

**NATIONAL IDENTITY AND EUROPEAN
INTEGRATION IN SECONDARY EDUCATION:
THE CASE OF SLOVAKIA**

**A thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of
Philosophy**

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ABSTRACT

This thesis is set against a twofold background: national identity as a source of public resistance towards the deepening of European integration; and the possible role of education in enhancing support for the process, as endorsed through the European dimension in education. In particular, through an empirical investigation, it examines the extent to which lower secondary education in Slovakia promotes the idea of a post-national Europe or whether, by contrast, it reinforces a more nationalist approach and therefore takes an instrumental outlook on European integration. To this end, a double-structured analytical model has been created. This draws on insights from the scholarship of nationalism captured under the umbrella terms of primordialism, constructivism and ethno-symbolism and also on the academic debate on European integration, summarised in this thesis as supranationalism and intergovernmentalism. In applying it, the thesis analyses the interpretation of the nature of nations and European integration in the most recent curricula and textbooks of history, geography and civics. It also examines teachers' and students' views through a qualitative research method based on interviews and discussions. As the findings indicate, the conceptualisation of national identity within lower secondary education in Slovakia remains dominated by the academically most controversial notion, primordialism, which regards nations as unique and immutable. Particularly in the case of textbooks and teachers, this does not necessarily lead to an interpretation of European integration as an instrument of interstate co-operation (intergovernmentalism) nor to a complete rejection of an eventual post-national transformation of Europe (supranationalism). However, students' views display a higher degree of polarisation in these respects, leading to a clear opposition to supranationalism. Overall, the thesis concludes that lower secondary education in Slovakia does not demonstrate support for a genuine post-national Europe. Unaffected by scholarly advances in the study of nationalism, it remains rooted in traditional misconceptions in relation to national identity and promotes values-based coexistence and co-operation between nations and nation-states in Europe.

The research is original in two ways. Firstly, it is innovative in adapting and applying the insights of the scholarship of nationalism and European integration within the context of a case study on secondary education. Secondly, it provides substantial new knowledge of learning, teaching and attitudes on these issues in Slovakia. Although the conclusions are country-specific, they have a wider significance and the thesis identifies some avenues for further research and areas for practical application of the findings within and beyond the frontiers of Slovakia.

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I have hardly ever paid attention to acknowledgements in academic works because I used to regard them with a fair degree of suspicion; something of a forced exercise. Having concluded this thesis with the support of so many people, I now understand that not emphasising it at the very beginning might be considered arrogant. It is because of these people that I succeeded in overcoming my prejudices against this academic convention and included here this non-compulsory supplement. If a few of them who made the contribution to the completion of my thesis should ever decide to read the end result (some might be sufficiently lucky not to be expected to do so due to the language barrier), I hope they will conclude that this page is not a hollow gesture. It was written because I would like to express my genuine thanks for all the support I have received over the last four years.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
|-------|---|
| CAP | Common Agricultural Policy |
| CE | Citizenship Education |
| EC | European Community |
| ECJ | European Court of Justice |
| ECSC | European Coal and Steel Community |
| EDE | European Dimension in Education |
| EEC | European Economic Community |
| EMU | Economic and Monetary Union |
| EI | European Integration |
| EP | European Parliament |
| EFSF | European Financial Stability Facility |
| ESM | European Stability Mechanism |
| EU | European Union |
| FG | Focus Group |
| GDP | Gross Domestic Product |
| GMF | German Marshall Fund |
| HZDS | Hnutie za Demokratické Slovensko (Movement for a Democratic Slovakia) |
| IR | International Relations |
| ISCED | International Standard Classification of Education |
| LGI | Large Group Interview |
| LSE | London School of Economics |
| MFEA | Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs |
| MS | Member States |
| NATO | North Atlantic Treaty Organisation |
| NI | National Identity |
| NMS | New Member States |
| ODS | Občanská Demokratická Strana (Civic Democratic Party) |
| OECD | Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development |
| OMC | Open Method of Co-ordination |
| OOI | One to One Interview |
| SaS | Sloboda a Solidarita (Freedom and Solidarity) |
| SEA | Single European Act |

| | |
|-------|--|
| SEP | State Educational Programme |
| SGI | Small Group Interview |
| SNS | Slovenská Národná Strana (Slovak National Party) |
| TEU | Treaty on European Union |
| TP | Treaty of Paris |
| WW I | First World War |
| WW II | Second World War |

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PART I: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Research questions

Der Weg der neuern Bildung geht Von Humanität Durch Nationalität Zur Bestialität
(The path of modern education leads from humanity through nationality to bestiality, Franz Grillparzer, 1960 [1849]).

Nations are not something eternal. They have begun, they will end. They will be replaced, in all probability, by a European confederation. But such is not the law of the century in which we live (Ernest Renan, 1994 [1882]).

The above words of the Viennese dramatist Franz Grillparzer (1791-1872) and the French scholar Ernest Renan (1823-1892), reflect the conceptual influences which have shaped the inception of this doctoral thesis. It seeks to evaluate the extent to which lower secondary education in Slovakia promotes the idea of a post-national Europe or whether, by contrast, it reinforces a nationalist approach and, therefore, takes an instrumental outlook on European integration. In doing so, the thesis examines how the nature of nations and European integration is understood through an empirical investigation. Relying on qualitative research methodology, this concentrates on the interpretation of both phenomena in the curricula and textbooks for history education, geography and civics, and also in teachers' and students' views.

In addition to an accentuation of the underlying influences and the wider background, Grillparzer's and Renan's views also call attention to the salience of the questions explored in this research and to the logic behind the analytical model adopted in it. This introductory section therefore begins with an exposition of the rationale and relevance of the investigation. It will be followed by a discussion of the three specific themes around which its structure is built: the relationship between nationalism and European integration with a particular emphasis on the role of public attitudes in this context; the function of education in the integration process; and Slovakia as a case study. Next, a review of previous academic research will be given before highlighting the original contribution of this examination. The introduction concludes with a brief outline of the organisation of the thesis. Before turning to the account of its motives and significance, it seems useful to clarify the key concepts which are used throughout the subsequent chapters:

- **Nationalism, nations, nation-state sovereignty**

Semantically rooted in the Latin *nascor* (I am born), nationalism, a contested concept within academia (a deeper discussion follows in chapter 2.2.1), might be succinctly explained as a socio-political movement or ideology which is anchored in a set of beliefs which maintain that humanity is divided into immutable subgroups of common origin, the nations. The existence of the presumably distinctive communities of people, defined by commonly shared and unique features (language, culture, history, character, territory) and their right to self-determination gradually became the principle of international politics in the course of the nineteenth century. Accordingly, nations became understood in political practice and among the wider public as the ultimate source upon which the legitimacy of nation-state sovereignty, namely, the independent exercise of power or control over a geographically delineated territory, is based (Smith 2010: 5-46; Özkirimli 2010: 9-31).

- **National identity (NI)**

Identity has become a pervasive category of interdisciplinary academic enquiry over the last three decades (Ely 1997; Fearon 1999; Brubaker and Cooper 2000). Derived from the Latin *idem* (same or sameness), there are two main contemporary meanings associated with the concept: the individual and collective. In the first instance, identity refers to a self-concept in the sense of a sum of personal attributes or character. The latter is best described as awareness of group membership or affiliation (Fearon 1999) which, in the context of this thesis, is the nation.

- **Post-national**

As the Latin prefix *post* (after, behind) indicates, this adjective pertains to the notion of the transformation of the significance of phenomena linked with nationalism. Although the term points toward the academic debate on post-nationalism, the broader discussion on the receding role of nation-states (Berezin 2007), its insights do not constitute the conceptual foundation of this thesis and will be considered only marginally.

- **European integration (EI)**

Whether the name of Europe should be linked to the Phoenician princess of the Greek mythology or in a less enchanting way to the Greek adjective *eurus* (wide, broad) and the semitic verb *erebu* (to get down/set, hence the land of sunset) is unclear. As with the semantic roots, the geographical, cultural and political notions of Europe are, likewise, a matter of considerable academic debate. Despite a number of shifts in thinking over time, Europe is described by geographical convention as one of the world's seven continents. It stretches from the Atlantic Ocean in the west to the Ural Mountains in the east, in the north to the Arctic Ocean and to the Mediterranean and Black Seas in the

south (Gollwitzer 1964; de Rougemont 1966; Fuhrmann 1981). Going back to the Latin verb *integrare* (to make complete, whole), the process of European unification continues to stir controversy. A deeper discussion on the approaches of EI will follow in a later chapter (2.2.1).

Having briefly outlined the research questions and the central concepts discussed in this thesis, the next chapter will address the research rationale and relevance.

1.2 Research rationale and relevance

Grillparzer wrote his aphorism inspired by the educational tendencies of the nineteenth century in the heyday of European national movements. The unspeakable atrocities of two world wars in the first half of the twentieth century proved, in the most tragic way, the accuracy of his assessment of the destructive potential of nationalism. Many scholars have highlighted and also disputed the impact of these historical experiences on the inception of EI in the early 1950s (Haas 1968 [1958]; Hoffmann 1966; Milward 2000 [1992]; Moravcsik 1993; Herz 2002).

