and Phillips (in McLeish 1998a; 1998b), for projecting the transition experience through transformations and phases that always led to practices found in democratic

countries. Her criticism is based around the assumptions of such models that a country would inevitably reach the state of democracy.

The volume features a number of reports from various post-communist countries, documenting the ways in which the outward acceptance of 'democratising' policies has not always led to a change in practice. Silova and Steiner-Khamsi have been working, since the early 2000s, around the idea of transfer of Western or European rhetoric and political discourse without similar changes taking place in practice. Their exploration of these processes has been fuelled by scepticism about the widely discussed notion of systems' convergence. These two authors, and others who were using Schriewer's (2003) (adapted from Luhmann) notion of 'externalisation' – legitimisation of national policies through reference to external systems, rather than internal historical developments – have sought to tease out the contextual difference potentially hidden behind the nominal homogenisation, and question local policymakers' motivation behind using these strategies. Silova (2002) has noted, for example, that externalisation strategies, which might lead to an appearance of international convergence, have often been used as either a means of legitimising contested reforms internally (see also Spreen , 2004; Vavrus, 2004 for examples of some African countries) or of overtly signalling adherence to certain goals and standards internationally.

Viewed more widely, the idea of 'post-post-communism' in education and educational research aligns with the phenomenon found in international education research generally, of individual studies identifying lack of change in

actual classroom practices despite the apparent trend towards assimilation, homogenisation and globalisation-as-consensus, at least when it comes to policies (Steiner-Khamsi, 2000). This, and possibly a general interest in and concern with language in policy research of the late modern era, has prompted in the post-communist field the refocusing from the transfer of policies to the transfer of language or discourse.

The idea of the 'transfer of discourse' (Steiner-Khamsi and Quist, 2000; Steiner-Khamsi, 2000; 2002; 2004; Silova, 2004) has been influenced both by the idea of externalisation (rather than self-referentiality) in policymaking (Schriewer, 2003), and by Lynch's (1998) notion of 'flags of convenience': common buzzwords used by government and NGO actors in the developing world to attract foreign partners and international funding, that remain on the level of rhetoric and not follow through to the implementation. This movement has marked a focus on the language of policies, indicating that the apparent convergence might actually be happening on a level of rhetoric and political signalling, whilst ground level practices either remain unchanged, or experience some sort of hybridisation that is not reflected in the transition literature's attempts at modelling and homogenising the experience of different contexts. Bearing in mind Karl and Schmitter's (1991) early warning that new democracies would live in 'compressed time', without an opportunity to develop the structures and channels of representation of 'older' democracies, nor follow the processes of gradual progression, Blokker's (2005) notion of democracy as a project of the elites becomes ever more salient. It is under these conditions, I believe, that the outward symbols of democratising changes,

particularly the rhetoric and discourse of educational-ideology-redefining policies are prominent and important to analyse.

A later-era transition scholar with a particular bent towards the discourse of policies and reforms, Steiner-Khamsi has been particularly interested in the motivations and legitimation strategies of policy makers in the context of the post-communist transition context. She has sought to explore (Steiner-Khamsi and Quist, 2000; Steiner-Khamsi 2000, 2002, 2004) what hides behind the overt convergence of practices, and especially explore the policymakers' agency in this process, refusing to portray them as helpless victims of the globalisation forces, or more concretely, of their representatives in the form of advice- and money providing international agencies. Silova (2004) has similarly conceptualised this local agency as manipulating global forces for own needs and purposes (p. 76). In looking at the processes of policy transfer, Steiner-Khamsi has focused on the political symbolism and legitimation purposes of the transfer of policies (or rather, discourse or rhetoric), resting on the notions of policy transfer as the means of political legitimation introduced early on by Halpin and Troyna (1995) in their discussion of the policy transfer between the UK and US. She has also made use of Cuban's (1998) separation of policy processes into policy talk (political signals, guiding values of policy makers that might not coincide with those of practitioners), policy action (outlined in policy documents), and policy implementation, noting that the transfer that she studies often remains at the level of policy talk, used for particular financial or political purposes.

These political purposes often include, as mentioned in reference to Silova's work above, a legitimisation of contested policies and reforms through externalisation (Schriewer, 2003; Schriewer and Martinez, 2004), or reference to foreign systems and solutions, often used in a vague way, with the omission of the actual source and the way in which the policy has been developed and implemented in the 'host' context. Such vagueness is related to something that Schriewer has called 'abstract universalisms' (Schriewer, 2003: 273) that 'fan out' as internationally disseminated models interact with context-bound social meanings and educational cultures (Schriewer and Martinez, 2004: 30). I shall return to this notion of abstract universalism when I discuss the Serbian policy-makers' encounter with and meaning ascribed to such concepts as 'civic education', 'democracy', 'engagement', or 'critical thinking', and as I compare these with the place and the role of these concepts in the international policy documents whence they might have, as vague universalisms, been 'fanned out' all the way to the Serbian educational space.

Taking the idea of transfer of discourses on board, various authors have attempted to explore transitions⁶ through the exploration of the discursive space in which these have happened. With this in mind, Fimyar (2008; 2010) has looked at the policy rationalities underlying neo-liberal and post-communist technologies of (self-)governance in the transitioning Ukraine, whilst Bain (2010) has been interested in the construction of the reform discourse by 'insiders' and 'outsiders' over the twenty years of the transition process, seeking to learn about the agency of meaning making and

⁶ Mincu and Horga (2010) and Halász (2012), for example, talk about multiple transitions: one prior to EU accession, the second one in leading up to, and following, it.

appropriation. Reflecting the idea of transfer of discourse, Gardinier and Anderson Worden (2010) have noted how in the countries that are still reasonably far from the EU accession, Europe has been used as a discursive imaginary, steering the policies, but resulting either in little actual change in practice, or in hybrid layering of new practices on top of old. Other authors, like Krzyżanowski and Galasińska (2009) and Krzyżanowski and Wodak (2009) have also recently tried to develop a discourse-based approach to the post-communist transition, in which they sought to explore the discursive construction of the various transformations happening in different Central and Eastern European countries, and move away from the idea of a ‘grand narrative’ of transition and modernisation that used to be, for the greater part, applied to the (homogeneously constructed) CEE region.

These ideas, and novel ways of studying education policies, have not been confined to the post-communist educational space and are applicable to any modernising context in which elements of the global educational discourse are used for national policy construction. Outside of the post-communist space, authors like Spreen (2004) or Vavrus (2004) have tested the usefulness of the concept of transfer of discourse, as well as externalisation as legitimation, in the contexts of South Africa and Tanzania, respectively, whilst Vavrus and Seghers (2010) have looked at the implications of Tanzania’s construction of the discourse of partnership in education. McCormick (2012), meanwhile, has explored the discourse of quality in educational policies of Laos and Cambodia. Importantly, the last several years have also seen the context of post-communist transition (albeit not exclusively in the field of education) solicit

attention from critical discourse authors, such as Fairclough (2006; 2007), who has sought to explore the discursive construction of the social change that is transition, arguing that the strategies of transition have a very discursive character and draw on a range of discourses and legitimising arguments.

Lest it be assumed that I here completely reject the traditional and embrace the post-modern and post-structuralist approaches to transition, I do not believe the 'post'-oriented scholars' criticism of established transition models is entirely justified, since many authors, Birzea and Phillips included, have advised that it was not necessarily neo-liberal democracy that post-communist countries were transitioning to. In this sense, I do not believe it necessary to discard the notion of 'transition' altogether, as long as it is not automatically assumed to mean 'transition to democracy'. That is why I have been more prone to see these changes in education as happening in the era of 'late modernity', rather than a post-modern era. The concepts of transition and modernisation still hold relevance, but I also believe that we as authors researching these phenomena do need to question them, rather than simply investigate with what success they have been achieved.

A tendency towards the latter is perhaps what explains the paucity of models developed in the last several years, namely after the accession of a number of CEE countries, or even studies of 'late' transitioners such as Serbia. It would seem that entering the EU has been sufficient proof for many of scholars in the field that transition was successful, that there is not much left to investigate in those countries since they have all apparently converged to a Western-style

democracy, and that those countries who have set upon the course of democratisation with some delay (Serbia is one example) would eventually follow there in similar steps. With this in mind, I am hoping to add a new case, and a perhaps new point of view to the existing scholarship, focusing on the case of a 'late transitioner'. Apart from a contextual contribution, I hope to extend the conceptual analysis in recent trends in the post-communist transition scholarship.

Whilst Steiner-Khamsi and other authors working in a similar vein are correct to insist on focusing on local agency that often gets lost in analyses of what is perceived as imposition of standards and ideologies of the West onto the democratising/globalising world, pointing out that adopters may have their own reasons and motives for engaging in these transactions, what I found missing from her and similarly inclined analyses was a conceptualisation of this agency. Agency is often either hypothesised as political signalling or the legitimisation strategy of externalisation, but without a more detailed examination of the actors' motives, with the analysis ending still on hypothetical terms. Even when authors like Steiner-Khamsi (2012) conceptualise motivation by noting that adopters use desirable discourses (of 'standards' or 'international education', for example) to attract funding, even this tend to make decision-making seem unidirectional and coercive.

Where I extend the above framework, is in bringing the personal narratives of key policy actors, and examining their discursive construction of policy development. In this way, I relate the origin of certain concepts to these actors'

background, relationships, and motivation. In this way, I attempt to further the theorisation of policymakers' agency, and create a richer background for policies – especially those treated as 'symbolic' – beyond assuming the 'flags of convenience' motivation, or a haphazard copy paste system in the rush to develop an internationally desirable and approved course for the reform. To achieve such conceptual extension, I have borrowed from policy sociology, particularly its strand that views policy as discourse. I have combined the view of policy as discourse with Bourdieu's notion of capital, conceptualising of policymakers' use and construction of 'desirable' concepts as demonstration of valuable capital. Subsequently, I have attempted an exploration of the accumulation of this capital and the power position in both the national and global policy field accorded to them through the command of it. The remainder of the chapter is dedicated to the outlining of this theoretical and conceptual framework, which will provide the rationale for the methodology that I adopted in the exploration of the Serbian civic education policy formation.

Discursive transition: policy as discourse

The discursive and poststructuralist turn in transition studies was by no means an accident. It has coincided, in fact, with critical trends in comparative and international education (see, for example, Apple, 1990; 1997; Taylor *et al*, 1997; Henry *et al*, 2001; Crossley and Watson, 2003; Singh *et al*, 2005; Rizvi and Lingard, 2010; Lingard, 2014b;c), and a linguistic turn in (educational) policy

studies. The past couple of decades have seen the rise of the critical approach to studying educational policy and reform, both in Western and in 'democratising' contexts, often drawing on insights from the language and rhetoric of policies. The criticism has largely been brought on by the ever-evolving marketisation of education and by what authors have seen as subjugation of educational aims to the neoliberal economic ideology. It contains scepticism towards the concepts of modernisation and the following of the Western (neo-liberal) ideal, predicted to lead to the homogenisation of educational and economic systems around the globe. Authors working in the critical education policy research, such as Taylor (2001a; 2001b; 2004), have more overtly pointed out the relevance of language and rhetoric in the ideological construction of the policy-making of the 'new age', used by Taylor (2004) to refer to late modernity and late capitalism (p. 433). Subsequently, there has been a rise in the utilisation of critical discourse analysis to unpack the 'taken-for-grantedness' of policies, focusing in particular on sources and distribution of power (see Luke, 1995; Henry *et al.*, 2001). Such analyses have, with various degrees of explicitness, employed the view of policy as discourse.

In recent scholarship, there has been a general trend towards moving away from the realist, rational approaches to policy analysis, whereby policies are treated either as a representation of (educational) reality, of existing problems and offered solutions, or a product of individual and group politics, conflicts and consensus. The linguistic turn is related to the theorisation of policies as discourses, proposed by Ball in the early 1990s (see Ball, 1993). This theorisation rests on an idea that policy texts do not merely represent social

reality, but constitute it, by constructing, rather than depicting, problems and solutions, prescribing roles and identities, and allocating desired values and ways of being. As such, policies are not simply prescriptive devices, advising action to be implemented by practitioners, but rhetorical and ideological devices, serving to normalise ideologies. It is in this manner that I have approached and analysed the Serbian civic education policy. In the following sections, I further explain my conceptualisation of educational policy and reform, which draws on the view of policy-as-discourse, and I discuss the notions of discourse, capital, ideology, and power, that further substantiate my version of this conceptualisation.

'Policy' and 'reform', discursively constructed

In conceptualising 'educational reform', of which this specific policy is a part, I initially borrowed from Karsten and Majoor (1994), who defined reforms as broad educational changes happening as a result of the need to legitimise the new governance and respond to wider changes happening nationally, regionally and globally. In this instance, with the reform immediately following a major ideological shift, my focus was on seeing the reforms not only as designed to legitimise those newly in power (Weiler, 1994, quoted in Gaziel, 2010: 50), but crucially as designed to construct a new ideology, promoted by those newly in power. Thus Serbia's education reform that was initiated by the introduction of civic (and religious) education became in my view a project, an ideological-

discursive project (Fairclough and Wodak, 1997), aimed at constructing a 'new Serbia'.

I have then treated the introduction of the civic education policy as a symbolic launch of this ideological-discursive project that was the planned comprehensive reform. The policy was a construction of discourse which introduced new ideological, normative prescriptions for the design of the new, post-2000 Serbian society, and its ideal citizen. Although I have kept in mind that in the widest possible sense, 'policy' could be defined as an intended course of action, or the statement of goals, designed to direct and guide action (Parsons, 1996), I have been more concerned with its function as performing an 'authoritative allocation of values' (Ball, 1990, quoted in Levinson and Sutton, 2001: 5; Gale, 2003), and a way for actors who are accorded authority to decide on public issues, to both construct something as a problem and offer a solution to it (Colebatch, 2002). I have also used Colebatch's (*ibid.*) note that policies tend to be constructed around a policy/solution juxtaposition as a way of exploring the policymakers' discursive strategies in constructing something as a problem, to which the proposed solution in the form of civic education seemed inevitable. It is an approach similarly used by Bacchi (1999; 2012), referred to as WPR approach (Bacchi, 2012: 4), or 'what is the problem represented to be?' With this approach, Bacchi, using Foucauldian notions of the problematisation of the common-sensical so it can lead to governing strategies, treats policy texts, and policy proposals as the way to offer solution to a problem, that she then 'traces back'.

My focus in this research project has been on the actors who had the authority to construct the policy discourse, and construct the problems and solutions for the future Serbian society, but also on those actors who might have challenged such construction and offered a different one. I looked at the various policy actors' relationship and action in what constituted the social practices of the policy event – practices such as initiation, development, discussion, advertising, publication. My initial curiosity in the matter of the Serbian civic education policy formation was not so much provoked by an interest in bureaucratic processes and political rationality, which, according to Parsons (1996) are what, in the English language at least separates 'policy' from 'politics' – the separation is not as clear in other languages, including Serbian. My interest lay specifically in this overlap between 'policy' and 'politics', in the notions of haphazard-ry, careerism (Halpin and Troyna, 1995) and political symbolism, in the idea of a policy as political legitimation of a ruling elite (Espinoza, 2010). Together with the notions of haphazardry and adhocery, I have also kept an awareness of the pluralist and rationalist notions of the variety and multitude of actors, agendas (Keating, 2008), and the necessary processes of negotiation, consensus, and compromise that are a part of the policymaking event (Ozga and McNay, 1985, Hargreaves, 1985, Taylor *et al*, 1997).

Considered within the field of early post-communist transition, particularly the 'first wave' of the literature discussed above, all these questions revolving around political exchange and adhocery became very pertinent. However, through removing the layers of rationalist concern with pluralism, conflict, and consensus, my initial policy formation question of 'what, why, who' moved

towards how the background circumstances to the policy created such conditions in which a certain policy became logical, imperative, even inevitable (Dotty, 1993, quoted in Holland, 2013: 3). In asking this question, I was fully subscribing to the policy-as-discourse paradigm. And before carrying on with the operationalisation of this conceptualisation, I will clarify the meaning and use of 'discourse' in this thesis.

The meaning and use of 'discourse'

Any utilisation of the concept of discourse necessarily draws on Foucault's various ways of theorising what discourse is and what it means to exist in social reality that is discursively constructed. I, too, rely, on some of his key propositions. These include an understanding that discourses are historically developed, and that they provide a modality of existence that enables a certain position, a certain subjectivity to the subject. Other central tenets of Foucault's conceptualisation of discourse include the inextricability of relations between knowledge and power, and the view of power as a fluid and productive force – productive in that it produces us as objects, but also as subjects as we self-govern through a historically produced system of 'normality', internalised through discourses that we live, that construct us even as we construct and perpetuate them (Foucault, 1972; 2002). Although my analysis of policy-as-discourse is not a Foucauldian one in that I am not tracing a historical

development of discourse, but examining it synchronically,⁷ it is loosely based around his key concepts, as they influenced all subsequent conceptualisations of discourse, as used by critical discourse analysts, particularly Fairclough, in whose steps I follow.

Following Fairclough's tradition of critical discourse analysis (1985; 2003), I have used the notion of discourse throughout this thesis to denote not only language-in-use, but the entire semiotic aspect of social reality – not merely representative of the reality, but, crucially, constitutive of it. Discourses construct reality even as they describe it. Discourses that we 'use' to describe our experiences also 'speak' us into existence, as we accept and perpetuate identities, roles, relationships, or values contained in them. Discourse is seen as being in a constant dialectic relationship with non-discursive, material social practices (actions, interactions, relationships) (Fairclough and Wodak, 1997), and so at once constitutive of them (Taylor, 2001a) and their product, a formation. The two are then seen as different, but not discrete (Fairclough, 2009).

Although Fairclough concedes that 'semiotic' also incorporates signs and meanings that are not strictly linguistic (such as images or body language), his analyses almost exclusively revolve around the agents' use of language, and it is the approach to an analysis of discourse that I have also adopted here. Using Halliday's idea of the multifunctionality of language, where language can simultaneously perform the functions of expressing ideas, performing actions,

⁷ For examples of authors who apply Foucault's methods of archaeology and genealogy to the study of policy discourses, see Gale, 2001; 2003, Olssen *et al* 2004; Fimyar, 2008; 2010.

as well as purely textual functions, leads Fairclough (1985; 1997; 2009) to imagine discourse as both representative and performative, constructed and constructing, of the social reality. This perspective enables him to unpack the meanings of the participants in the discourse, meanings which lie below the superficial description of the reality in text, and it also enables the analysis of the impact that texts can have on constructing the reality.

Through analysing texts, Fairclough (*ibid.*) suggests that it is possible to learn about the order of discourse – the semiotic/discursive aspect of the network of social practices. Orders of discourse comprise the network of various ways of being (styles), (inter)acting (genres) and representing the world (discourses). Reisigl and Wodak (2009) further point out that these networks of practices are attached to certain social fields, so there are aspects of social action found attached to the fields of politics economy, education, or art, for example (p. 90). Such reference to fields of social action provides a useful parallel to Bourdieu's (1977; 1997) theory that conceptualises fields as spaces for actors to accumulate and exchange their capital to gain symbolic, and material, power. I will elaborate on my combination of discourse theory and Bourdieu's social theory soon, but for now I want to highlight that I am keeping to the notion of 'field' to delimit the space of the network of social practices that all have their discursive side, thus forming, for example, an educational discourse.

I use a distinction between Discourse and discourse, with the former designating Fairclough's discourse as *singulare tantum* – a semiotic aspect of the social reality – and the latter as different aspects of Discourse attached to

fields of social action, spaces of networked social practices. Gee (2011) makes a similar distinction, although in his case it is between Discourse as an abstract noun, and discourses as language-in-use, although not necessarily seen as attached to certain fields. It is mostly in the latter sense, as the semiotic aspect of social action and social practices related to certain fields, that I use the term 'discourse' in the rest of the text. In this sense, I speak of educational, political, or economic discourses (plural), or 'local' and 'global' discourses, imagining them as attached to narrower or wider fields of social interaction, and smaller or larger networks of social practices. This also enables a distinction between, for example, *educational* discourse, in which teaching, learning, classroom organization, or assessment are some of the networked social practices. On the other hand, although with certain overlaps, but enough of separation to enable the study of an *educational* discourse as constructed in the policy field, there is a *policy* discourse with the earlier mentioned practices of discussion, negotiation, legislation, publication, and advertising/publicising, as constitutive social practices.

I conceptualise such discursive practices as drawing on a set of shared meanings, meanings that are not entirely fixed – whilst a 'core', 'invariant' (Grenfell, 2011b) shared meaning is necessary for some form of communication and social co-operation to continue, a degree of negotiation is always present. This negotiation of meaning allows for fluidity and change. The fixation of meaning is a work of power and of discourse – through the work of socially situated and contextualised language that is discourse, authority is imposed on certain meanings at the exclusion of others (Eick, 2001). This leads to the

relative dominance of one meaning over others (Verschueren, 2012) and is what is often referred to as normalisation. Such dominance should not, however, be confused with a non-permutable fixation of meaning. The meanings are, as mentioned above, constantly negotiated, and that is something close to Eagleton's (1991) idea of practical v theoretical ideology, where the latter constantly needs to be negotiated through the former, making ideologies flexible and open to change (Djerasimovic, 2014).

Discourses and ideologies; ideological-discursive resources and discursive capital

Fairclough (2009) argues that it is the goal of critical discourse analysis to unveil that which is in every society obscured by 'common sense' which prevents ideologies from being seen for what they are. Although I was largely basing my approach on this view, my approach nevertheless marked a slight departure from it on a couple of issues. Similarly to Hammersley (1997), I was uncomfortable with the 'messianic' character of the critical discourse analyst thus implied. Although it is difficult to argue with the call for emancipation of those dominated by the discursive constructs of, for example, gender or race, critical discourse analysts often assume the responsibility of defining a social ill, with the implication that they hold the key to its resolution. Such an approach then tends to eventuate in an analysis that reveals exactly what the researcher set out to find. My approach sprang from a somewhat different conceptualisation of 'ideology', which involved moving away from its largely

pejorative meaning, and closer towards Fairclough's use of discourse as countable – meaning simply different representations of reality.

So another departure from Fairclough's ideas is in his use of 'ideology' with invariably negative connotations. Both Fairclough and Wodak speak of ideology in distinctly negative terms, proposing that it always seeks to perpetuate unequal relations in society. However, I believe the existence of various ideologies throughout history, which were based on the idea of equality for all, to contradict this. For this reason, I prefer van Dijk's (1997) definition, which describes ideology as shared belief or knowledge, socially bound and drawn on, as well as built, in individual and group engagements with, and constructions of, discourse. His theory stresses that ideologies are created, expressed, externalised, objectified, and perpetuated through discourse.

Thus, rather than a 'narrow', politically-charged meaning of the word that is a part of a neo-Marxist criticism, used to denote an oppressive philosophy held by those in power and designed to keep them in power, what I use is what Eagleton (1991) would call a 'broader', more general definition of ideology, similar to a 'world view'. I see ideologies as discursively constructed systems of ideas about the world, something that is not simply 'done' to people who are repressed by them, but also something that people do, knowledge, meanings, and beliefs that people construct, adopt, share, and that enable them to build alliances and 'classes'. Such understanding of ideology coincides with a Foucauldian view of power as a productive, and not simply a repressive force, as we produce our identities and subjectivities by drawing on ideologies. This

conceptualisation of ideology also corresponds with my attempt to conceptualise one's agency within Discourse. Agency is achieved through accumulation and use of what I call ideological-discursive resources, which, when articulated in social interaction in the field, and considered as valuable, function as 'capital'.

Marrying Bourdieu's social theory to the Foucauldian notion of discourse is not often encountered in studies of educational change. More generally, Fairclough and Wodak have mentioned Bourdieu's notion of field when talking about the limits of networked social-discursive practices, and Fairclough (2013) recently defined discourse as 'language associated with a particular social field of practice' (p. 4). Gale (2003) used the combination of the two in his exploration of Foucault- based production (archaeology and genealogy) of Australia's higher education policy whilst using the notions of policy field containing actions and interactions of actors, as well as actors' capital. As I mentioned earlier, it is precisely the idea of capital that enabled me to conceptualise policy actors' agency – something that I found missing both in the strands of policy sociology that I follow, and in the post-communist transition studies that allow for the local policymakers' agency, but, in my view, insufficiently operationalise it in empirical research.

The integration of elements of Bourdieu's social theory with discourse theory was useful in providing a richer theorisation both on macro levels of the discursive nature of the social reality and the access to this reality through the study of its discursive construction, as well as on meso and micro levels of

group and individual interaction and motivation. For example, although Fairclough's 'orders of discourse' are defined in reference to network of practices, this is in analysis often reflected in acknowledgement of hybrid genres or styles, whilst the agents whose genres and styles are discussed, are often left out. Although I do not agree with the entirety of Bourdieu's propositions, for example, that all types of capital have their root in economic capital and are in the last instance reducible to it (Bourdieu, 1997; 2010), I use the explanatory potential of his ideas for studying sociological dynamics and dynamism of the field, something that a purely Foucauldian analysis might lack. Furthermore, this integrative approach allows for reflecting on, and factoring in, both situatedness and embeddedness of the agents (including the researcher) in the discourse, and their transcending of it. In adopting it, I have attempted to reconcile the ontological and epistemological power of the discursive construction of reality with the praxeological power of Bourdieuan social theory.

Bourdieu (1991; 1997; 2010) sees social reality through a set of conceptual tools that enable the dialectic of the subjective and objective, agency and structure. Subjective are the dispositions to act, think, or value, contained in the person's 'habitus'. Habitus is not static, but changeable, as every person is continuously learning and internalising the objective reality around them, thus modifying and adapting their habitus. Objective reality consists of structures (which are again changeable), it is a configuration of forces (Lingard *et al*, 2005), a space in which individuals and groups are variously positioned, in which there are certain rules and norms: the 'field' is portrayed as objective.

The relationship between field and habitus reflects Bourdieu's conceptualisation of culture as both structuring structure, reflecting his interest in its functional properties, and as structured structure, which reflects his interest in its symbolic properties.

In his view of practice, the external and internal are in perpetual dynamic, dialectical relationship, and the practice (in the field) tends to (re)produce the structure of which it is a product (Grenfell, 2011a). Thus habitus is created by internalisation of the position, relationships and practice in the field, but field is created by positions and relationships, which are a 'product' of habitus. In this way, in the field of policy-making, actors and groups are at the same time likely to act in a certain way, form certain alliances, support particular ideologies – both unconsciously, through their dispositions, and consciously, when they become aware of the strategic actions which can lead to the increase of their capital. They are able to do this because of the accumulated history of previous experiences now contained in their habitus, but they are also able to act upon the field and in effect change their habitus, not least by gaining or losing capital.

Such dialectic can be related to the cyclical and interweaving nature of producing Discourse, and being produced by Discourse, at the same time. Authors like Luke (1995), who sees Discourse as forming subjectivities, and Urban (2010) who treats discursive strategies of the Russian political elite as coming from group habituses, have already explored the connection between Discourse, subjectivities, and habitus. On the other hand, Blommaert (2005), although speaking from a Foucauldian perspective, talks about 'creativity',

which can help subvert the hegemony of discursive structures from the inside. One's identity, one's subjectivity is, according to him, related to Bourdieu's habitus, and I further extend this parallel by relating to capital what he calls 'voice'. He suggests that the '[...] capacity to produce "understandable" utterances is a capacity to speak from "within" an archive and in reference to a particular order of indexality related to that archive.' [It is a...] 'capacity to produce meanings that fit a particular archive.' (p. 103). Such creativity is relatable to the idea of cultural capital (linguistic one aspect of it), and possession of potential for agency and better positioning in the field in relation to that field's discourse, and the ideological-discursive resources that one possesses and is able to employ as capital. As a way of marrying ideas of archive (from within the discourse tradition) and habitus (from within the Bourdieuan tradition), I use the notions of 'discursive resources' and 'discursive capital'. An individual's discursive capital is evident in their use of ideological-discursive resources accumulated through life experiences of gaining and sharing cultural and social capital, and these resources come from a discursively constructed and shared, available ideologies.

A prevalent use of certain ideological-discursive propositions (for example, the value and importance of 'critical thinking' or the 'participating citizen'), even to a degree where they have been turned by the workings of discourse into 'obvious truths', does not necessarily have to equate to the internalisation of ideologies related to them by all social actors who engage with them in various fields. I have thus made a semantic and methodological separation of 'Discourse' from 'ideology', by using the former concept to denote the semiotic

aspect of social reality, and the latter to stand for the theory and beliefs of how a social reality should be organised, which are given expression, constructed, reconstructed, shared and perpetuated through Discourse. It is a distinction that discourse theorists sometimes do not make, as Fairclough, for example, tends to use 'discourse' to denote both the representation of the social world, and as an abstract noun, to mark the semiotic-linguistic aspect of it.

Although such separation of concepts is to a degree artificial – the two are not discrete – I felt that this would be useful to do for two reasons. A practical reason is that this avoids confusion produced through frequent use of 'discourse' to mean different things. More importantly, however, it allows us to think of the intellectual and normative representation of the social reality on the one hand, and the social action in this reality on another as not fully confluent, meaning that a social action involving a use of certain ideological-discursive resources by a social actor, does not necessarily lead to a conclusion that this actor has internalised the ideology as their truth (Djerasimovic, 2014). Agency that enables a selective internalisation of ideologies and negotiation of meanings, and the use of ideological-discursive resources without accepting them as truth, is an element often missing from a critical, structuralist treatment of ideas about discourse, and ideology imposition and dominance, and it is one found in the notion of capital in the case of this thesis.

Actors accumulate and use their economic, social, and cultural-linguistic (what I have conceptualised as discursive) capital, as they meet and interact in various social fields. Not everything will be valued as capital in all fields. Thus,

as Steiner-Khamsi (2014) and Halász (2012) have noted, there is a phenomenon of 'doublespeak' engaged in by post-communist policymakers: the difference in 'policyspeaks' constructed, for example, for the national, and those constructed for international, audience. Steiner-Khamsi (2014) even mentions a recent study of 'triplespeak' (in the local, regional, and the global field) as having incredible potential in discussing the national policymakers' construction of the post-communist space when engaging with different audiences. My work taps into this potential, as I explore the multi-field construction of the civic education policy discourse, where different discursive resources are resorted to by different actors in relation to how much of a capital they represented and how valuable they were in securing of different power positions in different fields.

Thus, since actors are able to recognise something as capital, I conceptualise their agency as coming from this recognition. Their power is rooted in the awareness of what counts as capital in a certain field, and it is what is related to their likelihood of internalising the ideology on which they draw in discursively constructing their social action. The accumulation of capital enables better positioning in the field, which can be related to Wodak and Meyer's (2009b) ideas of power within discourse. There is also what Wodak and Meyer (*ibid.*) call power over discourse, power that positions certain actors and groups in such a way that allows them to define the social reality, and have what is essentially an ideology be accepted as common sense, and 'misrecognised' (Bourdieu, 1991) as legitimate, as truth (Grenfell and James, 1998), this secured through a hegemonic compliance. However, even when some groups manage to

exert what Bourdieu (1991; 1997; 2010) refers to as 'symbolic power', it does not mean that those with power over discourse, have *all* of the power over everyone else.

Power is fluid and it moves from actor to actor, and from field to field, it is a capacity, not a state. It is dispositional as well as relational, it is a power *to*, rather than simply power *over*. This is a power to assign values and identities, and offer ideology as truth, securing the willing compliance to it (Lukes, 2005), but also a power to resist, negotiate, or even strategically utilise. Bourdieu's (1977; 1991) notions of *connaissance*, *reconnaissance*, *méconnaissance* can be used here to explain the capacity for agency in (inter)actions of social actors. *Connaissance* is loosely translated as know-how, *reconnaissance* a recognition of the norms, and ability to use this to one's advantage but without internalising, and *méconnaissance* a misrecognition of symbolic power and violence for legitimate authority, and thus acceptance of norms as unquestionable truth. It is in *reconnaissance* that I find the possibility for conscious action, as actors strategically seek to use the capital the value of which they recognise can better their position in a certain field. In the meantime, *méconnaissance*, having classifications and meanings accepted as legitimate, accepting others' naming and defining of the social reality (Swartz, 2010), is comparable to Foucauldian notions of power of discourse, which limits the possibilities for what is thinkable and unthinkable, and regulates identities and actions that are unwittingly internalised (Usher and Edwards, 1994). So constructed a social reality is articulated in discourses, and it is through critical discourse analysis that it can be revealed as a social

construction. Thus the dispositional and relational notion of power, power as capacity (Lukes, 2005) becomes related to the idea of resisting ideology and modifying discourse; it becomes transgressive in that it can upset the established 'order'. The more hybridity there is in the discursive practices, the further from the ideological ideal one is, and further from allowing for the ideological hegemony. In terms of policy as a discursive social practice (or a social event consisting of various practices, as mentioned before), it then becomes understandable why some ideologies will facilitate policies that 'fit in' the ideal that they embody, and constrain those that do not (Howarth and Griggs, 2012), allowing for some voices to be heard over others.

Finally, I understand Bourdieu's fields to be attached to certain networked social practices (creating, for example, a political field, an educational field, or a policy field as a part of it) and this view enables me to work around the notion of a hierarchy of fields with regard to geographic scale – local, national, regional, global. Using Bourdieu's concepts of fields and power in conceptualising global policy-making, Lingard *et al* (2005) note how the globalising effects and expanding of the fields can lead to 'cross-field effects' (*ibid.*), to the production of an educational policy through interaction between fields of education, politics, media, or economy. These 'crossfield effects' can also be likened to Fairclough's (2006; 2009) recontextualisation of discourses (e.g. from an economic or political to an educational field) traced in the 'interdiscursive hybridity' of the text. Interdiscursive hybridity was of particular importance to me also because I sought traces of it as a demonstration that ideologies constructed in the civic education policy discourse appeared in other

discourses as well, indicating their presence in all social fields, and thus an all-encompassing nature of the ideological project of transforming Serbia.

In addition to using the idea of cross-field recontextualisation of discourses to explore the relation of the (civic) education policy discourse to other fields and discourses, I also found it helpful in dealing with some concepts from the literature on globalisation of educational policy. These include hybridity between the global and local (Crossley and Watson, 2003), glocalisation (Jahng, 2011), colonisation and appropriation (Fairclough, 1992) of 'travelling' (Edwards and Nicoll, 2001; Arnott and Ozga, 2010) discourses, or sometimes simply the transfer (Steiner-Khamsi 1998; 2004b; 2008; Silova, 2009; Silova and Steiner-Khamsi; 2008b) of, discourse. Inevitably then, in the late modern era, the field of policy formation will be related to other fields, both horizontally – to economic, political, media – as well as vertically, eventuating in difference (although overlapping) between local/national/regional/global policy fields.

Policy-as-discourse revisited

Having explained my use of the key notions of discourse, ideology, and capital in this thesis, I return to outlining how a policy, the Serbian civic education policy, was conceptualised and approached in this thesis. As mentioned earlier, one of the earliest and most engaged theorisations of policy-as-discourse was offered by Ball (1993; 1994b) who pointed out that the 'pluralist' nature of the policy text production was shaped by the discourse which the policy produces,

and of which it is a product. Drawing on Foucault, he asserted then that policy, when seen as discourse, established the time, place, subject matter of the context, and the rules of the game: who can speak, when, where, about what and with what authority. Policies determine our possibilities for thinking, and for responding, and allow only certain voices to be heard (Ball, 1993: 14-15). Similarly to this view of policy as discourse, Colebatch (2002) speaks of policies as offering a particular world view, in which attention is drawn to certain issues and away from others, action is framed, rules of the game established, problem constituted and a solution for it offered.

Although Ball has also developed the idea of a 'policy cycle' (see Bowe and Ball, with Gold, 1992), whereby the policy discourse is studied both in its conception/construction by the elites who introduce the policy, but also in the reconstruction by the practitioners and other interest groups who enact it and interact with it, I kept only to the formation stage. I decided to work only within what I have termed above the 'policy field' and the corresponding 'policy discourse' aspect of the overall educational discourse in Serbia. I chose to focus on the source of the policy and the context and process of its production, with a hope that these would reveal more about its connection to national and global imperatives as well as whose interest it was made to serve (Ozga, 2000). My research was thus designed to explore the 'authoritative meaning' (Levinson and Sutton, 2001) of policymakers, as they defined goals, priorities, and procedures, and performed the allocation of roles, identities and values.

This interest in elites' side of meaning- and decision-making came from studying policy as a part of the wider project ('discursive event') of the elites: the educational reform in a context of recent ideological and political change. So although in developing my approach I accepted many of Ball's conceptual propositions regarding policy as text and as discourse, or the manifold ways in which to view and interpret informants' narratives, I did not adhere to his 'policy cycle' model. This was due to the fact that the questions I was asking, and the status that 'policy' had in my research, rendered policy implementation stage (discourse construction in the classroom field) less important. With the central questions of my thesis revolving around the ideological construction of the policy discourse by the elites, school-based construction of the educational discourse was in this instance less significant than the questions of how, by whom and why, certain ideologies, intended to guide practice and future policies, were constructed and promoted, whilst others were negated and constricted, at the beginning of the construction of the ideological-discursive project of building a new Serbia.

In this thesis then, I have studied what I term a 'discursive event of the policy formation'. 'Event' is here understood as a Bourdieuan 'action in the field' (Bourdieu, 1997; 2010), with the 'discursive event' (Luke, 1996; van Dijk, 1997) denoting individual or multiple instances of a social act which has a discursive side. The social practices which comprise the policy formation event at the centre of this thesis, have had their discursive side documented in texts, and also constructed in interviews. What is referred to as 'texts' are, similarly to how Fairclough (2003) uses the term, artefacts and representations of these

discursive events. Discursive events that I have analysed do have their material side – this includes the distribution and use of economic and other resources, the physical organisation of space and interaction, and myriad others. However, they are only accessible to me through their discursive counterpart, documented in texts to which I come as a ‘reader’, and the text the initial construction of which I was a part (interviews). This was why I applied discourse analysis not only to policy documents, but also to interviews, as I believed that discourse thus constructed held much merit when analysed alongside texts constructed at the time of the policy formation. I reasoned that this would add to the multiplicity and multifaceted-ness of knowledge, produced both with my engagement with documents, and on the interview site as well.

I began my research inclined to treat this particular policy as ‘symbolic’, relying on Rizvi and Lingard’s (2010: 9) definition of such policies as unsubstantiated, due to their coming about because of political pressures (the introduction of RE in this case). I saw such conceptualisation of ‘symbolic’ policies, in which linguistic and rhetorical elements are particularly prominent, and the operationalisation and implementation elements vague, as closely related to Steiner-Khamsi and Silova’s ideas about transfer and import of discourses, metaphors, and rhetoric in CEE policymaking, usually for political and economic reasons. However, such conceptualisation of the Serbian CE policy, similarly to what I expressed with respect to the notion of the transfer of discourse, seemed to deal too much with the surface issues, treating discourse as tactically used language or a rhetorical exercise.

In my view, treating policy as discourse, as a construction of reality, does not really allow for such superficiality, or for treating any policy as an irrelevant, off-handed, 'symbolic' (in the everyday sense of the word), quick-fix solution. CE policy did in fact introduce new ideological elements into the Serbian field of education. The classroom organisation, relationships between teachers and students, statements such as 'it is inevitable for Serbia to return to Europe', or 'it is important that we instil in our students the skill of critical thinking', everything – from organisation of space to a morphological and syntactic construction of statement treated as materialisation of discourse, is relevant, as it constructs the social reality (Fairclough, 2013). Through distribution, use, and internalisation of statements provided in the examples above, it is ensured that this reality (for the 'users' of discourse) is constituted as one in which it is 'normal' for Serbia to 'return' to Europe or for critical thinking skills to be fostered in the classroom. What I have tried to do was deconstruct this discourse, and relate such statements to certain ideologies that were being propagated through it.

The problem that I encountered, and tried to resolve through incorporation of elements of Bourdieu's social theory, was conceptualising and theorising agency 'within' discourse, or what Blommaert (2005) calls 'creativity' with discourse. In her overview of the implications of conceptualising policy as discourse, Bacchi (2000) points out that this view allows for little room to see actors as policy advisors, advocates or sceptics, as no one stands outside of discourse, and agents are recognised as either having the power to accord

positions and identities within discourse that are favourable to them, or as challengers to these discourses, unhappy with their own positions and identities. In addition to this, the non-innocence, as she calls it, of problem- and solution-framing in the policy development has to be recognised from the very start (p. 50). Similarly to Silova's and Steiner-Khamsi's ideas, Bacchi also notes the possibility of 'active marshalling of discourses for political purposes'. However despite conceding that agents are not merely users of discourse(s), but are also construed by them, she stops short of immersing herself fully into the inter-constructivism of this dialectic.

In fact, in many of the policy studies with a discourse approach (particularly those that use Fairclough's framework), as well as in post-modernist approaches to transition in which the notion of transfer-of-discourse figures prominently, I have found the idea of actors' agency insufficiently theorised, despite Foucault's never actually denying the potential of individuals to resist discourse that 'speaks' them. Howarth (2013), in his overview of post-structuralist and post-modernist accounts of structure and agency, mentions that poststructuralists are often charged with not being able to account for agency of social actors, and that Foucault-based approaches do allow for agency, but often without the agents' awareness of this agency. Even in critical (rather than poststructuralist) discourse analyses, the approach that I have taken, certain trends and themes (such as 'globalisation') tend to be identified as dominant in documents, policies, eras, but it is never clear whence they come and by whom they are carried.

In transition studies, Steiner-Khamsi, as noted earlier, brings the agency of policy borrowers and reforming governments into the discussion of post-socialist policy-making, but not a lot of studies conducted in this tradition develop this notion of agency, theoretically or empirically, at least not much further beyond conceptualising the collective actor ('government', 'policymakers', etc.) as using policies for political or financial gain. This idea of 'exchange' (of symbolic policy for political or economic benefit) in a national or an international policy field (depending on whether the partner in this exchange were national or international actors), attracted me to Bourdieu's notion of capital, particularly 'linguistic capital' (Bourdieu, 1991), which I was able to relate to discourse. With this, a connection between two theoretical traditions had been established, and I pursued this connection further in an attempt to create a framework which would allow for the analysis and theorisation of both the discursive properties and purposes of a policy, but also the agency of those who operated with(in) this policy discourse.

The idea that agents can use ideological-discursive formations, linguistic clusters which are an articulation of their capital (e.g. 'Serbia is dedicated to the course of democratic development') creatively and for certain purposes, opened up a possibility of intentionality and motivation. I have tried to conceptualise this agency as agents' use of discursive capital, demonstrated in their construction of the policy discourse, and used to better position themselves in the relevant fields (educational, political, national, global). Connecting this idea with my conceptualisation of ideology, means that such formations can be used as a demonstration of capital, but without assuming

that agents necessarily internalise them, allowing us to at least speculate about different degrees of internationalisation.

With this theoretical framework, I aim here to carve out a conceptual space for transcending the constricting and mystifying notions of discourse and ideology, and through combining discourse theory with Bourdieu's conceptual tools, attempt to create analytical and theoretical conditions for the somewhat more dynamic relationships in the policy-making field, and the power attached to certain field positions and roles. Bourdieu points out that one form of power is a power to 'name' or define the world (Bourdieu, 1991), and this naming of the world is a social, discursive construction, which is where critical discourse analysis approach, albeit based on Foucault, can be usefully employed in taking apart and understanding this construction. This has traditionally been the prerogative of critical discourse analysts, who seek to divest of power those who construct the reality, by revealing that the reality is but a construction.

Although I agree with the proposition that a policy construction represents an exercise of power over both the material and discursive aspects of the social reality, my aim was not to affect power relations by revealing such construction. I was more interested in getting at the ideological construction of the Serbian civic education policy and reform discourse, and in relating it to the interactions and power positions of individual and group agents involved in this construction, dependent on their capital. So in this case, I was interested in power that comes from reconnaissance. Also, looking at the policy discourse itself as a demonstration of the national capital (Ozga and Lingard, 2004) of

Serbia's then policymakers, moved me away from simply viewing them as being granted the power to define the social reality through the policy discourse construction, but also see them as being engaged in a bid to gain prominence and other kinds of capital in a much wider field of global capital distribution.

What determines the value of discursive capital in a certain field is a 'desirable' ideology, and that is why it was important to identify in this thesis the desirable ideology constructed by the policy and reform discourse, and connect its presence in this discourse to certain actors, who would have formed alliances on the basis of the shared capital and shared ideology, at the same time excluding those who did not command the desirable capital. I imagined the social aspect of ideologies as allowing for alliances to be created around certain ideologies, perpetuated through the socially-shared ideological-discursive resources. The power of these alliances in fields of social practices, and their access to public spaces could then have led to their particular ideology to be discursively constructed as the natural, as reality, as common sense (Verschueren, 2012). If at any time an ideology asserted such common-sense dominance in the public space, it would have been a hegemonic dominance. But going back to the degree of negotiation and change, and the freedom that agents can achieve in the construction and perpetuation of this ideology, it can be assumed that different actors would have, depending on their possession of capital, internalised the ideology only to a certain degree, modifying it in the process. In this way, more generally, I believed the processes of educational transformations that happen as a result of seemingly identical policies

transferred to (or imposed to, depending on one's point of view) CEE countries, to become more easily accessible through analysis.