While acknowledging to the significance of nations, yet well in advance of academic and political controversy about the origins, objectives and finality of integration, Renan also presented his perspective in relation to the legitimisation of a post-national order in Europe.¹ He argued, a European political structure is very likely to replace the supremacy of the transient nations at some point in the future. Similar to Renan, many conceived of EI as the instrument of this transformation in the twentieth century and continue to uphold such views even today (Coudenhove-Kalergi 1924 [1923]; Spinelli and Rossi 2006 [1941]; Monnet 1978; Fischer 2000; Spinelli Group 2010; Cohn-Bendit and Verhofstadt 2012; Blair 2012; Šimková 2012; Greven 2012; Schröder 2012; Duff 2011, 2013). However, regardless of such opinions and decades of ongoing integration, Renan's predictions have not yet been realised.

Contrary to the expectations of some early integrationists, numerous analytical assessments of the declining role of nation-states (Berezin 2007) and contemporary discussion and support for post-national Europe within academic, political and public circles, EI has not succeeded in overcoming the relevance of nationalism. There is evidence that a significant proportion of the European public does not share Renan's perspective on national identity or the alteration of the nation-state structure within Europe as the eventual outcome of EI (Hooghe and Marks 2009; Özkirimli 2010; Auer

¹ On the condition of the preservation of liberty, Renan also justified the existence of nations in the same speech presented at the Sorbonne in 1882 (Renan 1994 [1882]).

2010; Serricchio *et al.* 2013). Moreover, some commentators argue that instead of reducing the appeal of nationalism, EI might serve, even if unintentionally, as its 'backdoor' (Fox and Vermeersch 2010). Continuing, contemporary tensions in the European Union (EU) due to protracted economic challenges also provide relevant evidence in this context (The Economist 2012; Jones 2012; Serricchio *et al.* 2013).

The issue of an eventual transformation of the European nation-state system is a controversial, but recurring theme. Although the concept often carries normative overtones, it continues to stimulate academic, political and public debate in respect to the finality of EI. Consequently, the questions followed up in this thesis constitute a salient and timely research agenda. The next chapter will discuss its background.

1.3 Research background

National identity as a source of public resistance towards EI

The eventual inception of the longstanding idea of European unity is usually associated in the relevant literature with the early 1950s. Starting with the creation of the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) in 1951, European integration was initiated as an elite project. Public support was not a primary concern for neither the early integration practitioners nor its theorists. In addition to pragmatic considerations shaped by the realities of the immediate post-war Europe, both circles saw the process as a technocratic or political matter and regarded the public as largely irrelevant. Public appreciation was expected to develop more or less automatically following positive outcomes of integration.

Thus, on the basis of assumed public support, or 'permissive consensus' (Lindberg and Scheingold 1970), economic integration continued to be pursued for years without significant attention to general attitudes. What is more, opinion polls conducted regularly twice a year in spring and autumn since 1973, have shown fairly strong approval for EI as the European Community was established and consolidated (Haas 1968 [1958]; Holland 1996; Dalton and Eichenberg 1998; Carrubba 2001).² According to an opinion poll published in December 1991, 79% of the EU electorate supported efforts toward the unification of Western Europe, 69% regarded the membership of their particular country as a good thing and 56% thought that their country benefited from membership of the Community (Standard Eurobarometer 36, 1991).

² In 1957, two Treaties of Rome established 'The European Atomic Energy Community' (Euratom) and the 'European Economic Community' (EEC), also referred to as 'Common Market' or 'European Community' (EC) (Moravcsik 1998). As 'European Union' was founded first with Maastricht Treaty (1992), the term 'Community' is used here for the period before 1992.

The integration process undeniably contributed to the unprecedented economic and thus political and socio-cultural progress in Western Europe following the end of the Second World War and has been instrumental in stabilising the transformation of the post-communist countries of its central and eastern parts after 1989 (Milward 2000 [1992]; Rifkin 2004; Haughton 2012). The negative public response within the old member states (EU-15)³ to the Maastricht Treaty (signed in 1992), also known as the Treaty on European Union (TEU), revealing less public enthusiasm for further integration than expected, therefore took politicians and academics by surprise (Urwin 1995: 256-257; Dalton and Eichenberg 1998: 250).

Maastricht has been associated in academic literature with the role of a catalyst for the politicisation of EI as well as public resistance towards its increasing deepening (Checkel and Katzenstein 2009). Public reactions were interpreted by some as the culmination of the dissatisfaction with the neoliberal policies and subsequent socio-economic changes within Europe (the deregulation of financial and labour markets, the privatisation of public services, declining wages and job security) since the mid-1970s. Accordingly, EI also became seen as a channel of neoliberalism (Pollack 1998; Hermann 2007).

Others, pointing towards satisfactory economic developments in the early 1990s, highlighted the significance of national identity in this context (Eichenberg and Dalton 2007; Serricchio *et al.* 2013). The provisions of the treaty were wide ranging and initiated some major developments in the integration process. Besides arrangements for Economic and Monetary Union (EMU) requiring the pooling of national control over monetary and fiscal policy, TEU provided for co-operation on security policy and in justice and home affairs, also clearly matters of primary concern for sovereign national governments. Moreover, national currencies, which are powerful symbols of national sovereignty, have been replaced by a common currency (in public circulation since 2002) in a number of member states (MS, currently 17).⁴ European citizenship, a new legal status applying to all nationals of MS allowing them to settle and work within EU boundaries, was also introduced.

The rejection of the Maastricht Treaty in the Danish referendum (50.7%) and the marginal approval in France (51%) in 1992, interpreted as the end of 'permissive consensus', did not remain an isolated event. The public debate in the UK on the EMU or the double rejections of the European Constitution in the French (54.7%) and Dutch referenda (61.6%) in 2005 provided further evidence of nationalism as a factor impacting

³ Please refer to Annex 1, p.252 for the EU-15.

⁴ Please refer to Annex 1, p.253 for the eurozone countries.

on attitudes towards EI among the citizens within EU. In spite of not being seen as the sole factor fuelling such reactions, these were nevertheless interpreted by many as an unambiguous indication of popular disapproval of the ever increasing pooling of national sovereignty and of the project of political unification (Medrano 2003; Serricchio *et al.* 2013).

Whatever the decisive factor, Maastricht clearly marked the beginning of a new period of EI that has not been welcomed with a unanimously shared eagerness across Europe. It was a straightforward clue to the differences in public perceptions of EI and clearly spelled out its political potential. Consequently, the academic debate on factors shaping public attitudes towards integration, evolving since the 1970s, intensified in the 1990s. Although of varying strength across MS and dependent on cross-sectional variables (age, socio-economic and educational background, historical experiences of a specific country), national identity as a source of public resistance towards a deepening of EI has been highlighted in academic discussion of the issues (Deflem and Pamel 1996; Dalton and Eichenberg 1998; Carey 2002; McLaren 2002; Medrano 2003; Hooghe and Marks 2004; Netjes and Edwards 2005; Auer 2010; Serricchio *et al.* 2013).

The contemporary Euro crisis, like the adoption of the Maastricht Treaty twenty years ago, demonstrates convincingly that the 'permissive consensus' belongs irrevocably in academic history. Instead, the 'constraining dissensus' (Hooghe and Marks 2009) seems to capture more accurately the contemporary attitudes of a notable part of the European public. Moreover, it also exposes unambiguously the rifts in European unity and identity (Auer 2010; The Economist 2012).

Declining public support has been explained by many as resulting from the absence of a sense of belonging and cohesion within the EU and was associated with the absence of "European demos." Consequently, some within academic and political circles identified the building of European identity as a device to remedy the problems. Efforts to develop European identity and support for EI were renewed and intensified from the early 1990s.⁵ As national education systems previously played an important role in the construction of national identities, they now became part of this endeavour to enhance positive attitudes amongst the public in relation to European identity. The inclusion of the 'European dimension in education' (EDE) was therefore encouraged (Ryba 1992; Shore 2000; Str ath 2002).

⁵ The *Declaration on European Identity* adopted at the Community summit in Copenhagen in 1973 is seen in academic literature as the first step in this context followed by further action plans through the 1970s (*Tindeman's Report* 1975) and 1980s (*Solemn Declaration on the European Union* 1983, creation of Adonino's Comiteee in the European Parliament in 1984) (Shore 2000: 44-46; Str ath 2002: 388-389).