With this in mind, Serbian civic education policy was analysed in terms of its being part of an ideological-discursive project of creating a new Serbia. Fairclough and Wodak (1997) define ideological project as a discursive enterprise of creating not only the ideology (identities, values, relationships, institutions), but also its constituency, by virtue of discursive construction of reality. Going back to Steiner-Khamsi's ideas of the conscious and political use of policy and the transfer of discourse, I hypothesised that Serbian policy-makers introduced civic education policy as a way of positioning themselves better in the global field, and in doing so, used valuable discursive resources and linguistic capital, evident in the presence and recontextualisation of the global educational discourse that was at the time constructed by drawing on ideologies of democracy, modernity, and active citizenship.

In terms of my making a conceptual leap from the individual capital of a specific actor involved in the policy formation to the collective capital of 'policymakers' as a group, this is justifiable by treating them as belonging to different levels in the hierarchy of fields. Whilst individual capital is important in determining an actor's position and action within, for example, the national field of education policy, and in the construction of a national policy discourse, collective capital figures more strongly in the group's (policymakers, nation-state) position in the global field of the appropriation of political and economic power. Ozga and Lingard's (2004) notion of 'national capital' – the nation-states' ability to resist

and negotiate globalised themes and policy discourses in the global education policy field – is supportive of this. In the final section, I will explain further this scale of fields and the related idea of discourse recontextualisation.

These recontextualisation and glocalisation practices are what could be used to explain the seeming global policy convergence and ‘loose coupling’ – world systems theorists’ way of explaining local differences in adopting the same policies (Steiner-Khamsi, 2014). They could also explain what Levin (1998) calls ‘policy epidemic’, in his trying to find a way to conceptualise the spread of seemingly identical policies, mainly across the Western world. Hypothesising that these policies are being copied without any attention paid anywhere to what was happening ‘on the ground’, or any ‘learning from others’ mistakes’, he makes a point about adoption of similar policies being largely symbolic, and not completely justifiable by a ‘common ideology’. But such attempts at conceptualising a global field and the spread of seemingly similar policy across it can be further extended and substantiated by an approach offered by Schriewer (2003). Namely, he suggests that, rather than forcing identical policies, what is happening in the global field, largely through agency of international organisations, is a production of ‘abstract universalisms’ (p. 273), which can then be analysed as they come into contact with all the different structures, ideologies, cultures found in the national policy-making fields.

This spread of abstract universalisms does not then necessarily translate into the idea, widely accepted in critical policy research, of ‘Western’ domination over ‘local victims’. It is of course necessary to recognise the power of

international actors in creating discursive formations of these universalisms that find their way to national fields, and I am not arguing for its complete banishment from the study of the national policy field. But whilst any policy and reform formation exploration of the last couple of decades has had to account for supra- and international factors, it does not necessarily follow that international actors should *a priori* be conceptualised as agenda-pushers. Dale (1999), Keating, (2008), Stavros (2010), Ball and Junemann (2012) are only some amongst the many authors who have looked at the multiple, and often convoluted paths of influence on national policy making, and in this thesis, I have treated international actors as various channels for different ideologies in the process and the widening field of the Serbian education policy formation.

Although a study of a post-communist policy is specific due to the scope of fields in which the reforms are taking place, a study of any policy in the late modern world will have many parallels with the those that take into account the globalising forces and the related issues of transnational policy borrowing, attraction, travelling, or transformation of the policy-production within the nation-state, as affected by global factors (Dale, 1999; 2000). These are all concepts to which I make reference throughout this work, acknowledging in this way the processes of globalisation of which post-socialist transition is, in a way, a part, even if I am not overtly conducting a study of globalisation in education. The presence of international agents and the significance of a 'global' educational discourse – of particular salience in the context of the transitioning countries where policymakers seek to find their way 'back' into the international space – is theorised here as a 'wider' (both geographically and

conceptually) educational policy field in which civic education policy became a part of the Serbian policy-makers' discursive capital. The key point in my reference to the international field and international actors is moving away from the globalisation-led imposition of policies, or even abstract universalisms, by the more powerful actors in the global field (first world states, international organisations) onto what are seen as less powerful actors (such as transitioning or 'democratising' states).

Civic education policy was approached as carrying some of those 'abstract universalisms', but I conceptualise them as being ideologically constructed in this policy, so as to serve as capital for Serbian policymakers in the international field. This discursive capital, as I argue later, had the purpose of signalling Serbia's dedication to a certain, 'desirable' course of reform, and the national policymakers' command of the ideological-discursive resources that held value in that particular field, at that particular time. In this, I see the social practices which constituted this educational policy event as being stretched across multiple – national and global – fields, those of education and politics featuring most prominently in my analysis. I started my research by focusing on ideological-discursive formations in the Serbian civic education policy being used as discursive capital in the international field, but, as my analysis revealed, and as it will be shown in later chapters, elements of the civic, and even religious education policy discourse, were used as a demonstration of valuable capital in the national field as well.

Conclusion

Drawing on the theorisation of transition (p. 60), I have imagined reform as the discursive project of constructing a new ideology at the demise of an old one, and consisting of specific policies that might deal with the particularities of actualising this ideology and prescribing values contained in it. I have treated policy as an ideological and discursive construct that served to, among other things, legitimise a certain version of the social reality in prescribing values, and constructing roles, relationships, and identities for the new Serbian society. In policy discourse, power, both within (between participants) and over discourse – has been seen as actualised in the ability to define something as a problem, and offer something as an inevitable solution to it, but also in the ability to resist, negotiate and modify discursive elements of the dominant ideology, even if through an overt acceptance of it. Discourse, meanwhile, has been studied as a way of materialising and constructing ideology and constituency for it, by creating identities.

I imagine that the power and agency to assume a certain position in the field and within discourse comes from the possession and use of discursive capital that is related to one's social and cultural capital. The notion of the conscious, reflexive, strategic appropriation of elements of discourse was introduced by Chouliaraki and Fairclough (1999: 15, 25, 43-5, 118-9) who related it to the degree of active appropriation of recontextualised discourse, whereby the latter is actually modified by insertion of elements of the host context discourse. I accept this idea of active recontextualisation of discourse, and believe that it

creates space for theorising agency of the collective category of national policymakers, allowing me to further develop the notions of 'transfer of discourse' or adoption of favourable language in policies, without subsequent change in practice. The next chapter outlines the manner in which this particular version of the policy discourse was constructed, and sets the scene for exploration and analysis of these various voices in the policy field and discourse, hybridity and inter-discursiveness, and the explanation of the various actors' positioning in the field and contribution to the construction of the policy discourse.

CHAPTER 4

Exploring the field: the methods of policy discourse construction

Introduction

In view of the literature and theory above discussed, and before I proceed with the outline of my methodology, I want to reformulate the ‘simple’ questions of whos, hows, and whys of the Serbian civic education policy formation, so that they reflect more appropriately the use of my theoretical and conceptual lens. I have used this thesis to explore the actors, relationships, and ideologies that constructed, and were constructed by the Serbian 2001 civic education policy discourse, and to examine how the formation of the civic education policy related to the goals of Serbian 2001-2003 educational reform, conceptualised as the ideological-discursive project of post-2000 Serbia.

I explain in this chapter how my theoretical and conceptual lens, grounded in a constructivist epistemology and ontology, and outlined in the previous chapter, affected the key methodological points – data sampling, generation, and analysis – of this project. I explain the rationale behind certain methodological choices, reflect on my fieldwork experience, and engage with issues of reflexivity and ethics, particularly in relation to ‘elite’⁸ research. Finally, I

⁸ Quotation marks used here indicate the problematisation of this common qualifier, which is to follow further in the text.

consider the merit and contribution of a study undertaken in a constructivist tradition and using concepts rooted in post-structuralism and post-modernism.

Evolution of methodology and its impact on research design

The start of my exploration of the beginnings of the Serbian education reform was characterised by imagining reality as waiting to be discovered, and the events that I was interested in amenable to illumination and description through access to fairly static data that I was to 'collect' and further objectify by triangulating the findings coming from interviews with the documentary data. However, as I continued grappling with the topic, and engaging more deeply both with theory and with my questions, the idea of one 'truth' that I would be able to uncover through my research, was becoming increasingly tenuous. Instead, the notion of multiplicity of 'truths', the relevance of contexts and lenses employed, and of the subjectivity of researchers, participants, and even future readers, for the story's shape and meaning, became more salient.

Although I draw on discourse theory, and accept the idea of multiplicity and fluidity of 'truths', I am reluctant to label my approach a 'poststructuralist' or a 'postmodernist' one (the two labels, as Howarths [2013] points out, often being interchangeable). Fairclough (2013), for example, notes that poststructuralists deny the reality outside of the mind, and if we were to accept this, I am more likely to agree with Fairclough (*ibid.*) on being 'moderately realist'. Elsewhere,

Fairclough (2006; 2011) categorises his approach as 'critical realist', accepting that the world has materiality or 'reality' that is not dependent on our knowledge of it. In a way, such ontological agnosticism is not an issue. We can use various qualifiers of 'realism' – fallible or subtle (Robson, 2011) – to mark a departure from certainty of a discoverable reality, but as soon as an aspect of reality becomes an object/subject of social inquiry, we cannot but take into account its discursive properties. Thus said inquiry (which is in itself discursive) can be conducted with reference to and analysis of these properties, without its extradiscursive materiality needing to be unequivocally confirmed.

In my telling of this contingent, situated (Robson, 2011), and inevitably historically and contextually bound (Scott and Usher, 1999) story, I have used the methods traditionally used in policy formation studies: interviews with key policy actors and documentary research. My theoretical lens had implications for the sampling process, the approach to the interview situation, and the creation of the interview schedule. For example, the idea of exploring the dynamics and pluralism of ideas in the decision-making process that had initially led to plans to sample meetings- and roundtable minutes was abandoned in favour of obtaining access to broader policy and reform discourse embodied in policy documents, public addresses of key actors, published criticism of reform detractors, or parliamentary debates. My theoretical perspective was also reflected in my choice of informants, so that they now included, in addition to the core group of 'key' policy actors, also individuals with whom I was able to construct 'alternative' (Fairclough, 2009) policy discourse and reflect on the wider processes of defining the direction of the

reform and naming the reform goals. I approached my interviewees not as people from whom I would extract information, but as collaborators in the joint act of the policy discourse construction. In view of that, even referring to them as 'informants' seemed inadequate, so I decided to avoid this very common label in favour of a more neutral 'interviewee'.

Apart from shifting the purpose of questions from uncovering 'evidence of events', to expressing opinions and constructing personal and collective experiences, I also had to consider the importance of language in the creation of the interview schedule. Thus I had to balance between asking the more 'practical' policy formation questions of who, where, when, why, and how, with an attempt to produce a more conversationalist atmosphere. I did this with a purpose of constructing a discursive event that would be closer in genre (Fairclough, 2003) to a personal narrative rather than an interrogative interview, or an official public address. The latter two were genres of texts to which I would have had access through the then policy documents, so I did not feel it necessary to repeat the conditions for the production of the same genre in my interviews. Further in this chapter, I relate my experience and the varying success of adapting the interview situation to my modified research purposes. I also discuss the issues of access negotiation, self-representation and power relations in ('elite') interviewing. To start with, I make explicit my choices of data sources.

Approaching the field and beginning to construct the policy discourse

My 'going into the field', and the core of the data generation process, consisted of three one- or two-week trips to Serbia, an interview in London, and one Skype interview. Prior to that, I had some experience of what could be, from this theoretical perspective, termed policy discourse construction in the school field. It included attending two CE classes (one in primary, one in secondary school) and one RE class (primary), and having informal conversations with teachers of these classes. These school visits took place during my familiarisation with the topic and the refining of my research question. They contributed to my becoming (re)acquainted with the context, as did visits to numerous Serbian internet forum boards, and conversations with family and friends who had either attended these classes or had children who attended them. As such, school visits did not constitute a part of the research design or a pilot study, but they informed my thinking about the topic early on. They highlighted some themes (teacher training, policy advertising, subject materials and subject development) and opened up some questions to be addressed in the interview schedule.

As previously discussed, I have only sought to examine the construction of the policy discourse at one stage of the policy cycle, and in the social field of policy making, rather than the field of policy enactment. This is why the construction of the policy discourse in schools was not part of my research design. Interviews with policy actors (and by this I mean individuals involved in the policy introduction and development), commentators, and detractors provided

textual representations of the policy discourse (Gale, 2001). In conducting and, later, analysing these texts, I found particularly helpful Ball's (1994a: 109) suggestion to view such accounts as polyvocal: as realist accounts of events, as personal interpretation, as positioning of oneself within a discourse, but also as representation of personal interests. Without considering the interviewees' accounts to be the mirrors of one truth, I have nevertheless sought to construct an 'arch' narrative from the pool of personal narratives, so as to offer the process of the policy discourse construction a personal, agential dimension. The result of constructing this historical narrative of the policy introduction and development is offered in the next chapter, whilst the chapter 6 presents the analysis of interviewees' accounts at the level of ideological construction of the policy discourse. In chapter 6, I also discuss the position and meaning of the policy discourse in the wider context of Serbia's post-2000 educational and social reform.

Ozga (2000), in her volume on researching education policy, particularly stresses the importance of the context into which the policy is brought. In Serbia's CE policy case, the context, filtered through the relevant literature on policy-making, but especially on education reform in post-communist and 'democratising' societies, prompted the sampling of specific documents and respondents, and asking of questions outside the narrow topic of CE policy formation. In light of Ball's (1997) warning that policies should not be studied in isolation, but in conjunction with a host of other policies that appeared before them and in connection with them, I also included some of the RE policy texts, and those related to the general direction of the proposed reform. Such

widening of the documents sampled was warranted by the need to connect the introduction of CE to the wider ideological project, represented in part by the planned reform. The time frame of the project's focus was loosely defined by major political events that had an influence on shaping of education policy in Serbia. At one end was ousting of Milošević from power and the institution of the democratic coalition government at the end of 2000/start of 2001, and at the other the change of government in 2004 which led to a considerable shift in the way the Ministry of Education was to treat CE and (re)define the nature and the pace of the education reform. All of the above elements fine-tuned the focus of my thesis and guided the sampling choices, discussed below.

Discursive texts in the construction of CE policy discourse – sampling of documents

In adapting documentary and interview-based research to the nature and the purpose of this thesis, I have conceptualised both documents and interviews as a means of constructing policy discourse. The documents have been treated as textual representations of discursive events (Fairclough, 2003; 2006; 2007), and artefacts from the time of policy generation, whilst the interviews with various actors have been seen as a way of constructing new texts. I approached the documents aware of their function as providing the background for interviews as well as depicting a 'version of the social reality' (Atkinson and Coffey, 2004), but in my analysis of them, I saw them as 'ideological texts that have been constructed within a particular historical and political context, the

deconstruction [of which] ... [has] to begin with the recognition of that context' (Codd, 1988: 244). This is particularly relevant to the view of policy as discourse, as used for example by Arnott and Ozga (2010) in their examination of relevant policy documents for traces of their use of discursive resources in constructing certain narratives for political ends.

I selected the documents on the criteria of their being textual representations of significant discursive elements which constituted the discursive event of the Serbian education reform and the civic (and religious) education policy with which this reform began. In doing this, I was more concerned with creating a broader sweep of the policy and reform discourse than with minute day-to-day exchanges between policy actors. The selection of documents (the full list included in Appendix 1) contains key CE policy documents, as well as international policy documents concerning CE and EDC. With respect to my treatment of the national policy discourse as potentially inclusive of recontextualised elements of the global educational discourse, it was important to consider the global field (see previous chapter) and include documents and discourses from beyond the Serbian 'national space' (Mannion *et al.*, 2011). As the relevant literature gives prominent place to international organisations, this motivated my consulting some of these organisations' reports and recommendations on education in Serbia. Added to these were various media documents from the time of the policy introduction, media interviews with and public addresses of some of the key actors, as well as transcripts of the first parliamentary debates on the introduction of civic and religious education, and of the relevant debates about the general direction of the reform – all of which

provide textual representation of the civic education policy discourse and reform discourse as constructed at the time of policy introduction.

Access to most documents was fairly unproblematic, as most were available online and only required some degree of internet-based research. Some, however, involved extended search in Serbian libraries, and my good fortune of having library-employed members of the family who would invest time and effort in tracking down and photocopying legal proclamations or newspapers stubs from ten years ago. I also have to stress the value of opportunity and snowball sampling, as some important documents (in their final draft, unpublished form), the existence of which I had not been aware, were volunteered to me by my interviewees. Meanwhile, a good example of opportunity sampling was my obtaining some very rich data through sheer luck and good timing: namely, Serbian parliamentary debates transcripts that became available on-line just in time to be included in my dataset.

I had less luck, however, despite considerable effort, in locating one particular document, described by an interviewee as containing extremely disparaging remarks about the reform, informally referred to as the 'Black Paper'. As this was an unpublished document, there was always a possibility of its being difficult to retrieve more than a decade later, and its somewhat controversial nature and jaundiced content would have presumably made its authors reluctant to share it with an academic researcher. I have attempted to minimise any gap created by the absence of this document by interviewing one of its purported authors, and by including some of their, and their colleagues' most

vocal criticism of the Serbian educational reform, published at the time of the events that I am researching and available on-line.

Discursive texts in the construction of CE policy discourse – sampling of interviewees

With both the purpose of practical questions and their theoretical background motivating similar sampling choices, ‘theoretical sampling’ (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007) in this case overlapped to a considerable extent with purposive, and was combined with snowball (Bryman, 2008), and ‘opportunity’ sampling (Arksey and Knight, 1999). I started the interviewee sampling process by choosing to contact the authors of the key policy and reform documents, as well as the most senior actors in the then Ministry. I imagined that these actors were in possession of specific knowledge and thus able to provide in-depth accounts of events (Vidovich, 2002). They belonged to what could be described as different ‘groups’ – Ministry employees, NGO members, members of academia – but whilst these categories bore analytical relevance to actors’ position in the various fields, and their social/cultural/political capital, these individuals were not considered to be the representatives of these groups.

After the initial purposive sampling, a snowball sampling process expanded the sample to include the initially chosen actors’ contributors and collaborators. In addition, again through a combination of purposive and theoretical sampling, I selected actors who belonged to the categories of policy and reform

commentators and critics, actors with whom I could engage in the construction of alternative (to dominant policy) discourse (Fairclough, 2009). The sample was increased following my own growing familiarity with the field, as well as recommendations of other respondents. I based the decision to discontinue further interviewing on the balance of usefulness of data, and manageability in terms of the size of the data set and time available for analysis. As for acting on participants' recommendations, I was aware that their suggesting their friends, collaborators, or simply those who share their ideologies, might cause some concern with regard to 'skewing' the sample. However, my epistemological lens minimised such concerns, as I saw these recommendations as a way of participants making particular – analysable – choices in constructing the field of (educational) policy-making, by viewing some agents' contribution as more important or valuable than that of others. The list of the nineteen interviewees, loosely divided into two categories, can be found in the Table 1 below.

POLICY DEVELOPERS AND ADVISORS ('POLICY ACTORS')
2001-2004 minister of education
2001-2004 deputy minister of education
Director of Civil Society NGO ⁹
Civil Society's CE Programme co-ordinator/developer
Three 2001-2004 CE curriculum developers
2001-2004 EDC team member/curriculum advisor
2001-2004 EDC team's international work co-ordinator

⁹ Pseudonym for a Serbian NGO with an ongoing involvement in CE

Civic Support ¹⁰ employee
Belgrade CoE office employee
Belgrade OSF office employee
COMMENTATORS, CRITICS, RE REPRESENTATIVES
2001-2004 shadow cabinet member
Two RE development actors
Head of a teachers' union
Two critics of the reform/curriculum workgroup members
Prominent Serbian academic/prolific author on CE/EDC

Table 1. List of interviewees

Access to interviewees was in most cases fairly unproblematic, with only one contacted former Ministry actor, one who had reportedly resigned upon the (re)introduction of RE, remaining unreachable despite repeated attempts. The 'core' group of authors of key documents and senior Ministry figures was relatively easy to locate through their current professional affiliations, and early contact was established via email. This act of preliminary communication had the purpose of familiarising prospective interviewees with my work, and securing participation in the early stages of my project. Our communication continued over the following months, during which a viable date for interview

¹⁰ A pseudonym for a UK-based NGO that acted as the Serbian policymakers' partner and consultant, often employed in the Council of Europe EDC-related projects in Eastern Europe.

was being worked out. At the same time, I was occasionally suggested further interviewees and sources of data.

In spite of almost universal co-operation, there were a few instances of difficulties in establishing contact, which I attempted to overcome in different ways. In one case, a major – according to other interviewees – policy (and reform) actor only responded to my repeated invitations to participate after I had asked a previous interviewee, and their colleague, for help in gaining access. Another example involved my travelling to another non-responsive actor's place of work, waiting in the hallway, and improvising a quick interview during their lunch break. Finally, one last interview had to be conducted via Skype, as the interviewee only responded to my invitation months after the last group of interviews were conducted in Serbia.

In all my communication with prospective interviewees, I found that email was the best form of establishing initial contact, as it created the opportunity to introduce myself and my work properly, and explain exactly what was desired of them, as well as build rapport with the participants prior to the face-to-face meeting. The value of the pre-interview email communication was particularly evident in some situations where interviewees either had not used the internet regularly, or preferred to speak on the phone, and when the rather abrupt introduction had to be handled in a meaningful way, closest to the interviewee's field of action: informative yet concise. My previous professional experience of telephone interview-based research proved useful in judging the best way to achieve this.

Overall, the process of sampling and access negotiation was without major obstacles, but it did involve ethical considerations of how much about my research to reveal to the potential participant, a concern that I will revisit later. In most cases, the participants were sent the information sheet and the consent form ahead of the interview, and where requested, the list of areas covered by the interview schedule. Those who had not received these documents via email, received them in person and were given time to read them and ask additional questions before the interview. All of them were also given the opportunity to withdraw from research at that, or any other point, an opportunity that none have taken.

The sampling process itself marked, in line with my epistemological and theoretical stance, the beginning of constructing the civic education policy discourse. By the time I had selected which documents to analyse, whom to interview, and whose recommendations to follow, I already became actively involved in constructing this story which, had a different researcher been involved, or simply a different choice been made at any point since I started developing my research question, might have had a number of versions. The next section further examines these issues and the significance of the researcher's subjectivity, as I recount the interviewing process, in which I found the active role of the researcher to be particularly salient.

Interview as a site of discourse construction

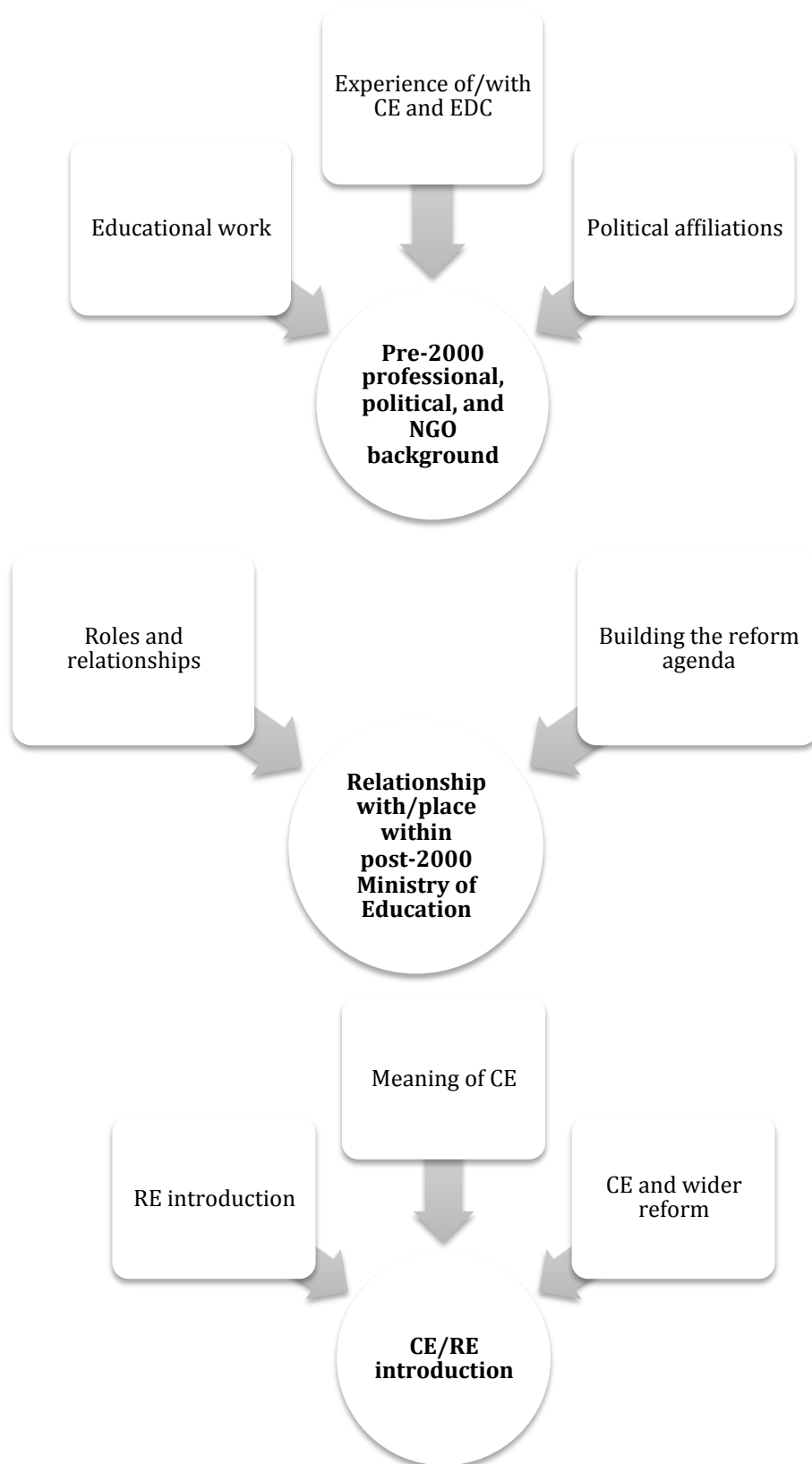
Rather than seeking to access the experience of the other (Silverman, 2000), I treated my interviews instead as discursive events, in which the particular version of a policy discourse was being constructed between myself and the participants. This is similar to what Holstein and Gubrium (2004) term an 'active' interview, a departure from a conventional view of interviewees as vessels of answers, towards partners in construction and interpretation which leads to the creation of knowledge between the two (or more) parties.

I initially found the intrusion of the subjective somewhat difficult to embrace, this probably stemming from a common notion that the researcher should be as 'objective' as possible. A number of authors point out, however, that an interview is never objective and value-free, as it is a situation brought into life by values and intentions of the researcher (Punch, 2005), although there is a difference in the degree to which interview can be conducted in a 'neutral, objective' fashion, rather than be an act of co-construction between the interviewer and the interviewee as they 'grasp for meaning' together (Punch and Oancea, 2014: 182). Emphasising the value of departing from the ideal of a traditional objective researcher who strives to create a neutral environment, and avoid, for example, 'leading' questions (Robson, 2011), Agar (2008) points out the need to recognise that questions will always 'lead' somewhere, and that it is our job as skilled interviewers to make sure that they lead in the right direction. That said, 'right' is hardly ever, and especially in this type of research, an unproblematic term.

The balance between asking 'leading' questions and creating an environment conducive to 'naturally' conducted conversation, and 'naturally' arising narratives in the construction of the policy discourse, was one of the most challenging aspects of my interviews. I was continually aware of the trade-off between leading the conversation in the direction of a specific question that I wanted answered, and an understanding that I was not 'unearthing evidence', but contributing to the construction of the policy and reform discourse – engaging in an in-depth conversation which was to allow for the other party's discursive formations to come to the fore (Howarth, 2000). Although the two are not necessarily antithetic, I occasionally felt such tension, arising perhaps from my relative inexperience as a researcher.

Constructing the discourse: investigations, conversations, narratives

The frame for the interviews was provided by the interview protocol, found in Appendix 2. Although its specific form was relative to the interviewees' positioning in the policy discourse, there were certain topics that were covered, to a varying degree, in all interviews. The diagram below shows how these topics relate to the most significant concepts (indicated by arrows) which constituted the research question, and which I wanted the interviews to address/construct.



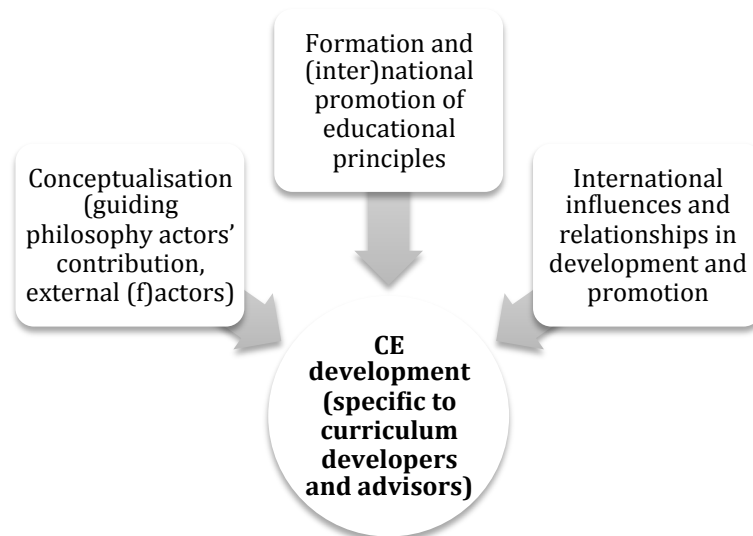


Diagram 1. Interview topics and research concepts

Specific questions concerned the interviewees' pre-2000 engagement, their role in, or the relationship with the new ministry, their role in CE/RE policy development, and relationships with other national and international actors. There were also more pointed questions relating to the appearance of the policy 'outside' the comprehensive reform, its relation to RE policy, the apparent delegation of various CE responsibilities to an NGO in 2004, or the support (financial and other) for its development and implementation. Commentators and critics were asked additional questions that concerned their experience and/or view of the 2001-2003 reform, comparison between it and the post-2004 reform, and preferred solutions to perceived problems.

I sought to initiate with these questions the participants' construction of their narratives, and by doing so, I took an active part in the discourse creation. Asking the participants to reflect on a topic (e.g. 'Can you tell me more about your professional background and pre-2000 engagement?') or asking them a specific question (e.g. 'Were any local NGOs involved in developing CE and what was their role if so?') prompted various manners of response, related to, among other factors, the interviewees' agendas and motives, and efforts to construct this story and make it meaningful. In a minority of cases, the interviewee addressed the question by seeking to answer fairly directly, regularly checking whether their answer corresponded to 'what I had in mind', and whether it would help to refer to some other issues outside the perceived boundary of my specific question (e.g. 'When and how did you become involved with the work of the new ministry?'). Much more common were cases in which the interviewee took the question as a starting point to compose a narrative of their professional path, political interaction, or personal ideological commitment.

With the exception of rare cases where this was manifested in long-winded monologues, tangential to the most pertinent topics that I sought to explore in the interview, these instances of topic extension created an opportunity for a more unmediated bid by the interviewee to make sense of the story – and they sometimes openly commented on this active effort of sense-making. Crucially, such relatively free-flowing narratives allowed more space for my subsequent exploration of the interviewees' discursive formations, even when their attempts did not yield 'facts' – the absence of facts often justified by poor memory on their part. I was aware that such 'departures' from brief and clear

answers enabled engaging with such stories on a level beyond that of content, value that is, as Elliott (2005), for example, points out, often denied as interviewers seek to elicit clear answers and dismiss such digressions as distracting and irrelevant.

Such interview experiences led me to reflect on rapport and power relations within an interview situation, and also question the extent to which narratives are variously constructed 'truths' – especially when considered alongside each other and against some 'indisputable' facts, for example, the chronology of events, evident from documents outside of interviews. In addition, the negotiation between myself as a researcher and the interviewee about what counts as 'relevant and valuable' also invited ethical implications of my conducting – sometimes even during the interview itself – an analysis of aspects other than content of such narratives. Clandinin and Rosiek (2007), for example, refer to this tension as borderline cases, when researchers are dividing their concern between wider social discourse that comes through individual narratives, and the interest and responsibility for those individuals and their narrated experiences. During the interviews, I, too, internally questioned the ethics of having my primary concern lie with the discursive construction of the narrative, and the critical engagement with issues of vocabulary, grammar, and syntax that the interviewee – themselves a category, an element of discourse – was employing. I occasionally felt that this concern was at odds with a sense of responsibility that I felt towards interviewees as individuals who granted me an access to their life story. Additionally, I felt like there was a need to negotiate engaging with their story as a personal narrative

on one end, and a discursive construction of ideologies, events, and identities, on the other.

The tension between what could traditionally be seen as content of a narrative, and its linguistic, discursive form arose from an attempt to construct a story which deals with historical events, but in reference to discourse theory and drawing on post-structuralist tradition. Whilst my epistemological approach denies the possibility of one 'truth', I was aware that certain elements in these various 'truths' can be seen as 'facts'. Thus in constructing this story, there were two competing urges at play – one was to treat the interviewees' narratives as gateways to social processes, discourse and ideologies. The other was to tell the story as it unveiled chronologically, and where the exact sequence of events may have played a part in how and why decisions were made and certain courses taken, and some, more practical questions of who, when or why could have been answered more definitively. However, it was shown that even the most 'straightforward' of questions, such as the above-quoted involvement of local NGOs in CE development, would be subject to the interviewees' (sometimes mutually contradictory) sense- and meaning-making, deletion of some events and actors, highlighting of others, offering and denying of authority to various agents (De Fina and Georgakapalou, 2012), compression of time, and self-(re)presentation. Accounts, for example, differed on questions of chronology, nature and degree of involvement of different actors, and the relationship between NGO and government actors.

Whilst these narrative phenomena offered great analytical potential at the level of constructing various actors' positions, agency, and capital, they made the construction of a 'historical narrative' somewhat challenging. The next chapter is a result of my attempt at such a narrative, in which I create the historical timeline, and highlight the common themes, and the most consistently performed, as well as sometimes contradictory, representations of actors, relationships, and events. These form a skeleton of the policy discourse, that will be fleshed out in chapters 6 and 7, in which I engage more fully with the ideological-discursive constructions of actors, relationships, and events.

The role of the researcher in the construction of interview narratives

It is possible that interviewees performed any particular positioning in the policy discourse not only in relation to other actors, or past events, but also with reference to their present situation, motivation behind participation in my research, or even the immediate context of the interview situation. In the very process of the policy discourse construction through the discursive event that is the interview, the participants might have also sought to assert their authority, this highlighting the questions of power and 'control' over the interview situation. My interview experiences, although in many ways unique to the particular participant, and the setting of the interview, could very loosely be divided into those where the interviewee kept to the question and the topic, expecting me to 'lead' the conversation, and those where it seemed that interlocutors' interests and agendas ran the conversation. Allowing for the

latter (although it was not always a matter of option) was important for two reasons. One of them was mentioned above and concerns allowing uninterrupted space for interviewees to make sense of the story that they were constructing, and frame it in a way that allowed me to explore how they had decided to structure its various aspects. The second reason was creating and maintaining rapport, and opening the space for exploration of the more sensitive topics, to which we segued smoothly from the interviewees' seemingly marginally relevant monologues. At times, however, and when I judged it necessary in the light of the interviewee's contribution, I chose to be more brisk and blunt with my questions, aware that this would not significantly alter the rapport, but hopeful that it would create space for topics that I saw as having more relevance to my research question.

In a couple of cases, the interviews continued pursuing their own agenda and ignoring my attempts to bring the conversation back to the more 'relevant' topic. Such instances, although not always pleasant, nevertheless constituted a valuable learning experience and prompted me to reflect on my role in the exchange, and on the way in which my background, my self-presentation, choice of words, tone of voice, even body language, contributed to the developments during an interview. This is where the notion of an 'objective' interviewer is again revealed as problematic. Even before coming to the interview, the researcher's background, perspective, and identity affect the choice of the topic and its treatment, and the researcher's construction carries on into the interview as well. The researcher's 'I' has to be acknowledged or even consciously utilised, as Taylor (2001a) and Hammersley and Atkinson

(2007) suggest. For example, I was able to combine, during the interviews, the duality of my having been raised and educated in the context which I research, and of coming (back) to it from a fairly different one – educationally, socially, politically, and linguistically. I was thus able – and required – to employ and negotiate my various personas: those of a Serbian national, a ‘western’ student, a researcher, a young female, an educational emigrant, a former Serbian pupil, or an anti-Milošević protester.

The matter of self-presentation had already become salient in establishing communication with the interviewee via phone or an email, and continued, with regard to not only verbal, but even sartorial choices, into the interview situation, starting with the location of the interview. The choice of venue was always left to the interviewee, and was in most cases their workplace, with three of the interviews taking place in a cafe. The latter did not pose a significant logistic inconvenience, as my voice recorder performed well in terms of isolating background noise, but it did occasionally cause a few more distractions and interruptions than were faced in a quiet office. I also want to note that none of the interviewees objected to being recorded. Having an interview in a cafe also invited the seemingly marginal issue of who would bear the cost of a bill, which showed interviewees’ treating me often as ‘a student’ who should benefit from their generosity.

Rapport was usually created through our shared cultural background, knowledge of institutional roles, and in some cases, of their public image. This initial familiarity also enabled sympathetic listening, and the creation of a

relaxed environment. The rapport and the degree to which the atmosphere of the interview was relaxed varied, but it rarely caused the 'risk' of over-familiarity, as in most cases our respective habitus, and fields in which we moved, were distant enough for the interview not to slip into a conversation between friends or even commiserators. Some over-familiarity was sometimes indicated in situations where the interviewee assumed more about me than was said and treated me as an understanding confidant. So a senior Ministry actor believed that since I "*study over there, in the normal world*", I would "*know how it is*". Similarly, some of them expressed the assumption that since I had 'emigrated' to a Western democracy, I naturally accepted the values contained in Serbian civic education and condemned what a senior EDC team member called "*this backward religious nationalism*".

My ethical concern about such situations in which my own habitus and discursive capital were assumed by the interviewee was intensified by their potential neglect of the fact that I would later subject their words to a detached, critical analysis. However, to overtly assume the persona of a critical (foreign) researcher would have been potentially detrimental to our rapport, especially as it was at odds with 'Serbian student' – 'researcher' being a term very rarely applied to doctoral students in Serbia, as it implies a greater degree of authority and a more equal playing field in what is still a very hierarchically structured academic environment. It would have been even more detrimental where the 'foreign' aspect of this persona meant possibly antagonising the interviewees whose ideologies clashed with the values and institutions of a Western democracy. In some instances of the latter, it felt like the interviewee and I were

on 'opposite' sides, and in others it caused an overt effort by my interviewees to persuade me of the worthiness of their values, whilst entirely assuming my own. One reform critic thus concluded the interview with the following: *"I know you are over there, but I hope I have managed to give you a hint of some ideas we fight for, and change your opinions somewhat."*

Not divulging my ideological persuasion was partly to do with my denying political agenda to my project, but it did at times feel dishonest, especially when it was a conscious act of reaction management: including my tone of voice, my body language, vocabulary, or my facial expression. This (mis)interpretation of my own values might have been avoided were I to disclose the full extent of my approach – particularly the more critical aspects of it – in securing the interviewees' participation, and authors like Hammersley and Atkinson (2007) wonder about the amount of detail about one's research that should be revealed to prospective participants, and to what end. Withholding some – especially theoretical – aspects of my research did not figure with some of the respondents, as I believed it would not have had an effect on either their willingness to participate or the course of the interview. In other cases, however, I was aware of not being completely open about my approach, as I believed that doing so, and being perceived as critical of the interviewees' actions, values, and opinions, would have impinged on my relationship with them. I made this decision consciously, in the interest of creating better rapport and eliciting a narrative of a particular genre (Fairclough, 2009).

These were genres of an academic interview, and of a personal narrative, conducive to production of somewhat different ideological-discursive formations from those that were available to me in public documents and media interviews from the time of the policy development – produced by some of my respondents in highly formal situations of a media interview, or a parliamentary address. I also hoped that the change of genre might counter the case of the researcher simply being offered many-times rehearsed monologues – or repeated ‘cultural tales’ (Silverman, 2004a). Such expectation that the interviewer might be offered merely a well rehearsed monologue is particularly present in elite interviewing, where the interviewees are used to public addresses or have simply often been asked similar questions in the past. What is also expected in such interviews is that the power balance would be tipped in the interviewee’s favour, something which I briefly problematise in the concluding part of this section on the role of the researcher in the construction of the interview narrative.

The meaning of ‘elite’ and the power relations in the construction of an interview narrative

One memorable account of elite interviewing from the literature on elite educational research included one of the authors’ noting that they were so nervous whilst interviewing some prominent Whitehall actors, that they had to sit on their hands so as to stop them from shaking (Fitz and Halpin, 1994). Interviewing policy ‘elites’ is often referred to as interviewing *up* (Conti and

O'Neill, 2007), but I rather agree with Smith (2006), who believes that such a view somehow implies a fixed, almost structuralist balance of power in interviewees' favour, or the transferability of power from one field, e.g. that of education policy, to another – in this case academic.

My own experience provided examples of elites as authoritative and controlling, but also of elites as emotional and vulnerable, sharing with me their fears, hopes, and disappointments. The instances in which the latter was the case particularly put into sharp relief again my seemingly conflicting responsibilities – towards participants and telling their story, and towards the academic community and the theoretical requirements of my project that might lead to telling the story in a way not envisaged by the interviewee. The assumption that elites will always be the authoritative party in an interviewing situation, is something that, despite accounts such as Conti and O'Neill's (2007) sobering one about respondents' immediately falling into the position of authority and dictating the course of the interview, needs to be qualified. On occasion, and especially when dealing with sensitive issues, it is necessary to appreciate the complexity and the emotional impact of the experience for the respondents (Neal and McLaughlin, 2009).

With 'elite' as well as with 'non-elite' interviewees, a number of factors, including the negotiation of access and the immediate context and conduct of the interview, will affect the power relations. Some of these factors will be played out unconsciously on either side, but a lot of them can be conceptualised as a conscious use of discursive, social, even economic (as in the above example

of bearing the cost of a bill) capital. In terms of this, I understand that the power relations in my interviews depended on the kind and amount of capital possessed by my interviewees and myself. This flow of power between us was something that I was able to acknowledge – and sometimes consciously regulate – and it was something that occasionally affected the change in genre, from an academic research interview, to an informal conversation, a confession, a public address, or even a lecture, a sermon.

On several occasions, when it so suited my purpose, I was able to employ social capital. An example of mentioning my acquaintance from an international conference with whom the respondent had collaborated served to both slightly alter my status from a student-researcher to an informed professional, and create a more congenial atmosphere with a senior Ministry actor. At other times it was my use of linguistic, cultural, or educational capital: by employing more professional language and referring to the work within the discussed area, I helped move the genre away from the ‘teacher-student lecture’ into a professional discussion, which in turn influenced the topic, and the discursive resources on which my respondent drew. This worked the other way around, too. In some cases, the advantage given to my respondent by their wielding of cultural, political, social, and linguistic capital, allowed little space for my shifting of the power relations. In others, the fields in which we respectively found ourselves seemed too remote for my cultural or discursive resources to be recognised as capital, so they did not have much value in negotiating power positions and exerting influence.

During some of my interviews, unequal power relations were demonstrated in ways other than verbal: the interviewee's inviting a third party to 'participate' – but really serve as an occasional off-topic distraction, their having mid-interview phone conversations, or often walking to the next office, indicating thus a multitude of obligations and the preciousness of the interviewee's time. Outside of an interview situation itself, my arriving to an empty office due to my interviewee's sudden trip abroad and their having forgotten to let me know about it might have indicated a relatively low place that our interview held in their schedule. Even the most technical issues, such as the oft-warned about malfunction of the recording device, which I unfortunately experienced on one occasion, may have affected the management of the flow of power during an interview, as they could have signalled a lack of proper preparation and professionalism.

Although there were some instances in which the interviewee assumed the traditional 'elite interviewee' role, most of what I described above does not exclusively apply to elite interviewing, and this was partly my intention in arguing the previous point regarding the special treatment ascribed in literature to elite interviewing. Barring management of expectations stemming from the researcher's familiarity with the interviewee's public work and image, most other issues – negotiating and securing access, revealing the full extent of one's research, and the very nature of the data generation process – present themselves across the spectrum of topics and respondents, and in most cases do not merit a separate category. What we are ultimately dealing with most of the time is the flow of power in a flexible relationship, which comes as a result

of micro-political exchange, the use of capital, and the utilisation of various personas, by both researchers and interviewees.