Education and EI

For pragmatic and political reasons, educational policies received little attention at the Community level for a considerable period of the integration process. The immediate post-war atmosphere in Europe was strongly penetrated by mutual distrust and hatred, particularly towards Germany, and was obviously less favourable towards a visible, political engagement in cultural co-operation (Künhardt 2004; Pépin 2006). Furthermore, the close link between the idea of national sovereignty and education made interference in this area a political 'taboo' (Pépin 2006: 22). Hence, efforts for closer educational co-operation in Europe rooted in the immediate post-war period of 1945 are associated only with a handful of dedicated educators. Their activities continued and were further developed over the decades, particularly within the Council of Europe founded in 1949 (Ryba 1992, 2000; Pépin 2006).

Although educational activities initially remained modest, they were not entirely ignored by the architects of European integration. First steps of co-operation in the area of education were reflected in the form of brief references to the mutual recognition of professional qualifications and vocational training in The Treaty of Rome signed in 1957 (Karlsen 2002; Pépin 2006). A number of factors enhanced gradual changes within the limited discussion on vocational training and university co-operation. Expansion and democratisation of education across Europe evolving in the 1960s, together with economic developments in the following decade, facilitated the actual beginning of education policies at the Community level.

The adverse economic situation in the 1970s leading to rising levels of unemployment exposed the interconnections between education and training and wider social policies. As a result, a number of initiatives were introduced in the following years: the first meeting of ministers of education in 1971, the publication of the highly influential report of Professor Henri Janne in 1973, the foundation of an educational administrative unit, the Directorate for Research, Science and Education (1973) and, finally, the launch of a first action programme in 1976 (Ryba 1992; Pépin 2006).⁶ The economic utility of education and training had stimulated educational policies at the EU level during the 1980s and continues to shape it today (Karlsen 2002; Pépin 2006; EC-ET 2013).

⁶ Multiple ideas developed in Janne's report (1973) continue to shape educational activities and publications at the EU level even today. For example, the concept of 'lifelong learning' as developed especially after the adoption of the Lisbon Strategy (2000) occurred in Janne's report as a concept of 'permanent education' (p.15). Janne's report, in spite of strong support for educational policies at the Community level, refused 'European nationalism' and economic domination and argued resolutely for a world perspective of education within Europe.

The Maastricht Treaty reinforced the legal basis of EU policy in education (Art. 126).⁷ Despite increased involvement in educational activities following the Treaty, decision-making power in this policy area remained firmly under the control of member states. Although resolutions issued by the Council of Ministers are binding and require a response from, and action by MS, educational policies at the EU level is anchored in the principle of subsidiarity.⁸ Therefore, engagement in education and training relies strongly on open method of co-operation (OMC).⁹ In other words, a significant number of educational initiatives developed at the EU level are not legally binding for MS and operate on the basis of recommendations, exchange of best practices and networking (Ryba 1992; Lewicka-Grisdale and McLaughlin 2002; Savvides 2008).

The concept of a European dimension in education, linked at the Community level for the first time with Janne's report (1973),¹⁰ began to appear increasingly in the official terminology and documentation during the course of 1970s. As it has never been defined precisely, its application remains inconsistent within both the EU and national levels of administration.¹¹ Nevertheless, EDE refers to a concept of education that is expected to enhance an understanding and support for European integration across member states. Therefore, its aim is the promotion of common values and interests focusing on notions of a shared, cultural and historical heritage in Europe. A wider, European contextualisation of teaching content, particularly in history, geography, the arts or social sciences (citizenship education) and foreign languages, is seen as a suitable, practical adaptation of the EDE approach that is able to:

strengthen in young people a sense of European identity and make clear to them the value of European civilisation and of the foundation on which the European peoples intend to base their development today, that is in particular the safeguarding of the principles of democracy, social justice and respect for human rights [...] prepare young people to take part in the economic and social development of the Community [...] make them aware of the advantages which the Community represents [...] improve their knowledge of the Community and its Member States in their historical, cultural, economic and social aspects and bring

⁷ By emphasising the control of EU member states over education policies, the article declared the Union's commitment to support actions aimed at qualitative improvements. It also excluded any harmonisation in this area (TEU 1992).

⁸ Following the principle of subsidiarity, action is only taken at the Union level when national, regional or local levels are unable to act effectively (EU Glossary-Subsidiarity).

⁹ OMC is an intergovernmental instrument of co-operation developed within Lisbon strategy (2000). OMC does not result in legally binding acts (directives, regulations or decisions) (EU Glossary-OMC).

¹⁰ The actual term of European dimension in education has its roots in the activities of The Council of Europe. It has been adopted in order to replace the broader references to 'European education or 'about Europe' as applied in the more distant past in writings of educationalists such as Comenius (1592-1670) (Philippou 2005: 345).

¹¹ Without providing a precise definition, the final remarks of Janne's report described the 'European dimension' in education as an instrument of building a collective affiliation to Europe, the 'political, social and cultural belonging' of Europeans' (Janne 1973: 51). For example the Council Resolution on European dimension adopted in May 1988 (cited above) described the concept in broad terms focusing on multiple aspects: historical, social, political, economic, and the learning of languages (Council of Ministers of Education 1988). The Treaty on the functioning of the European Union (Article 165) links the European dimension in first place with language teaching and sport (TFEU 2012).

home to them the significance of the co-operation of the Member States of the European Community with other countries of Europe and the world (Council of Ministers of Education, 1988).

This two-fold context of the multidisciplinary European dimension in education – public resistance towards a deepening of EI rooted in nationalism and the role of education in the integration process - provide the background for the research questions, which address the interpretation of national identity and EI in lower level secondary education in Slovakia.

Slovakia as a case study

The 27 member states of the EU with their distinct historical and contemporary geopolitical contexts, which shape the diverging motivations for and approaches to EI participation and also impact on the variety of educational traditions and systems, constitute a unique research field (Cajani and Ross 2007; Copsey and Haughton 2009; Kosova and Porubsky 2011).¹² By the way of illustration, the historical experience of Germany and Great Britain might be mentioned. Germany’s traditional pro-integrationist attitudes, which were significantly shaped by its history of the first half of the twenty century, contrast sharply with the continuously sceptical and reluctant EI attitudes of Great Britain, a former colonial power and winner of the Second World War. Both brief examples demonstrate convincingly that a research focus on the EU as a whole or a combination of MS would make up a considerable research challenge. Therefore, a case study approach focusing on Slovakia and a lower secondary education has been adopted in this dissertation. This will ensure a meaningful and in depth engagement with the defined research questions. In addition to the above considerations, including my own linguistic limitations, there are further reasons which justify this methodological choice.

The European dimension in education posits a specific set of questions in the case of Slovakia, making it an interesting and instructive research subject. As in a number of other post-communist countries in the region of Central and Eastern Europe, there is, in particular, the influence of history and the experience of a recently established democratic state. Slovakia was also exposed to a comparable process of socio-political and economic transformation after 1989 (outlined in more detail in chapter 2.1). It then joined the EU in 2004 shortly after (re-)gaining its national independence following the “Velvet divorce” of Czechoslovakia. Hence, the relationship between integrationist developments in Europe on the one hand and the building of national statehood on the

¹² As this research has been conducted and was in the last stages of completion before Croatia became the 28th member of the EU in July 2013, only 27 MS (EU-27) are considered here. See Annex 1, p.253 for EU-27.

other is particularly striking. How are these seemingly contradictory processes conceptualised and reconciled in Slovakia's lower secondary education? How does school instruction explain the potential contradiction between the theoretical premises of a sovereign exercise of political powers by a nation-state with their simultaneous reduction required by membership in the EU? How can national identity be cultivated and preserved whilst European identity is being encouraged?

In addition to the similarities with other new MS from the region of Central and Eastern Europe, Slovakia as a case study provides for contextual particularities which make the examination of the research questions even more compelling. These might be derived from the backdrop of political and public attitudes in Slovakia towards EI and the EU. Excluded from membership negotiations for non-compliance with the political pre-accession criteria in the period of 1993-1998 (discussed in more details in Chapter 2.1), Slovakia nevertheless participated in the historically largest widening of the EU in 2004. In spite of wide political consensus and support for Slovakia's EU membership, a diversification of views had been taking place across the political spectrum since 2004 (Bilčík and Világi 2007; Haughton and Bilčík 2012). The unresolved crisis in the eurozone also resulted in the increasing impact of EU affairs in domestic political and public debates. The EU management of the crisis became the object of vociferous and uncompromising criticism from some of Slovakia's political representatives and attracted media attention beyond the borders of the country (Spiegel Online 2011; BBC 2011; ZDF / You Tube 2012).

In terms of public support, Slovakia has been widely viewed as a supporter of EI. However, the relationship between the Slovak citizens and the EU is in fact rather complex (discussed in more detail in chapter 2.1). Regardless of fairly high levels of endorsement of EU membership, Slovakia has twice recorded the lowest participation of voters in elections to the European Parliament (EP) (2004: 16.96% and in 2009: 19.64%) with younger voters (age 18-24) most vigorously choosing to abstain from the ballots (IVO 2004: 4; TASR 2013). Moreover, the Euro crisis also reveals the problematic quality of the attitudes of Slovaks towards the EU (aktuality.sk 2012a). Therefore, an analysis of educational conceptualisation and transmission of both phenomena (NI and EI) to young European citizens in Slovakia has particular importance.

The European dimension in its broader context, i.e. the study of European history, culture and geography, is actually not a pedagogic innovation in Slovakia. On the contrary, a European perspective, particularly within the subjects of history, geography, arts and literature, has a long tradition in the education system. Although burdened with

a strong ideological bias during the period before 1989, it is a well-established area of study (Curriculum 1954, 1964, 1979, 1987). Moreover, a conceptual discussion of EDE has been conducted in Slovakia since the early 1990s (Ondrušková 2005). Therefore, the focus of this empirical investigation is the interpretation of national identity and the process of European integration within the lower level of secondary education (ages 11-15).

Although the approach adopted here combines insights of a number of theoretical frameworks into one analytical model, the research remains to a large extent inductive in its nature. Rather than seeking to confirm or to develop a specific hypothesis, I explore, identify and analyse current tendencies within 'a real-life context' (Yin 2009: 2) with the help of abductive inference (discussed in more detail in chapter 2.3). In applying this, an examination of curricula and textbooks for history education, geography and civics, alongside the views of teachers and students will be conducted. Out of practical necessity (lack of personal contacts and linguistic limitations), members of national minorities in Slovakia, which according to official statistics constitute around 12% of the citizens of Slovakia, are underrepresented among the research participants within both groups (SODB 2012).¹³ Consequently, their views could not be explored systematically. Equally, only textbooks published in Slovak language are considered in this research.¹⁴

The research was not based on a conviction that the curricula or textbooks would adopt a rigorous conceptual framework about the questions of national identity and European integration, and it was expected that the views of teachers and students would be rather fluid and imprecise. Nevertheless, the underlying assumption has been that a relationship exists between attitudes that are expressed on such issues – both in written and verbal forms – and the theories about NI and EI that have been developed in the academic literature.

A further fundamental assumption of the research is that the positions towards these issues as transmitted in the formal curriculum in textbooks and through the teaching and learning processes are anticipated to have some significance in fostering particular attitudes amongst students. It thus makes a difference to the impact of the European dimension in education whether the perspectives on Slovak national identity and European integration tend to be particularly influenced by specific theoretical interpretations.

¹³ See chapters 3.2.1 and 3.3.1 respectively for precise details on the nationality of interviewees within both groups. For detailed statistics related to national minorities in Slovakia, see p.213 and Footnotes 158 and 159.

¹⁴ According to the Education Law (EL 2008) schools of national minorities are obliged to use translated versions of the centrally authorised textbooks published in Slovak language. Please refer to chapter 2.3 for details on sources and methods of data collection including regulations of textbook production in Slovakia.

Anchored in the conceptual influences of Grillparzer and Renan, a double-structured analytical framework has therefore been used for the empirical analysis. This draws on the insights of the scholarship of nationalism and European integration. In terms of the interpretation of national identity, primordialism, constructivism and ethno-symbolism are considered. In regard to EI the analytical model builds on approaches summarised in this thesis under the umbrella terms of supranationalism and intergovernmentalism. What then are the conceptual lines along which the understanding of both NI and EI are constituted in Slovakia's lower secondary education? Is national identity conceived of more as given, unique and immutable (primordialism), socially constructed and rather modern (constructivism) or instrumentalist and continuous (ethno-symbolism)? Does European integration, tend to be viewed and endorsed as a vehicle of the post-national transformation of Europe (supranationalism)? Or is it rather understood as a tool of interstate co-operation utilised by EU member states within clearly defined areas of national interest (intergovernmentalism)? These are the key questions that will be examined in the empirical research.

Drawing on the findings, the thesis will then evaluate the extent to which lower secondary education in Slovakia promotes the idea of a post-national Europe or whether, by contrast, it reinforces a nationalist approach and therefore takes an instrumental outlook on European integration. Conclusions will also be drawn in relation to the implications for further research and educational practice within and beyond the boundaries of Slovakia. In order to show the original contribution of this thesis, the next chapter begins with a discussion on previous academic research.

1.4 Previous research and original contribution to knowledge

As already indicated, this dissertation draws on multidisciplinary insights within social sciences in relation to the examined research questions. In the context of European studies, it might be optimally located within two debates: nationalism and its impact on EI and the European dimension of education. Considering the multiple cross-cutting themes pertaining to this thesis and the increasingly vast academic focus in this area, the literature review given below does not claim to be exhaustive and complete. Nevertheless, I will attempt to provide a meaningful overview of research areas drawn upon. I begin my discussion on previous research with a general review related to both fields and turn later to the discussion on interrelated studies conducted in Slovakia.

In spite of gradually becoming an important area of academic inquiry after the Second World War, nationalism as a force impacting on EI did not gain much attention until the negative public response towards the Maastricht Treaty (Hoffmann 1966; Deflem and

Pamel 1996). Within the multidisciplinary field of European studies, nationalism and its influence on EI remains a contentious and inconclusive topic. In relation to public attitudes towards the EI and EU, nationalism has been explored almost exclusively in the context of a debate on European identity (Herrmann *et al.* 2004; Duchesne 2008; Checkel and Katzenstein 2009; Agirdag *et al.* 2012; Serricchio 2013 *et al.*). National affiliation is seen either as a primary and persistent category of personal identification with the potential to shape resistance towards deepening of EI (Carey 2002; McLarren 2002; Hooghe and Marks 2004; Guibernau 2011). Others have emphasised the changing and multilayered character of personal identity and its intersectional dependency on diverse variables, such as country of origin, age, gender, socio-economic and educational background, the strength and nature of national attachment (exclusive, inclusive, civic, ethnic) (Medrano 2003; Citrin and Sides 2004; Meinhof 2004; Hooghe and Marks 2005; Serricchio *et al.* 2013).

The second area of European studies which frames this dissertation is the role of education in EI known as the aforementioned European dimension in education. As in the case of the first background theme, EDE is also an ever expanding field of academic research. As Philippou (2005)¹⁵ argued, it has been a controversial topic since its inception. There are a number of examinations related to the criticism of EDE and its potentially elitist, selective and Eurocentric character (Tulasiewicz 1993; Sultana 1995; Hansen 1998). In addition, the negative judgments related to the lack of clarity on what constitutes EDE and the inconsistencies and slow pace in its application within the EU emerges frequently in the relevant associated literature (Ryba 1992; Philippou 2005; Savvides 2008; Bombardelli 2009; Faas 2011a; Faas 2011b).

On the other hand, there are also more positive assessments. A number of scholars have emphasised the pedagogic and also antinationalist potential of EDE (Janne 1973; Philippou 2005, 2007). Despite the remaining challenges, the EDE discussion has provided meaningful insights in relation to its curricular location (subjects or cross-cutting themes) and thematic suggestions: conceptualisation of Europe, European identity, enhancing awareness of the integration process or the inclusion of universal values combined with the concept of cultural diversity within Europe (Ryba 1992; Adams and Tulasiewicz 1995; Barthélémy 1997 *et al.*; Philippou 2005; Faas 2011b). Attention has also been paid to EDE in relation to teacher training (Leclercq 1997; Convery and Kerr 2005; Bombardelli 2009; Zuljan and Vogrinc 2011) and good practices alongside comparisons of cross-countries implementation of EDE (Ryba 1992; Hinderliter Ortloff 2005; Savvides 2008; Philippou *et al.* 2009; Faas 2011a, 2011b). Equally, student attitudes towards Europe and their European identity have been also explored in the

¹⁵ Philippou (2005) provides a very useful overview on EDE research conducted (mostly) in the UK.

context of EDE (Convery *et al.* 1997). In relation to the understanding of national identity, the EDE literature continues to acknowledge the significance of ethnocentrism in education within the boundaries of the EU (Philipou 2005; Faas 2011b).

In addition to the field of EDE, this dissertation is also related to a wider body of educational research, particularly that of curricula and textbook analysis. There are numerous studies examining the presentation of national history in both. While acknowledging a distinct shift from uncritical glorification to a more sober evaluation, available research conducted within a number of countries indicates that the ethnocentric focus of curricula and textbooks has yet to be meaningfully challenged (Furrer 2004; Maier 2004; van der Leeuw-Roord 2004; EUROCLIO 2006; Janmaat 2007; Fass 2011a, 2011b). A number of scholars have focused on the inclusion of EDE in history teaching and its impact on the transformation of the perception of Europe, nation-states, collective identities and citizenship (Schissler and Soysal 2005; Cajani and Ross 2007; Langner 2009). This has been also examined across various member states: Cyprus (Philippou 2005, 2007), Greece (Faas 2011a, 2011b), Italy (Bombardelli 1995), UK (Millat 1993, Faas 2011b), Germany (von Geyr *et al.* 2007; Faas 2011b).