Ethics and politics of (critical) policy research

Where there is difference between 'elite' and 'non-elite' research, is in matters of anonymity/non-attributability and publication of research. Although the default option in qualitative research is for accounts to be non-attributable, Grinyer (2002), for example, addresses the frequently neglected possibility of respondents wanting to claim the ownership of the data, and the ethics of assuming that they would not. Perhaps this is even more of an expectation with people used to being in the public eye. I have particularly experienced this, as a number of my interviewees either waived my promise of anonymity, or carried on expecting to be named, only occasionally introducing a statement with "*but this stays anonymous*". Offering a guarantee of anonymity in the first place is a tenuous promise, as in some cases – e.g. with the senior ministry figures – it is very difficult to adhere to it. Walford (2005), for example, points out that it is sometimes simply impossible to guarantee absolute anonymity – especially where a small group of respondents is concerned, and particularly nowadays, in the age of internet, whilst de Laine (2000) stresses that even if an account is anonymous to everyone else, the person in question would be able to recognise oneself and may feel misrepresented, or taken advantage of.

Although my project received the University's Ethics Committee's clearance (CUREC form and approval letter attached in Appendices 5 and 6), this in no way constituted the resolution of various ethical dilemmas, mostly revolving around my variously placed responsibilities – to the participants, to the academic world, to the wider public, and to my own personal ethical notions. One way to assuage the concerns about the responsibility to the participants, particularly with regard to misrepresentation, would have been respondent validation. This, again, is not without potential problems – Hallett (2013), for example, lists participants' voracious disagreement, embarrassment, reliving an uncomfortable experience, or even internalising the researcher's possibly detrimental conclusions. Hallett here problematises respondent validation in projects with an agenda – unlike mine – to give 'voice' to the personal experience of often 'unheard' individuals.

When it comes to other types of research, I agree with Scott and Usher (1999) who suggest that research which gives a highly important place to rights and responsibilities of participants may be idealistic and rarely practicable. Silverman (2000) and Hammersley (2008; 2010) argue for a more autocratic approach to research, with Silverman in particular suggesting that there is no reason why participants should have a privileged status when it comes to commenting on and analysing their actions. Hence, whilst not checking whether my participants agreed with my analysis of their actions, I did everything to ensure that those actions were constructed in their own words: through recording and closely transcribing all interviews, and double-checking with them wherever there was uncertainty about the meaning.

Other ethical concerns that arise from the responsibility to participants, are the usefulness of my research to them, the expectations with which they came to research, or sometimes even notions of 'favours being owed' (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007). In the case of elite respondents, Ball (1994b) offers a variety of motives which can colour respondents' representation of events and the construction of their own, and others', role in them. They can be embittered, disappointed, accusing, celebratory, self-justifying, or defensive. My experience has recorded an instance or more of all of these. Some interviewees wanted to relate their criticism of the policy and the overall reform, which was often so harsh, that it recognised very little of the policy-makers' work as valuable, as they dismissed the entire reform as un-transparent and even sinister. Others wished to relate their fervour and hard work, and express the disappointment with what came later. Yet others, aware of the criticism that was aimed at them at the time, seemed to have sought to explain and justify their actions.

Ozga (2011) also reflects on the agendas of the powerful, and maintains an awareness of interviewees being seen as a platform for spreading ideas and narratives further into the academic community. Indeed, some of the narratives that I recorded could have potentially relied on the above-mentioned assumption by some of my interviewees that we (I, from the western academic community, researching education for democracy, and they, building and delivering those programmes in Serbia) share the same ground, so my thesis could be a channel for publicising their work and ideas. But, as Agar (2008) points out, rather than having any specific agendas, the respondents could

simply be 'responding' to the fact that someone is taking a genuine interest in their story, and so cherish the opportunity to share it – an impression that I especially got from some of the more background actors in the policy discourse. Some of my interviewees were overt in their expression of the ways in which they benefitted from the interview process – through reflecting on issues that they had not thought about in a long time, through gaining new insights and the opportunity to tell their story or have their contribution recognised.

The way that some of these motives relate to matters of publication and identifiable recognition of the participants' contribution constitutes an ethical choice – should I honour the interviewee's motivation and have their contribution attributed if the end product would benefit more from having the person unidentifiable? This calls for making decisions on a case-by-case basis and in agreement with participants. In publicising my research, these issues are in some, more highly theoretical and abstracted parts, superfluous. In others, questions of attribution are relative to the type of publication (doctoral thesis, journal article which may focus on any aspect of my thesis, a 'report' for which some of the participants expressed a desire) and its purpose and audience. In my dissertation, with the augmentation of theoretical knowledge as its primary purpose, and academic community as its primary audience, I have used general markers (such as NGO member, EDC team member) that are of theoretical significance, with questions of attribution becoming at the moment relatively inconsequential.

Apart from the responsibility to the participants and to the academic/scientific community, there is, particularly in any sort of critical research, the responsibility to the public (Busher and James, 2007) and to the notion of the greater social good of 'unveiling the secrets' (Baez, 2002). However, these matters invite a level of normative judgement and a political purpose which I do not necessarily assume. I maintain that it is possible to research matters of politics and ideologies with an intellectual curiosity as a primary motivation, making it possible to remain 'neutral'. If I am to ascribe a practical purpose to my method of critical analysis is to be found, it is in, as Fowler suggests (1996), revealing, to participants as well as the wider audience (Elliott, 2005), some of the value systems behind representations of reality and mechanisms of making these representations common sense, so that the space is opened for different representations, invariantly guided by a different value system. This is without presuming to uncover the 'real', 'pure', 'uncorrupted' meaning, as I believe such form of universal meaning unmediated by the social component simply does not exist, except perhaps as an idea(l) in a Platonic sense.

The question of purpose is closely related to the contribution, usefulness, and 'worthiness' of a project conducted in a constructivist and poststructuralist vein, as well as the agenda of a 'critical' researcher, and shall be again discussed towards the end of this chapter. Decisions about how and what questions to ask, with what purpose in mind, and for whose benefit, were made throughout every step and aspect of my research, and were particularly strongly felt as I sought to describe, categorise, explain, and interpret others' vision of the world. A lot of my responsibility as a researcher lay in the process of data analysis and

interpretation that I felt, and in the next section I describe this process and make my choices and decisions more explicit.

Policy discourse construction through data analysis

One, perhaps prosaic, aspect of naming and categorising is found already in processes of transcription and translation. With my research being bilingual, and all but one of my interviews conducted in Serbian, I made the decision to conduct the analysis in the original language and write the results in English. In a project which puts such an emphasis on the idea of the linguistic-discursive construction of reality, it made little sense to perform the analysis of such constructions after translating them into another language. This did not eliminate all problems of performing a bilingual study, one of them being the difficulty of relating to the reader the linguistic analysis performed on, for most of my future audience, an unfamiliar language, or having to deal with translation of quotes.

As the bulk of the interview data did not require translating, I did not find it necessary to employ another person's view on the 'correctness' of my translation of select quotes, especially as it would have been extremely difficult to find someone with the same level of proficiency in both languages, as well as the academic knowledge and the familiarity with the topic. In addition, any concern with 'objectivity' which such a step would imply is incompatible with

the nature of this study to begin with. I also transcribed all of the interviews myself, adapting the detail of transcription to the requirements of the analytical and theoretical framework. I made sure to mark pauses and hesitations, as well as the tone of voice and the occasional accompanying laughter – anything that might convey the elements of relevance to the analysis of the interviewee’s construction of the narrative, but I was aware of Kvale’s (1996) warning that transcripts are not to be mistaken for the lived life of an interview, that they are, as he colourfully describes them, the interviews’ ‘bastard children’ (p. 182). An example of both transcription and translation can be found in Appendix 3.

In the same text, Kvale points out that this process of ‘bastardisation’ already involves a certain degree of analysis, as we decide what to keep and what to leave out, and what form to give to the final product that we will subject to a ‘proper’, systematic analysis. That said, I believe that my process of analysis started long before I first approached the data set. It was contained in the initial readings on the topic, review of the literature, in the informal communication with informants, which all influenced the early shaping of my analytical framework in a way that should be overtly acknowledged. Thus, as this project expanded in both breadth and depth, I was indeed performing an analysis of the ever-increasing data relevant to my topic. The extensive review of the literature rendered some themes and potential categories to look for in data more pronounced than others, and it is possible that some more debatable ones were subsumed under others that seemed more familiar. In addition, my personal and political inclinations that have led to adopting a somewhat critical stance towards the researched phenomena, my engagement with a wide scope of

literature, sometimes with little immediate relevance to my project, informal conversations with stakeholders in Serbia, informal observations of CE and RE classes, as well as visits to numerous internet forum boards where CE and RE in Serbia are discussed, inevitably produced a disposition towards seeing the data in a particular light, and favouring some readings of it over others.

Concretely, this meant that the post-communist transition literature made me more apt to recognise portions of data in my interview transcript that relate to the creation of the Serbian ministry as belonging to the frequently encountered themes of 'chaos and urgency', or ascribe the categories of 'alternative academic networks' to actors' relationships, or made me notice the discursive themes of 'catching up' or 'communist nostalgia'. Similarly, the literature on the NGO sector in the developing world made me see some of my data as instances of 'democracy promotion', and I had to employ conscious effort in reading against this literature's often very critical, even cynical, perception of NGOs. Or, the apparent mutual exclusiveness of ideologies that CE and RE could be seen to be symbolic of, that seeped from most parents' forum boards, conversations with parents, or with CE and RE teachers, made me more inclined to see them as opposites in my analysis.

Whilst acknowledging this 'bias' towards seeing the data in a certain light, I was also attempting to achieve a balanced analysis which would make audible a variety of voices (i.e. the 'quieter ones', both on the side of policy promoters and policy detractors) and avoid being laid bare to the most frequent kind of criticism of (critical) discourse analysis: that of 'discovering' exactly what one

set out to find. Widdowson (1995; 1998), for example, is among authors who point out that CDA authors often neglect to mention alternative readings, and suggests that the openly ideological (political, partisan) analysis can and should be distinguished from a critical-intellectual one. The greatest challenge for me was countering the danger of vagueness and impressionistic reading of my data, but at the same remaining conscious of the fact that there does not exist one 'correct' or prescribed way of conducting analysis (Hewitt, 2009) and that I was to develop my own framework based on my particular questions, and conceptual-theoretical imagining of the social phenomena that was at the centre of my research.

The evolution of the analytical framework

Whilst the many diverse aspects of the discourse analysis approach potentially account for its wide appeal, the frequently encountered lack of clear illustration of how they work together, creates difficulties when one attempts to adapt it for the purposes of their project, and possibly hints at why it might seem attractive to simply use someone else's tools. It is in this vein that the development of my analytical framework began. After studying texts by some of the most prolific authors in the field (Fairclough, van Dijk, Wodak), I chose and combined the elements of Wodak's ideas about different-level contexts (analysing from macro social contexts to more immediate ones – including the interview situation itself, and back again) and fields, and van Dijk's notion of ideology as a socially shared system of beliefs. I borrowed from Fairclough the categories of genres

styles and discourses (in my theoretical framework: ideologies). However, I have only referred to the genre when speaking of a concrete discursive event, such as an interview or a parliamentary address, whilst mainly keeping to the analysis of the discursive construction of ideologies.

I also relied on Fairclough's (2003; 2007) approach that incorporates the three steps of description, interpretation, and explanation, and is largely based around networks of social practices, contained, in my analysis, in a social field. I used his notion of the recontextualisation of discourse and the interdiscursive hybridity, i.e. the mixing of discourses of e.g. education with those of business, effecting in changed representations of the world, and different ways of being and acting, or even spatial organisation. I made some departures from his approach, mainly in increasing the potential for analysis of actions and relations of agents whom I was analysing, following the refinement of my research question, and the decision not to 'trace' social change, but explore how it was being normatively prescribed through an ideologically constructed policy discourse.

Through my analysis, I was aiming to unpack the common-sensical and seemingly indisputable prescriptions contained in CE education policy, to unveil the ideologies behind them (hence *critical* discourse analysis), with my interest primarily lying in how those actors whose societal position bequeathed them with an opportunity – or responsibility – to normatively define reality through a social practice such as policy, engaged in performing this practice, which ideological-discursive resources they drew on, how these resources

acted as their capital and how this, in turn, affected power relations between them.

Reading, abstraction, construction: stages and levels of analysis

In both initial and more in-depth engagement with my data, I was informed by Kress's (1993) argument about 'productive consumption' of the text by readers equipped with their own discursive resources, as this also accounted for my own readings of text, readings 'with' or 'against' it (Janks, 1997). My process of analysis and the choice of interpretation was affected by my own discursive resources, hypotheses, and expectations. I thus aimed, through multiple readings of my texts, to achieve both engagement with the text (submitting to a particular construction of the text by its authors, which favours a particular reading), as well as estrangement (employing my own subjectivity, which might produce a different one). This was the kind of methodological reflexivity, during which I was engaged in a continuous effort to recognise whether the ideological construction of themes and categories and themes had been created by *my* foregrounding of certain concepts in interviews, or offered by my interviewees. I aimed to recognise what the alternative reading could have been, and what had occasionally caused confusions and contradictions, possibly based on my own ideologies, discursive resources, and capital.

My analysis involved two levels at which I was sometimes simultaneously working throughout all of the multiple (chronological) stages of analysis,

abstraction, and theorisation. The first level involved the process of the more traditional content analysis, used to construct the historical narrative and elicit and abstract the most pertinent themes and categories of actors, relationships, and characterisations of the process of policymaking. During the second level of analysis, I explored the ideological construction of these discursive themes and categories. This involved both analysing how desirable and undesirable ideologies were constructed through the construction of the policy discourse, and identifying how the actors' possession and use of (various kinds of) capital, related to these ideologies, and subsequently, to the role and (power) relationships of different categories of actors in different fields. Although in describing my analysis I sometimes use ordinal numbers, which might impart an impression of linearity, it is necessary to stress that the entire process of analysis process was characterised by simultaneous multi-level analysis, and reflective iteration.

As far as the stages of analysis and abstraction are concerned, there was more of a linearity here. The first stage of analysis involved the familiarisation with the data, which required multiple readings, accompanied by note-taking and a tentative construction of the historical narrative, outlined in the next chapter. It involved the identification of potential 'gaps' in both the construction of the narrative and elements that formed the conceptual core of my topic. As I was constructing the historical narrative during this stage, I read and analysed the individual interview narratives as stories contributing to the construction of one overarching account. This meant focusing more on how the individual accounts fitted together, where they corresponded with, and where they

contradicted each other, as the ideas of one v multiple truths became ever more salient. Subsequent stages of analysis were characterised by higher levels of abstraction, distancing, and deconstruction, as the focus on content of stories gave way to the focus on their ideological-discursive construction.

The second stage involved categorisation, followed by colour-coding, and mapping out incidence and frequency, whilst establishing relationships between different codes, sometimes with the help of colour-coded cut-outs of texts spatially arranged. This enabled me to abstract core categories and the most dominant discursive themes used in the construction of these categories. Core categories related to processes, actions, relationships, roles, identities, that all constructed the field of policymaking at the time. Some of them were inner circle policy actors, outer circle policy actors, critics and commentators, international factor (these were categories referring to roles and identities), ministry composition, policymaking process, reform agenda preparation, CE conceptualisation (actions and processes), internal relationships, national-international relationship (relationships and alliances).

I saw dominant discursive themes as ways of constructing categories. Thus there were, for example, themes of enthusiasm and autonomy constructing the category of reform agenda preparation, professionalism constructing the theme of ministry composition, uncertainty of the policymaking process, or themes of openness and agency constructing the category of national-international relationship. In some cases, the identification of dominant themes served the purpose of content and thematic analysis, and the construction of the arch-

narrative. But some themes also involved a level of ideological construction, so for example if the category of policymaking process was constructed through the themes of openness, autonomy and professionalism, a continuous invocation of this theme would have contributed to the construction of a democratic ideology which rests on these principles.

During the third stage, I was going back from general to more specific, to the select parts of text that I subjected to closer linguistic analysis. I identified these sections of text as 'key statements': those parts of texts with a lot of generative power, containing important ideological-discursive formations that constructed an ideal future, and prescribed the desirable values and identities. Whilst various discursive patterns were identifiable across a significant proportion of the data set (e.g. the polarisation in the construction of actors – Us v Them), not all themes were ideologically rich. Where I chose to focus the discursive analysis on certain portions of text was where I identified theoretically and, relative to the research question, statements that carried the productive (Carabine, 2001; Graham, 2005), generative potential in terms of prescribing roles, identities, relationships, and values. As I said above, these were statements with the highest concentration of ideological-discursive formations.

In that sense, within the category of ministry composition, a quote from a senior Ministry actor "*if there were multiple sectors within Ministry, there was an idea that they should belong to people from different political parties*", had less of a discursive-productive potential (in terms of constructing identities, roles, and purposes) than, for example, "*half of the Ministry were non-political people who*

had ideas about metamorphosis, about Serbia's change, while the political half made political decisions. But my political party was a party of intellectuals, who had ideas that concerned the substance of things, and not destructive ideas." [Senior Ministry actor]. Although both of them contribute to the themes of depoliticisation and professionalism, which, as I illustrate in chapter 6, were used in the construction of the democratic ideology, I chose to subject the second one to a closer analysis, as it was more discursively rich, and already incorporated some of the first statement. The analysis of this statement, an example of the discursive analysis I performed, can be found in Appendix 4.

At this, third, stage of analysis, I was also paying closer attention to how the use of the ideological-discursive formations (phrases, syntactic structures, sentences, syntagms, opposites) was related to the actors' discursive and social capital. In some cases, the isolated use of actors' discursive resources signalled the possession of more capital, and more creativity with the use of it, and the subsequent better power position in the field of policymaking. Most of the time, however, I was identifying discursive patterns in both documentary and interview texts, and the habitual use of ideological-discursive formations, which drew on, and in turn perpetuated, certain ideologies. For example, the category of national-international relationships could be constructed through a discursive theme of 'animosity', which in turn contained an ideological-discursive formation of 'historical enemies' thus creating conditions for construction of ideology of East-West dualism. I also paid attention to the different actors' use of same or similar ideological-discursive formations, and

attempted to theorise the construction of alliances and relationships based on it.

Exploring the policy discourse and constructing ideologies

As my research question asked what CE policy revealed about the ideological project of building 'new' Serbia after the 2000 coup, in the last stages of the analysis, I was comparing discursive themes and ideological-discursive formations found in texts that were constructing the CE policy discourse specifically, with those which constructed the wider reform discourse. Hence, I could explore how the conceptualisation of citizenship was constructed through the CE policy discourse, but also to what extent this ideological construction corresponded to that conducted in the wider reform discourse. I also looked at the RE policy discourse, and alternative/opposite ideologies, and explored whether there was mutual exclusion or a point of meeting and ideological hybridity, and whether some discursive patterns might have been shared between it and CE policy discourse.

Interested in whether CE conceptualisation might have been used as discursive capital by Serbian policy-makers, I was comparing Serbian CE policy documents with international EDC documents, as well as comparing Serbian and English versions of national policy documents, and focusing on pronounced differences and the implications of adapting the text to the audience. I was also comparing key CE concepts as discursively constructed by policy documents to how they

were constructed by interviewees. In this way, it was possible to trace the difference in the use of discursive patterns, and ideological-discursive formations used by different actors in 'conversation' with prospective 'partners', compared to an academic researcher, leading to what I call in the following chapters different aspects of the policy discourse, or different policy discourses.

I noted in the previous chapter Colebatch's (2002) and Bacchi's (2012) observation about policies being constructed around the problem-solution juxtaposition. Bearing this in mind, where I was analysing the statements within the, for example, category of CE conceptualisation, I was looking at what legitimisation strategies were used for the normalisation of the constructed problem and the proposed solution to it. Interdiscursiveness – for example, drawing at the same time on educational and economic discourses, or discourses of war and international relations, was frequently used for legitimisation purposes, to indicate the scale of the problem, the fact that an educational matter was not educational alone, but spread across the number of fields, and the necessity of accepting the offered solution, or of negating an alternative one. Occasionally, policy actors used intertextuality for a similar purpose of increasing the scope of the problem by invoking a number of texts which are the part of the same project, or indicating another text as a source of authority.

Within these specific representations of the social reality, actors, processes, and relationships were fashioned in a certain way, through linguistic strategies such as listed below:

- polarisation (us/them; future/past; progressive/backward);
- nominalisation (where agency is omitted);
- use of pronouns (constructing personal agency, collective spirit, or detachment and alienation);
- the modality and voice of verbs (especially passivisation that constructs actors as sufferers of agentless, inevitable processes – this is often related to nominalisation and agent elision);
- the use of collocations (invoking the inseparability of concepts and ideologies whence they come);
- or a syntactic organisation of a statement (with rhetorical purposes).

With analysing these, it was necessary to spot syntagmatic choices (what is said) as well as paradigmatic possibilities (what is omitted – implied or suppressed). I was always conscious of invoking the ‘negative’ discourse, whose absence brings the present one into existence (Howarth and Griggs, 2012), as of the fact that this was one ‘reading’ of discourse, and that there may exist many

alternative ones, depending on the reader's motivation, command of discursive resources, or adopted ideologies.

Finally, having performed interviews with those who constituted policy problems and solutions, I was able to relate their use of discursive resources and patterns, to their position in the various fields. I hypothesised that while using aspects of CE policy discourse as discursive capital created in key policy actors a sense of a shared ideology and identity between Serbia and the 'rest of the normal world', amongst the actors themselves, there would be a degree of variation in the use of ideological-discursive formations. This came from their commanding sometimes different discursive resources, or, as the analysis later showed, some of them commanding a wealth of discursive resources, signalled by the ability to invoke different styles, and create varied ideological-discursive formations. Such creativity hinted at their power to move across fields (of education, science, politics) due to possessing more cultural, social, or political capital. Hence, there was a difference in the power position between not only those who 'spoke' the dominant policy discourse and used common ideological-discursive formations and those who did not, but also between those who seemed to have adopted and internalised them, and those who could demonstrate more variation in the command of various discursive resources.

This brief outline of the analysis process has imposed a sort of artificial separation between all the different, intricately connected, strands of analysis and the following chapters, in which they are brought together in concrete examples, followed by interpretation and discussion of results, will seek to

rectify this. I do however, reiterate the inherent open-endedness of any process of discourse analysis. In the course of refining my conceptual and analytical framework, constantly engaged with data for a long period of time, it was inevitable for some artificiality of division, separation, and structure to be imposed, for the sake of systematicity, where fluidity, overlapping, and the continuous allure of further deconstruction and interpretation perhaps felt more natural. Additionally, as I sought to achieve a balance between a more traditional content- and thematic qualitative analysis aimed at the macro- and meso-theorisation of the post-communist policymaking context, and a micro-analysis in the form of the linguistic deconstruction of texts, nuances might have been lost, and the wealth of data might have not been used to its full potential. In the end, this is – as I keep emphasising – but one of the possible stories that could have been told. Before I proceed with telling it, I reflect below on the worth and contribution of a study that does not claim to be the mirror of ‘truth’.

Multifacetedness, worthiness, and purpose of a CDA research project

The partiality of data and contingency of findings make the story told in this thesis far from ‘objective’ in any absolutist sense of the word, but the transparent (as far as my conscious awareness of my own place and role in constructing the story can reach) manner of telling it, and a particular theoretical lens through which it is recounted, distinguish it from anecdotalism

and ensure its internal validity (Arksey and Knight, 1999) or the interpretive and contextual validity of the data (Punch, 2005).

Validity and reliability may be sensitive terms in a study which generates qualitative data, and Taylor (2001b) suggests striving instead toward 'good practice' and 'fruitfulness', to be achieved through rigour, coherence, building on previous work, as well as triangulation and respondent validation. The first few are universal enough not to be contested, however triangulation – although sometimes advised even by discourse analysts (e.g. Wodak, 2008) – is a problematic term in a constructivist and a poststructuralist study. Arksey and Knight (1999) point out that the qualitative researchers often find this insistence on triangulation to be tightly related to positivist preoccupation with the elimination of bias. Silverman (2000) similarly expresses uneasiness with it and calls it contradictory to the assumptions of qualitative research. I agree that while scientific rigour and coherence are desirable, demanding that various methods or resources be triangulated for the purposes of arriving at the 'truth' is in conflict with the nature of my project, and my epistemological approach.

Respondent validation might be one way of increasing the validity of data, but I have already discussed my choice of more of an autocratic approach to data analysis, even if I considered the generation of data – and meaning – to be democratic. The issue which problematises dedication to a democratic approach stretches, I believe, beyond keeping the informants involved in the analysis and interpretation. Such an approach would also have to include the participants in the very process of research question- and methodology

development, as otherwise we again risk the autocratic imposition of our own categories and ideas about what is worth researching and in what way.

This is not to say that the practical difficulties should serve as an excuse to keep the participants in the dark as to the progress and the result of research. In my case, I had, after the interview, and where deemed necessary in order to clarify some points contacted some of my respondents. But once categories had been derived, and analysis of discourse was under way, I judged it less valuable – and feasible – to constantly be in touch with all of the respondents, to ask for their opinion on the progress of my analysis, especially in its more abstract and theoretical aspects. In doing this, I accepted that to a large degree, this study would always involve imposition of my own perspective, and that validity is to be achieved through systematic adherence to my analytical and theoretical framework, and not necessarily legitimation of my results by the participants. I do have plans to make a briefer, Serbian language version of the document available to respondents, as this will ensure a ‘fairer’ distribution of results to all who participated in their creation, and will provide an additional window for their use beyond the academic and theoretical purpose of this study.

Instead of generalisability, I have hoped to satisfy the criterion of usefulness with this project. This can be achieved in a number of ways, not least by increasing transparency and richness of description (Schofield, 1993) of concepts, contexts, and methods – if not for replication purposes, then for the purpose of developing theory, increasing knowledge, widening perspectives, and invoking discussion and reflection among both researchers and the wider

population. I have been aiming at a theoretical and conceptual (Hammersley, 1994), rather than a factual, practical application. The former is achieved through investigating a little researched case, and a phenomenon to which this sort of theoretical approach had not been much applied. Discourse analysts Titscher *et al.* (2000), for example, speak of the value of investigation as the contribution to the theoretical explanation of a complex phenomenon.

Furthermore, as Arksey and Knight (1999) note, even without claiming any generalisability to their study, qualitative researchers cannot control the way in which their results will be reconstructed by readers, or the way in which audiences will use their study as a basis for future research. Similarly, Firestone (1998) holds that the greatest potential for qualitative research generalisability rests with the case-to-case transfer by readers themselves, on whom the responsibility for this transfer lies, as long as the author ensures the richness of data. Another way in which a qualitative study can extend its 'usefulness', according to him, is theoretical/analytical generalisation, which is similar to Bryman's (2008) notion of extending generalisation not to populations but theoretical propositions, and is close to the nature and purpose of this project.

Finally, this curiosity in matters of a theoretical, rather than a political nature, is also what partly justifies my reluctance to subscribe to the emancipatory agenda of a critical researcher. Researcher's situatedness within the field and the socio-historical context of their project aside, I am not personally comfortable with the a biased approach to an object of study. In effect, I maintain that it is possible to nurture intellectual curiosity in matters of power

and ideology, without committing to social and political activism. Bacchi (2000) similarly feels some unease towards the political agenda of many policy-as-discourse analysts and expresses scepticism towards the prevailing focus on the 'dominant' in the construction of Discourse, and the 'dominated' in the effects of Discourse, invariably 'proving' their point that the powerful can make decisions and conceptualise reality according to their own interests, while the dispossessed can do nothing but suffer the effects of this.

Whilst I find the unpacking of the ideological-discursive formations that are designed to become at one point regarded as 'common sense' (e.g. 'it is important to catch up with Europe', or 'it is essential that students are educated in democracy') highly important, I have a problem with some of the common assumptions made by critical researchers. One of these assumptions is an invariably negative understanding of 'ideology' forced by the more powerful onto the less powerful, and thereby implied stability of such a power relationship, and simultaneously neglected other ideologies that the less powerful themselves would have as their way of socially organising and defining the world.

Thus, despite my dedication to exploring the ideological construction of the social reality, I did not ascribe emancipatory value to the exploratory, and perhaps revelatory, nature of my endeavour. One of the reasons for this was methodological: relying too much on notions of 'domination' would presume my ability to identify the 'real' interests of the 'dominated', which are being marginalised. I believe this notion of a 'real interest' to be extremely difficult to

operationalise and produce through research, unless these interests are relatively incontestable, like someone's health and well-being, and it was certainly beyond the scope of this thesis. For, whilst I aimed to introduce alternative and oppositional constructions of the policy discourse, and enable a variety of voices to be heard, I did not imagine to claim that one is in any way 'more right' than the others. This is an idea that applied both to the view of the Serbian policymakers as those who are powerful and imposing their dominant ideology through the reform and policy discourse, and of them as the dominated one, accepting the imposed ideology from the global policy discourse. The fluidity which I believe is a best way to characterise power relationships and power positions will be further demonstrated in the next two chapters, in which I present my findings.

Conclusion

This chapter outlined the methods I used in the construction of the Serbian civic education policy discourse. It outlined the categories of interviewees and documents, and the analytical framework that helped me understand and theorise the wealth of data generated in this research. I also discussed the notion of the objectivity of the researcher, and the researcher's role in the construction of the particular version of the story, and the version of the 'truth' offered by their project. I explained that my constructivist epistemology, although informed by discourse theory, is more grounded in critical realism

than poststructuralism, and that my adoption of the critical approach does not mean that I assume normative and emancipatory purpose to my work. Lastly, I argued for the conceptual and theoretical, if not 'practical' merit and applicability of a study such as mine.

I wanted to conclude my discussion of the applicability and value of an in-depth single-case study conducted in a constructivist fashion, by reflecting on Punch's (2005) assurance that some cases are so unique and complex that they deserve to be studied in their complexity without much concern for generalisation. Although I believe this idea to hold merit, it would be unwise to use it as an excuse to dispense with meditating on and satisfying the criteria of purpose and application which any study can, and should have, beyond satiating personal curiosity. In chapters that follow, I offer my limited, contingent, and ultimately unfinished story of the Serbian civic education policy formation, and consider its 'factual', theoretical, and methodological potential.

CHAPTER 5

The introduction of the civic education policy in Serbia: constructing the historical narrative

Introduction

Relying primarily on interviewees' accounts, in this chapter I construct the historical narrative of CE's introduction and early development, in the context of the early years of Serbia's first comprehensive post-communist education reform. The purpose of the chapter is twofold. Firstly, it is to bring together various actors' stories, with their beginnings, plots, and ends, and to weave them together into a kind of an arch-narrative that maps out the occurrence and relationship between different categories and themes of the policy discourse and brings to life the accounts of the various actors who contributed to the construction of this discourse. It is a narrative that highlights, as well as transcends, mutual collisions and contradictions between different individual accounts. Secondly, it allows me to address the questions of who/when/how/why, and relate the story of the CE policy within the wider context of Serbia's political circumstances and its early education reform, before focusing, in the next chapter, on the ideological construction of the policy and reform discourse. Therein, I explore how the constructions of actors, relationships, and events, were shaped by the agents' discursive capital and the

ideologies on which they were drawing. This exploration will also form the basis of theorisation of how the agents' discursive capital was related to their position and role in the policy discourse.

My 'findings'¹¹ are presented and discussed against the backdrop of the relevant literature on post-communist transition in education. In constructing this discourse, I draw on theoretical models and empirical findings constructed by authors sometimes coming from a distinctly different perspective from my own. My epistemological approach, although emphasising that knowledge is situated and contingent, does not however lead to discarding knowledge created from a different theoretical perspective. I rather think of it as contributing to a pool of knowledge on post-communist transition in education, here to be analysed, evaluated, and complemented, a conceptual amalgamation to which my thesis makes a contribution, subject to any future interpretations.

Recounting the story of CE introduction: categories of actors in and aspects of the CE policy discourse

The process of constructing the historical narrative within my epistemological paradigm meant that I had to take into account different categories of actors from the very beginning, and look at their constructions. I also had to organise my findings around the different 'aspects' of the policy discourse constructions,

¹¹ Similarly to 'elite' in the previous chapter, the term 'findings' is used here (interchangeably with 'results') due to its commonality, however I wish to note some reservations towards the herewith implied 'discovery' of facts.

that I theorised as different fields of the policy discourse construction, by different actors, for different audiences, and with different purposes in mind. The first level analysis, content- and thematic analysis, whose results are largely presented in this chapter, has provided a categorisation of actors into 'inner circle policy actors', 'outer circle policy actors', and 'commentators and critics'. The first category includes key policymakers: senior Ministry figures and members of the EDC expert group, curriculum developers and those corresponding with the CoE's EDC. The second group involves advisors and collaborators, including members of the Civil Society NGO, Belgrade office of Council of Europe, and OSF, and occasional collaborators on certain aspects of CE.

These two categories include actors referred to in table 1 as 'policy actors' – those whose cultural and discursive capital contributed to the construction of the official policy discourse, and whose discursive and social capital placed them at the core of the policy introduction and development. The difference lies in the fact that the members of the inner circle were involved in this process from the very beginning, with the members of the outer circle providing occasional contributions. The third category of 'commentators and critics' includes those actors who constructed an 'alternative' discourse. As for different 'discourses', I spoke in chapter 3 about my use of 'discourse' as a countable noun, to denote the semiotic aspects of social practices and networks contained in, and constitutive of different fields – educational, political, national, or global. Additionally, my analysis led to the theorisation of not only

multiple discourses connected to the fields that I perceived as existing prior to my generation of data, but different aspects of the CE policy discourse.

These different aspects of the policy discourse were constructed through different discursive texts and in different fields: in national and international policy documents, parliamentary debates and media texts, and my interviews. Such differentiation, although not resulting in any actual separation – all of the aspects still comprise a singular version of the policy discourse constructed in this thesis – was necessary with respect to the analysis that involved the actors' use of discursive capital when engaging with different actors in different fields. Thus I make a distinction between the following constructions of the CE policy and reform discourse: 'official' (as constructed in policy documents), 'public' (as constructed in media and parliamentary debates), 'personal' (as constructed in interviews), and finally 'alternative'. The separation between multiple 'policy discourses' is relatable to the concept of different 'policyspeaks', explored as a possibility in policy research by Halász (2012) and Steiner-Khamsi (2014).

It was primarily the inner, and to a degree, outer, circle policy actors who constructed the official discourse, which, as I will argue further on, functioned as a part of an ideological-discursive project of creating a new Serbia, of which the educational reform was a part. The 'commentators and critics' category includes various critics of the policy and of the reform, a member of the then shadow cabinet for education, as well as the SOC representatives who were involved with RE. All of these actors are theorised as belonging to the same category due to their drawing on the same ideologies in their, alternative

construction, of the policy discourse, the use of similar discursive resources, and the shared social capital which at the time created various overlaps between members of academia (critics, commentators), members of political parties (specifically DSS to whom the shadow cabinet belonged), or members of the SOC.

What I refer to as 'alternative' construction of the policy discourse, draws partly on Fairclough's (2009) recommendations about offering a construction of discourse that is one of the alternatives to the dominant construction of the social reality by the powerful (see pages 121; 128). Whilst Fairclough (2009) suggests offering 'alternative' discourse to the official one as more of a political strategy of identifying one possible solution to what he sees as a social problem created by the official discourse, what I have in mind is offering an alternative construction as one way of indicating that the official construction is not the only 'truth' and is but one of the many possible ways of constructing the social reality, dependent on the discursive resources of constructors. An additional reason is to examine the desirable and undesirable ideologies constructed therein, and the accompanying prescription of values and identities, seeking the meeting points and points of exclusion between the different aspects of policy discourse. This is intended as a way of exploration of the manner in which the use of valuable and undesirable ideological-discursive formations affects the positions, alliances, actions and conflicts, between different actors in the educational policymaking field.

In the remnant of the chapter, I proceed to present this historical account as constructed by these various actors belonging to different categories, and as constructed in various aspects between which there are certain overlaps. For example, there are overlaps between official and personal constructions where these are performed by same individuals. Also, some of the criticism and its constitutive ideologies (nationalism, traditionalism, conservatism) form the early public reform discourse constructed in the media and parliamentary debates, but its elements do not quite find their way into the official policy documents. As I mentioned above, the idea is to create an arch-narrative here that would bring these different narratives together, and set up the wider context for CE introduction, so as to map out the inception, development, and the place of the policy in the wider contemporary educational and political developments in Serbia. Considered in this wider context, it became apparent early on in my analysis, for example, that this policy discourse contained and constructed a complex interdiscursivity between educational, and political, and religious fields. Actions in the latter two provide the understanding for the religious education policy, the introduction of which, chronologically, and according to some interviewees, causally, triggered the introduction of CE in September 2001. I thus begin with constructing the wider context of the reform, and the categories of the relevant actors, new Ministry composition, and preparing the reform agenda.

Wider reform context post-2000 and the beginning of Serbia's transition 'proper'

Despite the fact that the events to which I refer here took place a decade after the end of the Serbian (Yugoslavian) variant of communism, the atmosphere surrounding the institution of the democratic government in 2000/1, as described in interviews with those directly involved with it, echoes much of the early post-communist-collapse days conveyed by the transition literature. These echoes are particularly striking when it comes to the prevalent theme of enthusiasm and optimism (see Pastuović, 1993) at the prospect of almost unlimited opportunity for change and progress: "*finally opening some space for action*" is a phrase that was used by several of my interviewees. This is also one of the multiple instances of having more than one interviewee use a similar – or occasionally identical – phrase. Such occurrences serve to further reinforce the notion of actors' sharing discursive resources.

Alongside the theme of enthusiasm descriptive and constitutive of the category of reform agenda preparation, another common theme that appears in the post-communist transition and literature is that of chaos and uncertainty, arising from the newly gained freedom to exercise the pluralism of ideas and opinions (Kaser and Phillips, 1992; Rupnik, 1995; Birzea, 1994; 1997; McLeish, 1998a; Coulby 2000; Buyandelgeriyn, 2008). My data however offer little in support of it. To the contrary, the narratives of the inner circle actors have consensus as a dominant theme in the construction of this category. There seemed to have been a concordance of opinions on the scope and nature of necessary changes,

consistently coupled with a theme of urgency (with which the changes were to be introduced). The theme of consensus is dominant both in the official and the personal constructions of the policy discourse, and appears also in the interview narratives of the category of critics and commentators, and some of the outer circle actors. In the latter, it forms a basis for harsh criticism of the manner in which reform was conducted.

Although the official and personal constructions of the reform agenda category revolves around the theme of consensus amongst the inner circle actors, these constructions also convey dissent and disagreement coming from outside of the circle. The dissenting voices did not belong to the former regime, however. There was no conflict between the old and the new here, as identified, for example, by Birzea (1997) in the case of Romania, and echoing in some forms throughout the post-communist literature. The relationship between the category of post-2000 inner circle policy actors, and the category of the pre-2000 administration was conceptualised by my Ministry-based interviewees merely as an initial, and later dissolved, petty opposition, non-threatening, as it was non-ideological. This is also confirmed in the contributions to the public construction of the reform discourse made by Milošević's former political party, contributions informed by a rather subdued and moderate criticism, and without any prevalent invocation of the ideologies of nationalism or conservatism. Meanwhile, the actor constructed by inner circle policy actors as having been a far more serious treat to the principles espoused by the reform and this policy, was, in fact, the conservative democratic party (DSS) of the new President, member of the former anti-Milošević coalition and also overtly

committed to democratic, pro-European principles, but whose 2004 Ministry led to the “*entire reform to be stopped and reverted*” (as reported by several interviewees).

Such construction of DSS as the adversary of the reform goals is related to this collective actor’s ideology, constructed by the then Serbian political and educational elite as undesirable, and necessary to eradicate in the ideological-discursive project of building the new Serbia. The discursive theme that has a most prevalent appearance in the inner circle actors’ construction of DSS was that of backwardness. Such construction was related to the party’s perceived lack of understanding of the needs of the system and the urgency of change, and particularly their reservation towards non-traditional (in Serbia at the time) policy actors such as international organisations and international and domestic NGOs. Such themes contribute to the dominant ideological construction of the oppositional (to the inner circle policy actors and the reform principles) DSS as conservative, traditional, even nationalist, adding to the construction of these ideologies as undesirable and threatening, more on which in the next chapter.

Apart from the theme of backwardness, that constructs both this distinct actor and the opponents of the reform in general, another dominant discursive theme in the construction of the reform adversaries is that of political affiliation. Whilst not all reform critics were necessarily overtly affiliated with a political party, the core theme of politics is very prominent in most narratives and regardless of the actor category, and it contributes, as I will illustrate in chapter

6, to the construction of another undesirable ideology – politicisation. I should emphasise that the meaning of ‘politicisation’ and ‘politics’, the words directly translated from my the interviewees’ and documents’ use of *politicizacija*, relate specifically to party politics, and political party membership.

In relation to self-identity, the invocation of this theme was used both by inner circle actors and commentators/critics as a discursive strategy of lending legitimacy to their statements, either by weaving detachment from political association throughout their accounts, or more overtly, by prefacing a statement with “*I was never a political person*”, or “*I never belonged to any party*”, as was the case with two interviewees. This strategy is related to the pronounced – and still present – politicisation of most public areas in Serbia (Ivić, 2006), at the time of the CE policy introduction identified as one of the main problems on the reform agenda. A similar way in which theme of political affiliation is used in narratives is as a discursive strategy aimed at discrediting the opponents’ opinions:

“And I know that they [some of the most vocal critics of the reform] had a political background. There was one among them who was some sort of an expert, so he occasionally came forth as a politician, and on other occasions as an expert – but as an expert he was a completely minor figure, still he always came forth with some quasi-expert criticism.” [CE curriculum developer]

Two main sub-themes of the core theme of politics, descriptive of the categories of the actors’ identity/role and relationship between different actors are those of political membership/affiliation, but also political interaction – interaction in the political field. As I will demonstrate shortly, the majority of interviewees,

belonging to all categories, but particularly that of inner circle actors, stayed away from the invocation of political discourse, as they sought to construct their identity, relationships, and agency as belonging exclusively to the field of education, strengthening in this way the desirable ideologies of professionalism and expertism. There is, however, one significant exception to this separation from the political field, and it is the case of construction of religious education policy, which was, most agreed, a stake in political exchange.

As this account of the civic education policy introduction follows a historical timeline, more on the crossover between the educational, political, and religious fields is to follow in the later sections of the chapter – for now, this brief note serves to position the Serbian Orthodox Church, too, as one of the relevant actors in the civic education policy discourse, and a powerful agent in educational and political fields, negatively constructed by the inner circle policy actors through the invocation of the political discourse. It is also an actor who, together with the above identified opponents of the reform, forms the core of carriers of the alternative discourse to the official policy discourse. It is interesting to note already that this alternative discourse was not created entirely outside of the educational field at the time (e.g. solely in the political, academic, or media fields). Some of the constructors of the alternative discourse, commentators and critics whom I interviewed, insisted that the elements of their discourse were voiced during the internal decision-making processes of the reform agenda preparation, but remained on the margins. I theorise this later as attributable to these actors' lacking the 'right', valuable kind of discursive capital, the kind shared amongst the inner circle of policy

actors, and accumulated during their pre-2000 professional engagement, leading to the composition of the Ministry to be conducted in the way described below.

The composition of the new Ministry of Education

The composition of the new Ministry is one of the two categories that I found significantly contributed to the above discussed lack of uncertainty with which the reform processes began. The other contributing category, also in a relationship of strong correlation with the first one, is the inner circle actors' construction of their pre-2000 professional engagement. The promptness of the post-2000 changes is evident in the fact that the new Ministry was formed only a few months after Milošević was ousted and the new elections were held, and the highly revolutionary, all-encompassing 'Umbrella Law' (Ivić, 2006) was voted in already in 2003. The new Ministry of Education was led by two political parties with fairly similar, modernising, progressive, pro-European agendas. The narratives constructed by those working with(in) the new Ministry are shaped by the fairly homogenous ideology of the 'modern, European Serbia' moving away from its undemocratic past. This homogenous agenda has, in turn, a reinforcing factor in the pre-2000 engagement of involved actors, as most of them shared a fairly similar background in terms of profession, civic engagement, preferred educational ideas, and ideas about the future of the Serbian society more generally.

This connection between a shared background and the composition of the reformist Ministry is not unfamiliar in the post-communist context, where it was occasionally the pre-revolution, 'revolutionary' groups and networks who came to be involved with the new, democratic government (see for example Polyzoi and Dneprov, 2003). In the Serbian context as well, many of the members of the new Ministry, and in the case of civic education, curriculum- and subject- developers and advisors, had known each other prior to 2000, through professional work, alternative academic networks, and various NGOs that had worked in the broad area of education during the 1990s. One senior Ministry actor described the building of the new Ministry as creating a core group and then extending it through personal connections, references, and recommendations. In this way the image is created as one of an almost military group, keeping in with the overarching metaphor of the revolutionary struggle.