In Slovakia, the relevant research in the context of this thesis might also be found across a number of disciplines of social science: historiography, sociology, psychology, political science or broader educational research. According to Láštiová (2009) studies examining the relationship between national and European identity remain modest in Slovakia. A number of academics have emphasised and presented the role of national affiliation in the integration process in an affirmative fashion. Accordingly, NI is viewed as an historical, profound group or personal attachment which preconditions the development of European belonging and successful participation in the development of EI. At the same time, they also highlight the need for collective identity within Europe beyond rationalist calculations of socio-economic advantages (Briška 2002; Gbúrová 2002, 2005; Gbúrová *et al.* 2009; Kazanský 2002; Šmihula 2002; Hajko 2005; Leška 2008).

On the other hand, indications pointing towards the restrictive potential of national consciousness in regard to support for deepening EI in Slovakia have been highlighted by others. Although Auer's study (2010) did not focus on Slovakia only, it drew attention to the relationship between deepening EI and the rise of populism, ethnocentric and identity politics and public resistance within the EU including the new MS (since 2004).¹⁶ Macháček's (2012) article elaborated on the results of the International Civic and Citizenship Education Study (ICCS 2009) which explored the attitudes of young students

¹⁶ Please refer to Annex 1, p.253 for the new MS (NMS-12).

(age 14) towards an eventual transformation of the nation-state structure within Europe. Results of the ICCS study suggest a causal link between NI and the opposition of young EU citizens in Slovakia towards a deepening of political integration. On the other hand, a number of studies conducted before and after the outbreak of the economic and financial crisis within the EU (2008) attest overwhelmingly positive attitudes towards the EI and EU among the younger generation in Slovakia (Velšic 1999; Bunčák and Piscová 2000; Macháček 2004a, 2004b, 2012).

As previously outlined (1.3), a conceptual discussion of the European dimension in education has been conducted in Slovakia since the early 1990s. A multidisciplinary and an inclusive approach emphasising the incorporation of universal values and maintenance of a balance between national, European and global aspects has been advocated in the relevant literature (Matúšová 1998, 2000, 2008; Ondrušková 2001; Manniová 2003). Discussion of the implementation of EDE within specific subjects has been conducted by scholars of didactics in history (Cangár 1994; Alberty 2007), geography (Drgoňa and Kramáreková 1998; Likavský 2000; Nogová 2000; Čižmárová 2002) and also in civics (Ondrušková 2005, 2008). A recent study of the Slovak National Centre for Human Rights (SNCHR 2011) evaluated the incorporation of EDE at the upper secondary level in a highly optimistic fashion. A number of authors paid attention to the presentation of Slovak national history in history textbooks (Kratochvíl 1997, 2005, 2012; Kmeť 2005; Findor 2009, 2011; Otčenášová 2012).

I am not aware of any specific studies that examine conceptual foundations and utilise a comparable double-structured analytical model as developed in this thesis.¹⁷ Therefore, the original contribution of the research presented here cuts across the lines of the background themes discussed above. Through the country specific focus, it constitutes an original addition to knowledge on the implementation of EDE within the European Union. Relying on an application of the insights of the scholarship of nationalism and European studies, it develops a practical analytical tool for the examination of two closely interrelated aspects: the nature of NI and EI. The case study approach focusing on a single country and a particular level of education facilitates in depth engagement with the research questions. On the other hand, the more inductive, explorative nature of the applied method leads to findings which are derived from a limited set of data. Therefore, conclusions of this research do not provide a suitable basis for a substantial generalisation and their validity and significance remains limited to one member state of the EU. However, the analytical framework utilised here seems appropriate for wider

¹⁷ In the 1990s, the Slovak psychologist Bačová (1999) examined the understanding of NI among academics (university teachers, researchers) by drawing on the insights of scholarship of nationalism (primordialism and instrumentalism). A more detailed discussion on the relevant concepts of the scholarship of nationalism is presented in the chapter 2.2.1 of this thesis.

research. On this basis, I hope that the innovative application of the insights of the scholarship of nationalism and EI could be of interest to educational researchers and practitioners within the boundaries of the EU and beyond. More importantly now, the next chapter explains how the study presented here is organised.

1.5 Dissertation structure

The research presentation is structured into three separate parts which are further divided into several chapters. **Part II: Methodology**, consists of three chapters which aim to outline the methodological approach underlying this thesis. The first chapter starts with the empirical context setting of Slovakia as a case study. In so doing, it seeks to help the reader to comprehend the later empirical analysis by introducing a concise overview of Slovakia's history, its path towards EU membership and priorities, as well as public attitudes. In addition, attention is also paid to a broader educational context, namely the transformation process after 1989 and the current schooling system and structure. The second chapter focuses on the development of the double-structured analytical model for the empirical examination. Firstly, the aspect of the nature of NI is addressed through a discussion of the three central theorems of scholarship of nationalism known under the umbrella terms of primordialism, constructivism and ethno-symbolism. Secondly, the EI dimension of the analytical framework is dealt with by introducing the concepts of supranationalism and intergovernmentalism. The last chapter of the methodological part discusses in detail the research design in terms of the approach taken, primary sources and methods applied for data collection and analysis.

Part III: Analysis, subdivided into seven chapters, will present the examination of both the conceptualisation of the nature of nations and European integration in all primary sources: curriculum, textbooks, teachers' and students' views. The last, **Part IV: Conclusions**, includes two chapters. The first begins with a recapitulation of the objectives, context and approach taken in this thesis before it highlights the main findings and answers the articulated research questions. The second chapter re-emphasises the original contribution of this investigation before concentrating on the implications of its conclusions in terms of further research avenues and suggestions for application of the findings in educational practice within the boundaries of Slovakia and beyond.

PART II: METHODOLOGY

2.1 The empirical context setting: the historical, EI and educational aspects

Introduction

The empirical element of this thesis is set against a background of Slovakia's national history, more recent socio-political developments and the country's educational culture and practices, which are all inextricably locked in a correlative relationship (Green 1997; Kosova and Porubsky 2011). Therefore this chapter aims to provide a frame of reference which will facilitate the understanding of these intersections in the Slovakian context and of the analysis presented in Part III. It begins with a concise introduction to Slovakia's history. This is followed by a discussion of its integration process, contemporary EU membership and public attitudes towards this. The chapter concludes by highlighting the central aspects of the transformation in Slovakia's educational system after 1989 and its contemporary structure.

Slovakia: a brief historical context

Established in January 1993, the Slovak Republic is a young state. Nevertheless, the origins of its national past are traced in various Slovak historiographical accounts over many centuries. In spite of differences in emphasis, these are all linked to the arrival of Slavs in the Carpathian Basin, dated back to the fifth century, and their first political formations in central Europe as Samo's realm (ca. 620-658) and Great Moravia (833-906/7).¹⁸ Following the disintegration of Great Moravia in the early tenth century, the territory of contemporary Slovakia was incorporated into the evolving Hungarian Kingdom¹⁹, which in turn became an integral component of the Habsburg Monarchy in 1526 (Caplovic 2000; Cicaj 2000).

¹⁸ The interpretation of the origins of national history remains a controversial issue in Slovakia's historiography. This also applies to the history of Samo's realm and Great Moravia. A number of Slovakia's historians attach great significance to these early medieval political organisations in central Europe and interpret their existence from a notably national viewpoint as historically the first forms of Slovak statehood (Marsina and Mulik 2009). Others adopt a more differentiated perspective and highlight the cultural heterogeneity of the territory where these first formations were established (Koziak 1998; Stefanovicova 2000; Caplovic 2000; Kovac 2011a). Samo's realm, named after Samo (died in 658), a Frankish merchant under whose leadership Slavic tribes successfully revolted against the supremacy of the neighbouring Avars, is associated with parts of contemporary Slovakia, Czech Republic, Austria and Slovenia. The core areas of Great Moravia, which some historians in Slovakia prefer to call the 'Old Slovak Realm or Kingdom' and its inhabitants the 'Old Slovaks', are also linked to present-day Slovakia and Czech Republic. According to a number of historiographical accounts, the realm of Great Moravia included also parts of contemporary Austria, Hungary, Croatia, Slovenia, Serbia, Poland, Germany and Ukraine (Koziak 1998; Stefanovicova 2000; Caplovic 2000; Cicaj 2000).

¹⁹In order to differentiate clearly between the Hungarian Kingdom (*Uhorsko* in Slovak) and its linguistically distinct peoples, the term Hungarian will be used in this thesis as a reference to the state formation. The term Magyar (s) will be used for the English expression of ethnic Hungarians.

In a similar way to other parts of Europe, a Slovak national movement began to evolve from the late eighteenth century. The account of its early development during the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries reflects a history of diverse and competing ideas rooted in confessional divisions (Catholic and Protestant) and their adaptation to actual political realities. The concept of an autochthonous Slovak nation emerged alongside the notion of cultural Czechoslovakism, which regarded Czechs and Slovaks as one national entity, and the idea of Slavic unity, known under the term of Pan-Slavism. The first Slovak political programme was formulated in 1848 and restated in 1861. The maximum political demand of both of these programmes was for administrative autonomy within the Kingdom of Hungary. However, only a few points from a wide array of cultural, political and socio-economic demands were realised (Kováč 2011a, 2011b; Haraksim 2011).

The rising nationalist fervour of the nineteenth century within the linguistically diverse Habsburg Monarchy, politically dominated by German- and Magyar-speaking political and cultural circles, facilitated gradually increased cultural and political co-operation between Czech and Slovak national activists. This eventually resulted in the creation of Czechoslovakia in 1918 at the end of First World War. Rooted in the notion of political Czechoslovakism, this was the establishment of a democratic state of two culturally distinct peoples, who were nevertheless considered sufficiently united to allow the formation of a single political entity (Kováč 2011a, 2011b; Krajčovičová 2011).²⁰

In spite of some critical evaluations of the nationalities and economic policies of the multinational interwar Czechoslovakia (1918-1939), its disintegration in March 1939 is associated primarily in the relevant literature with the expansionist politics of Nazi Germany.²¹ The Munich Agreement (September 1938) and its concomitant, the Vienna Arbitration (November 1938) initiated by Nazi Germany and endorsed by France, Italy and the UK, constituted its prelude and resulted in a forced transfer of parts of Czechoslovak territory to Germany, Hungary and Poland (30% in total).²² Following an

²⁰The concept of political Czechoslovakism in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century is linked mainly to Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk (1850-1937), former Professor at Prague University and later First President of Czechoslovakia (1918-1935). Being an intellectual construct of a specific historical period, the concept is fairly hard to comprehend. However, it might be described as a state building ideology rooted in the thesis of two separate nations forming one political force (Lipták 2000a).

²¹ The national structure of interwar Czechoslovakia was composed in 1930 of 7.4 million (51.2%) Czechs, 2.3 million (15.8%) Slovaks, 3.2 million (22.3%) Germans, 700,000 (4.8%) Magyars, 550,000 (3.8%) Ruthenians-Ukrainians, 365,800 (2.4%) Jews, and 82,000 (0.6%) Poles (Burian 1971).

²²As a consequence of the Munich Agreement, the Sudetenland (in Czech lands) and the territory of the Petržalka, part of Bratislava, located on the right bank of the Danube (Slovakia), were incorporated into Nazi Germany. The Munich Agreement also provided for the satisfaction of territorial demands by Poland and Hungary. Poland incorporated Tešín (north-east in Czech lands) in October 1938. The subsequent Vienna Arbitration resulted in a further territory transfer of 10,390 square kilometres of southern Slovakia to Hungary (854,000 people including ca. 270,000 of Slovak nationality). In addition, 226 square kilometres (4,280 people) of northern Slovakia were transferred to Poland (Bystrický 2011: 165-166; History 9/4, 2012: 60-62).

ultimatum and a threat of Nazi Germany to divide the remaining Slovakia between Hungary, Poland and Germany, an 'independent' Slovak Republic was established on March 14, 1939. The Czech Lands, the western part of Czechoslovakia (Bohemia, Moravia and Silesia), was incorporated into the Third Reich (15 March 1939) as the autonomously administered 'Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia' (Hoensch 1990; Teichova 1998; Bystrický 2011).

The political independence of Slovakia was limited during the Second World War. The political structure of the war state, displaying paternalist and authoritarian features, is in comparison with other satellites of Nazi Germany (Hungary, Romania and Croatia), described as moderate (Hoensch 1965; Lipták 2000b) or as a 'porous totality' (Kamenec 1992: 77).²³ The majority of the Slovak population was not exposed to any significant persecution or hardship for a considerable duration of the war, although the discriminatory treatment and deportation of Jews from Slovakia into the Nazi extermination camps remains a lasting moral burden of this historical period (Kamenec 1991; Lipták 2000b).

The geopolitical interests of the War Allies (UK, US and USSR) were conducive to the efforts of exiled Czecho-Slovak politicians and the domestic opposition, leading to the re-establishment of pre-war Czechoslovakia in April 1945.²⁴ At the same time, political agreements by the War coalition also facilitated the installation of a Soviet sphere of influence in Central and Eastern Europe. This in turn aided the formation of undemocratic communist regimes (February 1948 in Czechoslovakia) lasting until 1989 in this area. Shortly after the collapse of Communism in the region, the "Velvet Divorce" of Czechoslovakia followed.

Multiple reasons have been discussed to explain the break-up of Czechoslovakia: the revival of repressed nationalist sentiment in Eastern and Central Europe after 1989; Slovak nationalism; Czech economic nationalism; the absence of a Czechoslovakian identity; socio-economic and cultural differences within Czechoslovakia; its constitutional structure and discrepancies in political leverage. Others have highlighted the primacy of mismanaged negotiations and undemocratic decision-making among the political leadership of Czechs and Slovaks during this period. Without any public consultation such as a referendum, a political agreement between the winners of the last common election (June 1992), the Civic Democratic Party (Občanská Demokratická Strana,

²³ Parliamentary democracy ceased to exist as all political parties 'merged'. Nevertheless, a violent persecution of political opponents (long-term imprisonments or executions) did not occur in the aftermath of March 1939. In the context of 'porous totality', 'typical Slovak traditions' of nepotism and corruption are highlighted in the historiography. (Lipták 2000b; Rychlík 2005; Bystrický 2011).

²⁴ The pre-war Czechoslovakia was restored with the exception of Ruthenia which became incorporated into the Soviet Union (Kováč 1998).

ODS) under the leadership of Václav Klaus (Czech lands: 33% of votes) and the Movement for a Democratic Slovakia (Hnutie za demokratické Slovensko, HZDS) led by Vladimír Mečiar (Slovakia: 37% of votes), led to the establishment of two independent states in January 1993 (Rychlík 1998; Lipták 2000c; Innes 2001; Srb and Veselý 2004; Štefanský 2011).

The EI aspects

The political dimension

The government of the newly established Slovak Republic led by Mečiar progressed with the efforts of the post 1989 Czechoslovakia to achieve EU membership, widely regarded as a guarantee of Slovakia's future political and socio-economic stability and progress. The European Agreement between Slovakia and the EU was signed in 1993 and, based on a wider political consensus, integration remained a priority of Slovak foreign policy during the pre-accession period. However, based on the report of the European Commission monitoring the compliance of candidate countries with the pre-accession criteria agreed at the EU summit in Copenhagen in June 1993 (adoption of EU rules, the *acquis communautaire*, political commitments to democracy and free market economy), Slovakia was excluded from the first group of candidate countries (Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Poland and Slovenia) in July 1997 on political grounds (Duleba and Lukáč 2004; Malová *et al.* 2005; Henderson 2008).

The lack of a genuine adherence to the rule of democracy, the shortcomings in the political culture and the nationalist populism of the government coalition under the leadership of Mečiar (1992-1998)²⁵ led to international criticism (by both the EU and the US) of political developments in Slovakia after 1993.²⁶ Moreover, the non-transparent privatisation of Slovak economic assets, relying on nepotism and preferential treatment of domestic investors with close links to the Slovak government rather than international capital, contributed eventually to the EU verdict. Following a change of government at the September 1998 election (84% participation), the deadlocked position of Slovakia changed and the pre-accession negotiations were concluded in December 2002 after

²⁵ Mečiar actually lost parliamentary majority in March 1993 but his government became dysfunctional one year later in 1994. A new cabinet was formed between March-September 1994 under Jozef Moravčík. By gaining 35% of the votes cast in the election of September 1994, Mečiar formed a coalition with the nationalist Slovak National party (5.4%) and the leftist Association of Slovakia's Workers (7.3%) in December 1994 (Lipták 2000c: 289).

²⁶ The government coalition deprived the opposition of democratic control by placing its own candidates into political and economic control institutions: all 11 parliamentary committees, the executive board of Slovak Television and Radio, the Highest Control Institution (responsible for monitoring of economic and budgetary compliance of state institutions as well as the management of Slovakia's state assets) and the institution responsible for privatisation, the Fund of public assets of Slovak Republic (Malová *et al.* 2005: 38-39; Weiss 2009 [1995]: 29).

another parliamentary election. Participating in the historically largest enlargement (ten countries), Slovakia became an EU member in May 2004 (Haughton and Malová 2004; Malová *et al.* 2005).²⁷

The unequal relationship between the EU and the candidate countries, further reinforced in Slovakia's case through the political developments in the period of 1993-1998, imposed upon the country the passive role of 'follower' until 2004. It did not provide for pro-active participation or any substantial articulation of national preferences during the pre-accession period (Haughton and Malová 2004; Malová *et al.* 2005). Nevertheless, the eventual accession in May 2004 has been overwhelmingly evaluated positively in Slovak academic and political circles (Alner 2003; Malová *et al.* 2005; Bútorá 2007; Láštík 2007; Weiss 2009 [2004]). Some authors even describe Slovakia's accession in superlatives such as an 'inspirational' and 'virtuous' achievement (Valášek *et al.* 2010: 21; Nič 2010: 137-138).²⁸ The EU accession, followed by entry to the Schengen area in 2007, the adoption of the common currency in 2009 and the end of the restriction on Slovakia's citizens to free access to the EU labour market in 2011, are considered by some as the completion of the most significant political project for Slovakia since 1993 (Valášek *et al.* 2010; Bilčík 2012).