"Yes, there were a lot of people who wanted to participate [...] so the basic squad was there, the team leaders. And then they had two-three people they knew were good, so they chose their own teams." [Senior Ministry actor]

Another interviewee described their own experience of becoming a part of this group by building on the theme of a shared background between the new Ministry actors through personal, pre-2000 connections. This statement works to simultaneously contribute to the construction of the policy actors as a part of a close team, whilst overtly depicting the policymaking process as open and welcoming, *"when only those who didn't want to participate, didn't"* [Senior Ministry actor]:

"I knew her, so I informally came up to her after some conference and said that this was what interested me, what I would like to do." [Senior EDC member]

Another actor still was approached, again through recommendations owing to their pre-2000 engagement in the alternative educational activities, and connections to various NGOs:

"And I knew that several people had recommended me, so she [a senior Ministry actor] offered me several roles between which to choose." [Senior EDC team member]

The manner in which the Ministry was composed points to a weak presence of the theme of politics (either as a sub-theme of political affiliation or political interaction) in the construction of the new administration and the self-construction of the category of inner circle actors. Furthermore, the prime minister himself, as well as the senior figures in the Ministry, prided themselves on the fact that ministries were not to be politicised, but instead formed and led by experts: *"Zoran [Djindjić, PM] wanted to form that government on the basis of expertise and elitism¹², not political affiliation"* assured a senior Ministry actor. In fact, 'depoliticisation' was promoted by the key Ministry figures as one of the major '3D' aspects of the educational reform (the other two being democratisation and decentralisation) (Parliamentary debates, April/May 2002), and appears as one of the dominant discursive themes, alongside the above discussed notion of politicisation as a negative, in most narratives, as a

¹² Again, this is a direct translation from the interviewee's use of the word *elitizam*, to mean a positive focus on professionalism and expertism, rather than the usual, somewhat derogatory use of the word, with a focus on exclusivity.

theme constitutive of (un)desirable ideologies in the construction of the new Serbia.

Perhaps in an attempt to distance themselves from both the previous regimes in which the politicisation of education was such that even headmasters had to belong to the ruling party, most of my respondents' narratives – not only those of the supporters, but also those of the critics of the reform – feature a very prominent renouncement of political affiliation, and the linking of their values, opinions, and actions to a professional and academic reasoning. Even the most senior Ministry figures, who would be expected to have had a political background, sought to identify themselves with their profession, and with other experts working in the field, and detach themselves from political labelling.

“I came as a political person, but [mine] was a political party of intellectuals that had substantive ideas [...] and after two or three months I also slipped into this expert team.” (Senior Ministry actor).

Similarly, a senior EDC team member sought to assure me that:

“This is still a country dominated by political parties. But no one from my department was a member of a political party [...] you know, no one, not even the deputy ministers.”

Thus the narratives of the inner circle policy actors emphasise that the reform was to be led by people who did not belong to the ruling political parties to lend the legitimacy to the reform efforts. As the qualities reported as determining someone's participation in preparing the reform agenda were those of

expertism and willingness to get involved, the category of the reform agenda preparation is constructed by the inner circle actors as open and inclusive.

Parallel to the inner circle actors' construction of the reform agenda preparation as open, the category of critics and commentators, construct it as exclusive, calling upon the absence of challenging voices from the reform process, as well as the absence of the various scientific institutes, especially in the light of proselytising the democratic nature of decision-making. The critics were adamant in their interviews that involvement and suggestions were indeed possible, but the latter would regularly be rejected. One of the prominent reform critics and a participant in one of the curriculum development groups described the planning process in the following way:

"See, we would gather 'round and discuss and conclude, and send them [the Ministry] our conclusions, and they would send them back. And again and again it went [...] see, that was their method."

Another actor from the category of reform critics added to this notion of the reform leaders' imperviousness to suggestions outside of their own design, and explained it by referring to its being rooted in (Serbian, Yugoslavian) tradition. It is important to note here, however, that this is likely to be interpreted not as a justification of the process, but as its indictment through comparison with processes in authoritarian regimes (communist and Milošević's ethnic nationalist), thus discursively subverting the idea of proclaimed democratisation.

“But there was always a tradition of making some decisions, and then having an outer layer of public discussion [...] this was no exception. The bins in the Ministry were filled with constructive, some clever, some maybe stupid, suggestions.”

There were other accounts, constructing their criticism of the exclusivity of the inner circle through various other themes. For example, a prominent academic and critic of CE and the reform related it to the scepticism towards non-traditional (in the given context) policy actors, construed as offering less value than the more traditional, and more formal, sources of knowledge and expertise:

“What, me? No one consulted me. Or anyone from the Institute [...] It was NGOs, various NGOs who influenced the creation of the concept of civic education [...] they were the main actors, and the Institute, as a high-ranking scientific institution, was not consulted at all.”

Echoing similar absence of various groups from the decision-making process, a teachers' union representative, and the critic of the reform, related their criticism to the absence of teacher input.

“No, the teachers weren't consulted at all. The decision was made at the top, like it always is, and no one ever asked for the teachers' opinion on it.” [TU leader]

These examples of criticism of the exclusivity of the inner circle, and the experience of the major decisions as happening 'behind closed doors' appear in stark contrast to the policy-makers' assertion that

“[...] there was a basic conception around which we organised these discussions [...] and this really well led action called 'Conversations about the reform' [...] asking teachers for suggestions [...] collecting

suggestions, discussing them, exchanging them [...] and it was really good that these suggestions, [...] bottom-up suggestions, coincided with the expert teams' recommendations." [Senior Ministry actor]

From the inner circle actors' perspective, there is, in the meantime, a notion created of an open playground, welcoming anyone who cared to join in. Outside of it, the image is of a closed clique of like-minded people, content to let others join as long as others played by their rules. Whilst it is not too unusual for policy elites to share the same vision of the reform, there is in the categories of Ministry composition and reform agenda preparation a notable opposition between themes of freedom (to join the reform process), as constructed by the inner circle, and almost hermetic exclusivity, as constructed by commentators and critics, and partly by even some of the outer circle actors.

The manner in which the inner circle interviewees constructed the composition of, and the relationships within the new Ministry, further adds to the clique-y nature of the new administration. A quote from a senior Ministry actor is very illustrative in this respect:

"I was given complete freedom in forming the Ministry. So I went around town, leafed through my memories, and gathered people whom I [knew were] experts, from those pre-revolution days, the days of fighting for change."

This quote serves to illustrate an important discursive theme in the construction of the team and the category of the inner circle actors, and the atmosphere and nature of their work in the early days of transition. It is the theme of friendship, almost camaraderie, between the team members, borne

out of the mutual zeal and dedication to the principles of the reform, and to enacting them as promptly as possible. This theme appears also in the construction of the category of the inner circle actors' pre-revolution engagement. Their pre-2000 engagement was constructed as subversive to the then regime, thus acting to construct an interdiscursive hybridity between an educational, political, and war discourses, and reinforcing the magnitude and importance of educational changes. As one CE curriculum developer vividly described, referring to the pre-2000 testing out of some programmes in anti-war and democratic education in select schools:

"[...] we were terrified the whole time, feeling that they could bust in at any time and shut everything down [...] and schools were afraid to let us in [...] but] sometimes the headmasters would secretly let us try out some of our workshops."

Meanwhile, another CE curriculum developer succinctly described the pre-2000 work with a chuckle, perhaps careful not to seem to overstate the significance of their efforts:

"Our work, what we did, to us it was some sort of activism, it was a resistance movement."

This work was translated post-2000 into an overwhelming sense of enthusiasm – as well as responsibility – to have that 'guerrilla' practice developed into an official nation-wide policy. A senior Ministry actor talked about it in the following way, stressing their own personal agency and responsibility, and reinforcing the themes of revolutionism, and the dualism of the pre- and post-Milošević Serbia:

“Here was a chance to make a contribution, to mobilise the education system [...] I knew what the 90s did to us, and I knew I had to accept this post if I was to cast out any remains of that period.”

To a large degree, the narratives of the interviewees belonging to the inner circle construct the inner circle almost as crusaders, or as one senior Ministry actor put it, “*the first echelon in the struggle for change*”. And the ideologies that informed this change were largely related to the ideas borne out of inner circle actors’ pre-2000 professional engagement.

Preparing the reform agenda

As I mentioned earlier, a theme common to the construction of the early days of the post-communist education reform, that of urgency, appears also in the Serbian case. This urgency is related to the ten-year lag in the post-communist transition, with education in this period constructed by the inner circle policy actors as inferior even to the communist period in the official and personal aspects of the policy discourse. However, this theme is coupled, contrary to the usual themes of chaos and uncertainty, with a theme of determination about what ‘needed’ to be done. This determination is not only connected with the wide agreement on the course of the reform among the policy elite as illustrated above, but seems to have stemmed from the idea that the said lag could serve as a lesson in problems, success stories, and potential pitfalls of the changes introduced in similar context across Europe. Whilst this sort of

determination appears across the narratives of the inner circle actors, it is perhaps most powerfully reflected in the words of a senior Ministry actor, adamant that:

"I wanted for Serbia not to go in the known wrong direction. Maybe we would have gone in an unknown one, but at least we didn't have to go in the direction we knew was wrong."

According to the inner circle actors, the decade-long delay also created a prolonged period of time during which to 'actively' prepare for the reform, this period reaching back to the 1980s. The theme of 'active' waiting is causally related to the theme of unique position in their construction of the category of the international actors. Pre-existing knowledge, a valuable discursive, and for some of them social, capital enabled them to, for example, pre-empt donors' *"programmes that they had developed for, I don't know, Estonia"* [Senior Ministry actor] with their own agenda and reform strategy. 'Active waiting' also incorporates familiarity with transition processes across the post-communist Europe, contributing to an overarching theme of advantage that characterises the core category of international influences.

So another theme constitutive of the category of international influences, is 'lessons from abroad', which is one of the crucial factors of differentiation between Serbian experience of the post-communist reform, and – if one can call it that – collective experiences the 1990s reforms as depicted in the literature. 'Lessons from abroad' were generally only unanimously construed in interviews as beneficial if they were conceptualised in a way which stressed

learning from others' (negative) experiences and mistakes. Simply 'learning from others' was not always readily accepted as useful, and the way in which different actors constructed the category of international influence is related to the individual actor's position and role in the policy discourse and the social and discursive capital that they commanded, and is not necessarily constructed along the lines of division between different categories of actors. For example, it equally applies to inner and outer policy actors, as well as to commentators and critics.

The 'lessons from abroad', together with the theme of 'openness' constitutive of the category of pre-1990, communist experience, contributes to advantage, even uniqueness in the construction of the interaction with the CEE region (the sub-category of 'international influences'). There is in fact a correlation between the two. I connect the reluctance to conceive of other European post-communist countries' transition paths as valuable learning opportunities, to the construction of Serbia's communist experience as less oppressive, isolated, and centrally controlled from what might have been the case with other European countries. As I said, the theme of advantage in constructing Serbian experience against the CEE region does not appear in all narratives. Some actors related notable enthusiasm in their construction of a sub-category of interaction with the CEE region, which I connect to their possession of (lower) amount of valuable social and discursive capital, leading to the enthusiasm at the open possibility for its accumulation:

“There were so many learning possibilities! From all these other countries [...] and I wasn’t ashamed to ask [...] and they seemed to have respected our willingness to learn.” [Senior EDC team member]

Contrasted with such experiences is an occasional sense of almost arrogance towards their more ‘advanced’ (certainly in their path to the EU) neighbours that emerged from most other narratives:

“Sometimes they [CoE] would send us someone, some Czech [who] probably got some licence during for this during the ‘90s [...] to come here and, to tell you the truth, it was like trying to teach your grandmother to suck eggs [...] we were so much further ahead than they were. So there was quite a lot of time-wasting in those situations [EDC team member].”

The disinclination to construct the team of inner circle actors as ‘learning how to transition’, is, in addition to the possession of capital, also accentuated where there was a theme of active preparation, mentioned above, present in narratives. This is almost a natural deduction, as the period of active preparation was largely what enabled the accumulation of valuable social and discursive capital, and that capital enabled them to feel in a position of power to know, rather than learn, what Serbia needed. Although the accumulation of capital enabled through pre-2000 professional engagement is common to all of the inner circle actors, there are differences in how they constructed this category, and thus their own sense of power and agency post-2000. For example, where it is construed as a form of “*mental hygiene*” [CE curriculum developer], with the NGO sector seen as an oasis of “*meaningful work*” [CE curriculum developer], this has a weaker relationship to ‘reluctance to learn’, as the construction of the pre-2000 professional engagement is done through a

theme reflecting more of a personal than a social or political purpose. The relationship between an actor's pre-2000 engagement and an international influence category constructed through themes of advantage and a reluctance to learn is stronger with those who had cooperated – either through donor-related activities, or through professional engagement – with international organisations, colleagues from outside of the country, and major NGOs, thus gaining social capital, and becoming familiar with transition trends and creating ideas for future Serbian education reform (gain of valuable discursive capital). Exceptionally, one of the senior Ministry actors boasts experience in working, as a consultant, on other post-communist countries' education reforms during the 1990s.

These activities, the nature of which have a strong connection to the CE conceptualisation, as they created discursive resources used in the construction of the policy discourse, can be divided into three categories. The first is that of tolerance-building and peaceful conflict resolution related to anti-war programmes. The second focuses on active learning, debate and discussion as an antidote to the traditional ex-cathedra classroom organisation. Finally there are the more political and procedural elements, with a focus on the democratisation of structures and institutions, and the increased engagement of stakeholders in deciding the nature of educational processes. When it came to translating this experience into a policy strategy, all inner circle actors constructed in their interviews the category of preparing the reform agenda through the themes of freedom and autonomy. This is illustrated by a quote from a senior Ministry actor, who insisted that:

“[...] there was so much mutual trust within the team, so there was incredible autonomy [...] It all functioned so well thanks to our excellent relationship, and the great trust between us, and our similar ideas.”

Thus, through the combination of themes of active preparation, autonomy, consensus, and determination, the processes of setting the reform on its course swiftly took place. Soon after its institution in February 2001, the Ministry formed six expert groups to tackle different aspects of the reform and one of them was to develop Democratisation of Education and Education for Democracy. The basic reform strategy was created in the spring of 2001, according to a senior Ministry actor, and only four months after its formation, the Ministry organised the first major international conference where the strategy was presented to the prospective donors, and Serbian experts were familiarised with some of the practices and solutions from other European countries.

Education was named the new government's priority and the key reform goals were identified as economic recovery, creation of a democratic society and re-integration into the international community, with more specific goals including the improved quality, governance, education finance, stakeholder participation, appreciation of ethnic, cultural and linguistic diversity, and the level of professionalism and efficiency in education delivery (June 2001 Conference Strategy Discussion Draft). Whilst the conference concerned all aspects of the reform, democratic citizenship, and instilling of values of respect for democracy and human rights, featured as one of the key areas. This

indicates that the idea of EDC had indeed existed as a part of the reform strategy since the early days, and also that the discursive capital involving the concepts of human rights and democratic citizenship was used early on in exchange with international actors. However, somewhat paradoxically – considering the investment in depoliticisation of education, and insistence upon exclusive reliance on professionalism and expertise in decision-making – the reform was kicked off by a policy that all of my respondents, save for the SOC representatives, qualified as purely political. With it, religious and civic education were introduced, as optional electives, in first years of primary and secondary schools, and the SOC entered the educational field, and confirmed its position and power in the political field.

Religion, education, and political decisions

The introductory sections to this chapter identified the Serbian Orthodox Church as an important political actor in the field of Serbian national politics, constructed as such by the non-SOC interviewees. Almost all of them constructed the SOC as the only actor who contributed to the politicisation of the educational field. The presence of the SOC in the educational field, and their power in the wider political field are also elements that create a considerable discrepancy between the different aspects of the policy discourse, as they are completely omitted from the official construction of the policy and reform discourse. Their presence in interview narratives, on the other hand, may have

come as the product of some of the interviewees' motives (to justify, explain, mollify) behind participation in this project, especially since our interviews were temporally removed from these, at the time controversial, events.

Thus, despite the absence of the SOC in the official construction of discourse, most interviewees, regardless of their category, readily recognised RE's appearance as a political act, although this act was constructed differently by different actors, and in relation to their then and current position and place in the reform. In most cases it was mentioned in a casual manner, and referred to as common knowledge. In a couple of cases the interviewee took the time to explain it to me, in a way that made them appear privy to a well-kept secret. Yet in others, there was a personal, even emotional, reaction to a decision that they saw as negating multiple principles on which the reform was being based.

Documentary data, particularly relevant parliamentary debates, from the time of the events, offer a notably diverging construction of the RE policy discourse. Here, the introduction, or *re*-introduction, the term insisted upon by the SOC representatives and supporters of religious education in Serbia, of RE in formal education, is used in the public construction of the policy discourse as precisely supporting the principles of the reform. It appears as an example of the democratisation in schools, and in the next chapter, I will elaborate more on the discursive incorporation of the apparently incongruous (with respect to the rest of the reform) RE into the reform discourse. Its introduction was at the time related to its, in the Serbian context, novel status as an elective, enabling choice, initiative, and involvement for students and parents. It appears in the

public policy discourse construction by top government actors (those outside of the Ministry of Education) as both an exercise of cultural and basic human rights, and an educationally valid decision that contributes to a more comprehensive treatment of various topics in schools (Parliamentary debates, April/May 2002). However, this can also be treated as an *ex post facto* legitimization, as the actions surrounding the decision to bring RE (back) into schools did not, according to the available documentation, as well as majority of interviewees, follow this rationale.

Religious education was a part of Serbian schools' curricula prior to WWII, and dating back to the 19th century. After the fall of communism, and the dissolution of the Yugoslavian state, the dominant Church, as in most other post-communist contexts, started gaining political currency and "*claiming its rightful place in the society*" (an expression used ubiquitously by RE supporters, both among my interviewees and in documentary data). After an ambivalent relationship with Milošević's administration, in the second half of the 1990s, the SOC sided with anti-Milošević protesters, and, as was widely considered in Serbian public, secured a substantial popular support for their cause. Some hope of compensation for this support was intimated in a Serbian political weekly's interview with the then patriarch, given after Milošević was ousted, in which he expressed various expectations from Serbia's finally having a president who was a 'believer', including the return of RE to schools, albeit as an elective (*Vreme* interview with Patriarch Pavle, 2001).

Bringing back RE, first openly requested in November 2000, provoked much resistance from the civil sector. Resistance to RE, voiced by many NGOs, public figures, and some political parties, drew on the 'unconstitutional' role of any church in a nominally secular state, and the potential discrimination arising from allowing some (seven, somewhat arbitrarily defined as 'traditional') churches to exercise RE, but prohibiting others from it. The discursive themes of unconstitutionality and discrimination were also the most prominent in anti-RE strands of the spring 2002 parliamentary debates concerning the change of status of CE and RE from 'optional' to 'compulsory elective'. The response from the Church, although sometimes invoking religious discourse, and sometimes drawing on the nationalist ideology, perhaps surprisingly predominantly drew on the ideology of human rights. Such a discursive move serves to further reinforce what I will elaborate in the next chapter, and that is the status of nationalism as an undesirable ideology, and democracy and human rights as desirable ones, recognised as such even by RE policy actors, who, I theorise, used it as a discursive capital in their legitimisation of RE policy introduction. At the same time, the same desirable ideology was used by RE opponents, constructing RE introduction as an act of discrimination and violation of human rights.

When the special act, introducing RE and an 'alternative subject', which bypassed the Ministry and its planned reform, was announced in early July 2001, there was little doubt, in the words of my respondents, that it was a political, rather than an educational decision. The interviewees variously offered explanation for this *gift* (as referred to by several of them) to the SOC,

as the new government's 'returning of favours' for the political support of the Church in bringing down Milošević, or to securing future support for the politically extremely sensitive Milošević's extradition to the Hague. Some even interpreted it as a strategic move aimed at attracting an important political actor away from the President's democratic conservatives (DSS), and closer to the PM's party, often perceived in public as modern, progressive, and atheist. Whilst all of the above reasons might have formed a part of the long-term strategy of the Serbian political elite, the act itself was apparently immediately motivated by what the then deputy prime minister called in a television interview in 2005 *a price to pay* to have the SOC's support for the Milošević's arrest and deportation. He described the making of this decision as an early-morning, last-minute concession to SOC, agreed upon between himself and the patriarch, and announced to the unsuspecting minister of education in the corridor of the Ministry building (*B92 Interview with Čedomir Jovanović, 2005*).

Contrasted with this dramatic depiction of the political reality in the midst of educational decision-making stands the public reform discourse in which some political – but none of the educational – actors made the effort, as mentioned above, to claim ownership of the decision (*April/May 2002 Parliamentary Debates*). Majority of the CE policy actors, however, sought in their interviews to distance themselves from it, and to conceptualise it as having been not only outside of their power to influence, but even as having been outside of the reform discourse generally. This is also reflected in an interview with one of their foreign partners, who lacked awareness of RE's existence, or its

relationship to CE. RE is constructed in narratives as having appeared in, and been managed through, channels that ran parallel to my interviewees' work, so no meeting point could have been established. Despite these 'parallel structures', or the inner circle actors' reluctance to acknowledge RE's role and significance, it had an impact not only on CE's introduction, but also its development and curricular status.

Options and alternatives: introduction of civic education

In terms of discursive themes that appear in RE policy discourse as constructed in my interview with RE representatives, there is little that would have warranted an urgent 'reaction' to it, as suggested by CE policy actors. These themes are predominantly organised around concepts of community life, ethics, and love. And whilst the relationship between the two subjects is not explicitly conceptualised as one of opposition in terms of their fundamental principles, it is nevertheless constructed as such in narratives of CE policy actors, who referred to the simultaneous introduction of CE and RE as "*counter-balance*", "*remedy*", a way to "*minimise damage*", or "*soften the blow*". The 'reaction' is constructed as predominantly at the level of ideological implications of the presence of religion in schools, and of the SOC as an influential actor in the political and educational fields.

Although the majority of interviewees disagreed with the introduction of RE and CE as a part of the same package, and the polarisation on various levels that this was potentially creating, most of them, including all of the CE policy actors, related the need for the 'political structures' – an entity detached from them – to 'react' to introduction of RE. According to the interviews, it was an act constructed as beyond the influence of inner circle actors, an external decision that they needed to translate into an educationally viable one in the short time period before the start of the new school year. In this way, the narratives of CE policy actors reinforce the interdiscursive hybridity between educational and political fields created by the introduction of RE, constructed as an event created exclusively within the political field, its effect spilling over into the educational field, where it brought up a need for CE to be introduced prior to its previously planned timetable.

It is not only the personal construction of the policy discourse that stresses CE's significance as a part of the reform discourse, which could be theorised as inner circle actors' attempt to construct their agency in introducing the policy regardless of the circumstances created in the field outside of their area of power and influence. Education for democratic citizenship, and civic education as a separate subject and one of its three main channels (the other two being cross-curricular and extracurricular practices) did feature in the strategies for 'democratisation of education and education for democracy' – one of the primary goals of the reform, contained in the White Paper and other key policy and reform documents. Its presence in the reform plans and designs was already noted, as I mentioned previously, at the international conference in

June 2001. The change of timing is one way in which religious education's influence over CE is overtly recognised in interview narratives, however my analysis points to other aspects of the subject's development which appear in a relationship of dependence with RE.

The construction of CE as a separate subject, planned without connection to RE, is one unchallenged in individual narratives. There was apparently at the time some disagreement, however, most notably about its name, that also reinforces the confusion and uncertainty about its original conceptualisation and content, although all the different conceptualisations of CE were in some way performed in reaction to recent ethnic conflicts. A senior EDC team member pointed out the following principles that were to guide CE, contrasting them with the more political elements often found in this subject elsewhere, and highlighting some practical issues of literal translation of international terms:

“Well we didn't really want to use 'civic', because of its other meaning [civic=urban in Serbian][...] And anyway, we had a softer approach [...] not so much hard facts [but] communication, and non-violence, and opening some space for the kids to communicate in a different way.”

Other inner circle actors supported the anti-conflict focus of CE, and constructed it as standing in opposition to any potentially nationalist elements in education:

“But the focus was on the post-war context, on communication, non-violence, acceptance of diversity [...] and it was unnatural for our context for the national element to be present in CE because CE was imagined as education for co-operation.” [CE curriculum developers].

Although on one level CE was to be a political subject, the peace education component of it was insisted upon, due to what the inner circle actors saw as an environment of low political literacy:

“Well the accent was... you see, we as a society don’t have a developed civic consciousness, or understanding of democracy, so [...] we went for this option, for pragmatic reasons as well [...] with using the peace education and non-violent communication. We wanted for it to introduce a civil, a civic, approach to life [...]” [Senior EDC team member].

Finally, some actors who were not closely involved with the policy conceptualisation and subject development, imbued CE with an understanding related to their previous professional experience:

“Probably something like street law, like the [...] basic knowledge you need to know your way around when you’re on the streets.” [Senior Ministry actor].

Another senior Ministry actor’s narrative features a theme of substantial ad-hocery in the construction of the categories of CE’s introduction and conceptualisation. With it, the themes of adhocery, uncertainty, and confusion make their way into the reform discourse, otherwise dominated by what was above described as theme of almost a hegemony of opinion and revolutionary spirit. This senior actor related that SOC had originally planned to provide an alternative to RE in the form of secular moral education – a suggestion that RE representatives rejected by claiming that *“there isn’t, and there can’t be, an*

alternative to religious education” [in its confessional form] – and that, to prevent this, the top people at the Ministry, aware

“[...] that there was something called ‘civic education’ in other countries, something we encountered during the 90s [...] which was education for peace and democracy [...] something we did in the NGO sector [so] we had the capacities for it”,

offered it as an alternative for students who are, or their parents are, atheists. Thus a potentially accidental relationship between CE and atheism, rather than a lack of interest in confessional religious education, was established. Such dualism leads to a discursive construction of CE’s supporters, in the educational field encompassing the fields of both policy development, and of policy enactment, as atheists. Once it was decided what the alternative to RE would be in general terms, according to one of the respondents, the prime minister approached Civil Society NGO (outer circle actor) as a potential partner in developing the subject. But this was rejected on the grounds of professionalism and dedication to the concept – constructing thus inner circle actors as lacking in these qualities. In words of a senior actor of this NGO:

“Here was finally a chance to make something good out of this – I didn’t want it to be rushed. [So] I said no.”

Developing and instituting the subject of civic education

There is a notable contrast between the pre-planned nature of EDC strategies, as constructed in the official policy discourse and the ad-hocery in the political

field as constructed in the personal policy discourse. I will discuss the theoretical and methodological implications of such a mismatch in the concluding chapters, but for now I note any additional incongruities that come as a result of constructing different aspects of the policy discourse in my analysis. A prominent one, for example, concerns plans for CE once it did appear in schools. Again interview narratives indicate less clarity and consensus here than was conveyed by the policy documents. Some of the curriculum developers related being in the dark about how long CE would continue, and in what form, and one of the senior Ministry actors voiced the initial idea to have the subject slowly subsumed under other subjects, with the intent of making education for democracy cross-curricular and infused in every area of school life. If the latter was really the case, it was brought into conflict, eventually complying, with the plans to keep RE throughout the primary and secondary education, and to give RE a more firm-standing status than the initially granted 'optional elective.'

Those of my interviewees who mentioned the change of the subject's status after the first year, advised against by international evaluators of CE, and fervently contended in the parliament, construed it as dependent on RE policy actors, who had reportedly desired a more secure status for RE. An EDC team member related a rather defeatist statement by the then minister of education, which highlights again the above-mentioned separation between the actors operating mainly in the political field, and those whose actions were confined to the educational field, as well the relative powerlessness of the latter when the former are involved:

“He told us, ‘it doesn’t matter whether it’s me who’s the minister or if it’s someone else, religious education is becoming an obligatory elective this year’.” [EDC team member]

And so, in 2002/3 school year, instead of students’ being given the choice between taking either class, neither, or both, it became obligatory to choose between CE and RE. Thus the subjects’ new status further fixed – in the curriculum and in public mind – the oppositional character of the relationship between them. Most of the CE policy actors’ narratives only feature a casual mention of this decision that actually had a significant effect on the status and form of civic education, its eventually taking a form that was apparently different from the original plans. As with the introduction of RE, this decision appears as an issue outside of the control of inner circle actors, who continued developing civic education without much concern for its alternative. When asked about this relationship, a few commented on its being *“far from ideal”*, and mentioned its potentially detrimental effect, in terms of both conceptual/ideological and practical division:

“To complicate things like this by putting these things in the same package [...] to provoke inevitable comparison [...] plus the key issue of dividing the children like that!” [EDC team member]

Other distinct criticism of the relationship between CE and RE was related to the political implications of educational choices, or simply the administrative difficulties thus created:

“They created a horrible problem by opposing CE and RE, and it’s been getting worse [...] choosing between the two has become a political decision! [...] And those two systems, they are completely parallel” [Senior NGO actor].

The existence and further development of CE and RE is thus constructed in narratives as mutually co-dependent, yet parallel and disconnected at the same time. Those of my interviewees who reflected on this, did so whilst invoking reconciliation and defeatism with regard to the political decisions, and the sense of inaction and helplessness.

“We, within the Expert Group, did discuss that they shouldn’t be put in opposition like that, but that’s as far as we went.” [CE curriculum developer].

“Well we really didn’t plan to develop it as RE’s competition, as something mutually exclusive [...] but the next year, without consulting us, they made them compulsory alternatives.” [CE curriculum developer]

A similar sentiment of (agentless) separation was expressed also on the RE side, with the SOC representatives seeing not only CE, but the Ministry of Education as well, as almost a separate entity.

“It was odd to us – we call it the ‘civic option’ – but it was odd that they would choose that [as an alternative], I mean we are all citizens, I guess [...] but there was no relationship between us, no jurisdiction [...] they had their own plans, their own curricula.” [RE representative]

Some of the CE curriculum developers did note that some form of cooperation and communication between RE and CE would have been beneficial, but this was again constructed as an institutional and structural, and in some of the

narratives ideological, impossibility. So the two subjects continued to exist and develop in parallel, separation, and (unintended) rivalry.

There are two identifiable sources from which influences flowed into conceptualisation of CE, at least in the first year of its introduction. One are the 'adopted and adapted' ideas about EDC distributed at a Europe-wide level. The other source of discursive elements that constructed Serbian civic education is much more prominent in narratives, leading to an emphasis on the agency of inner circle policy actors. This source is related to the recent historical circumstances, and the programmes that were constructed in NGOs and alternative academic networks within this context, that were then, according to a senior Ministry actor, to be swiftly adjusted so as to respond to the urgent demand for an 'alternative' (to RE) subject (see the second quote on p. 130). The focus is thus placed on psychosocial, rather than political, issues. Instead of constructing CE as a political subject, advertised as an aspect of education for democracy, and around the ideological-discursive formations of critical thinking or active civic engagement, Serbian CE emphasises socialisation, recognition of the 'other', tolerance of difference, peaceful and constructive conflict resolution, communication (especially non-violent), and conflict mediation.

Again there are identifiable discrepancies between different aspects of the policy discourse here. Whilst documents construct CE as carefully developed subject with a place and purpose within the 'Education for democratic citizenship' (both nationally and internationally) and the wider education

reform, the interviews with key informants, as well as a selection of contemporary media documents and transcripts of (untelevised) parliamentary debates feature a combination of ad-hocery and convenience as themes that characterised the category of CE conceptualisation and development:

*"[We worked] year for year, not knowing how long it would continue."
(CE curriculum developer)*

*"[...] there was half an hour in which to decide what would be
alternative to religious education." (Senior EDC team member),*

*"[...] there wasn't enough time, so we had to pull together and make
something out of the existing programmes." (CE curriculum
developer)*

Thus there certainly are themes of adhocery and uncertainty present in the construction of the category of CE introduction and partly CE conceptualisation, reflecting informants' struggle to conceptualise an event that was outside of their influence and outside of their field. However, where there appear elements of agency and capacity to act and contribute, the result is, as above, a harmony of ideas and actions, informed by a shared ideology between a group of like-minded people, ideology constructed through the discursive theme of 'breaking away from the past'.

Some of these 'inherited problems from the past' echo common discursive themes in post-communist literature: the culture of apathy and reluctance to take responsibility, lack of activism and civic participation, unwillingness to engage in critical thinking and challenge authority. Other problems to the

tackling of which civic education was imagined to contribute, are given more prominence in interview narratives, reinforcing thus the idea of context-dependent specificity of the post-communist experience, and of the ideological-discursive particularities of a policy that, on the surface, might be viewed as one that came about through the process of 'policy epidemic' (Levin, 1998) or a 'transfer of discourse' (Steiner-Khamsi, 2002; 2004). Another theoretical point that I construct here is the importance of identifying the audience towards whom certain concepts are used as discursive capital. Thus the themes of the tolerance of diversity (ethnic and otherwise), constructive and peaceful resolution of conflict, mediation and rational argumentation are not very prominent in the public policy discourse, with the then Serbian public (the primary audience) still divided on questions of nationalism, tradition, and religion. Meanwhile, they are dominant in the conceptualisation of CE in the inner circle actors' interview narratives, with myself and an academic community as a primary audience.

The issue of chronology makes it somewhat difficult to discern whether this had been planned from the very beginning, with the recent past of violent ethnic nationalism identified as a major problem to overcome on Serbia's path to 'normality', or whether this, too, was an afterthought that followed decisions made largely for reasons of convenience. But one should again be reminded that this was not an investigation of 'facts', but a construction of discourse through the narratives of policy actors. What can be theorised from such ambiguity is that the discursive and social capital of inner circle policy actors played the part in conceptualising and developing civic education in so far as

their agency, constricted by developments in fields outside of that of education, was allowed for. The narratives of inner circle policy actors construct the need to overcome the recent past as having a direct effect on CE conceptualisation in those early years. This being related to their professional background, it is strongly connected to the themes of control and ownership, missing from the construction of the categories of RE/CE relationship, or the CE's introduction.

The construction of CE's introduction in the public sphere

At the time of CE/RE introduction, the public debate surrounding the place of religion and SOC in the Serbian society led to the public policy and reform discourse to be largely constructed around RE, with only sporadic mentions of CE in the fields of media and politics. The nature and purpose of civic education is construed in these mentions by drawing on, on one hand, ideologies of democratisation, modernisation, Europeanisation, and civic participation, and constructed to a significantly lesser degree around ideological-discursive formation of anti-war action, anti-discrimination agenda, and non-violent conflict resolution. The subject's name (which only became publicly known in September 2001 – an August newspaper article referred to it as 'upbringing for development') apparently inspired some confusion, as 'civic' is in Serbian homonymous with 'urban' (population), causing a further polarisation between CE and RE, in this case along the urban/rural lines.

The public construction of the policy discourse in 2002 parliamentary debates preceding the change of the subjects' status reveals a distinct lack of knowledge of, or even interest in CE by MPs. References to CE are, compared to those to RE, almost negligible, and implied by an outstanding lack of information about its basic principles: on multiple occasions speakers not even using its proper name, referring instead to "*civic culture*", or "*a subject with ethical-humanist content*." Even the staunchest critics of the reform, who could have potentially found in CE fertile ground for exploration of alien ideas and values entering Serbian educational system (the focal point of the criticism of the reform), barely mentioned it. The expected criticism of CE is absent also from the interview narratives of critics and commentators, in which it is constructed as

"[...] an empty subject, it doesn't have any content, its content is covered by other subjects [...] what is its purpose, socialisation, good manners? [...] I guess it's creating some ethical base, but that cannot be done with a subject, it is done through actions of students, teachers, or parents." [Reform critic]

Although, according to three CE curriculum developers, some of the criticism aimed at CE at the time of its introduction involved conceptualising it as an ideological subject, or *new Marxism*, this is not an overt part of the alternative policy discourse constructed in interview narratives, where critics chose to foreground its lack of substance and purpose instead.

In opposition to the somewhat inconsequential place for CE thus conveyed, stands a thriving life for the subject, both in the national and international fields, created in interviews with the inner circle actors. For its developers and

promoters – and this is again closely tied in with the themes of enthusiasm and ownership – CE epitomised the values and pedagogic principles that the inner circle actors had been trying to incorporate in their own work under an unwelcoming formal educational structure pre-2000. In the national field, it offered them a chance to build on this work, and further diffuse it through cascade teacher training programmes, in what was unanimously described as an environment of cooperation, creativity, and professional and intellectual freedom. In the international field, for some of them, dependent on the actor's capital, and the earlier-discussed 'readiness to learn', it was an opportunity to work with European colleagues, and compare and compete with them – especially with other Balkan countries and ex-Yugoslavian states.

The perceived success in such competition, self-reported as well as construed as such by some external actors among my interviewees, was again the source of pride and validation of their 'mission'. Although some of my interviewees constructed the category of international influence with a certain degree of scepticism, overall, this was not done through a theme of pressure and instruction, although the subtleties of this construction will be further unpacked and theorised in the next two chapters.

Outer circle policy actors, external influences, and international relation(ship)s in CE development

Despite the fact that CE/EDC in Serbia is in the official policy discourse constructed as co-ordinated with the CoE's Europe-wide programme that stressed at the time the civic and political aspect elements, personal policy discourse constructs the national CE programmes as arising from, and feeding into, the national and historical needs of the Serbian context, with an accent on 'softer skills', and socialisation issues. The latter is, however, prominent in what would have been a contribution to the construction of the official discourse – an unpublished (due to the change in government in 2004) policy document called EDC National Framework, given to me by one of the interviewees. The international review of this document, also an 'interrupted' contribution to the official discourse, and also offered by an interviewee, whilst largely positive, treats the focus on softer skills as something of a deficiency, perceived as driving the focus away from a more political-education purpose of CE. I will return to this in the next chapter, meanwhile it serves here to indicate some degree of the national policy actors' agency and power in the construction of the category of international influence and interaction.

Although tying the development of CE/EDC to the inner circle actors' previous work, and creating in this way a notion of autonomous, organic, needs-based, and context-bound decision-making, this concept of autonomy does not stand in contrast with the presence of the international factor. Whilst the relevant literature had made me susceptible towards conceptualising the international

factor as freedom-restricting, the latter is construed in CE developers' narratives as a factor supportive to their work, a silent, benevolent partner – and this conceptualisation is shared between policy actors, NGO members, and actors coming from international organisations. One of the senior Ministry figures constructed such freedom and autonomy as standing in opposition to present-day decision-making:

“We were in a good position that we knew how some of donors operated, so we were able to work our way around them [...] to be creative with our ideas and propositions [...] and they might have thought them odd, but they would agree. These days, with the EU projects [it is] more constricted, you're spending some European money intended for us [...] you don't have enough influence [...] not enough choice. Back then, we were more willing, we had more enthusiastic, interested, consultants [...] you felt it from their side too.”
[Senior Ministry actor]

The 'international factor' is by no means a homogeneous category, however. Inner and outer circle actors' narratives all create a demarcation between an 'American' and a 'European' approach – both in categories of CE conceptualisation and in national/international actors' relationship. The European partner (largely CoE and affiliated organisations) appears as a 'more natural partner', offering options that “*were closer to what we were trying to achieve*” [EDC team member], and described as helpful, non-intruding, and easy to engage in even-playing-field collaboration. Nevertheless, there are some other aspects of the narratives (of inner circle actors as well as international actors) that contribute to the construction of the foreign 'partners' as being in position of authority. These aspects include depicting them as vessels of knowledge and advice, to be accessed as needed, mediators and brokers of

international experiences via conferences that not only served to instigate cross-cultural co-operation but showcase attainments in fulfilling the goals previously agreed upon. In addition, these international actors served as 'experts' addressed for purposes of evaluation of national efforts: including the OSF/UNESCO-based evaluation of the first year of CE, and the National Framework for EDC in Serbia, evaluated by the UK-based Citizenship Foundation.

The 'American factor', on the other hand, was regarded with more scepticism. Where inner circle actors construct the sense of openness to European partners, this construction is tied in with their pre-2000 professional background which involved a positive experience of co-operation or support coming from either European organisations, or what a couple of interviewees termed "*benign*" global organisations, such as UNICEF or UNESCO. The absence of similar accounts involving American organisations' pre-2000 assistance can be used to theorise on the somewhat more reserved stance here. This stance is also related to the only traces of outright external pressure noted in my interviews, which involved an American-developed CE programme, rejected by the Serbian EDC team due to a perceived incompatibility. One interviewee noted, underlining the themes of autonomy and integrity in the construction of the category of international influence, as well as a critical undertone in dealing with what some authors (see Carothers 2002; 2008) call 'democracy promotion', that:

“[...] in all my years of living in an un-democratic, authoritarian regime, I was never faced with such blackmail [...] such were the political pressures that we were willing to resign collectively rather than accept this programme. [EDC team member]”

There is one instance in which the division along the lines of European (beneficial)/American (strenuous) is complicated, and it involves an international agent brought by the critics into the connection with the purported Americanisation of education, and portrayed by the inner circle actors as a supporting and connecting actor – the Open Society Foundation. OSF has featured prominently in most post-communist reforms, usually around educational initiatives that aim at the development of critical thinking and civic activism. Their particular investment in such issues made them a potentially ideal partner in the conceptual development of a civic education policy in this context. Their major contribution, however, rather than being on a conceptual level (at least not in a direct way), is constructed in inner circle actors’ narratives as a binding agent and the contributing factor to the composition of the Serbian Ministry and civic education team. The majority of senior Ministry actors and the CE/EDC team gave their various connections to the organisation a prominent place in the construction of their professional background.

These connections ranged from participating in non-formal education programmes sponsored by OSF in the 1990s, taking part in professional seminars organised by the organisation, or working directly with them in Budapest. In addition, they were casually mentioned as providing some of the financial support for CE, as well as offering to support, together with UNESCO, the evaluation of the subject’s first year. The relationship with OSF may have

been constructed by the inner circle actors as one of equality, and OSF constructed as an organisation of like-minded people who could help with their experience and advice. However, as I noted in relation to the general construction of the category of international influence, there is here as well an undercurrent of inequality, stemming both from the inner circle actors' treatment of OSF's authority in relevant fields, and an OSF's member's perpetuation of such notion in their self-construction (in our interview) of this relationship. Overall, rather than a policy advisor, or even a policy 'broker' (Stone, 2010), I believe that the most adequate conceptualisation of OSF is as a source of social and discursive capital for inner circle actors, occupying in that way a very powerful position.

As for any other actors external to the policy field, although the EDC section of the Serbian Reform White Paper refers to the excellent collaboration between the government and NGO sector in the development of EDC programmes (also advocated by CoE's EDC policy documents), it appears that this connection was at the time predominantly related to the common NGO background of the Serbian EDC team members. Post-CE introduction, aside from the mentioned co-operation with OSF, there was only one Serbian NGO that was actively involved in CE/EDC, an involvement that was not readily recognised as positive by the inner circle actors.

This NGO (Civil Society) are also the only national actor whose construction of the American/European factor is inversed when compared to that of other actors. Although some more neutral inner circle actors' narratives are centred

around the NGO's help with developing programmes for older students, commending their assistance, the dominant theme in the construction of the category of the relationship between NGO and Ministry CE/EDC team is that of tension. Some of this tension is related to past personal and professional disagreements, but also to ideological disagreements, where – similarly to the harsher critics of the reform – a Civil Society actor condemned in our interview the “*psychologisation*” of the reform. The Ministry-based respondents meanwhile predominantly linked the antagonism to the pressures coming from American NGOs trying to use Civil Society as a channel for a “*more individualistic, American, and alien to our context, vision of CE*” [EDC team member]. Civil Society were promoting then a different ideology, and commanding a different kind of discursive capital, recognised as not fully compatible with the ideological goals of the reform. However, whilst their influence might have been somewhat resisted and limited during the 2001-2003 period, with the change of government in 2004, Civil Society became the most important agent in developing materials and delivering teacher training, and crucially, providing the financial support for CE.

Short-term decisions and long-term solutions – civic education after 2004

When the prime minister Zoran Djindjić was assassinated in March 2003, many of the EDC team felt that “*the reform was shot down with a bullet*” [Senior EDC

team member]. Inner circle actors felt that they had lost the person seen by most of them as a leader who shared their enthusiasm and their vision and whose public addresses “*sounded just as he were present at our meetings!*” [EDC team member] – this concordance seen both as an authority lending legitimacy to their own ideas, and as assuring their realisation. The reform continued, however, and the ‘Umbrella Law’ was passed in the Parliament in June 2003, but not without being subject to a prolonged debate and harsh criticism.

The uncompromising criticism of the reform, often voiced throughout the three-year reform period in the right-wing press and in the Parliament was also embodied in a document entitled ‘The Resolution against Violence against School and Children’ (2003), signed by representatives of the Serbian Orthodox Church and some affiliated organisations, as well as by a number of prominent academics. The criticism revolved around the undemocratic nature of decision-making and course-setting, but it particularly focuses on what the undersigned perceived then as uncritical adoption of alien principles and ideologies imagined to lead to chaos, anarchy, and destruction. Although such criticism was addressed at the reform generally and not CE or EDC specifically, it distinctly opposes and rejects as harmful some of the elements of the educational discourse introduced through the CE policy. These elements include, for example, the workshop-based methodology, and insisting upon minimisation of the traditional teacher-as-authority classroom relationships. The latter particularly is echoed in some of the policy and reform critics’ interview narratives. The notion of a ‘school without authority’ is conceptualised therein as a novelty certain to lose its appeal once its promoters

acknowledged its unsustainability. It is dismissed, not only on the basis of its origin in 'Western' pedagogy, but because of its 'experimental' nature, which the respondents related, in a distinctly negative light, to the failing schools of the West and the eager adoption of such solutions by the transitional societies unaware of their detrimental effect.