There seems to have been a consensus among Slovakia's political analysts on the need for an active approach towards Slovakia's EU relationship after 2004. They have argued in favour of a policy anchored in an activist and values-based foundation, conceived of as a concept of 'international responsibility' (Duleba and Lukáč 2004: 108-110). Consequently, active participation and contribution to regional and global political stability enhancing socio-economic prosperity has been emphasised as the optimal instrument in serving Slovakia's national interests (Duleba and Lukáč 2004; Valášek *et al.* 2010). This is also reflected in the recent documentations of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which changed its name in 2012 to the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs (MFEA) in order to emphasise the domestication of EI-related issues and reinforce their centrality and significance for Slovak national interests (SMZV-SR; AR 2013).

Nevertheless, some commentators have emphasised shortcomings in the practical application of the activist and values-based concept. While acknowledging the impact of Slovakia's specific conditions (transition, pre-accession situation, limits of human resources and expertise), they highlight the poor quality of the political debate on European themes. The marginal attention paid to issues concerning the nature of EI, its

²⁷ Please refer to Annex 1, p.253 for the new member states (NMS-10) which joined in 2004.

²⁸ In this context they highlight a number of undisputable historical facts: the absence of a significant historical tradition of independent policy making before 1989, serious socio-economic problems after 1989 and the political shortcomings under Mečiar's leadership (Valášek *et al.* 2010: 21; Nič 2010: 137-138).

objectives and finality in the period before and after 2004 has been stressed. The shameless political pragmatism concentrating on the benefits of access to EU funding together with the inconsistencies and lack of a clearly defined agenda or assertiveness of Slovakia's political representatives were also targeted by the critics. Accordingly, these factors do not favour the enforcement of Slovakia's position and interests at the EU level (Láštic 2007; Bilčík and Világi 2007; Bilčík 2012, 2010; Haughton and Bilčík 2012).

Without ignoring the existing deficiencies, other analysts identified some positive aspects and acknowledge an incremental crystallisation of Slovakia's EU priorities. Highlighting the volatility within the political spectrum of Slovakia and the weak civic culture which prevents the establishment of a solid infrastructure of interest group formation and mediation of their various objectives, Rybář (2011) emphasised the relative autonomy of non-political members of the Slovak state administration engaged in negotiations at the EU level. As he argued, their personal value orientation is a factor which positively influences Slovakia's approach to EU membership.

Being an open market economy and part of the eurozone with strong economic ties towards the western core of the EU (particularly to Germany), recent government policy documentation and political rhetoric also demonstrate Slovakia's interests in strengthening the stability of the common currency, including some signals for a greater harmonisation of budgetary policies (Rybář 2011; PV 2012; Draxler 2012).²⁹ Support for further enlargement of the EU is emphasised, particularly in relation to the Western Balkans and Turkey,³⁰ alongside engagement within the EU Neighbourhood policy specifically in regard to the Eastern Partnership.³¹ Slovakia's EU interests also concern the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), together with regional and cohesion policies as critical instruments in reducing socio-economic disparities within the EU. Other Slovakian priorities are in the area of energy policies alongside broadly defined support for the effective functioning of EU institutions and enhanced democratisation. In terms of a domestic dimension of Slovakia's EU prerogatives, the critical point is improving the mechanism of EU policy coordination (SMZV-SR; PV 2012; AR 2013).

²⁹ Slovakia's shifting position in EU strategy might be identified for example in relation to the issues of direct taxation and social policies. Having introduced a flat tax rate in 2004, Slovakia was opposed to harmonisation in these policies (Haughton and Malová 2004). Due to the re-introduction of progressive taxation (January 2013) following the latest election in March 2012, it seems, Slovakia's position might show a greater space for compromise in this context (PV 2012; Draxler 2012).

³⁰ The inconsistencies in Slovakia's EU approach are also manifested in relation to the issue of Turkey's accession. Contrary to the endorsement of Turkey's accession in a recent governmental document (SMZV-SR: 9), Slovakia's position was rather 'cautious and reserved' (Láštic 2007: 16) in this respect without any definite position taken in the period of 2004-2006.

³¹ The EU policy of Eastern Partnership currently focuses on: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine. However, given Slovakia's geographic location, the Slovak government put particular emphasis on Ukraine and Moldova (SMZV-SR; AR 2013).

Staunch euroscepticism rooted in a 'principled opposition to the EU and European integration' (Taggart and Szczerbiak 2008: 7) was not a defining feature of the pre-accession period (Lešková 2006; Henderson 2008). Nevertheless, a gradual diversification of political positions has been taking place in Slovakia since 2004 (Láštic 2007; Bilčík and Világi 2007; Gyarfášová 2011; Haughton and Bilčík 2012). As Gyarfášová argued, there appear to be two categories of euroscepticism in contemporary Slovakia. The first, a peripheral euroscepticism, typical of the parties on the far-right and their overall opposition to globalisation, might be associated with the Slovak National Party (Slovenská Národná Strana /SNS) which, following the latest election in March 2012, did not reach the parliamentary threshold of 5% (SME 2012).

Gyarfášová's second category of euroscepticism can be outlined as the political mobilisation associated with the recently established SaS party (Sloboda a Solidarita / Freedom and Solidarity). Created in 2009, the party describes itself as 'right-liberal' (SaS Website) and represents a relatively small part of Slovakia's electorate. The party's notable success in the election of 2010 (12.14% votes, SME 2010a) which secured their participation in the centre-right government as one of four coalition partners during the period of June 2010-October 2011 was not repeated in the last ballot in March 2012.³² Although the support for SaS declined significantly (5.88% votes, SME 2012), its vociferous and uncompromising criticism of the EU - directed particularly against the management of the euro crisis - attracted considerable media attention within and beyond the borders of Slovakia (Spiegel Online 2011; BBC 2011; ZDF / You Tube 2012). According to Gyarfášová, there is a particular generational aspect that constitutes the Eurosceptic capital of SaS, as the party predominantly represents the younger generation with 'rich social potential' and not the typical, less qualified strata more likely to be disadvantaged by integration (Gyarfášová 2011: 4).³³

While there is not a firmly rooted tradition of hard euroscepticism at the political level in Slovakia, the period after 2004 seem to be shaped by two main trends: incremental diversification in views and a gradual crystallisation of membership priorities. How these will impact the political debates and attitudes in regard to future developments in the EU remains to be seen. Both tendencies are embedded in a complex and dynamic web of mutually interacting internal and external factors (Bilčík and Világi 2007; Gyarfášová 2011; Haughton and Bilčík 2012).³⁴ The next section of this chapter will attempt to

³² The coalition (June 2010-October 2012) was formed by Slovak Democratic and Christian Union, Christian Democratic Union, Most-Híd (Bridge, a Slovak-Magyar Party) and Freedom and Solidarity (SaS) (SME 2010a).

³³ SaS web portal describes the party as a group of experts and entrepreneurs with a track record of successful professional achievements (SaS Website).

³⁴ The incremental diversification of political attitudes towards EI and EU was also clearly displayed in the context of the discussion on the temporary European Financial Stability Facility (EFSF) and the permanent

illuminate the position of the weakest link (with substantial political potential) among them: the Slovak public.

Public EI and EU attitudes

Studies of Slovak public views of EI suggest an ambiguous relationship. As with the formation of political positions towards the EU, constant flux, contradictions and diversification seem to be the most defining features. The widely shared notion of belonging to Europe within former communist countries, as expressed in the catchphrase of "Return to Europe" in 1989, did not transfer directly into wide public support for Slovakia's integration into the EU in the early nineties. Surveys conducted in the period of 1990-1993 revealed rather vague and passive attitudes in this respect. A change in public opinion in Slovakia towards EI coincided with the signing of the association agreement between Slovakia and the EU in October 1993. In an opinion poll conducted in autumn 1993 public attitudes indicated strong support of 87% for EU integration (Bútorá 2010: 130).

Multiple opinion polls undertaken in Slovakia by domestic agencies (FOCUS, Institute of Public Opinions) produced similar findings to those of the EU Eurobarometer surveys. Slovakia's support for EU membership was consistent in the period of 2001-2003 (58%). Only a small proportion of Slovak citizens, below 10%, strongly opposed EU membership. Although the *Candidate countries Eurobarometer* (2004: C57) recorded a drop of 12% in the spring of 2004, polls between autumn 2004 and spring 2005 conducted by Slovak agencies indicated a notable growth in positive views (between 73% and 83%) towards EU membership (IVO 2005: 20).