There was little time, however, to gauge the effects of the law and education for democracy as envisaged by the 2001-2003 reformers. With the change of government in 2004, and the Ministry now helmed by DSS, the reform was reversed, with the exception of CE and RE, which had kept their place. Whilst the RE's continued presence was not surprising considering this political party's constant support for its (re)introduction, keeping CE was somewhat inconsistent with their rejection of the previous government's ideology. All of the narratives of inner-circle actors, and some of the external ones, conceptualise the relationship between the 2001-2003 EDC team and the new administration as one of extreme animosity, eventuating in dismissal of some of key EDC figures, resignation of most others, and the reluctance to submit the mentioned National Framework for EDC.

If the account of one amongst my interviewees who was affiliated with the post-2004 Ministry is to be taken as in any way representative, CE was considered relatively marginal by the post-2004 Ministry who had, according to a Civil Society actor, approached the NGO confiding that they did not really know much about "*this CE thing*" or what to do about it, noting that it seemed "*really bad, everyone is complaining about it*" [Civil Society actor]. Ultimately, most of

the responsibilities for organising and delivering CE were relegated to Civil Society, who had continued to do so with the conceptual and financial help of its various international partners, whilst seeking to develop and popularise it, as well as secure support for it with subsequent ministries – the NGO now taking the role of ‘CE crussaders’. Such step was unequivocally construed by another outer circle actor as a pragmatic choice, owing to the financial funds which were at the NGO’s disposal. The CoE office in Belgrade, after the conclusion of their own project on supporting both CE and the changes to history teaching in Serbia, also retreated from any EDC development work, with the CoE informant suggesting that their role had always been advisory-as-requested, something for which the post-2004 government showed little initiative. Nevertheless, civic education remained in schools, an act that one informant described as inevitable:

“Oh but they wouldn’t have dared cancel it [...] as we are going towards the EU, it would have been like cancelling privatisation [EDC team member].”

Statements such as this one, which discursively construct CE as a symbol of Serbia’s ‘modernisation’ and ‘Europeanisation’ stand in contrast to the earlier discussed almost marginalised position of the subject itself in the public construction of the reform discourse. These contrasts and their implications will be unpacked in the next chapter, in the exploration of the ideological-discursive formation of Serbian civic education policy in different fields, and its part in the ideological-discursive formation of the country’s planned education reform.

Conclusion

In this chapter, with some background- and additional data provided by documents, I constructed a historical narrative about the CE introduction and early development during the first years of Serbian 2001-2003 education reform, from a pool of personal narratives constructed between various policy actors and commentators, and myself. An over-arching narrative was composed of both elements common to individual narratives, and elements which underlined the conflicting, problematic, and non-straightforward nature of constructing a story from the individual accounts affected by memory, personal motives, positioning of self and others, and responding to the act of co-construction in the interview situation.

This arch narrative highlighted the categories of actors, relationships, events, and the nature of the processes that characterised the early transition space in Serbia, and the configuration of the educational field during the 2001-2003 reform, as well as the inextricable connection between this field and the political field in Serbia. I also introduced the dominant discursive themes through which the interviewees had constructed these categories, indicating some agreement with the 1990s transition literature, but also some notable departures, namely in the themes of consensus and determination with which the reform had begun, related to the policy actors' pre-2000 engagement and the belatedness of transition 'proper'. The strong influence from the political field was another characteristic feature of the educational reform launch, again something that did not have a strong parallel in other CEE contexts. I theorise

these similarities and differences in chapter 7, but in the next chapter, I leave for the moment the broader context of the reform, and focus in on the ideologies that were constructed as desirable and undesirable through the construction of the CE policy discourse.

I consider the different aspects of the construction and attempt to answer the above-noted discrepancy between the different place and significance that was given to civic education in different fields. I also conduct a closer exploration of the ideological-discursive project that was Serbia's 2001-2003 education reform, and look at how civic education discourse, as well as religious education discourse, were constructed as a part of it. I explore the idea(l)s of modernisation, democratisation, and Europeanisation that appear in the official construction of the reform discourse, contrasted with the reform as "*violence against school and children*", as it appeared in the aforementioned 'Resolution', and various other alternative constructions of the CE policy and reform discourse. Through portraying these different constructions, I attempt to illustrate their dependence on the audience to whom the ideological-discursive formations used in different constructions were offered, and the purpose that thus demonstrated discursive capital had in different fields. I begin with the official construction, which, as I theorise later, had the most significant purpose in constructing the 'new Serbia' for both national and international audiences.

CHAPTER 6

Ideologies, actors, and capital in the civic education policy discourse

Introduction

In this chapter, I continue to examine the meaning and position of the civic education policy with respect to the wider reform, conceptualised, in the third chapter, as an ideological-discursive project of making of the 'new Serbia'. I examine the new, 'desirable'¹³ ideologies constructed through the civic education policy discourse, and the values and identities prescribed by them. I also look at how desirable and undesirable ideologies are constructed in the different aspects of the policy discourse, leading to my theorisation about the use of ideological-discursive formations in such constructions as discursive capital exchanged with different actors in different fields.

As I present the ideologies constructed through the CE policy discourse, I consider them alongside the construction of desirable and undesirable ideologies in the wider reform discourse, and discuss whether it is viable to see CE policy as the part of the ideological-discursive project that was the reform. Such view of the policy as a constitutive part of the wider discursive project moderates the idea of introduction of individual policies as adhoc reaction and

¹³ My use of 'desirable' and 'undesirable' does not reflect any personal, and certainly not universal, normative proposition. The qualifiers are used to describe what was constructed as such by inner circle policy actors in the construction of the policy discourse.

interaction, and of post-communist policies as flags of convenience, notions that negate the work and efforts of national policymakers, and create a risk of reducing policymaking to political exchange and political signalling to attract funds. To this end, I also explore how the ideologies are interdiscursively connected and how they appear in different fields. Interdiscursivity reinforces the notion of the policy discourse as a part of a larger and wider ideological project, that was to be conducted through the reforms intended for all areas of Serbian public life.

I begin with the aspect of the policy discourse with the high level of interdiscursivity: the public construction, performed in media and parliamentary fields, and the only aspect confined to Serbia's national space. As such, it is a good place from which to launch an investigation of an ideological construction of the new Serbia through the civic education policy discourse. In this construction, civic education is strongly connected to the wider reform discourse, and hardly ever discursively independent from the religious education. Due to this, actors who appear as constructors are only occasionally those belonging to the inner circle; with the CE/RE arising initially in the political field, it is predominantly political actors who appear as creators of this discourse. Drawing on the construction of the desirable and undesirable in the policy discourse around the problem/solution axis (see page 87), I first look at how the policy Problem¹⁴ was conceptualised, in order for education of the citizen of the new Serbia to become its inevitable Solution.

¹⁴ Policy 'Problem' and 'Solution' are capitalised throughout the remaining part of the text, so as to distinguish the Problems and Solutions as the focal points of discursive construction of

Public construction of the civic education policy discourse

Problems to be solved by civic education, based on my review of the literature on post-communist education reform, and particularly civic education or education for democracy as an aspect of it (Vaillant, 2001; 2005; Weber and Liikanen, 2001), have usually drawn on political discourse. They have tended to include civic apathy, 'ideological' rather than critical thinking, authoritarian values of an unquestioning, obedient respect for those in power, and of a future that is given rather than created. With Serbia's decade-late arrival to transition 'proper', and the policymakers' urgency to catch up with the rest of the transitioning Europe, I expected that such educational-political interdiscursivity as appears in post-communist literature to also form the Problem to be tackled by what the Serbian policymakers named an aspect of the 'Education for Democratic Citizenship' programme (White Paper, p. 22). With the educational system un-reformed since the Yugoslavian communist era, I also assumed that the communist legacies in education would be identified by the Serbian policymakers as the problematic issues that the politically and ideologically oriented policy such as civic education/education for democracy would address. The analysis, however, subverted most of these assumptions, perhaps partly due to what I theorised in the previous chapter as the Serbian inner circle actors' attempt to construct their reformist efforts through the theme of advantage, even uniqueness, in the context of the post-communist transitional experience.

undesirable and desirable ideologies in a policy, from the more everyday use of the notions of problems and solutions.

The process of my analysis brought up discrepancies in the ideological construction of the Problem in different aspects of the policy discourse, and I will demonstrate these throughout the chapter. I later theorise this discrepancy as an indicator of the ways in which discursive capital is used with the different audience. Leaving aside for the moment the alternative construction of the policy and reform discourses, the most marked difference with regard to the dominant undesirable ideology in the official and personal constructions on one hand, and the public construction on the other, is that the latter almost completely avoids the construction of nationalism and authoritarianism as undesirable ideologies. So whilst in all three constructions democracy appears as a Solution, I theorise that using the ideologies of nationalism and authoritarianism might have had uncertain value with the Serbian public, so the policy actors kept to what could have at the time been safely exchanged for political capital. In this case, it is the undesirable ideology of politicisation¹⁵ that I identify as a legitimising strategy for the ideological project of democratisation in the public construction of the policy discourse.

Public construction of the policy Problem

The policy Problem constructed in the parliamentary and media fields is thus only to a degree informed by authoritarianism as an undesirable ideology constructed through themes of centralisation and state control. However, a

¹⁵ I should point out again that, in using the term 'politicisation', I use a direct translation from Serbian *politizacija*, meaning the overwhelming influence of party politics on school administration make-up, use of funds, etc.

more valuable example in terms of its serving as discursive capital in the Serbian national field, and so used as a focus in the construction of the Problem, is that of 'politicisation'. Politicisation is most consistently juxtaposed with the ideology of 'democratisation', with the latter identified as a solution to it. The focus on 'politicisation' was a useful discursive resource before the wider national audience. This is because the problem of the political affiliation determining relationships at all levels of the educational system had been one of the most widely protested ones prior to 2000, so addressing it was certain to garner support for the ideology offered as its opposite post-2000. Constructing 'democratisation' as standing in opposition to it, as its antithesis, contributes to the positive, powerful representation of the ideology of democracy as the universal solution.

The construction of democratisation as a positive opposite to politicisation is performed through consistent use of pairs of oppositionals. The latter include politicisation juxtaposed not only with democratisation, but throughout various parliamentary and media texts with discursive themes that constitute the ideology of democratisation in the educational field: professionalisation, participation, transparency, autonomy, support, communication and partnership. This is achieved through a repeated appearance of these qualities as collocations, bound together with the conjunction "*and*", and the repeated construction of the overarching ideology of 'democratisation' via contribution of individual elements, that are introduced with conjunctions "*by*" and "*through*".

“Democratisation is about giving power to the employees, the students, even the parents.”

“What we mean by democratisation is developing local and regional participation.”

“What this whole new law on education is about is democratisation and depoliticisation through professionalisation.”

“Establish partnership between schools and local community. That’s how you get institutions that cherish democracy.”

“Our main three tasks are to return autonomy to schools, achieve professionalisation of staff, and increase quality.” [Parliamentary Debates]

Politicisation as a Problem to which democratisation is offered as a Solution is most consistently constructed in the parliamentary field, in which there is an overt polarity between politicisation, centralisation, and low democracy, at one end, and depoliticisation, decentralisation, and democratisation at the other. The ubiquitous mention of the “3D” programme, as it was then called by policymakers, the abbreviation indicating forthrightness and efficiency, is here also constructed as contributing to the positive ideology of ‘professionalisation’, itself invariably qualified as ‘better’ and related to a higher quality of education. Quality repeatedly appears in collocation with autonomy and in opposition to state control. The positive properties of quality and professionalisation thus further contribute to ‘democratisation’ as a positive, standing as it does in opposition to the negative authoritarian state control. It is also important to note that all of these concepts appear as nominalisations (Fairclough, 2003; van Dijk, 2008), as inevitable processes.

Although 'depoliticisation', translated to equal stakeholder participation, appears as a Solution occasionally legitimised by externalisation (Schriewer, 2003), through reference to its existence in other systems:

"By introducing parents' councils, we come closer to European standards", [Parliamentary Debates]

it is mostly legitimised through its opposition to the practices of the former regime, so as to underline the good intentions of the new government, working as they did in opposition to the already established negative that was the 1990s regime.

In another instance of its working as a discursive strategy of legitimation, 'depoliticisation' is also occasionally connected with human rights ideology, and its incorporating themes of children's rights, and racial and ethnic rights, so that 'depoliticisation' is discursively equated with 'human rights protection':

"Firstly, values that determine democracy: diversity and respect for human rights."

"Adhering to the principles of democratisation and depoliticisation, and relying on the Universal Human Rights Declaration and the Convention on Children's Rights, the Law forbids any political, racial, religious action and offense against children." [Parliamentary Debates]

Finally, when legitimised through externalisation strategies, it is qualified as 'modern', this ensuring that depoliticisation became discursively related to

modernisation and internationalisation, another two ideologies that orbit around the nodal ideology of democratisation:

“Suggested solutions lead to a modern law, adapted to contemporary trends, leading to the necessary decentralisation, depoliticisation, and democratisation, and coordination with international conventions.”
[Parliamentary Debates]

The modernisation of education is constructed as aiming to effect an institution of ‘new education’ – to instil normality after a decade of irregularity. Modernisation is also equated with internationalisation, constructed as a change that reflects a ‘correspondence to the reality of the out there world’. The ‘out there world’ is meanwhile constructed both as a static reality to be met by the Serbian reforms, and used metonymically to mean ‘the world to which Serbia aspires’. Using the theme of depoliticisation as discursive capital in the Serbian national field was, I theorise, intended to secure the support for the related ideologies of democratisation, modernisation, internationalisation, and human rights protection. As noted earlier, although the constructions of the Problem might have differed, the different aspects of the policy and reform discourses are in agreement when it comes to the offered Solution. I look more closely at how Solution is constructed in the public field, before turning to the official and personal constructions of the policy and reform discourses.

Public construction of the policy Solution

Whilst the official and personal constructions of the CE discourse position it as a central aspect of the 2001-2003 reform, as I will shortly illustrate, in the public field civic education rarely appears outside of the RE/CE nexus. As chapter 5 has shown, RE was largely avoided by the inner circle actors in their interviews, as they sought to distance themselves from the issue of religious education (re)introduction, and construct both civic education and their own actions and identities in a way that almost completely negated the existence of RE. I interpret this negation as a way of distancing oneself from the field in which one had little or no power and influence, and at a level of ideological-discursive construction of the reform, as a way of excluding the ideologies that did not fit in with the rest of the ideological project. It was possible to do so in the official and personal constructions of the CE policy discourse, where inner circle actors' construction faced limited challenge and intrusion from other actors in the field. However, in the parliamentary and media fields, religious education was being constantly invoked by various actors (journalists, RE opponents, various MPs), and so had to be addressed. In parliamentary debates, for example, RE appears variously, and negatively, constructed by commentators as "*dangerous*", with religion and education interdiscursively connected to the ideology of ethnic nationalism, or to that of politicisation through the discursive themes of unconstitutionality and complication of state/church relations. It is also constructed as "*regressive*", through the claims of its introduction of anachronistic educational elements, or "*discriminatory*",

through the claims of its only treating some denominations as official and deserving of space in Serbia's educational field.

These invocations of RE were then actively taken up by the political actors (MPs), and ideologically reconstructed in the process. These actors' defense of RE's (re)introduction allows for various desirable discursive themes that contributed to the building of the ideology of democracy and democratisation to be, paradoxically, reinforced, in spite of the presence of the seemingly oppositional discursive themes that construct the ideologies of religion and traditionalism. This is performed by discursively transforming the presence of the oppositional ideologies into a construction of the human rights ideology. Thus the introduction of religious education becomes not a reintroduction of backward and undesirable ideology, but rather an act of respect of the "*basic human right to practice one's belief*", legitimised through references to the commanding authority of international documents that, more than simply support this decision, actually "*dictate*" it:

"The Government, as a whole, must give up their own attitudes and affinities in the Parliament, where they must represent people's will. So it is not only Universal Declaration on Human Rights, European Convention on Human Rights, and Helsinki Declaration, but also citizens' will, that dictate the introduction of religious education in the educational system." [Parliamentary Debates]

Such externalising strategy reinforces at the same time one of the nodal ideologies in the construction of the reform discourse: that of internationalisation. Other strategies include discursively combining the

ideology of religion with those of 'Europeanisation' or 'decommunisation', by legitimising through vague externalisation:

"EU countries have regulated religious education in their systems and our goal is to enter EU";

"The situation is similar in other countries in transition".
[Parliamentary Debates]

Even though the ideology of communism is not constructed as a particularly problematic in any of the fields, political actors who defended the introduction of RE in the public space drew on the ideology of 'decommunisation' i.e. acting in contrast to the communist regime, when they could use it as a discursive strategy through which to construct the introduction of RE as a agent-ful act of allowing the people what the communist regime had denied them. Combining the ideology of decommunisation as an interrupted course of history with invocation of ideologies of tradition and historical continuation, the reintroduction (there is no dilemma here about whether it should be called an introduction or reintroduction) of RE is constructed as a necessity. In this case, the ideologies of tradition and historicism are not connected to the undesirable ideology of ethnic nationalism, but, through a discursive theme of return to the interrupted course of history, to the ideologies of 'normalisation' and 'Europeanisation'. In this construction, the political actors are positively constructed as a responsive government that obeys "*the majority and the will of the people*" [Parliamentary debates]. Even here, the opportunity is taken to discursively construct the 'people' as agent-ful citizens – in contrast to the

voiceless mass – thus further reinforcing the impact of building the ideologies of active, engaged democracy in opposition to the Problem of authoritarianism.

Vagueness is also frequently utilised as a discursive strategy, achieved through the use of vague references, and complicating, non-committal double negatives: “*respect for human rights and ethnic and religious diversity [...] not making it impossible to celebrate the school saint patron day*” (a Christian Orthodox tradition), or “*not opposing the idea of religious education*” [Parliamentary debates], the latter defined as being of an educational and nurturing, rather than of religious character. Within the educational field alone, the positive ideology of democracy and democratisation is supported through the discourse of religious education not only by using the ideological-discursive formations of human rights, but also those of personal choice and responsibility, actualised in the introduction of electives.

It was in this way that the then political actors – and it was primarily actors from the political, rather than educational field who performed the public construction – used the religious education discourse to reinforce desirable ideologies in the public reform discourse. As for civic education, as I noted in chapter 5, it seldom appears in the public construction of the policy discourse outside of its connection to RE. When it does, it is positively constructed through externalisation (reference to European and worldwide EDC trends) and aggrandisement, as a “*civilisational achievement*”, and assurance of ‘modern’ approach to education. Such qualification, apart from legitimising civic education, also contribute to the positive construction of ideologies of

internationalisation, Europeanisation, and modernisation. At the same time, CE introduction as a “*European theme and trend in education*” is a use of an ideological-discursive formation that places Serbia in the same category as ‘Europe’. When constructed in relation to RE, CE introduction is a part of the same initiative to support the ideologies of democratisation and modernisation through emphasising the discursive themes of choice and agency given to the students and their parents in the form of the two electives.

These are some of the discursive strategies through which the new government actors attempted to legitimise the joint introduction of RE and CE. Overall however, there was little space to explore the construction of CE as it stood on its own, and in connection to the wider reform. The matters were significantly different in the construction of the official and personal aspects of the policy and reform discourses, and I turn to them in the next section. With more room there for analysis of significant statements (see pages 106; 161), I look at the construction of the policy Problem, and seek to identify undesirable ideologies and values, and actors constructed as enemies – the Other. I subsequently examine the construction of favourable values and identities that were to be internalised through the distribution and materialisation of the policy discourse. I also look to identify the actors who are constructed as powerful enough to act as enactors of this discourse, and ensure the distribution and internalisation of the desirable ideologies.

The official and personal constructions of the policy discourse

The official aspect of the policy discourse was at the time of the policy introduction constructed for the widest field, addressed at both the national and international audience. This aspect also offers the most uniform construction of the Problem, with all the potential internal inconsistencies and contradictions 'ironed out'. I intersperse the examination of this consistent construction with examples of personal construction from the inner circle actors' interview narratives, where they support the official construction. I will later discuss variations and divergences in the personal constructions, as I relate them to the actors' use of discursive capital and the position in the field.

In the constructions of official and personal aspects of the policy discourse, the the 'problematic' ideology to be eradicated in the ideological-discursive problem of building a new Serbian society, is again minimally informed by the ideology of communism. Rather, the Problem is constructed through the consistent invocation of a discursive theme of the 1990s-as-a-dark-age. Communism, meanwhile, is rather neutrally constructed in relation to Marxism as an obsolete (and fairly harmless) ideology. It is contrasted with the much more powerful discursive themes of xenophobia, racism, and ethnic and religious hatred employed in the construction of the 1990s, which civic education was imagined as countering:

"EDC is a means in the fight against violence, xenophobia, racism, aggressive nationalism and intolerance." [DEEDC]

The Problem is temporally delineated at one end by the dissolution of Yugoslavia in the early 1990s, rather than by the ascent of communism in the 1940s, and the arrival of the post-Milošević government in late 2000, at the other, thus posing the question ‘transition from what?’, which I seek to answer in chapter 7. The event that instigated the transition that was constructed as starting in 2000 was in interviews variously named by the inner circle policy actors as “*liberation*” and “*revolution*”, making the construction of the ‘break point’ similar to discursive construction of the ‘revolutions’ that led to the end of communism in some European countries.

On very rare occasions I managed to identify a discursive combination of the entire period of Yugoslavian state socialism and Milošević’s 1990s authoritarianism into one negative image of stagnation and destruction. But this discursive amalgamation appears most clearly where the image of stagnation/destruction is contrasted with the pre-WW2 era of the ‘traditionally Serbian’¹⁶ education. The contrast achieved in this way leads to a very occasional invocation of the post-communist discursive theme of ‘return to the good old days’, or the nationalist ideology built through the theme of a ‘glorious past’, and the only instances of this theme appear in the alternative constructions of the policy discourse. In the official construction, there is hardly any space for the nationalist ideology as desirable, even if this means avoiding to construct communism as its ideological opposite.

¹⁶ In the next chapter, I consider the idea of the ‘traditional’ education (as opposed to ‘Western’) being used as a discursive strategy of vilifying imported policies, negating in the process the fact that even ‘traditional’ education was a legacy of earlier systems modelled after, for example, French or German late 19th and early 20th century ones.

In the official policy discourse, the Serbian communist past is only sporadically mentioned in the context of an economic transition to market economy. Even where there is such interdiscursivity between economic and educational discourses, the economic discourse is only in one instance constructed as the post-communist transformation from the planned to market economy, through an invocation of a post-communist ideology. This is done in a statement that introduces the tripartite ideology of 'new Serbia' – democratisation, economic transition, and international integration – and identified education for democracy as its vehicle, an aspect of the ideological-discursive project, discussed towards the end of the chapter:

“Within the scope of the overall socio-political transformation of our society towards parliamentary democracy and the general democratisation of social relations, the economic transition towards the market economy and the preparation for integration into European currents and structures, the democratisation of education and education for democracy play a crucial role at all levels and for all participants.” [DEEDC]

In most cases of economic-educational interdiscursivity, the official construction of the wider reform discourse predominantly features the theme of improvement. This is the theme of improving the circumstances of economic destruction caused not by a dysfunctional economic system, but by the wars, international isolation and economic sanctions, and the disastrous governance of the 1990s regime. Rather than drawing on the economic discourse, the construction of this context of devastation is performed through the use of dramatic, catastrophic vocabulary, creating almost literary discourse. For

example, the 1990s-as-a-dark-age is hyperbolically constructed as “*chaos that ruled all fields of life*” [EDC Stocktaking Report] or “*the agony of the ten-year-long isolation*” [Reform White Paper]. Additionally, in the instances of economic-educational interdiscursivity, the system of education is constructed as passive, suffering, and dependent on other fields – shaped by economy, politics, and wars:

“Under the circumstances of disruption and economic deprivation prevailing during the previous decade, education faced a lack of funding and general neglect.”

“During the isolation of the 1990s, the education sector suffered considerable neglect as government funding declined. Investment in and maintenance of educational institutions were limited and reduced real earnings, demotivating educational professionals and forcing them to find alternative sources of income. Curricula and teaching methods stagnated and there was significant political interference in the operation of the education system. The influx of almost one million refugees increased pressure on the system. Further damage to physical infrastructure occurred as a result of the bombing in 1999.” [Reform White Paper]

In contrast, with the arrival of the new government, the educational system is activated, becoming the vehicle of the positive change in the future-oriented discourse.

“The system [...] will be the driving force of the economic recovery.”

“Education is a priority area for the development of Serbia to facilitate its economic recovery.”

[The aim is] "Reorganising the schooling system in accordance with the need to efficiently contribute to the economic revival of the country." [Reform White Paper]

The above quoted examples of economic-educational interdiscursivity achieve the indisputable negativity of economic devastation to be discursively connected not to the communist ideology, but to the ideology of the 1990s, reinforcing the latter as problematic and undesirable. Overall, the Problem constructs communism as an undesirable ideology to a very limited degree. Even where the representation of the Problem draws on the undesirable ideology of authoritarianism and its constitutive elements of centralisation and state control, this is again connected to the actions of the 1990s government, through repeated references to laws and regulations which contributed to the making of a highly regulated system controlled by the central government. Not only does such discursive construction of the undesirable ideology of 'authoritarianism' largely ignore the legacies of the communist regime, the communist era actually appears in a positive light, as the period of greater autonomy, creativity, openness and international interaction. The consistent grouping together of "*autonomy*", "*creativity*", and "*openness*" into an ideological-discursive formation leads to the construction of communist Serbia/Yugoslavia as a positive and desirable space that is the opposite pole to the desolation of the 1990s.

The construction of the 1990s as a Problem may have been in part related to the unrelentingly negative construction of its regime in the international field. Communist Yugoslavia was never really an 'enemy' in the international field,

perceived as it was as one of the more open and liberal of European communist states. By contrast, the 1990s Serbia experienced a much more overtly negative construction, and the Serbian policy actors' focus on this period as one to negate can be interpreted as the use of discursive capital intended to create allies amongst international actors. The most problematic ideologies of the 1990s – extreme nationalism and conservatism – are depicted as dependent (through vocabulary indicating causality: “*came out of*”, “*resulted from*”) on the wars and “*international isolation*” and the “*confrontation with the entire world*”. The hyperbole “*entire world*” is used metonymically to mean ‘part of the world that matters’, i.e. the Western world, as Serbia was certainly not at the time isolated from or in conflict with the entire world.

The planned post-2000 transformation of Serbia is thus constructed as led to a great degree by the ideology of ‘internationalisation’ rather than ‘de-authoritarianisation’, constructed through discursive themes of reconciliation with the part of the world that mattered, and of ‘return to Europe’ (Birzea, 1994). Interdiscursivity between educational and political fields has a strong presence: in education, as in the then Yugoslavia’s foreign policy, communist Serbia is portrayed as standing between the ‘East’ and the ‘West’, nurturing constructive and enlightening relationships with the both. If there is a theme of ‘return’ here, it is the return to that position of perceived uniqueness.

Dominant ideologies in the official and personal discursive constructions of the Problem

There are two dominant ideologies strongly positioned as negative and undesirable in the construction of the Problem. The first one, the ideology of violent ethnic nationalism, is predominantly constructed through drawing on war discourse. One inner circle actor provided the following statement about educational problems of the 1990s as constructed by drawing on this discourse:

“War, refugees, poverty, sanctions. These are the problems that we had”. [CE Curriculum Developer]

This is a good example of a statement that constructed the Problem for policy actors. The emotional tone is accentuated through the use of a collective ‘We’ – these were the lives of the policy actors, the lives of their family and children. What is left out of this list was not for them crucial in the construction of the Problem: democracy, the change of system, and political ideology were not priority issues. The solutions and ideas that poured into the civic education policy were those that would contest war and violence, and establish an antithesis to what some actors who shared social capital, saw as a period of contamination, choosing to refer to their 1990s work as *“mental hygiene”*.

It is interesting to note that despite consistent invocation of the war discourse, the theme of ethnic conflicts that is central to the construction of this discourse, appears as existing ‘out there’, an external reality without an identifiable agent. The agentless, disastrous circumstances are constructed as *“what was*

happening here [to us]", a "situation", the "goings on" – an uncontrollable set of circumstances, almost a natural disaster, perhaps due to the still controversial, and internally contradictory construction of these events making it difficult for actors to clearly identify the responsible parties. Opposition and resistance to such vaguely constructed (in terms of agents and actions) circumstances is meanwhile contrastingly constructed through identifiable actions of the very identifiable actors. The positive construction of these actors as "*light in the darkness*" [Senior Ministry actor] will be further elaborated in the section on actor representation.

The other main ideology, although less prevalent, in the official and personal constructions of the Problem, is that of authoritarianism. One aspect and contributing element to the problem of authoritarian culture, the undemocratic relationships between educational actors, and the manner of teaching and learning supportive of acceptance of authority, is constructed by drawing on the educational discourse, and through focus on the educational field. In this case, it is critical thinking and individuality that are offered as a part of the Solution. For example, the following belong to the list of problems identified in the chief policy paper on democratisation as the problems to be addressed and resolved in the project of democratisation of Serbian education:

"Dominance of the traditional concept of education as transmission of knowledge: the curriculum devised as material that should be adopted, excessive contents, traditional teaching methods."

"Insisting on obedience and motivation based on fear of sanctions."

“Non-democratic climate in the school – formal, hierarchical, authoritative and competition based relationships.”

“Rigid, uniform organisation of space and time, leading to a non-democratic model of relationships and work.” [DEEDC]

These statements construct the educational discourse as one in which the ideology of authoritarianism, with constitutive elements of obedience, hierarchy, and rigidity is woven together with the ideology of tradition. The authoritarian educational culture is constructed as a negative through repeated collocations, in official as well as personal aspects of the policy discourse, as *“traditional”*, *“conservative”*, and *“backward”*. So the discursive themes of tradition, conservatism, and backwardness contribute to the forming of an undesirable ideology, standing in opposition to democracy. In this way, they become much more present as constitutive elements of the undesirable ideology of authoritarianism, than, for example, the themes of collective control or etatism, that would have constructed authoritarianism as related to the communist ideology.

Thus the ideologies of nationalism and isolationism, predominantly constructed through discursive themes of destruction and isolation, and the ideology of authoritarianism, predominantly constructed through the discursive themes of backwardness and tradition, appear as dominant in both official and personal aspects of the policy discourse. Although there are some inconsistencies with the official construction that stemmed from personal constructions, and on which I reflect further in the text, the dominant constructions of desirable and

undesirable ideologies largely coincide. These constructions are further reinforced through the representation of actors performed in these two aspects of the policy discourse, with certain actors appearing as the 'Enemy', the 'Other', who sought to perpetuate the undesirable ideologies, and others as 'Us' who were building the positive ideology.

Actor representation and actors' capital and agency in the official and personal discursive constructions of the Problem

The official and personal constructions of the Problem of the 1990s feature on one hand the darkness of war caused by the ethnic nationalist ideology, with the 'light' coming from the anti-war activities of the inner circle actors, and on the other the ideology of authoritarian oppression, where 'light' is constructed as a political action, a revolutionary opposition to the oppressive regime. The agent-ful ways of responding to the negative circumstances were constructed by various inner circle actors in interviews as "*breathing space*" and "*space for action*", depicting the political situation as one of stifling oppression, and the agents' action conceptualised as either participation (drawing on the political discourse) or conflict resolution (drawing on the war discourse). I mentioned earlier that in the war discourse, the conflicts are constructed as an agentless natural disaster, with the vague representation of actors leading to the war being constructed as an uncontrollable force. In contrast, the 'revolutionary struggle' had to be constructed with an identifiable enemy – so in this case, references are made to the "*political regime*", a concrete adversary, with Us, the underground teaching community attempting small acts of resistance, as offered by one of the interviewees:

"The regime let us be. There were no significant acts of repression against us, I guess we were too small for them." [CE Curriculum Developer]

Although the pre-2000 enemy is clearly identified as the then regime, once deposed, the construction of the enemy contemporary to the policy introduction and reform beginnings is much more vague. There is only one instance in which the then Enemy of the principles of the reform and civic education is identified in the form of a concrete actor (DSS). Elsewhere Otherness is constructed as a vague, general adversary of progress, modernisation, and openness, the backward and unenlightened proponent of tradition and conservatism, ideologies already established as undesirable, as I indicated above, and standing in opposition to democratisation. Constructed around a similar discursive theme of backwardness, the Other also occasionally appears in the form of the SOC, represented as narrow-minded and anachronistic. This is achieved by contrasting them with representatives of other religions who had “*a wider outlook*”, “*were educated*”, and “*prepared to engage in a dialogue*”. Such representation of non-SOC religious actors also highlights the fact that what was then seen as the enemy were a specific group of people, rather than religion in general. Religion is generally accepted as a part of cultural identity and not constructed as an outright negative, only appearing as such when it is connected to the undesirable ideology of nationalism, or to the political power of the religious actor (the SOC).

With the undesirable concepts of the national history, nationality, and religion ideologically employed in the construction of the Other, inner circle actors construed it as necessary to exclude both this ideology and its perpetrators from the official policy discourse:

“There was never a need for the [concept of] national identity [to be included], probably because of the previous experience, there was a need to foster something else, respect of differences.” [CE Curriculum Developer]

“With us it was unnatural for the national aspect to enter civic education, because civic education was imagined as education for participation. I mean, the national is not against participation as such, but after we’ve just ended the bloodshed and wars...”[Senior EDC team member]

Constructing the enemy around the concepts already established as dangerous is a strategy of negative Other-representation. RE and conservative strand of political (right-of-centre and extreme right-wing) actors were constructed in interviews using a dramatic, hyperbolic language, as engaged in a physical combat with the bearers of light and knowledge:

“We tried, we fought with them, and in that struggle, we managed to get RE and CE to enter the educational system as equal alternatives that year.” [Senior Ministry actor]

“They put landmines everywhere. They land-mined everything, absolutely everything they could.”

“We were at gunpoint. We were attacked from all sides.”[Senior Ministry actor]

In such representation of the Enemy as almost a military enemy, the construction of the two, ‘warring’ sides, is performed in inner circle policy actors’ narratives through the contrasting discursive themes of enthusiasm, honesty, drive, genuine desire to make lives better, with the Other constructed through the discursive themes of narrow-mindedness and concern with selfish and personal agendas:

“You know, we had this wonderful team. This fantastic team of people from the Departments of Psychology and Pedagogy. All of the others were disappointing. [...] They were so small-minded, they couldn’t see the wider perspective, they were only interested in their own personal benefit.” [Senior Ministry actor]

Overall, in the construction of the Other, there is a clear separation between Us and Them, achieved through both the vocabulary and the consistent opposition of imagery of light and darkness, progress and destruction, and through the repeated use of collective pronouns to designate the two groups. The Us group is a positive agent, the bringer of life, a “*team*” (most commonly used word in the inner circle actors’ construction of this category) held together by common values that were to contribute to the building of the new ideology, and – as my analysis indicated – similarly valued discursive capital.

The Us group of agent-ful actors, a “*team*” to build new Serbia is often constructed through a military discourse invoked through the discursive themes of revolutionary struggle. The revolutionary aspect, either the reaction to the negative of war (waged by violent nationalism) or the negative of authoritarianism, represented by Milošević’s regime, is very dominant in constructing the relationships, the background, and the shared capital of this group. The latter, particularly the idea of commanding the ‘right’ capital and correct knowledge, is what contributed to the construction of this group as powerful, in position to ‘educate’ those constructed as less so. Categories of ‘Ministry composition’ and ‘internal relationships’ are constructed through a distinctly informal lexicon and the consistent use of first names: these were

personal relationships of camaraderie and friendship, based around the same values and the same suffering, actors constructed through the use of superlatives and hyperboles. Their values are conceptualised as exceptional, outside of what was familiar in the national context, and beneficial for everyone's future. As I illustrated in the previous chapter, there is a strong theme of enthusiasm and pride in inner circle policy actors' narratives, which is related to their power and agency in constructing the Solution. Part of this power comes from their emphasising their professionalism, an insisted-upon differentiation between the 'political' and the 'expert' that lent legitimacy and meaning to the reform processes:

"[...] half of the Ministry were non-political people who had ideas about metamorphosis, about Serbia's change, while the political half made political decisions. But my political party was a party of intellectuals, who had ideas that concerned the substance of things, and not destructive ideas." [Senior Ministry actor]

Educational ideas and programmes developed and practiced during the 1990s that became the essence and the basis for the Serbian development of the civic education policy created a 'club' of similar members, people commanding similar ideological-discursive resources, that would come to constitute for them valuable discursive capital. The actors who appear commanding most power and agency are the overlapping group of academia/pre-2000 NGOs. This group of actors are constructed as positive through opposition and contrast with the negative discursive themes that constructed the 1990s. In statements which build the world of darkness and chaos, these actors are portrayed as bringing light. In a politicised environment, they are the professionals. In a controlling,

oppressive regime, they are the opposition, the fighters. They are constructed as the carriers of desirable ideological-discursive formations, and in this way commanding enough agency and power to build those ideologies, those values and identities for others to internalise.

This group of academics/members of pre-2000 NGOs and the group of political actors in the post-2000 government (with slight overlaps between the two) comprises what in the previous chapter I theorised as the inner circle of policymaking. For these actors, pre-2000 accumulation of the relevant and valuable social capital is connected to the gain in discursive, and for some actors political, capital. Their strong sense of agency post-2000 comes from their already established power to either oppose the regime politically, through overt activism and protests, or through ‘underground’ activities. These underground activities are constructed as being outside of the political field and within the educational, sometimes even international educational field, but still (through, for example, anti-war educational activities) countering the effects of the negative actions in the political field.

“There was a group of us... You know, people who weren’t just employed for the sake of a paycheck, but people who had some genuine orientation and desire to... dedicated to influence the society [...] those who were socially engaged were working on several projects in several NGOs at the time, because NGOs were the only space for action back then.” [CE curriculum developer]

“That subject of tolerance and conflicts and conflict behaviour, it was my focus with all that was happening here. [...] So we became gathered around those NGOs.” [CE curriculum developer]

The construction of the group of people sharing the same discursive capital also sporadically extends to include the teachers, some of whom are represented favourably and positively, as already having acquired the 'right' kind of capital:

"So there was a lot of training happening, and those first teachers that we trained were the most curious, the most innovative ones." [Senior EDC team member]

"It was a problem finding the right teachers, the ones who would be experienced. So we turned to those who already had that experience, relied on some programmes that were already applied before." [Senior EDC team member]

"Those were the teachers that were really willing, and really 'got' the whole concept, and had a – shared a vision with us about where we would want to go. [...] They really wanted to improve education, really connect with their students." [Council of Europe representative]

"You know, those were the teachers who wanted innovations in their work, who wanted changes." [Senior Ministry actor]

In contrast to the subcategory of teachers who are seen favourably, there is an occasional construction of others as narrow-minded and not-understanding of concepts and principles which are in themselves constructed as self-evident and in no need of explanation or justification:

"The system is distrusting."

"[when the training started] it turned into a complete joke, you know, it was insulting to them that teachers now had to become students... complete lack of understanding of triple I, of everything in the educational process!" [Senior Ministry actor]

Thus the notion of a team of similarly minded people – and this team also includes ‘outer circle’ partners such as Council of Europe members – able to draw on, and perpetuate the same ideology, is further reinforced.

In the inner circle policy actors’ representation of actors, both in interview and in documentary texts, categories of NGOs and international actors frequently appear side by side, forming a supporting/enabling factor. In interviews, however, NGO category is split into two subcategories: on one hand there are pre-2000 NGOs formed around anti-war, anti-conflict, tolerance-raising programmes, and this is the same group, the same “*team*” that ended up assembled around the Ministry. At an equal level of influence, particularly in the later stages (post-2004) of the civic education development, stands the Civil Society NGO whose influence is related to their by-then accumulated social and political capital from their involvement in anti-1990s regime activities. Although the Civil Society NGO was very active during the 1990s, and had contact with the 1990s NGO/academics group who would come to form the inner circle, their categorisation as an outer circle actor comes from some disagreements with the this group, leading to a degree of tension in relationships post-2000, and their absence from the most immediate decision-making process and subject conceptualisation in the initial years.

Thus, when it came to the early development of civic education, the Civil Society’s discursive capital did not seem entirely appropriate for the exchange with the inner circle actors, who were constructing the ideology of democratisation-through-CE through discursive themes of peace, tolerance, and

conflict resolution. The inner circle actors were drawing on psychosocial discourse, whilst the discourse drawn on by Civil Society was largely political, due to their political capital and pre-2000 political involvement. So the policy-building alliance was formed around the former, and it included only those outer circle partners who commanded the similar discourse, such as UNICEF, and those who allowed for the context-bound conceptualisation of civic education, and in fact insisted on the discourse of reconciliation, namely the Council of Europe. In this context, Civil Society, with the less desirable discursive construction of the ideology of democracy, and the less desirable, hardline (American) partners in teaching democracy, were largely left out of this alliance.

I mentioned in the previous chapter that the relationship between the inner circle actors and Civil Society was constructed around the theme of “tension”, tension coming from a discrepancy in conceptualisation of civic education (use of discursive resources) and desirable partners (desirable social capital). In addition, the only instance of politicisation of educational decision-making (apart from the RE introduction) in the inner circle actors’ narratives is the involvement of American civic education organisations via Civil Society, where ‘democracy imposed’ became for some inner circle policy actors authoritarianism in disguise. The American, individualistic concept of CE was rejected as foreign and alien to the Serbian culture, making the focus on context of primary importance, and emphasising national policymakers’ agency in choosing the desired course.

I also noted in chapter 5 the construction of the category of international influences along the lines of “European” and “American”, the latter appearing as fairly undesirable. The first level of analysis also identified the Open Society Foundation as one exception from the construction of the “American factor” engaged in by inner circle policy actors. OSF are constructed in interview narratives as a supportive agent, not necessarily with the focus on economic capital provided by them, but primarily, as I noted above, as a source of the social and discursive capital. They are a group to which almost all of the inner circle actors and developers were at some point and in some way connected. Such position grants OSF the power which was also identified in one of their members construction of the Foundation as “*support to the development of the civil society in Serbia*”, “*support to the formation of NGOs in Serbia*” [OSF representative], this constructing the Serbian society as one in which civil society almost did not exist before OSF. Their power is also derived from this actor’s hyperbolic description of their relationship to the (negative) actor that is the 1990s regime: they are self-constructed as the “*the enemy of the state*” [OSF representative]. Such construction through opposition to the negative achieves positive self-representation.

As for the relationships between OSF and the inner circle actors, it was most often described as one of ‘partnership’ in interviews, but discursive constructions are such so as to make it an uneven relationship, due to one party in the relationship being in possession of more economic, linguistic-discursive, and political capital. It is a construction of a relationship in which OSF is established as more powerful, commanding valuable knowledge that was at the

then Ministry's disposal. Their involvement is positively constructed in all inner circle actors' interview narratives as 'openness'. Openness is also generally a dominant discursive theme through which the presence of the category of international actors is constructed.

International actors are overall constructed as positive and supportive agents, whose absence from the Serbian educational system during the 1990s was a deficiency in the system, and its presence pre-1990 used to construct the communist period as relatively positive and unproblematic. Although the agency of national actors is a very strong theme in the category of the policy development, the category of international actors is still present as positive and supportive to the category of policy development. They are established as the source of useful knowledge accessed by the policy actors through a relationship of communication, partnership, and tutelage.

Some inner circle policy actors' narratives construct this 'support' from the international actors as help from a more powerful actor, whilst those of others construct it as help from an equal with whom the same values were shared. What determines the nature of construction, and the presence of the 'willingness to learn' theme that I noted in chapter 5, is the particular inner circle policy actor's position in the policy field. For those with less social and discursive capital in an international field, communication with international actors is construed as a valuable opportunity to learn:

“So Council of Europe said: there you go, whatever you need. And we were very open, too. And I didn’t always know what we needed, but I wanted to know what we needed. [...] So if you wanted to hear it, you could learn an awful lot.” [Senior EDC team member]

Although the category of national/international relationship is predominantly construed through the theme of partnership, some inner circle policy actors nevertheless occasionally produced statements that constructed them as less powerful, waiting to be commended for their effort, and good work and progress:

“But they [Council of Europe] appreciated that we wanted to learn and that it seemed like we were learning, not just that we wanted to learn, but that we learned quickly. That’s how it seemed to me.”

“And when our department was closed down [after 2004], she [Council of Europe EDC representative] came to Belgrade to tell the present minister not to cancel CE, that Serbia had achieved so much and that it would be such a shame to cancel it.” [Senior EDC team member]

“Not that I’m bragging, but we simply saw that we were zooming forward while others were stuck in the same spot. [...] They [international actors] would offer to shake our hand and say ‘it’s crazy what you’re doing’! You know, it was true progress, but this could only be recognised by the world, you know, by experts.” [Senior Ministry actor]

For the more powerful inner circle actors, it was no more than reinforcement of policymakers’ ideas about “*what we thought we should do anyway*”, and what our “*domestic experts suggested*”.

“You know, they invite you, or someone asks if you’re interested and you say yes, sure, so they organise your visit, show you what they’ve got, and you talk to everyone and see what it is that they have to

offer... You know, it's not, it's not the ugly globalisation. They offer things, this is what we've got, you know, that's what you're paying us for!" [Senior Ministry actor]

Even in the 'alternative' construction of the policy and reform discourse considered below, the manner in which the category of international influences is constructed, whether the subcategory is that of international organisations or of the CEE region, is related to their capital. The greater the capital, the more power the actor had in constructing the international actor as equal if not inferior, and depicting international advice, not as valuable, but almost as patronising.

"To me this was... these conferences... You had these people coming from the West, treating us like we were amateurs, like we were beginners, like now they'd show us..." [Serbian academic/author on EDC/CE]

These constructions are important for the theorisation of the national/international policy actors relationship, and consideration of notions of policy discourse imposition and adoption/adaptation. My argument, that I will further develop in chapter 7, is that the degree to which global discourses are imposed or appropriated depends on the power accorded to national actors through possession of what is at the time considered valuable discursive capital, and is evident even in individual cases, as illustrated above. In this case, there is, overall, a strong insistence on the national policy actors' agency. For example, where Serbian individual policy actors construct the national-international relationship through a theme of partnership, it is usually portrayed as a 'two-way' interaction, and support as that either benevolently

offered by the international organisations, or the effect of the policy actors' agency demonstrated through the conceptualisation of the problems and solutions, and invitation of international support. The agency is conveyed through the consistent use of active and transitive verbs, and identification of the subject performing the action ("*We brought*", "*We asked*", "*We invited*", "*We attracted*"), with the policy actors as subjects, and international 'partners' as objects of their intention.

Any instance of international organisations' offering specific advice or projects is in narratives met with agency to refuse at the national policy actors' end. The inner circle actors thus constructed their capacity to judge the offered help and decide on its quality or appropriateness before accepting or refusing it. Similarly, the 'lessons from abroad theme' discussed in the previous chapter, and constitutive of the category of international influences (particularly the CEE region subcategory) is used to construct national actors' agency in using good experiences and learning from bad ones. This does not equate to adopting models, but adapting good solutions which would act as "*seed on fertile ground*" [Senior Ministry actor]. Such construction further contributes to the building of the policymakers' agency and power, and to the general theme of superiority and exceptionality with regard to other post-communist countries, thus further reinforcing the effort to construct the Serbian field outside of the post-communist discourse (the 'post-communist' qualification possibly seen as one of inferiority). National policymakers are depicted as autonomous and expert, this additionally highlighting their professional and dedicated character, free of ideology (in the negative sense of the word) and political affiliations, free to

construct the Solution to the Problem that they 'identified' as the most pressing one.

Official and personal constructions of the Solution

Whilst there is a fair degree of coincidence between the official and personal constructions of the Problem, there are some differences in the construction of the desirable ideologies of the Solution. One of them is that the official aspect employed more frequently discursive strategies that construct Serbia as a part of Europe, and on its way (back) to Europe. Meanwhile, personal narratives tend to construct 'Europe' and the 'world' in a more ambiguous manner, as illustrated by earlier discussions of construction of 'international influences'. The official aspect features more ideological-discursive formations that could have demonstrated at the time, particularly to actors in the international field, that Serbian national policy actors belonged to the same 'team' as them, in the same category of actors together engaged in the construction of the educational discourse in the international field. One of the indicator of this is the correspondence between the key Serbian policy documents and the international ones which discourse of education for democratic citizenship was being constructed in a wider (predominantly European) field. Where I identified such correspondence in my analysis, particularly in the case of concepts alien to the Serbian language (such as 'capacity building'), I was inclined to theorise them as discursive capital, or even a 'flag of convenience'. However, there is less coincidence between national and international texts in

the prescription of desirable values, and principles to be upheld by the education for democratic citizenship than I originally expected, informed by the literature, and the idea of national policies' adoption of internationally developed concepts.

Thematic analysis of the international EDC policy documents enabled me to spot patterns in the construction of values and ideal identities, and potentially trace some Serbian policy actors' ideological-discursive formations back to texts in international educational field. With the main Council of Europe documents written solely for the purpose of constructing and explaining the idea(l) of an education for democratic citizenship, and the Serbian documents constructing and explaining the planned direction of the entire educational system, I had no expectations that when it came to their frequency alone, there would be coincidence of relevant statements. However, as both sets of texts are constructing an ideal society, it was possible to seek out comparable ideological-discursive formations in some of the 'key' statements.

All the four main Council of Europe documents (the list is Appendix 1), despite having a different focus and a different purpose (defining the idea of Education for Democratic Citizenship, identifying core values, identifying 'sites' of citizenship, recommending national policies) are consistent in their ideological-discursive construction of the ideal society. The dominant, nodal, ideology is that of social responsibility, built through repeated and consistent appearance of the 'rights and responsibilities' formation. There is a differentiation between themes of "*human rights*" on one hand, and "*rights and responsibilities*" on the

other hand. The theme of human rights mostly appears on its own or in relation to the sub-themes of race, gender, religious, and children's rights, constructed as an ideal and a value to be upheld, whilst the theme of rights and responsibilities invariably appears as a collocation of knowledge and action. This collocation of knowledge of rights and the subsequent responsible action in the society is always causally connected to the theme of individual and social empowerment through 'responsibilisation', an active exercise of rights and a productive and informed involvement leading to an equal participation by all the members of a democratic society.

'Democracy', meanwhile, is constructed as a perfectible ideal, to be strived towards – even if never attained – through knowledgeable, responsible engagement by the society's individual members. The ideology of democracy is constructed through the use of discursive themes of contribution and participation, and communitarianism and social cohesion, as opposed to the traditional accent on democracy-as-representation. In this way, responsibility is constructed as 'shared', and a democratic society that, whilst cohesive and inclusive, is not homogeneous but pluralist and accepting of diversity, and one of functional co-exercise of personal differences and freedoms (freedom as capacity for action), implying tolerance of those of others. In such way, citizenship itself is constructed as postnational and plural. There is thus in the global civic education discourse, also, an absence of ideology of nationalism in the construction of 'ideal' citizenship, but not to the same degree as in the Serbian civic education policy discourse, in which the two are oppositional ideologies.

The international EDC documents construct the ideal of democracy as perfectible, underlined by modal verbs (would, should) and vocabulary that incorporates “*utopia*” and “*ideal*”. Meanwhile, Serbian documents construct it as achievable, and in the ‘modern’ world (the earlier construction of the ‘world that matters’), already achieved, ‘out there’ state, to which Serbia is transitioning, and to which the project of civic education is contributing.

“Democracy is not only a form of political arrangement and governmental structure (“the rule of people” by direct or representative democracy) but it also assumes and incorporates a democratic social arrangement: a type of social life that implies acceptance and practice of the principles of equal rights, opportunities and treatment for all members of the community.” [DEEDC]

Supporting the ideal of democracy as definable and attainable, there is a ubiquitous insistence on “*basic democratic values*” across Serbian EDC documents. This item does not have a corresponding one in international documents, and in Serbian texts it constructs a world in which these basic rights are universal and recognisable. As such, these values are constructed as unquestionable, so an adherence to them becomes a matter of necessity and inevitability. The “basic values” are specified in only one statement, identified as “*human rights, freedom, equality, peace, and justice*” and placed in the same category with the throughout-insisted-upon respect, cooperation, solidarity, and tolerance. They are habitually left vague and undefined, and as they lack elaboration or substantiation, there is room to see them as examples of ‘flags of convenience’ or ‘empty vessels’ without fixed meaning, performing little more than political signalling (Steiner-Khamsi, 2014). However, I choose to view

these particular formations as demonstrations of discursive capital, due to their ubiquity and relation to the discursive construction of the nodal ideology of democratisation. I note below some other ideological-discursive formations that I am more inclined to conceptualise as ‘flags of convenience’, as their insularity, and lack of discursive connectedness to other important ideological-discursive formations leave them without much generative power.

The appearance of these formations constitutes one of the most obvious divergences between the use of ideological-discursive formations in the official constructions in the national field, and in international field. These discrepancies come out of a comparative analysis of Serbian and English versions of the key policy documents, and cannot be attributed simply to the matters of translation, as there is otherwise considerable level of correspondence between different-language version. The discrepancies are manifested in a consistent and repeated use in English versions of concepts that I interpret as rare instances of ‘flags of convenience’, as they are alien in the Serbian context, and carry little discursive substantiation in English-version documents. These include “*capacity-building*”, “*human resources*”, “*international development*”, “*informed policy-making*”, “*empowerment*”, which are either descriptively translated into Serbian, the meaning considerably diluted and their power diminished in the process, or completely omitted.

The second significant divergence is in the use of active/passive voice. In English documents, there is a predominant use of active voice, the actor is clearly identified and power and agency granted to them:

“The Government recognises the need”;

“The Ministry assumes the role”;

“The reform draws on international recommendations”; [Reform White Paper]

“We have accepted EDC concepts from the Council of Europe project”.
[DEEDC]

In contrast, Serbian documents are built around passivisations and nominalisations, constructing inevitable, agentless processes of democratisation and change.

“The Ministry was beset with a task”

“The reform is based on international recommendations”

“Civic education is being introduced” [Reform White Paper]

‘Democratisation’ in particular, appears time and time again as an inevitable, out-there process to which various elements in the Serbian educational field – governance, issues of quality of education, lack of defined standards, lack of macro-evaluation of standards and attainability, lack of connections between formal and non-formal education, lack of vertical and horizontal mobility – are a hindrance. Meanwhile, there is no consideration of the ways in which elements of the system could positively contribute to the set goals, or identification of the ways in which elements of the system could already be

considered 'democratic'. The necessary democratisation was "*challenged*" by these elements, and it acts as an agent in itself, one with certain demands and requirements. The consistent use of 'democratisation' as a clause subject coupled with active verbs, as in the below examples, achieves this:

"Democratisation of education assumes the decentralisation of the system..."

"Democratisation of education requires previous changes of law regulations..."

"Democratisation of education sets normative and procedural frameworks..." [DEEDC]

The construction of 'democracy' as an existing quality of the world towards which Serbia strives is additionally strengthened through the use of present tense, contrasted with modal verbs used in international EDC documents. Together with the documentary construction of the certainty of 'democracy', 'democratisation', as the guiding ideology of the reform, is introduced in the above quoted DEEDC paper through values and skills offered as a bullet-pointed list, made simple and straightforward, forgoing their internal uncertainties, contradictions, and the space for debate. Presented as positive ideals ("*freedom, equality, solidarity, human rights, trust, acceptance of self and others, cooperation, dignity, self-respect*"), they are constructed as common sense notions against which there is no argument, thus disabling challenging and disagreement. All the items within the list are only connected with commas, the impact growing as the ideas accumulated. The list contains incontestable items: the accent is on personal development, understanding of self and the

world, respect and understanding of nationality, tradition, and culture, and building of the value system based on the notion of the greater good. Couched in between were the notions of “*individual responsibility*”, “*employability*”, “*Europeanness*”, and “*lifelong learning*”, and, distributed throughout documentary texts, erected on connections to these items, there appear constructions of the democratic society as one in which diversity is respected, human, children’s and civic rights were upheld, and the society is humane and tolerant.

In the construction of ideological-discursive formations which include concepts of tolerance, diversity and inter-cultural conflict resolution and avoidance, there is also an occasional use of externalisation as a discursive strategy. Its function is to construct these formations as not exclusive to the Serbian context, particularly in Serbian-language texts (official construction in the national field). Externalisation likely serves to not only obtain authority and legitimacy for the offered solutions, in the way that, for example, Silova (2002) or Spreen (2004) have used the concept, but also to signal an ideological alignment of Serbian educational ideas and agendas with international ones. In this way, Serbia is constructed as the part of the European family in which it is connected with other societies in a relationship of collaboration on resolving the same problems, and not isolated in dealing with these, as I noted above, still sensitive issues on which there was at the time of the policy introduction likely to be little consensus in the national field. Urgency and necessity appear as discursive themes in the official construction of the policy discourse in the national field, and they are causally connected to the discursive themes of catastrophe and

devastation, but lest this be translated into helplessness and powerlessness, an additional strategy of externalisation is employed to moderate the theme of helplessness with one of belonging to the wider European community facing the same problems, and having the reassurance and support in solving those same problems together.

In international texts, the discursive theme of tolerance, constructed as acceptance of diversities, drawn from intercultural and peace education, and its related values of negotiation, dialogue, and peaceful conflict resolution, constructs only one aspect of the ideal of democracy and is nowhere near as dominant as the discourse of rights and responsibilities, and an informed, productive acting in the society. The theme of tolerance, however, is in one significant instance functioning as an ideological-discursive formation, constructing the context of Southeastern Europe and its need to “*manage diversity*” [CoE EDC Sites of Citizenship Document]. Even as a seemingly perfunctory mention, in that it is not discursively reinforced throughout the rest of the international texts, it should still be noted as a formation potentially embraced in Serbian documents where it could act as powerful discursive capital.

The matter is not as simple, however, and it does not neatly translate into powerlessness of Serbian policy actors’ accepting recommendations. Whilst the strong invocation of this discursive theme in the English versions of Serbian documents (official construction in the international field), can be interpreted as demonstration of desirable and valuable capital, it is also constructing a

nodal ideology in the personal policy discourse. In addition, and in relation to the expectation that international recommendations would be readily accepted, it is important to note that the otherwise positive international review of the Serbian national framework for EDC, expresses some criticism aimed at its lacking in political education, and its focus on 'softer' concepts of personal and group development and managing of relationships and interactions. This indicates that the Serbian policy actors commanded enough power to construct the EDC discourse around concepts towards which there existed the potential for self-referentiality (Schriewer, 2003), and not only rely on adoption. In favour of their doing so is also the conspicuous sparseness of the discursive theme of critical thinking. Overall, the ideology of democratic citizenship in the official Serbian civic education policy discourse intended for consumption in the international field is predominantly constructed through the discursive themes of tolerance, respect of diversity, and of human rights. As in the conceptualisation of the Problem, which draws minimally on a (post-)communist ideology, here as well one of the key themes in the reform of the authoritarian system of education, critical thinking, appears only in a limited way and only in collocation with "*creative*" and "*innovative*" thinking. The focus is on the development of individual and group identity, and the ideology of individuality that would require fostering of 'hard skills' is foregone in favour of self-confidence as the tool towards participation, shared and informed decision-making, but primarily collaboration, communication, group problem-solving, trust and respect of rights and diversity. The discursive themes of peace, tolerance, and respect of diversity are very prominent, permeating both

the documents and the interview data, with the above example of even the “basic human rights” defined in relation to it.

The analysis of the personal constructions of the policy discourse proved enriching here in that they enabled me to trace the origin and meaning of ideological-discursive formations constitutive of the official policy discourse, that could have been interpreted in one of the many possible ways. Self-referentiality with particular discursive potency is that which comes from the Positive actors who stand in opposition to the Negative regime of the 1990s, this further reinforcing the construction of their power and agency. In the personal policy discourse constructed in interviews, as shown in the previous chapter, policy actors were keen to establish their agency and ownership of concepts, with the focus on actors’ cultural and social capital and its role in enabling the building of the civic education ideology.

An access to the personal construction of the policy discourse, the merit of which I will further discuss in the next chapter, also enabled me to spot discrepancies and divergences from the official construction. One example is a personal construction of ‘democracy’, which stands in some contrast to the above outlined official construction of it as an achievable, ‘out there’ achieved, and for Serbia inevitable, state:

“Democracy was an empty positive word.” [CE Curriculum developer]

“All the life I’ve spent in an ‘undemocratic’ society, I’ve never experienced such pressures.” [Senior EDC team member]

“Well, democracy is an ideal, isn’t it?” [Senior NGO actor]

The official construction, in order for it to successfully perform the function of a discursive project’s construction of a hegemonic ideology, which I discuss at the end of this chapter, had to be free of such inconsistencies. For the same reason, it would have been difficult for it to incorporate any of the ideological-discursive formations that were constructing the ideologies of democratisation, modernisation, and internationalisation in divergent, or problematising ways. I already introduced some of them in the section on the public construction of CE policy discourse, but they are fully explored below, where I look at the alternative constructions.

Alternative constructions of the civic education policy discourse

Whilst there are some discrepancies between the public, official, and personal constructions of the policy discourse, particularly in the use of discursive capital with respect to different audiences, the ideological constructions made by the inner circle actors are fairly consistent. Civic education is constructed as a major aspect of the project of the democratisation of education in Serbia, which was in turn an important part of an all-encompassing educational change intended to support the country’s socio-political transformation towards a ‘European’ democracy. Modernisation, democratisation, and internationalisation were the guiding ideologies of the project of making a new

Serbia, to which reform and civic education (even religious education) policy discourses contributed. The ideologies of nationalism, conservatism, and authoritarianism were in the meantime an undesirable ideologies, the elements of which did not have a place in the official construction. I now turn my attention to the alternative constructions of the civic education and reform discourses, as a way of not only exploring the ideological elements that did not make into the official discourse, but also looking at the alternative ways of constructing the educational reality of Serbia at the time, this helping us to view the official discourse, not as inevitability, but simply one possible option.

Mediating policy discourse

In the consideration of alternative construction CE policy and reform discourses, I start with those constructions that had most common elements with the official and personal policy discourses. Consequently, following my theorisation, the constructors of this discourse were at least present at the outer perimeter of the decision-making. What I call a sub-aspect of 'mediating' civic education policy discourse is one that is constructed primarily in interviews. This construction is largely absent from the national public space, in which elements of what I later term 'oppositional' alternative discourse are present, but are either rejected as the negative ideology of the Other, or, as in the case of religious education discussed above, transformed so as to fit ideologically with the overall reform discourse. Common elements between the official and mediating policy discourses include the construction of civic

education and education for democracy as positive and necessary. The diverging elements come from the fact that these mediating constructions either use formations from within the political discourse, or, more a narrowly educational discourse. Such constructions are contrasted with those of the inner circle actors, who primarily drew from field of social psychology and psychosocial discourses, seeking to negate the ideology of ethnic nationalism.

In the case where the mediating construction draws on political discourse, the Problem is more overtly conceptualised as a problem stemming from an authoritarian ideology, constructed as an absence of concrete knowledge of democratic principles and processes, and of human rights values. Such conceptualisation of the Problem, and civic education as a Solution, firmly postulates the issue of civic education introduction within a political ideology. This is particularly the case with the constructions offered by representative of the Civil Society NGO, and their orientation and construction of the Problem is relatable to the political and social capital that the chief actors had accumulated during the 1990s. This NGO's strong grounding in anti-authoritarian political action on one hand, and strong connections with various democracy-promoting international (and a lot of them US-based) organisations on the other, led to a particular orientation towards the conceptualisation of civic education, excluding them, as noted above, from the inner circle of policy actors due to the incongruity thus produced.

Civil Society NGO's construction is built around strong insistence on civic activism and the power of local community, democratic institutions and

procedures, and oriented towards knowledge and skills, rather than beliefs and values. Such orientation is constructed as superior to that of the inner circle actors, dismissed as “*child play*” and “*playing psychiatrists*” [Senior Civil Society actor]. Their focus was apparently on changing the system so more local empowerment and initiative was allowed, and it was on teachers as the carriers of the change. This was coupled with mistrust towards the Ministry, and the strong support of decentralisation and of weakening of the state’s influence in education. Democracy, too, is constructed in their narratives in pragmatic, functionalist terms, and rather than the existing ideal towards which Serbia was striving, as in the official discourse, it is constructed as a perfectible and challenging task.

The self-constructed power of these actors that, gained from the accumulated political and social capital during the 1990s led to tension (also a theme in the inner policy actors’ narratives) with the political elite with whom the NGO believed to assume a position of equality if not authority. The possession of what they perceived as valuable knowledge put them in the position of educating the teachers constructed as in an initial position of less power due to their lack of appropriate knowledge and skills, which is another similarity with the inner circle actors’ constructions. NGO’s self-construction as being in position of power is also illustrated in a constant and consistent repetition of the first person pronouns at the beginning of each sentence, creating a strong sense of agency. There are, finally, some small variations in individual constructions performed by different members of Civil Society. Where the individual actor is in a position of less power, the discursive constructions

revolved around cooperation and partnership with the Ministry, creating an idea of equality. Where the actor is self-constructed as powerful, the relationship was constructed as one of (NGO's) superiority and authority.

A former member of the 2001-2004 education shadow cabinet also contributed to the construction of the mediating policy discourse. In their narrative, for example, earlier discussed discursive theme of enthusiasm that constructed inner circle policy actors as a band of like-minded people fighting for change, appears as a construction of a negative. The vocabulary is one of zeal rather than enthusiasm, and this zeal is causally related to the urgency and haste with which the reform was approached, again constructed as negative and leading into mistake. Although the same discursive elements are present: the necessity of change, reform as positive development, 'keeping up with the world', they are coupled together differently from how they appear in the official construction. There, these elements are brought together in creating a positive theme of catching up with Europe, coming from an assumption that wherever 'Europe' is going was also desirable. In contrast, in the mediating discourse, they are organised as a negative theme of rushing to catch up, with the trajectory of the collective 'world' remaining an open question.

In this construction, tradition and conservatism are constructed as the positive opposite of the undesirable ideology of progressivism created by a radical reform. In addition, there does not exist a clear polarity between 'Serbian' and 'European', as the "traditional" Serbian system is constructed around early European (predominantly French) influences on Serbian education. As tradition

is constructed as positive, self-referentiality is used more regularly, not to legitimatise any one specific education policy, but to legitimise what is in this construction seen as a desirable quality of a reform process. Referring to Serbian educational tradition, and past reforms, a slow, experimental, but incremental process of educational change is seen as much more advantageous than a fast, extreme change that inner circle actors are seen as having been advocating. So whilst the inner circle actors' narratives feature the theme of 'revolution' as a positive, the subversion of what was discursively established as a Problem, in the mediating discourse, revolution is contrasted with evolution. Evolution is a slow, progressive change for the better, and revolution an all-destructive process, including the destruction of what was good.

Oppositional alternative discourse

Apart from these mediating constructions, there is an oppositional strand of the public discourse, consistent with the interview narratives of carriers of this discourse – oppositional because it shares very few elements with the official discourse. In this oppositional discourse, the Other is the West, and domestic actors are constructed as playing a slave to it. Such construction is not constitutive of the ideology of isolationism, however, and it does not negate the ideology of internationalisation, but simply constructs it in a different way. There are still elements of internationalisation and widening of the educational field, but rather than constructed through discursive themes of belonging and catching up, they are built through the discursive theme of competition.

“It is very difficult, you know, for any country on Earth to have a normal development in competition with other countries by neglecting what everyone everywhere considers a fundamental discipline, which civic education certainly isn’t.” [Reform critic]

This construction of the policy discourse does not necessarily treat civic education and education for democracy as negatives, but as unnecessary and irrelevant. There is one instance, where, along the ideological axis of ‘modernisation’/‘tradition’, CE is negatively constructed as a negative mechanism for “*annihilation*” [Reform critic] of the national and traditional. Otherwise, civic education is constructed through repeated (by various actors) parallel comparisons with Marxism, however, not as dangerous, but as harmless: an empty subject that teaches values that do not correspond to real life. CE is thus not constructed as negative, merely as unnecessary, through further comparisons to non-political subjects such as family education or ethics.

What is perceived as a Problem in this construction of the policy and reform discourse is the destruction of order and hierarchy: tradition, as a positive, something to be preserved, is constructed through discursive themes of order and hierarchy. In the meantime, democracy is constructed in the oppositional discourse as a Negative through appearing as the ideology of the Other, the collective West, whose defining quality is constructed through references to the Negative absolute, the act of 1999 bombing of Serbia. However, the Other, the West, is not condemned for trying to convert Us to their ideology, or suppress Our tradition, but for stifling Our economic and industrial productiveness and potential.

"You know, they don't want educated people here. All they want is cheap manual labour." [Reform critic]

Whilst there is no justification or defence of the Problematic 1990s period, there is in the oppositional alternative discourse a more overt positive construction of the communist period contrasted with what is seen as a post-2000 Problem. In this construction, the Problem of the 1990s is almost absent, and with it, the positive agency of the policy actors who were acting against it.

The inner circle actors are constructed as having been led by what was seen as the ideology of 'Anglo-Americanising' Serbian education, with an identifiable source in a number of specific individuals, and with the rest of the 'democratisation' of decision-making simply a charade. Otherisation of the policy actors is personalised through identifying specific individuals, and through the use of first names, the intimacy implying a close knowledge of the problematic inner circle and their mistakes. Otherisation is performed through the reference to Their position built on political and social capital, with Our power and legitimacy coming from cultural and intellectual capital. Concepts that serve as inner circle actors' discursive capital in the official construction of the policy discourse, such as 'active participation', are subverted through ridicule to exaggeration:

"Take, for example, active learning. Can there be learning without an active mind? You don't have to run around the classroom to be active!"
[TU leader]

In the meantime, self-constructed power of the outsider group comes from intellectual capital (strongly attributed to self through the consistent use of active verbs and first person pronouns), and the discrepancy between their discursive resources and those of the policy actors led to the almost self-imposed exile from the policy field. Thus, interestingly, with the reversal of positive/negative representation of actors, alternative policy discourse also features 'politicisation' as a negative, and contributes to the construction of the positive ideologies of professionalism and expertism.

Policy discourse from outside the education field

Before I conclude the section on alternative policy discourses, a word on construction of the reform from within the religious field. These actors' construction is very interesting, as it features discursive events which kick-started the education reform, but it constructs them almost completely outside of the educational field, or at least the field created by formal education practices and institutions. In the policy discourse as constructed by RE representatives, the central discursive theme is that of reawakening of religion, and the re-installment of religion to its 'rightful' place in the society. Educational actors, and educational policy actors are constructed as existing outside of their field. Detachment, conveyed through the use of third person collective pronouns instead of specific names and institutions:

“I can’t really tell you about any difference in treatment from the different ministries of education, they’re all the same to me”, [RE representative]

is also combined with superiority coming from their provision of something strongly desired by the people:

“It is what they wanted. What children had been learning at home, but wished to learn more.” [RE representative]

This statement identifies the recipients of the instructional process as ‘children’, rather than ‘students’, humanising ideology, and making it a personal and familial matter (the context of home is introduced), rather than an educational one. Even civic education is constructed outside of the educational discourse, and referred to as a ‘civic option’, and delegitimised through being referred to as “*child play*”, this contrasted with the “*serious approach of the RE teacher who wants to teach them*”.

The focus is not necessarily on tradition, nationality, or ethnicity, but through the focus on family, the needs and wants of “*children*”, the RE discourse is in these narratives constructed around basic human and family needs. Additionally, by staying outside of educational discourse, any possible challenge or questioning of the RE status as an antithesis to civic education is avoided. As a subject of a nature and a function that is ‘above’ education, RE has also stayed, as far as RE actors were concerned, outside of any ideological project of which education reform was a part. In the final section of the chapter, I look at how the latter, on the other hand, incorporated civic education.

Civic education as a part of the ideological-discursive project

This chapter has so far served to illustrate ideologies constructed by distinct groups of actors around certain sets of values and in opposition to certain problems and (the ideology of) enemies, outlined in the table below.

	UNDESIRABLE IDEOLOGIES/PROBLEM	DESIRABLE IDEOLOGIES/SOLUTION
OFFICIAL DISCOURSE	Ethnic nationalism, Authoritarianism	Democratisation, Modernisation, Europeanisation/Internationalisation
PUBLIC DISCOURSE	Politicisation	Democratisation, Modernisation, Europeanisation/Internationalisation
PERSONAL DISCOURSE	Ethnic nationalism, Authoritarianism, Traditionalism, Conservatism	Democratisation, Modernisation, Europeanisation/Internationalisation
ALTERNATIVE DISCOURSE	Westernisation, Neo-colonialism	Tradition, Global competitiveness

Table 2. *Desirable and undesirable ideologies in the policy discourse construction*

Although there are certain divergences identified in the discursive constructions of problems and solutions, and attributable to the use of capital by different actors and with a different audience with whom to exchange capital, both the narrower civic education policy discourse, and the wider reform discourse draw on the same themes in construction of the Problem, and

construct groups of actors and their agency in the same manner. Allies and supporters are clearly identifiable, as are the Other. In both interviews and documents, the public – the future constituency for the desirable ideologies – are constructed as ‘lacking’ in knowledge and skills, and in need of education and empowering by those actors whose command of valuable discursive resources enabled them to start building the ideological-discursive project. In this last section, I look more closely at how civic education/education for democracy works as an aspect of this ideological-discursive project.

Key reform documents open with education being “*identified*” by the Government (stressing the agency and effort of the government) as a “*key priority area for the development (all-encompassing project of great magnitude and reach) of Serbia.*” Development is constructed as consisting of economic recovery, revitalisation, or improvement, and rather than a transformation/transition from one economic system to another, this is a normative qualification that is a positive movement from the state of suffering and destruction. The second ideological-discursive ‘pillar’ of the ‘new Serbia’ is a creation or the development of the democratic society, the variation implying an already existing society of democratic relations that needs to be developed as opposed to constructing from the position of no democracy. Finally, the third pillar was that of integration (or less frequently re-integration) into the variously described international community/Europe; it is never clearly defined where this international/European community lay geographically, politically, or culturally, but is instead offered as a vague concept, a utopia to be attained. Also the fact that Serbia had at some level been ‘integrated’ with *some*

sort of international community was largely foregone, as it was left unclear whether this integration was institutional, organisational, structural, or simply ideological.

The relationship between education and wider social, economic, and political change was constructed as one of fluid causality: the relationship of causality ran in both directions. Within education as a vehicle of this wider change, EDC is identified as one aspect of particular interest and with a particularly wide reach, as it is made out to infuse all of the other changes taking place in other areas of education, such as decentralisation, vocational, higher education, and education quality. Values desirable in this new society, with a greater emphasis on the communal rather than individual, are listed as *“freedom, equity, understanding, and respect for oneself and others, and also on the development of human resources that enable creative work, and of a spiritual community dedicated to ideas of peace, brotherhood and hope”*. The identified aim is to establish relationships that would ensure the *“full respect of each individual, regardless of their age, sex, religious, national, political or cultural affiliation.”* (Educational Reform Proposal Draft).

Save for one neo-liberal discursive element (*“human resources”*) in the above statement, this desirable ideology is built around discursive themes of equality, diversity, peace and respect, rather than a more closely identifiable political ideology based on neo-liberal democracy, based on the rights and skills of the individual. There is also a dramatic theme of hope, arising as it did from the contrasting theme of destruction and suffering of the previous period, and also

a theme of brotherhood, particularly interesting as it is related to the ideology of brotherhood and unity of the communist Yugoslavia. The presence of a communist ideological-discursive element on the one hand, and the lack of post-communist discursive elements on the other, underlined again the construction of the Serbian post-2000 space as post-conflict, rather than post-communist, such construction both coming from the policy actors' cultural and discursive capital, and certain to ensure a wider support for the ideological project where the ideology that was offered is not an overtly political one.

In the parliamentary field, one of the nodal ideologies around which the construction of the reform was performed by policy actors is that of modernisation, defined in terms of a changed pedagogy towards a child-centred approach, with the ideological trinity of modernisation, democratisation, and international integration appearing throughout as a ubiquitous collocation. Reform is constructed as a public good, rather than a political party property, this further reinforcing the ideology of democratisation in opposition to politicisation. Within this, two types of themes identified are those of individualism, critical thinking and practical skills of problem-solving on the one hand (those drawing on a political discourse), and communication and conflict resolution (those drawing on a war discourse) on the other. Civic education appears as one of the outward aspects of the wider democratisation of education, and also as an ideological-discursive element that places Serbia in the same category as 'Europe', as it is constructed as a "*European theme in education*". RE is similarly explained and justified through externalisation and

reference to European experience, with the RE discourse also using discursive themes of tolerance and appreciation of (religious) diversity.

The introduction of civic education is repeatedly named the part of education for democratic citizenship, which in itself is a part of the wider movement of the democratisation of the entire educational system, one of the main channels towards the democratisation of society, as the inseparability of educational from the wider national field was repeatedly substantiated through the use of the modal 'must':

“Changes in education must take into consideration the broader social and political changes” [White Paper],

adapted from an international statement

“Educational policy and political reform must overlap [...] within the context of the democratisation of the country” [Council of Europe EDC document]

as an example of the use of discursive capital by the Serbian policymakers.

Alternatively, this inseparability is constructed through absolutisms:

“It is impossible to make a democratic society [...] without having been educated for democracy”. [DEEDC]

Both democratisation of education and democratisation of society are again consistently nominalised and agentless, inevitable processes that are 'on their

way' and the only thing that actors in these processes can do is enable and facilitate them (Us) or obstruct them (Them). The values and qualities of the future citizens are constructed as dependent on the educational changes, as the Serbian EDC programme often appears as a clause subject with transitive verbs, "*forming*", "*making*", or "*developing*".

The public policy discourse is supportive of the official discourse constructed in the White Paper and the key policy documents in that it reinforces the ideologies of democracy, modernisation, Europeanisation (through the discursive theme of 'catching up with the world'). The ideological trinity of democratisation, economic development, and Serbia's international integration is also reinforced as the main tenet of the ideological-discursive project of which education was a crucially supportive element, reflected in the vocabulary that often employs architectural metaphors, such as "*building blocks*" and "*foundations*". Also perpetuated, similarly to the civic education policy discourse, is a construction of stakeholders as potentially crucial agents of positive change, but yet without any actual agency – they are yet there to be educated and empowered. One of the elements of Problem (the authoritarianism aspect of it) is constructed as an absence and lack of applicable knowledge, this brought into connection with the ability to nurture an open mind and create an open society that can be easily internationalised, culturally and economically. Knowledge is knowledge only if applicable and Serbia is 'lacking' in it. The country could only become developed if the proper type of knowledge was achieved, and this knowledge is always brought into

connection with the elements (such as openness) already discursively connected to internationalisation.

Public construction of the reform discourse also uses externalisation for the legitimisation of the reform goals, referring to the authority of international texts without the need to justify or explain this authority, and constructing Serbia as an actor in the international field. However, not all elements of internationalisation are desirable. As with civic education discourse, there is here, on a higher scale, an attempt made by the political actors to discursively distance themselves and the reform process from any US actor involvement, and construct the discourse of Americanisation as a negative one, standing in opposition to the positive and desirable Europeanisation. 'Europe' is seen as an important external parameter of quality, however, and both references to the 'region', and 'international organisations' used for legitimisation purposes, as are references to principles and knowledge identified as 'universal'.

There is also a high degree of political/economic/educational interdiscursivity in public construction of the reform discourse. Elements belonging to the educational field, rather than being the nodal points of public debate on educational reform, are more often used as a vehicle of political dispute, and of invocation of the contesting ideologies of communism/socialism, nationalism, authoritarianism, liberalism, and democracy. There is thus discrepancy between the role and meanings of elements of educational discourse in the public and the official constructions of the reform discourse. Despite these differences, in both cases educational policy is clearly constructed as a vehicle

of wider transformation – through interdiscursive hybridity in the public construction, and through the use of discursively powerful statements that make the socio-political change dependent on educational, in the official construction.

Conclusion

This chapter has explored the ideological-discursive workings behind construction of values, identities, and roles of an ‘ideal’ society to which policy-as-discourse contributes by distributing these and making them available for internalisation. My theoretical argument does not assume a simplistic and agentless process of internalisation by students, teachers, parents. However, exploring the way in which these actors adopted and adapted some of the ideological-discursive formations contained in this policy is a matter for future study. Here, my aim was to explore some of the ways in which the policymakers built into the policy their own discursive resources, coming from their (primarily) social and cultural capital. I demonstrated multiple constructions within the policy discourse that differ with regard to different audiences (in using policy elements as discursive capital), and looked at how the policy worked as a part of a larger ideological-discursive project which was the education reform and the overall socio-political change in Serbia.

Together with exploring the ideologies contained in and constitutive of the CE policy discourse, I used the combined explanatory power of the concepts of

discourse and capital, to theorise policy actors' (power) position in the education field, and in CE policy discourse, their actions, interactions, and relationships. Drawing on the configuration of desirable and excluded ideologies, I constructed the landscape of actors and alliances, actions and conflicts based on the idea of shared discursive capital, and favoured ideologies advanced through its use. I did this by relating the construction to the discourse carriers and their possession of, at the time, 'relevant' and 'valuable' discursive capital, and thus their position in the policy field. I should note again, that as any discourse analysis, this one was influenced by various theoretical and scholarly constructions of the social events and actors that created a propensity towards my reading data in a certain way. I have aimed, however, through the process of interpretation and re-interpretation, with an open and critical mind, sensitive to construction over common sense, to minimise the occurrence of casual inferences. In the next chapter, I return to the transition literature and situate my findings in this scholarship, as well as explore the fit of my conceptual framework and the usefulness of my methodological tools in examining (the formation of) a post-communist education policy.

CHAPTER 7

Serbian civic education policy discourse formation in the context of post-communist transition

Introduction

I begin this chapter by briefly considering the meaning and function of the Serbian civic education policy as a part of the wider ideological-discursive project. My theorisation of the policy in this way is a reiteration of the importance of the context into which the policy is brought, and of the appreciation that, even if considered symbolic, ad-hoc and haphazard, any education policy that is a part of the wider project is a channel for certain ideological-discursive formations to enter the educational field. As a matter of additional importance, new educational policies also introduce various actors who use the ideological-discursive formations as their discursive capital, and who are then accorded a position of power from which they can shape the discourse associated with the educational field.

After offering a rationale for using the introduction of civic education policy as a way of examining the reform at the beginning of the transition 'proper' in Serbia, I proceed to situate Serbia's case in the wider scholarship on post-communist education reform. In the first part of the chapter, I compare Serbian reform efforts in the context of the early 'democratisation' context with cases of

other CEE countries analysed in the post-communist transition literature and predominantly focusing on the period just after the fall of communist regimes in the early 1990s, a decade before Serbian transition 'proper' began. In doing this, I also discuss to what degree there was a teleological aspect to the Serbian education reform, and whether transition really did come to mean transition-to-democracy. I also compare and contrast the theorisations made about the 'early' transition in the 1990s post-communist transition scholarship, and what I theorise as a case of 'belated' transition.

Although my theoretical and epistemological perspective argues for the specificity of a researched case, I make comparisons where the social and political elements of different CEE contexts are sufficiently similar to allow comparison with the Serbian case. Moving from the transition-as-democratisation paradigm, I examine how my findings and conclusions fit in with later, post-modernist approaches to the study of the post-communist field, and communicate with ideas proffered by authors such as Silova and Steiner-Khamsi (e.g. 'flags of convenience' or 'transfer of discourse'). I discuss whether and in which way my conclusions contribute to the extension of such concepts, as I seek to add to theorisation of policymaking in the post-communist context.

Civic education policy in the context of the 2001-2003 reform

One of the conclusions of my analysis of the CE policy discourse indicates a significant correspondence between ideologies constructed as desirable in Serbian civic education policy discourse, and those constructed as desirable in the wider reform discourse. What I refer to as an 'ideological trinity' of democratisation, modernisation, and internationalisation (the latter sometimes appearing as equivalent to Europeanisation) was proffered as a necessary solution for the problem of the 1990s and the nationalist, isolationist, and authoritarian ideologies therein promoted. Civic education policy discourse is not constructed so as to actively fight tradition, but it certainly works towards negating it through policymakers' largely excluding the elements of history, nation, and religion from the policy discourse. As noted in the previous chapter, self-referentiality is used minimally in the official construction of the policy and reform discourse. In my analysis, I identified instances of it only in the discursive incorporation of the work that the policy actors undertook during the 1990s (some of them starting in the 1980s), work intended to contend with the official state ideology. In the public construction, an exception is religious education policy discourse, in which (political) actors used the discursive theme of return to the interrupted course of history. In this case, there are references to the Serbian educational tradition in which the SOC had played an important role, but the construction of the RE discourse is ideologically very complex, as there was an urgent need to legitimise discursively what was

essentially a political decision, and have a seemingly incongruous element fit in ideologically with the rest of the reform.

These exceptions aside, the public and official constructions of the policy and reform solutions are conducted without much reference to Serbian educational traditions, and offer little as worth saving. This is particularly conspicuous when compared to what I have termed 'mediating' and 'alternative' policy constructions of the policy discourse, where the presence of the national, traditional, and historical elements is often used to contest some policymakers' decisions. There are even some elements of self-referentiality in the personal construction of the policy discourse in narratives of some of the inner circle actors. Some of them, for example, conceded that there were potentially elements of the old system that were good, but that at the time, there was an overwhelming need for a complete ideological overhaul that had called for drastic changes.

One aspect of planning such an ideological overhaul is an apparent consensus on the problems that needed to be solved and goals that needed to be attained. Any internal contradictions are left out of the discursive construction, excluded as the ideology of the Other. Such was the need to construct one-spiritedness of the reform, that even the religious education policy, which is arguably built predominantly on the ideology of 'the Other', is in the public construction of the policy discourse incorporated in the ideological homogeneity created around democratisation, modernisation, and internationalisation. As illustrated in the previous chapter, the introduction of religious education, rather than being the

introduction of ideologies of nationalism and traditionalism into the reform discourse, is transformed in the reform discourse construction into an act of the offering of choice, the practice of the freedom of religion, the upholding of international standards, and lastly, the continuation of the natural flow of history which had been interrupted by communism.

The ideological homogeneity of the public and the official constructions of the policy discourse is related to the policy's being a part of a wider ideological-discursive project. Its creators had to ensure that it was able to convey the new ideology with the internal contradictions removed, so some elements of undesirable ideologies in the discursive resources of some policy actors would have been homogenised in the process of public and official policy discourse construction, and those actors who did not share what were at the time seen as desirable ideological-discursive resources altogether excluded. According to an established Serbian academic who was mentioned by several of my interviewees as someone occasionally consulted in the process of preparing the reform, the key policy documents (such as White Paper) offered a homogenised appearance of what were at the time possibly disparate views. A quote from a paper co-authored by him is illustrative in this regard:

“The problems and dilemmas faced in reality were never discussed in the policy and reform documents of the 2001–03 Ministry. Instead, these documents just presented general concepts, flaunting them during large convention-type gatherings, and simply assuming and demanding that they be accepted.” (Ivić and Pešikan, 2012: 46)

Such homogeneity conveyed by the official and public constructions of the policy discourse is also evident in the polarisation between Us and Them, and Our ideology and Theirs, where the Other is necessarily constructed as propagating the undesirable ideology, and overlaps and inconsistencies, such as the fact that, for example, 'traditional' (v 'modern') education is also European (see Johnson, 2010b), are omitted. It was necessary for the Solution and ideology publicly and officially constructed by Us to be accepted, which is what produced an apparent single-mindedness of everyone involved in the reform. Such single-mindedness stands, as previously reiterated, in contrast to the themes of 'uncertainty', 'chaos', 'conflict', and 'pluralism', often encountered in studies of early transition reforms across the CEE context in the 1990s.

It is important to note that the apparent unity of intent does not exclude the diversity of positions within the 'policymakers' collective category itself, nor the disagreement with what I conceptualise as a global civic education discourse. The arrival at the point of apparent, or at least, relative, homogeneity of the ideological-discursive project would have had a different path, dependent on matters of actors' capital and the discursive position from which to initiate the negotiation of discourses and ideological formations and prescriptions. This, in turn, would make the declaratively identical discursive theme diverse across contexts, with its having incorporated 'global' and 'international' influences and elements to a different degree. What is important is that, we, as researchers, do not assume the same teleological attitude towards post-communist changes, as constructions and hybridisation of discourses may or may not happen, leading to diverse and unpredictable transformations. Despite the seemingly identical

educational discursive themes, ideologies may end up being very different; this is where I identify my approach as 'late' modern. In the remaining part of this chapter, I proceed to situate my conclusions in both 'modernist' and 'post-modernist' strands of the post-communist education transition studies, beginning with consideration of the Serbian case alongside other cases of 'early' transition and reform developments within this context.

Serbian early transition and 2001-2003 reform in the context of 'early' post-communist transition

In the introductory chapters, I discussed the different ways in which education reforms, particularly their beginnings, across the CEE context were described, and in some cases, conceptualised and explained. I return to these narratives of post-communist reforms here, and relate the Serbian case to them. I explore how Serbian early reform developments compare with those theorised in the 1990s literature that treated other countries, before proceeding to explore how much the concept of 'belated transition' can contribute to extending these earlier theorisations. In doing this, I will predominantly make reference to key actors, (un)desirable ideologies, and the general themes in describing and conceptualising the process of decision-making and priority-setting.

In this section that looks at the early transition and reform context, I primarily look at the descriptive studies of the 1990s transitions, and less so at some of

the models discussed in chapter 3. The reason for this is that the descriptive studies provide more room for the exploration and potential comparison between more detailed elements of educational reform beginnings, something not quite offered by models such as those of Birzea (1994; 1996) and McLeish and Phillips (McLeish, 1998a; 1998b) that theorise the full course of the reform. Nevertheless, towards the end of the section, I will reflect on the potentially useful way in which these models can be applied to a new case, particularly with respect to a broad view of the reform trends, goals, and outcomes.

Firstly, however, I address the question of whether Serbia's post-2000 transition can at all be considered an 'early post-communist' transition and thus comparable to the post-1990 transitions of other CEE countries. This is a question particularly valid if we bear in mind a point argued earlier, that, as Serbia experienced the fall of communism in 1990, it, too, had been 'transitioning' since the early 1990s, albeit towards a less clearly identified ideology. I discuss the question of transition, and its starting- and end-point later on, as I seek to theorise contextual differences of the experience of post-communist transition, but I wish to offer here a justification of my comparison of Serbia's early-2000s period with the early 1990s changes as described and conceptualised across the CEE context.

Some of the 1990s definitions of transition, as mentioned in chapter 3, stress the notion of rupture, the dissolution of one economic and socio-political system, and the establishment of a new one, leading to various interconnected reforms in different areas of life. In Serbia, although this socio-political and

economic rupture happened concurrently with the rest of Europe, the ensuing decade saw little of the post-communist reforms, since the governing elite were predominantly invested in matters of foreign policy. Internally, they were dedicated to keeping a higher level of central control, resulting in educational policies that led to even higher degrees of centralisation and etatisation than was the case during the previous communist regime.

With this in view, many of the defining characteristics of the period of transformation in CEE in the early 1990s, as shown by my data, appear in Serbia only after October 2000. Ideologies constructed by the reform discourse incorporate many of the 'buzzwords' (Birzea, 1994) of the post-communist reforms: democratisation, decentralisation, modernisation, and Europeanisation (also see Cerych, 1997). The discursive theme of 'opening to the world' is one in particular that was not present in the Serbian post-communist space until the 2000s. In the previous chapter I discussed the discursive construction of the 'world' and 'opening/return to the world' by the post-2000 Serbian policymakers, which came to mean a 'return to the Western world', a discursive theme relatable to the post-communist 'myth of return to Europe'.

The discursive themes identified separately across the CEE context by Birzea (1994) and Bozóki (2002) as a 'return to Europe' and 'return to normality', and also present in Serbia's case, are constitutive of the guiding ideology of 'democratisation'. This theme is supported by the theme of 'catching up' in my data, not merely catching up with the 'developed' West, but with the formerly

communist Europe. The latter is a particularly complex construction of the urgency to catch up in institutional and procedural terms, whilst keeping (the case with most of my interviewees) a sense of advantage, almost superiority, coming from what they perceived as already having a command of valuable discursive capital that needed to be exchanged for social, economic, and political capital. Themes of haste and urgency are also accentuated in my data by the notion of being late, and being behind even those post-communist countries who were at one time, as again seen by most of my interviewees, far behind Serbia.

The theme of advantage through which most of my interviewees constructed Serbia's communist experience possibly explains the absence in this case of one reform buzzword that Birzea found common to most CEE countries in his 1994 overview: 'deideologisation'. The absence of this discursive theme, at least in its construction as 'deideologisation-as-decommunisation' is attributable both to the construction of the 1990s in Serbia, but also to the pre-1990 period. The communist period is constructed both by the categories of inner and outer circle policy actors, and of the critics and commentators of the reform, through a dominant discursive theme of 'openness'. Hence there was no need, as perceived by the post-2000 Serbian policymakers, to introduce policies which rid the educational system of the communist ideology, notwithstanding the necessary structural and institutional changes that would decentralise the system and make it more democratic and flexible. The priority was to 'de-1990s-ise' the system, and return the society to the state of perceived pre-1990 advantage.

The theme of the society's openness (to the Western world) with which the communist period is constructed, and the associated theme of active waiting, are related to another characteristic of the Serbian early reform that distinguishes it from the rest of the European post-communist space as represented in scholarship. This refers specifically to the absence of the post-communist transition theme of 'chaos and uncertainty', with multiple options and possible steps appearing before the policymakers, and a resulting reluctance amongst the members of the new democratic governments to embark on any one particular course. I noted above that the public and official constructions of the Serbian reform discourse conveyed a fair degree of homogeneity and single-mindedness of intent, and explained why this was necessary in that domain.

But even in the personal construction of the policy discourse, the theme of chaos and uncertainty is not particularly pertinent. I relate this in part to the Serbian policymakers' social and discursive capital accumulated whilst 'actively preparing' for the reform already in the last days of communism. As related by a senior Ministry actor, Serbian educationalists had already prepared possible solutions, and planned for various potential directions during the 1980s, with many members of this group 'benefiting' from an open professional exchange with Western colleagues. Their solutions could not be directly tested on the Serbian system during the 1990s, but that decade was used to develop ideas in a non-formal way, within various NGOs and alternative academic networks, and occasionally apply them to select and/or available educational settings. In

addition, there was an opportunity to learn from other CEE countries' early transition experiences, making sure that Serbian policymakers, once they got the opportunity, as the above actor remarked (see quote on page 122), did not make the same mistakes and follow the paths they had learned were wrong.

Such pre-planned conceptualisation of the post-communist reform, once the political circumstances created the opportunity for the reform to be set fully in motion, enabled the post-2000 policymakers to "*hit the ground running*" [Senior Ministry actor], and come up with a reform strategy in a short time, thus avoiding a period of questioning and uncertainty. Another factor that contributes, I theorise, to such a state of agreement, and this is where the Serbian case is comparable to that of Russia in the early 1990s, is that the pre-revolution educationalists who would go on to become post-revolution reformists, shared a lot of their social and cultural capital. In Russia's case, similarly to Serbia's, the agents in the post-communist reform had belonged to the same academic and NGO networks prior to the change (Polyzoi and Dneprov, 2003), so were able to draw on the same discursive resources once they were put in the position of power that enabled them to translate these into educational policies.

An absence of multiple and diverse groups of reformists involved in the construction of a new educational discourse, as existed in, for example, Romania, according to Svezová (1997), facilitated a fairly homogeneous environment in terms of proffered ideas about the direction of education and setting of priorities. Serbian inner circle actors insisted in interviews that not

only the Serbian education experts' ideas coincided with the consensus reached at the country-wide 'Conversations about the Reform' with stakeholders, and that even international organisations' recommendations reflected "*what we thought we should do anyway*" [Senior Ministry actor].

Inner circle actors are self-constructed in interview narratives as a "*team*" working on a common goal, one shared among everyone from the EDC team members to the prime minister himself, as the quote below illustrates. The sense of single-mindedness and efficiency contributes to conceptualising the reform as an ideological-discursive project, and the civic education policy a part of it.

"[...] and I was thinking, man, it's as if he [PM] was present in our meetings, [what he was saying was] what education is supposed to develop: critical, creative, divergent thinking, development of communication skills, making a person adaptable to new conditions, to the market and so on..." [Senior EDC team member]

Such unanimity was apparently not challenged at the time by what the inner circle actors insisted was an open and democratic manner of discussion about the future of Serbian education, which would have presumably invited pluralism of ideas and made matters much more complex and much less straightforward. However, this notion of a democratic, far-reaching discussion, is particularly challenged in interviews with the commentators and critics of the reform, who noted that although opposing opinions (to those of the reform leaders) were voiced, they were not always heard, and certainly not implemented.

Whilst the theme of 'uncertainty' is thus shown to be largely absent from the Serbian example, and despite the contrasting prevalent theme of wide consensus leading to expeditious changes, there is nevertheless an element of ad-hocery in Serbia's early reform discourse that could possibly be considered an extension of the otherwise unreported state of discord. There are multiple instances of curriculum developers' interview narratives featuring a lack of knowledge and clarity about the future and nature of civic education. In addition to such uncertainty about the subject's status, even more telling is the related sense of suddenness with regard to the decision to introduce it. However, what prevents me from seeing these elements as contradicting the dominant theme of agreement and determination is, firstly, an insistence upon having civic education in the long-term reform plans from the very beginning, and secondly, connecting this one instance of ad-hocery to the political strategies of the ruling elite. Through this discursive strategy, this incongruous element of the reform is confined to the political field, constructed as existing outside the field of agency of the inner circle actors.

This is one instance of reform decision that is confined to the political field, and influenced by political and religious actors, comparable to the Polish case, where the Catholic Church had also (re)assumed a strong presence in education after the fall of the communist regime (Mieszalski, 1994). Aside from it, any notion of discord, confusion, and uncertainty disappears in the case of the Serbian 2001-2003 reform under the seeming expediency of the reform plans and first reform steps, and an apparent consensus between the various key

actors – predominantly academics, pre-2000 NGO members, and international advisers – on its entire course. I discuss below this and other differentiating qualities of Serbia's belated transition and also re-state what I see as contributing factors to it – not simply a ten-year delay to the changes that were happening elsewhere, but crucially, the specificity of the context, and the agency of the key policy actors. Before examining the concept of 'belated transition', in conclusion to this section I wish to briefly reflect on the macro-theorisation of the post-communist reform offered by some of the major post-communist transition models, and identify any points of communication with the Serbian case.

Serbia's 2001-2003 reform against the post-communist models of transition

Adopting a broad view of Serbia's 2001-2003 reform, Birzea's notes on the characteristics and aspects of the various stages of the reform allow more room for comparison than that of Phillips and McLeish. The model of Phillips and McLeish (in McLeish, 1998a; 1998b) offers a much neater outline of macro-to-micro reform, whilst that of Birzea allows for more of the messiness of the reform-making reality to come to the fore. Particularly pertinent are Birzea's classifications of the different reform measures into rectifying, modernising, and restructuring (Birzea, 1994) – different aspects of the Serbian planned 'education for democratisation' programme, which involved curricular (civic education), but also institutional and restructuring measures, can fit in with all

three of these categories. There is also his later (Birzea, 1996) distinction between a slow and transformative reform, as opposed to a radical, 'shock therapy' model, the latter certainly applicable to the radical transformations planned by the Serbian 2001-2003 reform.

Overall in Serbia's case however, there was little of the power struggle between the old system and the new. As one inner circle actor reported, these were mostly petty personal issues, rather than political and ideological. Nor was I able to identify in my analysis a lack of understanding or foresight with regard to the system as a whole and the wide-reaching effects of the transformation of the entire system noted by Birzea and Fartusnic in 2003, although I did recognise the validity of Halász's (2003) note on the propensity of the new elites towards high risk behaviour and setting of ambitious goals. And despite not finding Phillips and McLeish's model applicable to this case, I am inclined to agree with McLeish's later (2003) note on the importance of political (in)stability, which, as it was shown in Serbia in 2004, can cause a complete U-turn when it comes to the direction and the nature of the reform. In this, Serbia's 2001-2003 reform is similar to Dneprov's early 1990s progressive reform in Russia (Polzoi and Dneprov, 2003).

One major identifiable characteristic of Serbia's case that may be related to other CEE reforms as conceptualised through models, is an overtly decided and proclaimed end-point of Serbia's transition, a teleological aspect of the reform meant to lead to democratisation, modernisation, and international integration. Thus despite my treatment of the Serbian reform as non-linear, official and

public constructions of the Serbian 2001-2003 reform discourse do indeed offer an idea of linearity of transition process in its being a series of steps from point A that, if performed with success, should lead to a decided-upon point B. In this, any of the 1990s models of post-communist transition and reform, criticised for their determinism or even prescriptiveness, can be seen as applicable to the Serbian case. One of these models, Fullan's Triple I model, applied to the post-communist context by Polyzoi *et al.* (2003b), was in fact used by two of my interviewees, both senior Ministry actors, as common, indisputable knowledge about the nature and the process of an educational reform.

I have then been able to identify a correspondence between Serbian and the CEE context, in a proclaimed end-point of transition, and the related commonality of 'reform buzzwords' ('revolution', 'return', or 'Europeanisation'), or themes of political freedom, economic liberalisation, and a renewed interest in the West. These themes and buzzwords act in a way as signifiers that mark an ideological 'switch', and a beginning of the reform 'proper', and may be interpreted, and have in fact been interpreted in scholarship, as a proof of homogeneity of the post-communist transition experience and education efforts and agendas. My argument, however, is that we should be careful not to confuse similarity of reform language with the sameness of the ideological construction of the reform discourse. As my theorisation of difference in the transition experience indicates below, the specific meanings with which these 'buzzwords' are imbued, or rather the ideological construction of policy and reform discourse of which they are a part, make it extremely important to focus

on the characteristic properties of the context. Only then will we be able to understand the processes taking place, the desirable and undesirable ideologies, and the Problems and Solutions constructed in the policy discourse, before proceeding to theorise the ideological sameness solely on the base of linguistic similarities. I begin to theorise ideological difference in the next section, and attempt to answer the question of its relationship with the concept of a belated transition.

'Belated transition': is there a difference?

Comparing Serbian early transition through the case of civic education policy formation, with that of other countries as they were discussed in chapter 3, enables an examination of the validity and usefulness of thinking about the Serbian case as a 'belated transition'. It also enables an exploration of the ways in which this belatedness may have affected the approach of Serbia's new governing elites to the country's reforms. For example, it might appear from this case that even with the case of a 'belated' or a 'stilted' transition, what the political and educational elites arrived at, was a sense of the inevitability of democracy – however defined – as the only viable option that is equated with, or made a necessary condition of 'normalisation' and 'internationalisation'. In that sense, democratisation of the post-communist (educational) space seems to have worked in homogenising ways. The argument that I have made throughout, is that in addition to exploring how this homogenisation is

prevented by the heterogeneous translation of policies into practice, we can also explore the ways in which heterogeneity happens at the level of the initial policy discourse construction by the elites. This proposed heterogeneity also raises a question of relevance of the notion of 'transition' as opposed to the concept of multiple 'transformations'.

Thus the concept of 'transition' remains useful in theorising post-communist change, and I argue that we should not rush to dispense with it, or negate its validity. However, rather than simply looking to answer the question of what it is that the society is transitioning *to*, we also need to ask what it is that the society is transitioning *from*, since this will markedly affect the experience of transition. The specific context of change will determine the ideological substance of similar linguistic elements of the reform that may otherwise be regarded as no more than common transition 'buzzwords'. Establishing the context-specific meaning of apparent buzzwords will make us less likely to think of different countries' national educational discourses as identical, since they will be ideologically constructed in different ways. I argue that the particular ideological construction of meanings depends on the discursive capital of actors involved in the construction of the policy discourse, and on what these actors construct as undesirable and desirable ideologies to be suppressed and promoted, respectively, through a particular education policy discourse.

In Serbia's case, the political and regional circumstances created the authoritarian nationalism and isolationism of the 1990s as the main ideologies

to be eradicated by the country's first proper post-communist reform. The construction of the ideologies of the 1990s regime, coupled with a construction of Serbia's communist experience as uncharacteristically liberal, led the key post-2000 actors to regard decommunisation as an issue of less priority. For example, Gordy's (2013) investigations of the Serbian 1990s regime, and the efforts of the post-2000 government to deal with its legacy, similarly suggest how it was not decommunisation that was – in my conceptual terms – on the agenda of the ideological-discursive project, but rather, an attempt to erase the ideology of the more recent regime, an ideology whose beginnings are not so easy to determine, reaching as they do far back into Serbia's pre-communist past.

Although one of the common characterisations of the early post-communist transition experience includes the concept of anomie (see page 4) and the breakdown of social norms and values, that requires for a new guiding philosophy/ideology to be established, the context of 'belated transition' worked in this case to create various, publicly available ideologies before the 'democratic revolution' took place. The historical and cultural particularity of the context, and the specific experience of communism means that the ideology that lost popular support, or lost constituency in Serbia in 1990 was post-national, and post-ethnic. It was less of a political and economic ideology, and more an anti-nationalist one built on the ethnic-historical ideas about the 'brotherhood and unity' of the South Slavic peoples, gathered under the Yugoslavian flag. It is perhaps for this reason that the succeeding ideology turned out to be nationalism, as it was this space that needed to be filled.

Democracy, as a political successor of communism, may have competed with nationalism in Serbia in the early 1990s, but it was a difficult battle to win, and it had to wait until nationalism and isolationism proved unsustainable. What makes this even more complex, is that in competing with nationalism, democracy simply became 'an idea of a better life', one not provided by the nationalist ideology of the 1990s. Thus, rather than being an ideology with a set of political and economic prescriptions for the future constituency to embrace and internalise, it became a vague, open concept to be ideologically 'filled' by the elites through specific reforms and policies, and elements of nationalism were understandably to be avoided in this process. That might explain why civic education policy was not overwhelmingly political in nature, or why the policymakers did not work within the 'democratic deficit' (Nicoll *et al*, 2013) paradigm. It is because it was not communism that was the undesirable ideology to erase through the civic education policy discourse: the undesirable ideology was nationalism, and that was built through the discourse that was not exactly political. So even though the entire reform was being declaratively guided by the ideology of 'democratisation', it becomes fairly understandable why, for most of the inner circle actors, this did not simply translate into 'learning democracy'.

The above is important because it emphasises the importance of the communist era for the ideological construction of the post-communist policies. As illustrated in the previous two chapters, narratives of all the actor categories construct the communist period in a very positive light, and especially those of

the inner circle actors construct Serbia's education as benefitting from the relationship of openness, and the possibility of innovation (especially during the 1980s), standing in stark contrast to the 'chaos' of the 1990s. Nostalgia towards the communist period is perhaps not an altogether uncommon theme in this scholarship, but in the Serbian case the positive construction of the communist period is related to a sense of unique advantage towards proposed 'Western' solutions, and also towards advice that might have been issued by the CEE 'neighbours', particularly vividly illustrated in the quote by one of the EDC team members on page 118.

I argue that the inner circle actors constructed, in the personal aspect of the policy discourse, the category of international influences, and particularly its sub-category of influences from the CEE region through the theme of advantage, related to their command of valuable discursive resources. However, in terms of translating the resources into institutionalised social practices, there was still for them a need to 'catch up', brought on by the experience of belated transition. There was a sense of urgency created by the ten-year delay in changes, contributing to the expediency of reform measures. The delay is also constructed as beneficial as it enabled learning from other CEE countries' (negative) experiences, particularly with regard to relationships with international organisations. For some of the inner circle actors, the delay enabled direct involvement in other CEE countries' experience of transition. This was for them a position from which they were able to accumulate discursive and social capital to use in both national and international fields of Serbia's transition.

For most other inner circle actors, the period of the 1990s enabled experimentation with novel ways of teaching and learning. As this was conducted in the circumstances of war and political oppression, it gave these actors a command of discursive resources drawing on anti-war and anti-authoritarian ideologies. Additionally, their pre-2000 professional engagement within the NGOs and academic networks enabled accumulation of valuable social capital which determined the nature of the post-2000 Ministry composition. The pre-2000 professional engagement also involved building relationships with some international organisations (UNICEF, OSF), creating, after the revolution, a sense of openness and opportunity in the international field seldom noted in the literature. The themes of freedom and opportunity constitutive of the category of international relationships are also illustrated by the senior Ministry actor's remark (see page 137) on the enthusiasm and engagement of international actors that surpassed the present use of EU funds towards certain projects around which Serbian policymakers nowadays do not seem to have much creativity or choice.

Despite several similarities between the Serbian and the rest of the CEE context, themes that are then markedly different are those of superiority towards the post-communist context, and occasionally with regard to international influence in general, and independence in decision-making processes amongst the national policy actors. These specificities of the Serbian 'belated transition' are related to the communist experience constructed through the theme of openness, and the pre-revolutionary professional engagement constructed

through the theme of active waiting partly enabled by the unrestricted professional work. The distinguishing characteristic of the late transition is also marked by the existence of a 'hybrid regime' period in which future policy actors gained an opportunity to accumulate valuable capital and assume a favourable power position in the education field, through their NGO educational work, and their communication with international actors. The latter are all identified as enabling factors of the democratic revolution (Merkel and Croissant, 2004), whose presence would have been limited in other pre-democratic change contexts. Such factors enable the early formation of alliances which would come to be in charge of conceptualising and distributing the new ideological-discursive project.

In this way, I can confidently say that a different experience of transition is created by the specificity of the context (perhaps a truism), but the 'specificity of the context' is not confined to structural and institutional constraints that shape policies and reforms in one way or another. What I have in mind here is the availability and value of discursive and social capital, and – here I aim to extend the later post-communist transition scholarship – the agency of national actors, demonstrated in their possession and command of it. The command of the inextricably related discursive and social capital affects the freedom to choose between available ideologies, the creation of ideologically (and discursively) fairly homogenous alliances leading to prompt and smooth changes, and to a relationship with actors in the international field characterised by themes of freedom, autonomy, and confidence. In the next section, I use this theorisation, relying on the themes of freedom and power

constructed by my interviewees with regard to international influence, to re-examine the concepts of 'transfer of discourses', 'adoption of language of new allies' (Silova, 2004; 2009), and 'externalisation', predominantly used by later transition scholars to conceptualise post-communist policymaking, and national actors' agency and motivation in it.

Capital and power of national actors in post-communist policymaking in national and international fields

In extension of conceptualisation of only an apparent convergence of post-communist policies as a superficial transfer of discourse, but without the subsequent change in practice, I propose conceptualising of policies not as somewhat instrumental 'linguistic signalling' and 'flags of convenience', but as containing ideological-discursive formations, and being demonstrative of discursive capital. Such a conceptualisation goes further in incorporating national actors' agency and background in the making of policies, beyond the mere use of buzzwords deemed useful in the international field. Viewing policy as containing policymakers' discursive resources, and policy formation as a demonstration of the discursive capital also explains a different construction of the policy discourse in different fields where it is aimed at different audiences.

In Serbia's case, it explains why there were discrepancies between official, public, and personal constructions of the policy discourse. It explains a

mismatch in the place and importance given to civic education in official and public constructions of the policy and reform discourse. In the official construction, particularly in English language versions of documents, civic education takes central stage. In the public construction, meanwhile, it appears almost as an afterthought, and only in its connection to religious education, its being an elective conceptualised as a measure intended towards democratisation of the education system. The idea of the demonstration of capital might also explain some inconsistencies within the official construction (i.e. in the national and international fields), and why various concepts that can act as discursive capital in international documents: “*capacity-building*”, “*empowerment*”, etc. are omitted from their Serbian-language versions.

However, such occasional appearance of discursive formations that I was in the last chapter prone to view as the use of a ‘flag of convenience’ (Lynch, 1998) is not enough, as I previously noted, to theorise the entire construction of the national policy discourse as a bid to win international partners (and funding). I do theorise elements of the CE conceptualisation that draw on the anti-war, anti-nationalist ideologies, or that advertise adherence to education for democracy and a ‘harmonisation’ with the global civic education discourse as discursive capital used in dealing with, for example, international actors. However, using elements of the policy discourse construction as capital does not simply mean that Serbian policy makers had adopted and transferred the desirable educational discourse and its ideological construction. I noted, for example, in the previous chapter, that whilst international documents constructed civic education primarily around the discursive themes of

'responsibilisation' and 'rights and responsibilities', Serbia's civic education discourse was created around the themes of tolerance, reconciliation, conflict resolution, group decision making, and a general focus on softer, un-political skills, the origin of which was distinctly identifiable in the policy actors' cultural and social capital. Discursive themes of knowledge and respect of self and others, of problem-solving, communication, and avoidance and resolution of conflict were developed during these actors' pre-2000 professional engagement and used in the construction of the civic education discourse in Serbia.

There are some policy actors whose lack of those particular discursive resources, including one previously cited senior Ministry actor for whom civic education was akin to 'street law', made them more susceptible to adoption of international discursive formations – either, as in this actor's case, through engagement with OSF, or for another, through direct and intensive engagement with Council of Europe's EDC project. However, most inner circle actors' narratives convey a strong sense of power and agency to know exactly what they wanted for Serbian CE, leading them to reject discursive formations which they considered incompatible with the ideology that they wanted to construct and support through the civic education policy discourse. Their commitment to their vision of CE is particularly visible in their strong negative reaction to financial conditioning by some potential American partners.

Inner circle actors' departure from what international partners might have considered necessary is also observable in Citizenship Foundation's note that the proposed National Framework for EDC was too focused on 'soft skills' and

lacked what they believed was a much-needed political education in democratic institutions and procedures. Discursive themes of critical thinking, civic engagement, or democratic participation, certainly did not form the ideological core of this policy discourse at the time; this changed somewhat when Civil Society took over most of the curriculum planning and teacher training post-2004. I had initial expectations that discursive themes that draw on a political ideology, present in similar projects across post-communist Europe (see second chapter, particularly pages 30-32) would also appear in the construction of the Serbian civic education discourse intended as an aspect of the wider 2001-2003 'democratisation of education and education for democracy' programme. These expectations were largely subverted by my findings. Lastly, I do not wish to neglect or lessen the significance of the one instance mentioned in the previous chapter in which the Council of Europe's EDC document notes the need for South Eastern European countries to incorporate 'management of diversity' in their EDC policies. However, my data, particularly the personal construction of the policy discourse, offer much more in support of policy agents' own contribution to the deciding on the nature of Serbian civic education beyond following international organisations' recommendations.

The above resonates to some degree with Silova's and Steiner-Khamsi's ideas, and however much Serbian policy actors might have insisted on the grassroots nature of ideas and concepts that came to shape Serbian civic education policy, there are still some arguments for viewing the policy as an example of 'transfer of discourse' and externalisation (Schriewer, 2003). One of the arguments is that it is impossible to ignore the Europe-wide EDC project that was happening

concurrently with the introduction of civic education and education for democracy in Serbia. Some of my interviewees' remarks that they were "*aware of something called 'civic education' in other countries*" [Senior Ministry actor] further adds to this. Additionally, even if we were to consider Serbian civic education to have been developed from the national educationalists' work during the 1990s (and partly ideas developed in the 1980s), the fact is that even some of this work was developed in cooperation with international partners, such as UNICEF, and involved international travel, and seminar-based learning and exchange.

My conclusion, however, is not that national actors' input and agency necessarily negate the policy/discourse transfer mechanisms; it is not an either/or situation. It is naturally difficult to avoid the notion and process of adaptation of global educational discourse in the late modern era, or the influx of discursive formations into the national educational field from the wider regional and international fields. I argue, however, that this need not be seen as either a wholesale transfer and adoption of discursive formations, which implies national policymakers' powerlessness, or the pick-and-mix situation, which allows for national agency, but confines it to a cunning use of convenient buzzwords. I argue that there may be a way to conceptualise national agency through a more in-depth engagement with the make-up of the often collectively and homogeneously presented category of 'national policymakers'. By exploring the channels of influence and inspiration through looking at individuals' and groups' social and discursive capital, it is possible to connect nationally relevant agendas, and discursive formations constructing context-

dependent ideologies to aspects of the global discourse. I argue that in this way, the transformations and recontextualisations of the global educational discourse (see page 51) are happening already at the level of the policy formation. We do not have to wait for the seemingly homogeneous policies to be translated into heterogeneous classroom practices, to explore the notion of multiple diverse post-communist transformations.

My perspective moves us away from viewing the category of 'national actors' as adopting favourable discursive formations to attract international partners and funding, or as 'manipulating discourse' (Bacchi, 2000) for political ends. It enables a richer theorisation of their agency and motivation, as it enables us to explore how these actors' background translates into a discursive contribution to the making of a policy. This is an argument for studying the meeting of national and global educational discourses – not exclusively in the post-communist context – not only through top-down process of 'glocalisation'. We can also study this process by looking at the bottom-up discursive connection of local initiatives and context-dependent needs (such as in this case the need to negate the undesirable elements of nationalism in education, for example) to contemporary international trends, and achieved through the employment of national actors' discursive and social capital. Or we can incorporate more of a horizontal view of personal connections, networks, and channels of influence in the, perhaps simultaneous, construction of national and international educational discourses.

In the case of the Serbian civic education policy formation, some of the channels include the Open Society Foundation, an actor that was instrumental in bringing together the team of policy agents, and accounted for some of the discursive elements in the policy. UNICEF and Council of Europe are two other prominent (international) actors. Importantly, the connections between Serbian national actors and these international actors were personal and professional connections established over decades of the former's academic and voluntary engagement, rather than a connection established exclusively through official channels that might make for a 'ground-zero' development of the national policy. In this case, for example, the on-going discursive engagement between national and international actors, in Serbia's circumstances of war and political oppression of a semi-authoritarian regime, then moved into a particular 'official' relationship post-2000, constructed by Serbian policy actors as one of freedom, openness, and partnership. Concurrently, discursive formations already established pre-2000, or even pre-1990, in the internal engagement within the national academic networks, were used in the official policy discourse post-2000, subsequently interacting with the global EDC policy discourse under the circumstances of Serbia's opening to the world.

Looking at the national-international relationship, amongst the group of 'national policymakers', there are those who were engaging at a higher level of influence, having accumulated enough of the valuable discursive and social capital to push national ideas towards the 'harmonisation with the world' agenda, knowing that this does not equal submission to requests, but a

convenient coincidence of efforts and intents, as remarked on earlier. There are others who were at a lower position of influence in the public and official constructions of the policy discourse, commanding less power to choose what would be used as discursive capital either in a national or international field, but whose day-to-day involvement in constructing the policy discourse is what led to its specific form. Also, there are some whose lower position of power coming from a limited wealth of discursive resources, coupled with engagement with the global discourse, made them more prone to adopting some formations contained in the latter, constructing, as remarked in chapter 5, this engagement in the international field through a more dominant theme of 'willingness to learn'.

We should also not dispense with occasionally looking at 'national policymakers' as a collective agent in their interaction with various other actors in the domestic or international policy field, as this can provide room for theorisation about how much power the national policymakers have in accepting, rejecting, and negotiating global discursive formations, as well as the source of this power. It is what Ozga and Lingard (2004) refer to as the 'national capital' of the nation-states in their negotiation of various influences and/or pressures in the global education policy field. Looking at the case of Serbia, I can conceptualise the Serbian policy agents' power in this inter-dynamic as having come from their discursive and social capital acquired through unrestricted (by the authorities) national professional development and international engagement during the more liberal (compared to their European counterparts) communist period, creating the theme of 'active

preparation' for the period of a nation-wide change. Further valuable discursive resources, related to the national policymakers' social and cultural capital, were acquired during the professional and social engagement during the 1990s.

Such background brought them to the position from which they believed that they were able to negotiate advice that was offered and seek advice where *they* thought was necessary; to reject what they thought was inappropriate, and look for access to what they thought would be helpful, to form alliances based on similar ideological approaches to (civic) education, and keep at distance actors from whom they did not believe that they could benefit. With all of the above, I can avoid the risk of oversimplifying the policymaking process in the context of post-communist transition by constructing national policy actors as almost manipulatively seeking to fulfil their purpose, but rather develop a more nuanced perspective on the national policymaking process, one that will take into account the complex interaction between various individual and group backgrounds, relationships, motivations, and ideologies.

Post-communist policymaking, global discourse recontextualisation, and the actors' agency

'Post-post-communist' scholars are inclined to argue that the adoption of seemingly identical policies does not lead to the homogenisation of practice. I have argued that I entered my field with a tendency to agree with this, but that I also wanted to explore the national policymakers' agency and motivation in this

process. In doing so, I have aimed to go beyond 'flags of convenience' (Lynch, 1998: 9) or 'transfer of discourse', which, although useful to a degree, are at risk of treating policymaking as rather one-dimensional attempt by the national actors to attract funding and international partners. There are some elements of this in Serbian civic education policy, particularly in the policy doublespeak (Halász, 2012), or even triplespeak, employed by the elites in their varied construction and presentation of the civic education policy in the international field and in the national field, recounted in the previous chapter. However, through engagement with these individuals, I managed to obtain a richer and deeper understanding of how their backgrounds, motivations, relationships, and positions of power within the policy discourse, have led to specific conceptualisations of the policy and its situation within the global policy field.

With regard to the interaction between what I called global and local educational discourses (discourses attached to, for example, national and global fields), I want to consider the Serbian case in the light of various processes of discourse recontextualisation, hybridisation (Fairclough, 2006), or what Fairclough and Chouliaraki (1999) call 'colonisation without appropriation'. All of these concepts, similarly to the transfer of discourse, imply the adoption of dominant global discourse through various degrees of planning and agency. Adoption does not lead to implementation, or the materialisation of the adopted discourse through the change of social (in this case educational) practices, relationships, institution and identities, this leading to the hybridisation of the global discourse through local practice and insertion of local meaning. Such a view, for one, presupposes the existence of one,

conceptually fixed, global discourse, that is then disseminated to various contexts. Notions such as 'policy epidemic' (Levin, 1998) would also draw on this idea.

Instead, I have found Schriewer's (2003) concept of 'abstract universalisms' more useful in this process of global discourse recontextualisation or modification. Rather than look at how these abstract universalisms (examples of it would be 'civic education' and 'education for democracy') are spread out into the international field, and then adopted, adapted, recontextualised, or appropriated by various nation-states, I start here at the other end and look at how a nation-state defines its needs, problems, and solutions, dependent on the specific context, and articulates these through policies which are then connected to the 'abstract universalisms'. Such a connection makes these abstract universalisms conceptually 'full', as it gives them meaning through a specific ideological construction. Such a change of perspective leads to the shift in the perception of power relations, but also allows for the examination of the 'hybridisation' already at the level of policymaking, instead of assuming adoption, transfer, or even imposition of discourse (rhetoric), with the modification left to the policy implementation end, or within this paradigm, a different field of discourse construction and materialisation.

Thus we can conceptualise heterogeneity in various national policies by not looking exclusively at how seemingly homogeneous policy discourses are changed when articulated in the educational field, especially as this implies a duality between 'discourse' and 'practice', but also at how the divergence

actually exists in their very of construction in the educational policy field. The degree to which these diverse elements will be incorporated, and act as a starting point, rather than a modifying device later on, depends on the capital and power of national policymakers as a collective agent, or the 'national capital' (Ozga and Lingard, 2004), but also on the social and cultural/linguistic capital of individual actors – as is the case with the senior Serbian policy actor whose command of valuable discursive resources and social capital placed them in a powerful position from which to form Serbian policy and approach international actors.

The greater the capital of the national policymakers, the less likely it is that the national policy would be heavily shaped by what have been termed 'reform packages' (Silova, 2011b) or 'hit and run democracy kits' (Sayer, 2005). In the case of civic education in Serbia, as indicated by my data, one such attempt at the latter was actively resisted by the policy actors, and, with regard to the reform in general, there are multiple instances, such as the one below, in which policymakers insisted that even though 'they' (international actors) may have had their ideas and plans, 'we' (self-constructed-as-powerful national actors) managed to work around them.

"You know, it was very important to have an agenda, and go with it before them, and make sure that they follow what you want. If you don't have an agenda and you let them 'sell' you something that they had made for Tajikistan and are now recycling, you get a centaur, and you get a problem. [...] We managed to do things in non-standard ways. World Bank, you know exactly what it is that they support [...] but we managed to get school development to be a necessary pre-stage of the school grants project, so we basically got them to support the democratic development of schools rather than financial

development of schools. They found that a bit odd at first, but then said OK [...] We did this, thanks to our being informed, we knew what hadn't worked in Bosnia, where they got stuck, what didn't work in Estonia, where they got stuck..." [Senior Ministry actor]

Elements of Bourdieu's social theory, particularly the notion of capital, has proved very useful in the development of my conceptual framework, an analytical tool with which to conceptualise individuals' agency in discourse, which, as I said before, might not have been denied by Foucault and critical discourse analysts, but has rarely been analytically and empirically operationalised. Focusing on the individuals' and groups' use of discursive capital in the construction of Serbia's civic education policy discourse, I have been able to explain its strategic use, and its usefulness and value in certain fields, but not in others. I have attempted to explain why policymakers use a certain policy as a vehicle for commanding the desirable and valuable ideological-discursive capital, but having gained the power in the field through such use, have the freedom to rework and change the discourse in the process.

Using this approach, I have also thought about the possibility for certain individuals to perhaps influence a global educational discourse change (or recontextualisation and ideology hybridisation) through firstly gaining possession of desirable and valuable ideological-discursive resources, and then coming to a position of power from which they can utilise these, but also different resources, to produce such change. The 'transfer of discourse, not of practice' argument, apart from implying a duality of discourse and practice, seemed to me initially to also rely too much on the duality of discursive

formations that are disseminated, and practices that follow. Looking at the processes of global discourse hybridisation from a 'bottom-up', and a horizontal perspective has allowed me instead to explore how a nationally conceptualised policy communicated and established a point of contact with the global discourse. Focusing on those points of contact, I believe I have accentuated the notions of overlapping and fluidity, rather than opposition and exclusivity. Some of the ideas recently offered by Mead and Silova (2013) in their examination of communist and post-communist 'literacies', feed into this notion of fluidity and the avoidance of communist/post-communist polarisation, and I will reflect on them in the final chapter.

Despite the notions of fluidity and overlapping becoming more relevant as my thought developed, I conclude that the Serbian 2001-2003 reform was nevertheless guided by an apparently homogenised ideological agenda. With the policy and reform discourse constructed in multiple fields and by diverse groups of agents, such multiplicity and ideological fluidity would become more salient. At this end of the initial policy discourse construction, the reform's guiding ideology of democracy was, as Blokker (2005) notes, a project of the elites. Constituency for this ideology is in the construction of the reform discourse hardly ever mentioned: there are sporadic remarks about the 'Conversations about the reform', but civic education does not appear to be something that stakeholders had required pre-2000 as reported by numerous Serbian studies about teachers' and students' expectations regarding the democratisation of education, in which the latter predominantly stood for 'increased participation in the decision-making process' (Djurišić-Bojanović,

2003; Bukvic and Krvavac, 2006). Overall – and this is where Serbia is similar to other formerly communist countries – the policy was not the expression of voters' explicit desires: the very idea of 'democracy' was the expectation of a 'better life', rather than choosing one political and ideological option over another. In such circumstances, policy makers were bequeathed with the power to discursively construct this better life, interacting, as I argued earlier, in the field of educational policymaking. Meanwhile, there were other agents (teachers, students, parents, businesses and other stakeholders) in the educational field, constructed by educational institutions of teaching, learning, certification and award-giving. Following Ball's (1990) logic of the continuous construction of policy discourses within policy cycles, I do not consider these educational actors powerless, as influence in reshaping the policy discourse would have become more pertinent at the policy implementation stage. At the stage of the policy discourse initial formation, which has been the focus of this research, however, they were constructed as actors whose adequacy and quality was judged based on whether they possessed valuable capital, by those who were at the time more powerful in the initial construction of the policy discourse.

Conclusion

This thesis has made a twofold contribution to the post-communist transition scholarship. Considered within the 1990s strand of scholarship on the wider

outlook on the early transition and reform, my findings add another case, hitherto largely absent from the literature, through which I re-examined some ideas espoused in the 1990s models and narratives of early transition, add new themes and confirm existing ones. These findings indicate that, in the case of some elements of the post-communist transition reform, a decade-long 'lag' in launching 'democratising' changes, makes little difference in terms of the rhetoric about the end-point of transition, the goals of the reform, and acceptance and presence of international support in reaching those goals. However, it has also been shown, perhaps to a greater degree, that the particularities of designing and instilling planned reform depend a lot on the nature of the communist experience, and also on the nature of this 'lag'. These two factors grant, for example, more influence to alternative educational networks and also allow for reform plans to be based on their experience and discursive capital. They allow for the new policy elites' self-construction of power and independence of their position with respect to international partners: both 'Western' and supranational organisations, and 'Eastern' ex-communist countries who had at the time already been engaged in the post-communist reform. Importantly, the specificity of the context, both pre- and immediately following the collapse of communism, is what defines the dominant undesirable ideology to be eradicated and replaced through the various reforms.

The second contribution of this thesis, and one with a potentially wider reach, is found in its exploration of the usefulness of certain concepts offered by the post-communist transition scholarship, and my efforts to expand these

concepts. I have sought to further develop the tools for examination of policy development in the post-communist context, potentially making them applicable to any context in which the nation-state is perceived as less powerful in its encounter with the global influences or global educational discourse. I explore this possibility, and the current position of the post-communist field within the policy study in the globalising world of late modernity in the final chapter.

CHAPTER 8

Conclusion

Opening remarks

Having theorised the aspects of the 2001 Serbian civic education policy formation as: a) part of a larger ideological-discursive project, and b) the way to utilise discursive capital so as to acquire a better position in a relevant field, I consider in this concluding chapter possible extensions of my theoretical framework, and the space opened for future research. I begin by summarising the findings and the way in which they have made a substantive contribution to the field of post-communist studies, addressing some of the unanswered questions and limitations. I stress again here that although I have been working primarily with the concepts developed within the more recent post-communist scholarship with its focus on particularities of different contexts rather than generalisations, my attempt to relate my findings to the more generalising strand of the scholarship, identifying similarities and differences, does not contradict my efforts to further the former strand of scholarship. By appreciating particularities, we do not necessarily negate all generalisations, otherwise we would have to dispense with concepts such as 'post-communist' altogether. In that sense, one can seek to identify similarities where they do exist, and seek to relate their appearance to certain factors. This case has shown enough similarities with other 'post-communist' contexts to merit its inclusion in some more general categories, but I have also identified enough

idiosyncrasies that emphasise, as later transition scholars advise, context-dependent singularity.

In the second part of the chapter, I revisit the conceptual and methodological merit of this study's employment of policy-as-discourse approach, and the ensuing analytical treatment of not only documents, but also interviews, as discursive texts, as well as in its combining of the epistemological potency of discourse theory with the analytical potential of Bourdieu's 'thinking tools' (Lingard *et al*, 2005). I also consider limitations of this approach, and the space for further development. Finally, following from the character of contingency in this construction of this historical, and discursive, event, I devote some space to the theoretical and ethical implications of meaning and practice of 'critical' educational research, and the responsibility of the social (educational) researcher in the creation of knowledge.

Serbian 2001 civic education policy and post-communist reform revisited

A major research question of this project has concerned the relationship between the discourse of the civic education policy and the wider ideological-discursive project of the education reform. For this reason the conclusions produced in this study of a policy relate as much to the process of policymaking, as they do to the context of reform, and the relationships, interactions, and

expectations that shape the early post-communist transition period. The idea behind the project has been to use the policy that marked the beginning of educational changes in Serbia's first comprehensive post-communist education reform as a way of exploring this period, and comparing it with the early transition period in other CEE countries as documented and conceptualised in the 1990s literature. Simultaneously, the civic education policy formation has been used as an example on which to test current developments in the field of post-communist studies, and explore the usefulness of the 'flags of convenience' and 'transfer of discourse' concepts for theorising the process of post-communist policymaking.

With regard to the broader sweep of the early transition context, I have been able to identify a number of discursive themes (such as 'return to Europe', 'return to normality') and ideologies (of modernisation, democratisation) which are similar in both Serbian and other CEE contexts. Although these similarities might suggest the uniformity of the context, what is frequently neglected in such assumptions is the difference in construction of these themes and the meaning of concepts, as well as their value as discursive capital in specific contexts. For example, ideological-discursive formations that construct 'democratisation', may have the meaning of 'de-communisation' and as discursive capital, have currency of 'decentralisation', 'transparency', 'accountability' in one context, or of 'abandoning of violent ethnic nationalism of the 1990s', as my data indicated was largely the case in Serbia. A point worth emphasising is that the similar appearance of discursive themes does not necessarily lead to ideological convergence, and that the historical development

of a studied discourse needs to be looked at, even if it brings into question the validity of some commonly used markers, such as 'post-communist'.

In addition, the concept of 'transition' deserves to be looked at in terms of its context-specific ideological-discursive construction. Late-modern transition scholars have perhaps rightly been attempting to pinpoint what it is that various post-communist countries are transitioning *to*, but an equally valid question is what it is that they are transitioning *from*. As I discussed in chapter 7, in Serbia's case, the experience of communism and post-communism constructed a very specific ideology that was supposed to be erased in this period of transition, with the ideological-discursive project of which education reform and civic education policy were a part.

Another aspect of the specificity of context is the configuration of national actors, and their relationship with international actors and engagement with the global educational discourse. I indicated in the previous chapter that the individual command of discursive capital was important in individual positioning in the national policy and reform discourse, but also that the national discursive capital of Serbia's transition and 'democratisation' had such great value, that a significant degree of freedom of negotiation – power in the global field – was accorded to national policy actors. Within the inner and outer circles of policy actors, there were networks based on shared discursive and social capital. Belonging to these networks was empowering both for individual actors and for the collective actor of the national policymakers.

There is potential in researching these horizontal networks, both national and global, in policymaking processes, networks through which capital and discursive resources are gained and shared, and various ideas and 'abstract universalisms' (Schriewer, 2003) flow. This is equally valid in the contexts in which the levels of informality and politicisation are fairly high (such as was the case with Serbia), and the globalising contexts in general in which nation-states and national institutions are faced with devolution of power and influence. But in the post-communist context in particular, the combined analytical power of non-hierarchically considered networks of actors and the focus on policy-as-discourse as means of ideological-discursive construction of actors and institutions, can find significant application.

In this context, with the organic development of democratic institutions not having existed, the informality of relationships and the importance of the initial discursive efforts at constructing a new ideology are immense. And although the national policy elites themselves might be working under the paradigm of 'transition as a predictive narrative' (Fairclough, 2006: 57), and proclaim as the goal of their work the development of or a transition to a democratic society, we as researchers do not have to. Instead of taking the proclaimed goal as a given and proceeding to gauge the policymakers' success in achieving it, but go further, and through the analysis of the policy and reform discourse try to get at what it actually is that they are building, what exactly is their ideology. If we do this, we might become less likely to proclaim a global ideological convergence, and instead explore how the global/local dialectics really works from below, and how discursive and ideological resources are gained through the social and

economic capital shared through horizontal networks. Such an approach has largely been found useful in the example of the policy examined here, that of civic education, at one time a 'pandemic' policy and a potentially strong candidate for the argument of worldwide policy conversion, but certainly different meanings and ideological purpose in different contexts.

The policy-as-discourse approach has proved useful in the construction of not only policy ideologies, and local recontextualisation of the global policy discourse (EDC in this case) but also of ideology- and capital-related interactions and power relationships between policy actors. Although this approach can benefit any critical exploration of adaptations and hybridisations of global policy discourses, and channels of ideological-discursive resource distribution and accumulation, critical discourse analysis has increasingly been finding its way into post-communist policy studies over the last few years. To fully exploit its potential, it is important that tools are constantly revised and refined. In this thesis, I have aimed to further develop the tools of critical discourse analysis, by conceptualising of the use of ideological-discursive formations in a policy discourse not only as a construction of ideologies through policy, but also demonstration of discursive capital. In the next section, I reflect on the usefulness of the tools that I have developed, and suggest space for extension and improvement.

Policy as discourse and policy as capital: advantages and limitations

A possible criticism of discourse analysis as applied to the study of policies is that it leads to too many assumptions, and a tendency to 'read' what is not really there. Speaking from experience in both education policymaking, and education research, Levin (2012), for example, is suspicious of the truth-revealing claims of discourse analysis, noting that policy documents are constructed in such a way as to be intended for rhetorical consumption rather than as statements of intent or outlines of future practice. While it is true that discourse analysis may sometimes be criticised as 'revealing' what authors had set out to find, comments such as Levin's should not be taken as a justification for dispensing with the approach altogether. Levin's comment, in fact, only serves to accentuate the need for a deeper understanding and explanation of the notion of discourse and its workings, perhaps especially in documents intended 'merely' for rhetorical consumption.

These reservations about the usefulness of discursive analysis of policies bring up the need for a discursive approach to be taken not only to policy documents, but interviews with policy actors as well. In this thesis, I have considered that the discursive analysis of interviews was one way to access the nuances of the ideological work coming from specific actors, groups, and networks, and thus the ideological workings of the policy itself. Keeping to the official and public constructions of the policy discourse, performed through published documents, and through media and parliamentary addresses, policy discourse will be more likely to function as a demonstration of discursive capital, and so be likely to be

'purged' of elements of ideologies which might at the time be considered undesirable, leading the policy discourse to appear ideologically homogeneous. Since thus constructed policy discourse works well in showing the idealised state as presented by the policymakers, it is an excellent basis from which to research the ideological positioning of this collective actor. I believe that the discourse approach to the study of the Serbian civic education policy formation has been largely successful in teasing out the ways in which the originally heterogeneous ideological-discursive formations of various policy actors are negotiated and ironed out, and undesirable ideologies excluded, so as to produce seemingly homogeneous official and public constructions of policy discourse, intended for 'rhetoric consumption' and as demonstration of capital.

In this thesis, I have looked at how the policy discourse is constructed in a particular point in time, taking a synchronistic approach (Howarth, 2000), and used this as the basis for the exploration of the actors' relationships and interactions. One possible extension of the approach is to incorporate a diachronistic discourse analysis to the development of the post-communist (educational) discourse, particularly using it as the means of exploration of the historical differences and similarities that predate the communist era, and of the modification of the use of 'post-communist' concepts in constructing these different discourses. Thus, incorporating a historical development of discourse and ideologies would provide a more in-depth explanation of how the development of discourse and ideologies had worked over a longer period of time in making some ideologies incompatible, and in creating alliances and enemies, both internally and externally.

The synchronistic approach that has been taken here may also appear not to have given due significance to international actors in agenda-setting and standard dissemination, particularly bearing in mind the important role of international and supranational actors in the policymaking scholarship. Although I made the choice to conduct this research with a predominantly 'bottom-up' approach, and focus primarily on national policymakers and various other internal actors, there is no doubt that a richer exploration of the position and role of international actors would have yielded a more thorough account of this ideological-discursive project building. This is, again, another element that I wish to develop further in future work.

Lastly, one might want to address the question of whether this particular ideological-discursive project has been successful in materialising the policy and reform discourse constructed by the then policymakers, through institutionalising the practices. The 2004 change in governing elites that led to the reversal of the 2001-2003 reform might be interpreted as a 'failed' ideological-discursive project, but as the discursive elements introduced post-2000 entered the educational field nonetheless, some change in educational discourse and ideology did take place over the years. To explore to what degree these elements have been institutionalised and internalised by the constituency (for the proposed ideology) and how they have been transformed, it would perhaps be useful to take Fairclough's approach to Serbian educational system at the present time. The relationship between the change of discourse, and the change of social practices that is at the heart of Fairclough's approach

can only be examined now after some time has elapsed. At the time of the policy development, one could have only really looked at how the social/discourse change was reflected in the discourse of elites, not yet having spread to other fields, e.g. the narrower educational field made up of educational institutions and practices.

The benefits of using the concept of capital in a discourse study

Whilst the discourse approach is being applied to the research of the post-communist field in recent years, tools offered by Bourdieu's social theory have been utilised less, although discourse theorists such as Fairclough and Wodak have used Bourdieu's notion of the field to create a discursive space in which social relations and interactions are situated (see chapter 3), and Gale has tried to combine Bourdieu's theory with policy archaeology and genealogy in Australia. In addition, Lingard has been trying to make Bourdieu's ideas applicable to today's globalising era of policymaking, stressing their usefulness in an age of fluidity and of flexible, dialectical relationships between structure and agency, as well as their usefulness in deterritorialising spaces of policy production in the world of porous borders. I have tried to push this trend further by relating the concept of capital to the discursive resources that are socially and culturally shared through national and international fields. I believe that doing so could offer some space for the conceptualisation of agency (including capability and motivation for strategic action) of individual and collective actors in the construction of discourses. I think that the further

refining of this combined approach could serve both the post-communist field and the field of policymaking research in general, as it might lead to a closer examination of how and why global discourses interact with national/local ones.

Chouliaraki and Fairclough (1999) have already suggested the possibility of transformation of global discourse through the process of local colonisation/appropriation. They also noted that the strategic relationships between the internal and external actors in the field would be inflected by the strategic relations between internal actors. To attempt an exploration and explanation of how these relationships are formed and what the relationship between the local and global discourses is, I have used the notion of capital. I theorise it as the means of formation of alliances and the development, accumulation and sharing of discursive resources, to be used as discursive capital when they gain such value in a certain field in which they may be successfully exchanged for political or economic capital. I believe that this combination of the two traditions has been useful in that respect.

Where the approach needs to be developed further is, for example, in a more meaningful incorporation of economic capital. For example, although it can be theorised that discursive capital, demonstrated in the repertoire of ideological-discursive resources on which one draws, is accumulated through shared cultural and social capital, I have not been able to sufficiently develop the place of economic capital in this framework, apart from theorising that ideological-discursive capital is exchanged for it. The economic aspect is an element that

has been generally absent from interviewees' accounts of the Serbian civic education policy development, and when I brought it up, the response was vague and general, emphasising that there were funds that were always available, and that this was not an issue. Given the financial difficulties facing the Serbian education system at the time, it is safe to presume that these funds came from outside of the state budget, but rather than identify the donor, and the conditions of the donation, Serbian policy actors preferred to emphasise their power and agency in 'dealing' with donors, and point out, as illustrated in the previous chapter, their deftness in working around donors' customary model of project funding.

Although I do find this way of self-construction important, the idea behind the interviewing technique was to leave as much space, and as much 'freedom' as possible for the interviewee to construct the policy discourse through a genre of a personal narrative. However, I did at the time, as well as subsequently, wonder if I could have pushed the issue further even if this meant possibly sacrificing the established rapport. In the end, this was always a balance that was to be negotiated, and if there were missed opportunities, they were also learning opportunities. So the element of economic capital has remained insufficiently utilised in explaining certain relations and exchanges of other kinds of capital, something that I intend to develop in future applications and modifications of my approach.

Finally, similarly to Ball in his exploration of ideological and discursive aspects of various British education reforms in 1990, I acknowledge that the nature of

this study was mostly exploratory, which means that perhaps more questions were initially posed than could be answered on this occasion, and more data collected and analysed than could have been included in the final write-up. This wealth of data can serve a future project. In addition, there is scope for finer-grained analysis of smaller linguistic chunks of the data. But these are all concessions and negotiations that I had to make throughout the process of data analysis and interpretation, and my attempt at sense-making of the complex social phenomena through the process of building a theoretical model that is to be tested and refined in future work. I devote the next section to reassessing some of the key concepts in my theorising, and to exploring the space for future work in the field afforded by the re-examination of these concepts, and the potentially wider application of my framework.

Post-communist policymaking as local adaptation of global discourse

In the research of the current educational policymaking in the global field, one can be tempted to conceptualise the process of global-local discourse interaction as imposition of ideology (through discursive construction) by the more powerful, and discourse appropriation by the less powerful who have little choice, either because they are financially conditioned, or because their choice is controlled by discourse domination with little chance of escaping it. However, my argument throughout has been that the actors perceived as less powerful can actually have more agency than they are granted, in that their

overt utilisation of formations of what is seen as a dominant global discourse does not necessarily translate into their internalising it. In fact, they may be using some common points of contact, and an internally defined agenda, to establish communication with whatever we choose to call a dominant ideology of the global policy discourse (be it marketisation of education, or democratic citizenship education), and through the process of *conscious* adaptation modify it and resist its dominance. I stress 'conscious', because what I have in mind here are not accidental and unwitting acts of adaptation – although these are included at all levels of discourse construction – but, at least when it comes to national policymakers, strategic action that comes as a result of applying knowledge, understanding, and reflexive practice to one's context (Howarth, 2013).

The matter of hybridisation of ideologies, through the meeting of global and local discourses, or the local recontextualisation of global educational discourses, is not exclusive to the post-communist context, and similar ways of researching this process as suggested throughout this text could apply to other contexts as well. The difference will lie in the nature and quantity of discursive capital possessed by different actors in this meeting, the discursive resources that they command, and the power and freedom that they will have in utilising different types of resources at various stages of policy formation. However, I am not arguing for absolute freedom and power of the national actors, as they are still working within a global discourse that had been constructed by – at some point – more powerful global actors. Serbian policymakers, for example, did not have absolute freedom to abandon the global education discourse altogether

and disconnect themselves from the Council of Europe-propagated ideology of active and democratic citizenship. Rather, they might have had this freedom but *chose* not to exercise it. What I have attempted is to merely moderate the apparent agentlessness of national actors, and find a way for their agency to be conceptualised.

In some recent Serbian education research, I have found an example of the potential hybridisation of ideologies that might happen at a grassroots level. This study (Vuksanovic, 2007) deals with the reform of the Serbian language and literature curriculum – one of the subjects considered particularly prone to ideological construction. The study has shown that prior to reform, students and teachers had demanded a greater incorporation of, one hand, Cyrillic script and elements which might be described as belonging to the ‘traditionalist’, ‘nationalist’ ideology, and on the other hand, problem-solving, debating, and group-work in pedagogy, which would traditionally belong to the ‘progressivist’, ‘modernist’ ideology. In the Serbian students’ and teachers’ construction of the Serbian language and literature reform discourse, there is no such separation. Perhaps this is one way of studying a bottom-up development of local discourses and their subsequent connection with the global ones: a ‘globalisation from below’, as Appadurai (2001) calls it.

Such insight into a discrepancy between macro-levels of apparent policy convergence, and micro-levels of policy discourse construction can be helpful in fleshing out doubts voiced by Silova and Steiner-Khamsi about the worldwide

(not only post-communist) policy homogenisation. Dale voiced these doubts already in 1999:

‘The global institutionalist view that world wide models of political institutions are leading to convergence of the categories states use to organize and define their business was seen as correct in a formal sense, but lacking in any effective and demonstrable outcomes on individual states, beyond a kind of lip service compliance’ (p. 16).

I believe that this still holds true. Future research might need to turn to a careful examination of what is actually happening on a sub-national level of policy discourse construction. By focusing on the agency of national policy actors and through combining it with that of teachers, students, and other stakeholders, we can explore if any convergence is happening and at what level. Importantly, we can learn more about how global discursive formations are locally transformed.

In this thesis, I have tried to develop one possible way of achieving this: by exploring the role of individual and group discursive capital, shared and distributed through various networks, and instrumental in constructing and conveying specific ideologies. Another way would be to explore both the construction of the policy discourse at the elites’ end, in the policy field, and in classrooms, in educational field – or at least combine the policy elite studies with appropriate, already existing studies of policy discourse modifications in different sites and in different fields, so as to explore the discourse and ideology hybridisation in as multifarious way as possible. Although I have studied this process in the post-communist context, it is a process not confined to this context alone. In the next section, I examine the specificity and relevance of the

concept of 'post-communism' as applied to current policymaking research in the area.

The continuing relevance of the concept of post-communism?

Bianchini suggested in 2002 that the 'post-communist' qualifier should not be reserved for the formerly communist context alone, but applied to the whole of Europe, since there would be changes in the West effected by this ideological shift. This is only one way in which the concept of 'post-communism' could be extended, but I focus here on the question of its continued usefulness and precise meaning in the more traditional sense, in studying an education policy in an area that we have for the past two decades described as 'post-communist'. Defining this concept and explaining in what way it distinguishes the post-communist context from any other 'democratising', 'modernising', or even any other 'globalising' context, is of increasing importance in the face of the poststructuralist calls for specificity of the late modern era, when even authors in the post-communist field who insist on the specificity of the researched context still keep to this generalising concept.

One of these authors, Silova (2004b), notes, for example, that although the countries within the post-communist context differ in both in their past cultural, political, and economic experiences, and in the paths they have taken since the fall of communism, the shared socialist past, the sheer scale of transformations taking place in various countries, as well as the common

catchwords of their reforms make them similar. This is perhaps one justification for continuing to work under this somewhat generalising umbrella term, whilst focusing on what makes individual contexts specific in their post-communist trajectories. As evident from previous chapters, my own work has allowed for enough comparisons, and identified plenty of similarities between Serbia and other CEE countries to support this. However one should bear in mind that some of these similarities might have come from various international actors' (including both international organisations and international education scholars) past tendency to homogenise the 'Eastern European bloc', and apply similar advice, and similar modernising measures and packages to the diverse nation-states that comprised it.

This homogenisation is perhaps indicative of a wider trend to consider the whole of Western Europe as one 'bloc' as well. As Lagerspetz noted in 1999, it was not only the Eastern European elites and scholars who engaged in construction of post-communist transition as a 'return to Europe', but also their Western counterparts. This construction implies a unity of Europe, split in two when the Eastern part fell under the experiment of communism, with the West waiting, homogeneous and unchanged, for the East to return. Not only does this view negate the differences that existed, and continue to exist, in different parts of Europe, but it also neglects what authors such as Mungiu-Pippidi (2006) have termed a pre-communist contextual divide. Mungiu-Pippidi advocates focusing on the pre-communist era in the whole of Europe, and on the European countries' pre-communist experiences and alliances, even similarities, which might be more helpful in explaining post-communist

transformations than the focus on the common, and – on a large scale, rather short-lived – experience of communism. Looking further into the past can be combined with the diachronic approach to the study of educational discourse and ideologies mentioned earlier.

One of the recent trends in approaches to studying the post-communist experience, focuses on the ‘communist’, rather than the ‘post’ aspect of it. This change in focus is illustrated in the work of scholars such as Perry (2005), and documented in, for example, a 2013 volume edited by Griffiths and Millei, titled *Logics of Socialist Education*. These authors are not very interested in whether East was ‘successful’ in catching up with West, but instead in looking into the (post-)communist experience of education as a simply different way of ‘doing’ education, and a space which might provide answers to problems they perceive as having been created by the neo-liberalisation of education. It is important to note the emergence of this trend, as it contributes to a late modern tendency towards breaking down of boundaries and categories, and negating of antagonisms.

These trends might signify a move towards diminishing polarities such as East and West, communism and capitalism, Good and Bad. Rather, different experiences are approached not as different stages en route to ‘modernisation’, but different modes of existence. These different modes might have considerable similarities and overlaps that would perhaps have been overlooked in the 1990s drive to eradicate everything that was ‘communist’ and hence ‘Bad’, something my data suggested as well. Some of Silova’s recent

work, such as the comparative discursive analysis of Soviet and post-Soviet early childhood readers with Mead (2013) is also a step in this direction, as these two authors attempt to tease out different overlaps and points of contact in the normally presumed as different, even opposing, literacies therein constructed. It is fluidity, rather than polarity, that is their concern, and even though some dualism remains in their work (e.g. 'communist'/'post-communist') since it has shaped the scholarship for so long, this study is an example of moving in a slightly different direction. Mead and Silova's work also brings attention to the survival of certain elements of educational experience attributed to the communist era, elements whose strength and importance continue to pervade the curricula decades later and adds to shaping of educational cultures, not eradicated by any number of neoliberal policies. In this sense, some aspects of the (post-)communist experience might still deserve our focus, and the concept of 'post-communism' might still for some time hold relevance.

Outside of the classroom, with the focus on the process of policymaking, the 'specificity' of the context might not justify a separate area of policy research. This is especially the case with the aspects of policymaking that involve an adaptation of a global educational discourse in local fields. For example, Levinson (2005; 2010; 2011) has done some extensive work on the appropriation of global cultural flows by Mexican governments in the area of civic education, where, similarly to the conclusions of this study, he has emphasised the background and the individual agency of some key actors in this process. I have also recently attempted to apply my theoretical framework

of discourse adaptation through the use capital, changing the way we see power relationships and ideology imposition and importing, in the area of transnational higher education (Djerasimovic, 2014). Throughout the course of my work, my thinking about the current reality of educational policymaking has been greatly helped by conceptual extension and theoretical communication between different geographical contexts and different areas of research. I wish to contribute to this practice as I engage in future constructions of knowledge about the globalising world of interconnected phenomena. I conclude the work done so by reflecting on my responsibility as a researcher in performing such construction.

In conclusion: on constructing educational knowledge

I mentioned above the value of extending one's conceptual discussion and refinement to different contexts and areas. To this, I wish to add Schriewer's (2000b) call for research that comes not only from diverse contexts, but is relayed by different voices, not necessarily those who have learned how to articulate in the – broadly speaking – Western tradition. Having 'insider' knowledge such as I utilised in this instance perhaps goes some way towards mediating what Singh *et al* (2005) call a Western dominance of global research, but the global educational research can only benefit from varied constructions of meanings from a majority of contexts, diversifying points of view, and

communication between work conducted in different fields, and from within different paradigms.

Such diversification in the construction of knowledge can perhaps add to reconfiguring the power balance that might be seen as tipped in favour of Western scholars, or it can at least prevent the monopolisation of knowledge by any one paradigm. The question of power and responsibility of the researcher has been constantly present throughout my project, and in this final part of my thesis I return to the nature and ethics of 'critical' research, briefly addressed in chapter 4. My idea of 'critical' research rests on the assumption that those who are in the position of power that grants them access to wider fields of influence, and a wider audience whom they are constructing through the construction of (e.g. policy) discourse, thus normalising ideology, are certainly in the possession of power. But I am also reluctant to assume that they always necessarily engage in this process from a place of conscious design to create and maintain inequalities. For that reason, although I am dedicated to a critical examination of social relationships (and these are almost always inevitably power relationships), I do not approach critical research with an agenda to re-distribute power and thus 'resolve' inequalities. Subscribed as I am to a fluid and flexible notion of power relations, I believe that inequalities are inevitable. What I consider 'critical' research, is an attempt to unpack the ways in which we construct and are constructed by Discourse. I consider that we – both the more and the less powerful at any point in time – can benefit from a better understanding of how our actions, beliefs, and relationships are subject to the use of concepts and constructions that we often simply take for granted.

I also believe that one of the chief characteristics of a critical researcher is a reluctance to subscribe to any paradigm that proffers any sort of a 'universal' truth (Schriewer and Martinez, 2004), be it economic development, individual development, political order, or citizenship as a participatory competence. If one does subscribe to a paradigm, the allegiance to an ideology should at the very least be objectified, perhaps even operationalised. We bear responsibility, as researchers, for the academic discourse that we create, which is always prescriptive and normative, more dangerously so if we work from within a certain paradigm, without overtly acknowledging this. The responsibility of the researcher with regard to the creation of knowledge, and the power relationships implicit in this creation and access to this knowledge (in a Foucauldian sense) has been noted by authors such as Popkewitz (2000) and Cambridge (2007) and should be reflected on in discussions of ethics of research more consistently than it is at the moment.

With this thesis, I have aimed to be responsible in adding to the construction and advancement of knowledge of a comparatively little researched context of education in Serbia. Equally, I have been committed to contributing to the refining of conceptual and methodological tools at our disposal in policy research, and to an on-going development of a critical approach to it. My synthesis and employment of different academic traditions in this process is a step in this direction, and with it, I hope to have started to create additional space for viewing and studying the social phenomena in new and insightful ways.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Documents sample

- ❖ Official educational regulation acts concerning CE and RE, dated September 2001;
- ❖ UNICEF's Comprehensive Report on Education in Serbia (often considered by the Ministry a Green Paper, relevant sections, dated 2001);
- ❖ Two conference reports – from June 2001 (Reform agenda – general) and December 2001 (Education for democracy), published by Serbian policy makers;
- ❖ *Quality Education for All* (White Paper, relevant sections, dated 2002);
- ❖ *Democratisation of Education and Education for Democracy and Civil Society* (follows from the previous one, specific to EDC and CE, dated 2002);
- ❖ Stocktaking research of policies for education for democratic citizenship and management of diversity in South Eastern Europe CoE Regional Report (relevant sections, dated 2002);
- ❖ *Strategy and Framework for Educational Reform in Serbia* (relevant sections, dated 2003);
- ❖ *Challenges to Educational Reform in Serbia* (relevant sections, dated 2004);
- ❖ *National Framework for Education for Democracy in Serbia* (unpublished, dated 2004);
- ❖ Citizenship Foundation's evaluation of the previous document (unpublished, dated 2004);
- ❖ Relevant transcripts of Serbian parliamentary debates concerning the introduction of RE and CE (dated 2002), and the new Law on Education, setting the legal framework for a comprehensive, all-encompassing reform of primary and secondary education (dated 2003);
- ❖ Newspaper interview with the then Patriarch of the Serbian Orthodox

Church (dated 2001);

- ❖ Televised interview with the then deputy prime minister (relevant section, dated 2005);
- ❖ Various short interviews with the minister of education and his deputies, as well as with the member of the shadow cabinet in charge of education, dating 2001-2004;
- ❖ Relevant sections of various papers outlining conceptual and strategic elements of the Council of Europe Education for Democratic Citizenship Project (dated 1997-2002). These include: *Basic Concepts and Core Competencies for Education for Democratic Citizenship*, *Sites of Citizenship: Empowerment, participation and partnerships*, *Education for Democratic Citizenship: A Lifelong Learning Perspective*, and *Strategies for Learning Democratic Citizenship*

Appendix 2: Interview protocol

- Professional background (Work during the 1990s and membership in any notable groups/networks; prompts: academic networks, NGOs, *if the conversation flows and is open* political parties)
- Post-2000 (Becoming involved with the new ministry; its/your work during the first few months; prompts: your inclusion, contribution, dealing with the previous administration/shadow cabinet, establishing priorities)
- Civic education (When and how did the civic education appear in the context of the above – the story of its inception; prompts: the prior knowledge of/experience with CE, EDC, international initiatives and collaborations, relation to religious education)
- The development of the policy (prompts: the agents that partook in it, the stakeholders' input, funding, harmonisation with international work; relationship with RE developers)
- The international factor (the nature of the relationship with the international organisations from your angle; prompts: conferences, communication with NGOs and supranational organisations, contact with other CEE countries)

NGO-specific:

- The brief history of the NGO, the mission, the partners, the funders
- Initiation in the work of the ministry, the nature of the relationship with policy-makers

External actors-specific:

- Previous work in the area of CE/EDC
- Previous experience in working in the post-communist context
- The nature of communication and collaboration with Serbian policy-makers
- Comment on the CE/RE relationship in Serbia

Commentators-specific:

- Involvement in the reform; relationship with the policy-makers
- Comment on CE introduction and CE/RE relationship
- Comment on the positives and the negatives of the reform; suggest opinions and solutions to perceived issues

RE representatives-specific:

- Introduction and development of RE; relationship with the MoE and CE developers
- Comment on the reform; comment on the CE/RE relationship

Appendix 3: Transcription/translation sample

R (Senior Ministry actor/CE policy developer): [exasperatedly] Oh, it was the whole list of actions, actions that we expected from Kosštica's entire government, and whomever it was that became the minister later, and that whole thing [hesitation] [*smiles*] of course there would have been pressures coming from them... but let's be honest, they didn't really want us there, though maybe it wouldn't have been... but we all resigned and just put an end on our involvement... But at first the committee really wasn't under any pressure, on the contrary. We were given opportunities for getting the materials, and I mean... at the time, it was really, at first, while Djindjić was still alive and was the head of the government, during the first year and half, two, or almost three, there were so many things happening at all levels, I was here and I was also involved in preschool education... during those days, we actually lived that reform, it was a running start, a true beginning for us. After that, everything, including what's happening today, really isn't democratisation in the true sense of the word... it's just following some trends, courses, that are, I'll admit, present worldwide, but that I have quite considerable reservations towards... starting with standardisation of all and sundry, I mean [*laughs*] bringing the standards in [incredulously] in the 21st century!

Appendix 4: Analysis sample

R: [...] half of the ministry were non-political people who had ideas about metamorphosis, about Serbia's change, while the political half made political decisions. But my political party was a party of intellectuals, who had ideas that concerned the substance of things, and not destructive ideas.

Analysis

This is an example of the category of *ministry composition*, in which processes, relationships, and identities are discursively constructed. The main theme in this statement is that of 'depolicitisation' of the new Ministry of Education, and the system of education in general, as well as the 'necessity of change'.

The frequently encountered discursive pattern across the data set, also used here, is invoking of the notion of destruction coming from the 'Other', thus accentuating one's own side's potential for salvation.

There is the lack of challenge to the idea of Serbia's change, it thus being presented as something inevitable. Not only that, the use of the 'metamorphosis' metaphor, makes it necessarily a change for the better, a change into a more perfect form, whilst drawing on a discourse of biology reinforces the idea of the necessity of change and evolution, by conceptualising the country or a society as a living organism (an example of interdiscursiveness).

The ministry – and the policy and reform actors in post-revolutionary Serbia – are divided along the lines of political/non-political affiliation, the former constructed as a negative trait. The actor's own political affiliation – a bad thing – is justified or excused through the use of the contrast/exemption conjunction 'but' which introduces his affiliation with the 'good' group of intellectuals. The desirable qualities of this group are accentuated through the opposition of destruction (the concern of the 'Other') and substance (the concern of 'Us'). The use of the singular possessive adjective (*my* party as opposed to *our* party) signals the greater concern at this instance with underlining personal, rather than collective, identification with something good.

At the same time, the actor's personal capital is increased through belonging to both political and academic fields, and the possession of both political and cultural capital.

Overall, an ideological image of a 'new Serbia' constructed by this statement is that of a progressive country led by intellectuals, with main ideologies those of progressivism and expertism.

Appendix 5: CUREC form

University of Oxford

CENTRAL UNIVERSITY RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (CUREC)

CUREC/1A Checklist for the Social Sciences and Humanities

The University of Oxford places a high value on the knowledge, expertise, and integrity of its members and their ability to conduct research to high standards of scholarship and ethics. The research ethics clearance procedures have been established to ensure that the University is meeting its obligations as a responsible institution. They start from the presumption that all members of the University will take their responsibilities and obligations seriously and will ensure that their research on human subjects is conducted according to the established principles and good practice in their fields and in accordance, where appropriate, with legal requirements. Since the requirements of research ethics review will vary from field to field and from project to project, the University accepts that different guidelines and procedures will be appropriate. Please check the CUREC website to ensure that you have the correct form for your project.

This form does not cover research governance, satisfactory methodology, or the health and safety of employees and students. As principal investigator, it is your responsibility to ensure that requirements in these areas are met. Please carry out a risk assessment of the project, in consultation with all researchers involved, using the checklist and CUREC's other documentation.

The use of an asterisk in this form indicates a phrase defined in the glossary. The glossary and further information on the University's research ethics procedures are available from the CUREC website:

www.admin.ox.ac.uk/curec

This form is designed largely for research that falls within the Divisions of Social Sciences and Humanities and which does not involve a high-level of risk to the subjects. Elite interviews, field work and oral history are included in the CUREC process. Please take a moment to read through it and if you have any questions or doubts as to whether it is the appropriate form, please review Section A or consult the CUREC website.

Note on anonymised data: If you are using previously collected anonymised data about people which neither you nor anyone else involved in your study can trace back to the individuals who provided them (e.g. census data, administrative data, secondary analysis), you do not need to obtain ethical approval for your study. Please refer to the definition of *personal data in the glossary and FAQ no. 6 for further guidance.

Note on audit: If you are conducting research on behalf of or at the request of a service provider that matches the definition of *audit in the glossary, you do not need to obtain ethical approval for your study.

SECTION A

	Yes	No
1) Are you using research methodologies commonly used in biomedical or behavioural laboratory sciences?		✓
2) Is there a significant risk that the research will induce anxiety, stress or other harmful psychological states in participants that might persist beyond the duration of any test or interview in which they are participating?		✓
3) Will the research involve human participants recruited by means of their status as present or past NHS patients or their relatives or carers or present or past NHS staff?		✓
4) Does the research involve *human participants aged 16 and over who do not have *capacity to consent for themselves? See the Mental Capacity Act 2005		✓
5) Is the study to be funded by the US National Institutes of Health or another US federal funding agency?		✓

Office use only: IDREC Ref. No. _____

Date of confirmation that checklist accepted on behalf of IDREC: // //

If you answered 'yes', please stop work on this checklist and

for questions 1 and 2, complete CUREC/1 instead (available from www.admin.ox.ac.uk/curec);

for questions 3 and 4, submit your proposal to the appropriate NHS ethics committee (see www.nres.npsa.nhs.uk and www.admin.ox.ac.uk/rso/clinical for further information);

for question 5, or if you answered 'yes' to questions 1, 2 or 4 and your research will take place outside the EU, submit your proposal to OXTREC, which uses separate documentation (www.tropicalmedicine.ox.ac.uk/ox trec).

If you have answered 'no' to all questions in Section A, please complete Sections B-E. This form and any supporting materials should be typewritten.

SECTION B

*Principal investigator/ supervisor/student researcher (title and name):	Miss Sanja Djerasic
---	----------------------------

Name of supervisor (STUDENT RESEARCH PROJECTS ONLY):	Prof Ingrid Lunt and Dr Alis Oancea
Department or institute:	Department of Education
Address for correspondence (if different):	26 Buttermere Drive, London SW15 2HW
Email and phone contact:	sanja.djerasimovic@stx.ox.ac.uk; 07930902079
Title of research project:	<i>The development of the policy for civic education in the wake of Serbian 'democratic revolution': setting the course for 'education for democracy'</i>
<i>Brief description of research methods and goals plus description of the nature of participants (including the criteria for inclusion/exclusion, method of recruitment), explanation of how professional guidelines and/or CUREC protocol(s) will be applied (if relevant) and expected use to which the results/data will be put. Please describe how you will obtain informed consent. Approx 400 words.</i>	

The purpose of the research is to create an account of the development of the policy for civic education in Serbia in 2001, and explain it using the conceptual tools from post-communist reform studies and policy-making in societies undergoing a radical socio-political change. The aim is to add to existing scholarship on education in post-communist and post-authoritarian societies and illuminate the nature of policy development at the start of the transition from one political system to another.

Methods employed to achieve this goal will be documentary analysis and semi-structured interviews. Documents will both provide the background for interview, and provide primary data in relation to the policy development, which will be subjected to discourse analysis to unearth the rhetoric and ideology underlying its creation.

Semi-structured interviews shall be conducted with elite individuals who partook in the policy development process (including members of academia, government administration, politicians, non-governmental organisations), as well as certain individuals who will be able to provide valuable commentary and an outsider's perspective. The sampling technique employed was purposeful sampling, i.e. the participants have been selected on the basis on their being able to provide first-hand account of the event in question, either through having partaken in it, or by having been able to observe the process as an – opposing - excluded party. Aside from purposeful sampling, in some cases snowball sampling was employed as well.

Most of the participants have already been approached via email and were introduced to the research and asked to participate, to which they have all given their preliminary consent. This shall be followed by another round of emails, this time containing the information sheet and consent form that all participants will be asked to sign and return before the interviews are scheduled and travel arrangements made. At the start of the interview, all the important points shall once again be made clear to the interviewees, before proceeding. Audio recordings and transcripts of the interviews shall be stored, during the research, and after it is finished, securely, on a password-protected personal computer, and in the accordance with the UK 1998 Data Protection Act.

Although the consent form guarantees anonymity and confidentiality in research, as is sometimes the case with elite interviewees, some of them might express explicit wish to have their ownership of the data recognised. For this to happen, a written and signed waiver of anonymity shall be requested from those participants. However, this will *only* be allowed if it does not pose any risk whatsoever to the anonymity and confidentiality of other participants.

List actual or probable location(s) where project will be conducted, if known:	Belgrade, Serbia
---	-------------------------

Anticipated duration of project:	<i>Four months for the empirical part of the research, although some additional interviews, if so need be, may be conducted following the planned conclusion.</i>
Anticipated start date:	<i>January 2012</i>
Anticipated end date:	<i>April 2012</i>
Name and status (e.g. 3rd year undergraduate; post-doctoral research assistant) of others taking part in y project:	
Please indicate what training on research ethics the researchers involved with this study have received, e.g. the title of the online or in-person course, and date completed (online training available at www.admin.ox.ac.uk/rso/integrity/#Training):	<i>Research Ethics course within the DPhil programme at the Department of Education.</i>

SECTION C

Methods to be used in the study (**tick** as many as apply: this information will help the committee understand the nature of your research and may be used for audit).

	Please
Interview	✓
Questionnaire	
Analysis of existing records	
Participant performs verbal/paper and pencil/computer based task	
Measurement/recording of motor behaviour	
Audio recording of participant	✓
Video recording or phtotography of participant	
Physiological recording from participant	
Participant observation	
Covert observation	

<i>Systematic observation</i>	
<i>Observation of specific organisational practices</i>	
<i>Other (please specify)</i>	✓

SECTION D

Have you read one or more of the following professional guidelines and do you undertake to use the principles listed there as a guide for your own work? Please note that this is not intended to be an exhaustive list. Links to the guidelines listed below are included on the CUREC website.

	Please tick
<i>British Society of Criminology: Code of Ethics for Researchers in the Field of Criminology [britsoccrim.org/ethical.htm]</i>	
<i>British Educational Research Association Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research [www.bera.ac.uk/publications/guidelines/]</i>	✓
<i>Academy of Management's Professional Code of Ethics [www.aonline.org]</i>	
<i>Association of American Geographers Statement on Professional Ethics [www.aag.org/Info/ethics.htm]</i>	
<i>Oral History Society of the UK Ethical Guidelines [www.oralhistory.org.uk/ethics/index.php]</i>	
<i>American Political Science Association (APSA) Guide to Professional Ethics in Political Science (Section H) [www.apsanet.org/content_9350.cfm]</i>	✓
<i>British Psychological Society Code of Ethics and Conduct [www.bps.org.uk/the-society/code-of-conduct/code-of-conduct_home.cfm]</i>	
<i>Ethics Guidelines of the Association of Social Anthropologists of the UK and Commonwealth [www.theasa.org/ethics/guidelines.htm]</i>	
<i>Social Research Association: Ethical Guidelines [www.the-sra.org.uk/ethical.htm]</i>	✓
<i>Statement of Principles of Ethical Research Practice from the Socio-Legal Studies Association [www.slsa.ac.uk]</i>	
<i>Statement of Ethical Practice for the British Sociological Association [www.britsoc.co.uk/equality/Statement+Ethical+Practice.htm]</i>	✓

Other professional guidelines (please specify): The Research Ethics Guidebook: a Resource for Social Scientists [www.ethicsguidebook.ac.uk]	✓
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SECTION E

Please put a tick in the yes/no column as appropriate to indicate your response.

1) Will you obtain informed consent according to good practice in your discipline before participation?	Yes	No
	✓	
2) Will you ensure that *personal data collected directly from participants or via a *third party is held and processed in accordance with the provisions of the Data Protection Act?	Yes	No
	✓	
3) Does the research involve as participants *people whose ability to give free and informed consent is in question? (This includes those under 18 and vulnerable adults.)	Yes	No
		✓
4) As a consequence of taking part in the research, will participants be at serious risk of rendering themselves liable to criminal prosecution (e.g. by providing information on drug abuse or child abuse)?	Yes	No
		✓
5) Does the research involve the *deception of participants, as part of the investigation/experiment?	Yes	No
		✓
If any of your answers above are in a shaded box, please indicate whether those aspects of your project are fully covered by the following.		
6) Research protocol(s) which has/ve received IDREC/CUREC approval? If yes, please give protocol number(s):	Yes	No
7) Professional guidelines that you will be following, as noted under Section D?	Yes	No

If any of your answers in Section E are in a shaded box and are not covered by a protocol or by professional guidelines, please complete CUREC/2, available to download from the CUREC website. Then submit both this form (you need not complete section F) and the CUREC/2 to the Social Sciences and Humanities IDREC.

If all your answers in Section E are in the unshaded boxes or your answers in shaded boxes are covered by a protocol or professional guidelines, complete Section F and submit this form and any accompanying documents to the Social Sciences and Humanities IDREC (see notes and address below).

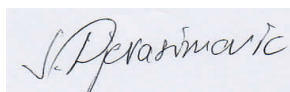
SECTION F

Complete this section only if you do not need to submit form CUREC/2.

I understand my responsibilities as principal researcher/supervisor/student researcher as outlined in the CUREC glossary and guidance on the CUREC website.

I declare that the answers above accurately describe my research as presently designed and that I will submit a new checklist should the design of my research change in a way which would alter any of the above responses so as to require completion of CUREC/2 (involving full scrutiny by an IDREC). I will inform the relevant IDREC if I cease to be the principal researcher on this project and supply the name and contact details of my successor if appropriate.

Signed by principal researcher/supervisor/student researcher:



Date: 20/10/2011

Print name (block capitals) SANJA DJERASIMOVIC

Signed by supervisor:... ..(for student projects)

Date:...

Print name (block capitals).....

I understand the questions and answers that have been entered above describing the research, and I will ensure that my practice in this research complies with these answers, subject to any modifications made by the principal researcher properly authorised by the CUREC system.

Signed **by** **associate/other** **researcher:**
.....N/A.....

Print name (block capitals).....

Date

I have read the research project application named above. On the basis of the information available to me, I:

(i) consider the principal researcher/supervisor/student researcher to be aware of her/his ethical responsibilities in regard to this research;

(ii) consider that any ethical issues raised have been satisfactorily resolved or are covered by relevant professional guidelines and/or CUREC approved protocols, and that it is appropriate for the research to proceed without further formal ethical scrutiny at this stage (noting the principal researcher's obligation to report should the design of the research change in a way which would alter any of the above responses so as to require completion of a CUREC/2 full application);

(iii) am satisfied that the proposed project has been/will be subject to appropriate *peer review and is likely to contribute something useful to existing knowledge and/or to the education and training of the researcher(s) and that it is in the *public interest.

(iv) [FOR DEPARTMENTS/FACULTIES WITH A DEPARTMENTAL RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (DREC) OR EQUIVALENT BODY - PLEASE DELETE IF NOT APPLICABLE] confirm that this checklist (and associated research outline) has been reviewed by the Department's Research Ethics Committee (DREC)/equivalent body, and attach the associated report from that body.

Signed:.....

(Head of department or nominee e.g Chair of DREC, Director of Graduate Studies for postgraduate student projects)

Print name (block capitals).....

Date:.....

Please send an electronic copy and a signed paper copy of this completed checklist, together with any supporting documentation, to the following addresses, keeping a copy for yourself:

Secretary of the Social Sciences and Humanities IDREC Email:
ethics@socsci.ox.ac.uk

University of Oxford Social Sciences Division

Hayes House, George Street

Oxford, OX1 2BQ

Forms may be sent by email (without signature), where both the note of

submission from the researcher and the note of endorsement from the supervisor/Head of Department are sent from a University of Oxford email address.

IDRECs and/or CUREC will review a sample of completed checklists and may ask for further details of any project.

FINAL CHECK

To prevent delay please check each of the following before submitting the application.

Have you completed Sections A-E?

Have you defined all technical terms and abbreviations used?

Have you included any supporting documentation, including – as appropriate – questionnaires and participant information, consent forms/form or note of procedure for recording oral consent, advertisements and surveys to be used?

Are all pages (including appendices and attachments) numbered?

Are all relevant declarations in Section F complete and any necessary authorisations obtained (by email or by signing the form)?



Department of Education

The development of the policy for civic education in the wake of Serbian 'democratic revolution': setting the course for 'education for democracy'

Participant Information Sheet

This project is conducted as a part of a doctoral degree at the University of Oxford. The purpose of the research is to create an account of the development of the policy for civic education in Serbia in 2001, and explain it drawing on theory on post-communist educational reform and policy-making in societies undergoing a radical socio-political change. The aim is to add to knowledge about education in post-communist and post-authoritarian societies and illuminate the nature of policy development at the start of the transition from one political system to another.

The actors, interactions and discourses involved in Serbian civic education policy making, will be examined through semi-structured interviews with individuals who can provide either a first-hand account of the process, or valuable commentary from an alternative point of view. It is on the basis of this that you have been selected to partake in this research, and this is why your candid account and in-depth knowledge is of paramount significance for the success of the project.

The interview shall last approximately one hour and will be semi-structured, which means that instead of a set of fixed questions, there shall be several areas that need covering – your role in the process, relationship with other actors, background, experience, and opinions. The interviews will be audio-recorded, and audio files and transcripts will be, during the project and after it is finished, kept on a password-protected personal computer, with all the necessary internet security measures in place, and in accordance with the UK 1998 Data Protection Act. This stipulates that data only be used for the purposes for which they were collected, not disclosed to third party without your explicit consent; it asserts your right to access data, and change/update any *factual* information if necessary. You are reassured that data will be subject to strict confidentiality rules and used with respect to maintaining your anonymity, however if you wish to forsake assurance of anonymity, you may do so as long as it does not affect the anonymity of other participants.

This project has received clearance from the Oxford Central University Research Ethics Committee.

You are invited to ask for any clarification and further information prior to the interview and you retain the right to withdraw from the project at any time, by advising the researcher of this decision. You can find the contact details below.

<i>Researcher</i>	<i>Contact details</i>
<i>Sanja Djerasimovic</i>	Email: sanja.djerasimovic@stx.ox.ac.uk
<i>DPhil Student</i>	Phone: +447930902079



Department of Education

The development of the policy for civic education in the wake of Serbian 'democratic revolution': setting the course for 'education for democracy'

Participant consent form

I, the undersigned, agree to participate in the above study. I have been given an explanation of the project and have been given the opportunity to ask further questions about it, to which I have received satisfactory answers. I have understood that:

- I may withdraw from the study at any time without having to justify my decision;
- Audio-recording/transcript of the interview shall be kept in strictest confidentiality, and used solely for the purposes of this project; after the research is completed, all data shall be kept securely, on a password-protected personal computer, and in compliance with the UK 1998 Data Protection Act, not disclosed to a third party without my explicit consent, whilst I retain the right of access to them;
- Any material used in the study shall be used anonymously, unless otherwise requested and approved;
- This project has received clearance from Central University Research Ethics Committee at the University of Oxford.

Participant

Researcher

Print name		Print name	
-------------------	--	-------------------	--

Sign		Sign	
Date		Date	

Interview Protocol

- Professional background
- Political activity/affiliation prior to 2000
- Relationship with Milosevic's administration
- Involvement in international academic networks during communism and 1990s
- Personal engagement with NGOs during 1990s
- Experience with/knowledge of civic/citizenship education prior to 2001
- Becoming engaged by the post-2000 government
- Nature of dealing with the previous administration
- Nature of relationship with the shadow cabinet of the post-2000 government
- The inception of the idea about civic education
- The decision to introduce civic education in September 2001
- The role of the third sector/stakeholders/external agents in developing the policy
- Conceptualisation and writing of the policy
- Publication and publicising of the policy
- Internal and external review of the policy

Appendix 6: CUREC application approval

Thursday, 26 September 2013 11:42:36 British Summer Time

Subject: CUREC Application Approval

Date: Monday, 14 November 2011 14:01:46 Greenwich Mean Time **From:** Education Research Office

To: Sanja Djerasimovic

CC: Alis Oancea, Ingrid Lunt

14/11/2011

Dear Sanja Djerasimovic, Application Approval

Title: "The development of the policy for civic education in the wake of Serbian 'democratic revolution': setting the course for 'education for democracy?'"

The above application has been considered on behalf of the Departmental Research Ethics Committee (DREC) in accordance with the procedures laid down by the University for ethical approval of all research involving human participants. I am pleased to inform you that, on the basis of the information provided to DREC, the proposed research has been judged as meeting appropriate ethical standards, and accordingly approval has been granted.

Should there be any subsequent changes to the project, which raise ethical issues not covered in the original application, you should submit details to DREC for consideration.

Good luck with your research study.

Yours sincerely,

Justina Kurkova Research Office Assistant