However, as has been suggested, the support of the Slovakian public seems to be in many respects rather 'shallow and impersonal' (Lešková 2006: 33). EI is viewed by many as a necessity, and is evaluated through a narrowly defined process of economic instrumentalism. Economic growth, financial support and an expectation of better living standards featured predominantly in public opinion before EU accession. Evidence in respect of the rather superficial relationship towards EI was provided in the referendum on Slovakia's accession to the EU (May 15-16, 2003) and in Slovakia's first and second election to the European Parliament (June 13, 2004 and June 6, 2009).

European Stability Mechanism (ESM) in the period of 2010-2011. While the then Slovak centre-right government under the leadership of Iveta Radičová (June 2010-October 2011) approved of EFSF in summer 2010, it simultaneously declined to contribute Euro 882 million (1% out of total package) towards the Greek bail-out fund. Moreover, an increase of EFSF powers eventually became a catalyst for a break-up of the Slovak government in October 2011 (SME 2010b; SME 2011). The permanent ESM was approved by Slovak Parliament in June 2012 (Pravda 2012a).

The political pre-accession developments in Slovakia during 1993-1998 contributed to a wide political endorsement of the referendum, which required 50% of eligible voters. This threshold was narrowly achieved (52.15%) and Slovakia's accession was overwhelmingly endorsed by 92.46% of votes cast (Lešková 2006: 43; Malová *et al.* 2005: 119). However, the first participation of Slovakia's citizens in the election to the EP (June 2004) was the lowest in the EU-25 (16.96%) and also historically the worst since the first election in 1979. The rate increased only slightly to 19.64% in the EP election in June 2009, but Slovakia still recorded the lowest rate of votes cast among the 27 EU members.³⁵

Weak civic participation and a lack of interest in politics were considered by some commentators as a legacy of the historical experience of the undemocratic regime before 1989 (IVO 2004; Lešková 2006; Bútorová and Gyarfášová 2010). In addition, the superficial and limited public discussion on EI matters and 'election fatigue' (Lešková 2006: 43, in the case of first EP election) have been highlighted.³⁶ Others emphasised the link between a degree of complacency and taken-for-granted attitudes arising from the fact that EU membership had now been achieved (Henderson 2008).

A number of contradictory indicators of the relationship between the EU and the public in Slovakia might also be seen in aspects of the Eurobarometer survey findings. These regularly display notable Slovakian support for a range of EU policies, including, for example, the adoption of the common currency. Despite a significant minority (ranging between 42-36%) opposing the euro, the majority of Slovaks (ranging between 50-55%) approved of replacing the national currency in the period of 2004-2006 (Flash Eurobarometer 191, 2006: 37). In 2012, the common currency was seen by 59% as a 'good thing' and by 30% as a 'bad thing' for Slovakia (Flash Eurobarometer 362, 2012: 8).³⁷

The common currency is also used in Eurobarometer surveys as a marker of European identity and affiliation with the EU. In 2006, 59% of Slovak public associated the adoption of the common currency with a strengthening of their European identity (see graph 1 below).

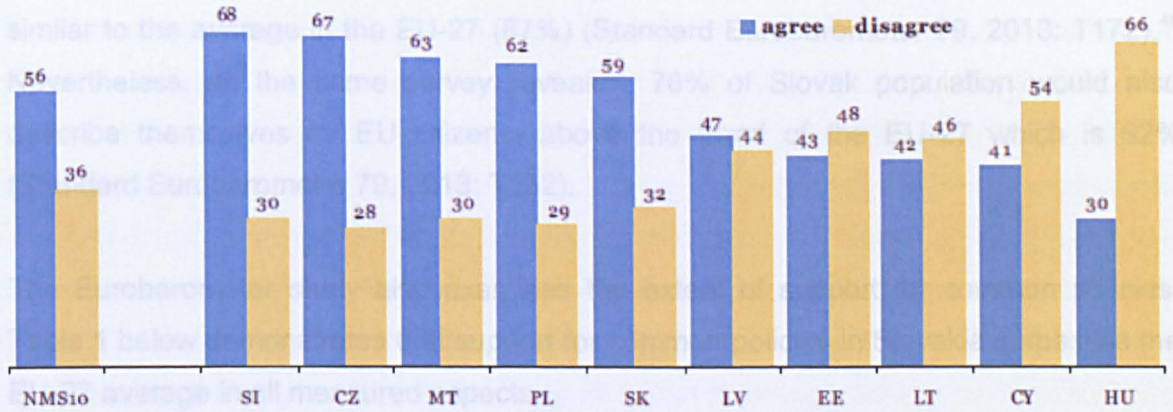
³⁵ Please refer to Annex 1, p.253 for the EU-25 and EU-27.

³⁶ The 'election fatigue' before first participation of Slovakia in EP elections is linked in the literature to a number of other pre-accession ballots which are interpreted as a demonstration of public approval of EU accession and support for the pro-reform and pro-democratic course of the country: parliamentary election in 1998, presidential election and failed candidature of Mečiar in 1999, parliamentary election in 2002 (70% participation) (Lešková 2006: 43-44; Henderson 2004).

³⁷ The remaining 11% are recorded as 'Can't decide' and 'Don't know' responses (9% and 2% respectively). (Flash Eurobarometer 362, 2012: 8).

Graph 1: Euro and European Identity (2006)

Using the euro will make people feel more European

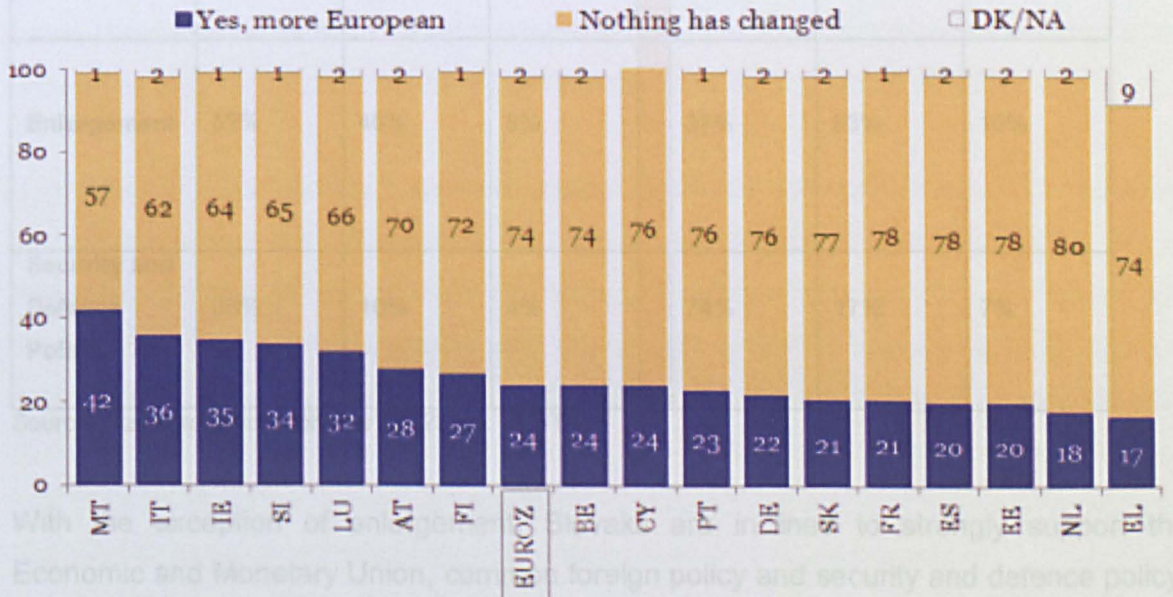


Source: Flash Eurobarometer 191-Summary (2006): 24³⁸

A more recent survey pointed to a rather different state of affairs. Flash Eurobarometer 362 (2012) showed only 21% of Slovaks feeling more European due to the adoption of the common currency. Attitudes in Slovakia do not differ in this respect from the average across all eurozone countries at 24% (see graph 2 below).

Graph 2: The Euro and European Identity (2012)

Question: Does the euro make you personally feel more European than before or would you say that your feeling of being European has not changed?



Source: Flash Eurobarometer 362 (2012)³⁹: 12

³⁸ Please refer to Annex 1, p.253 for the NMS-10.

³⁹ Please refer to Annex 1, p.253 for the eurozone (EUROZ) countries.

The euro as a marker of European identity is not the only indicator used in assessing the strength of European identity among citizens of the EU member states. National sentiments and EU affiliation are also examined through Eurobarometer. In the 'near future', 89% of Slovaks will see themselves as 'more national than European', which is similar to the average in the EU-27 (87%) (Standard Eurobarometer 79, 2013: T172).⁴⁰ Nevertheless, as the same survey revealed, 76% of Slovak population would also describe themselves as EU citizens, above the trend of the EU-27 which is 62% (Standard Eurobarometer 79, 2013: T162).

The Eurobarometer study also examines the extent of support for common policies. Table 1 below demonstrates that support for common policies in Slovakia surpasses the EU-27 average in all measured aspects.

Table 1: Support for Common Policies

| Common Policies | Slovakia | | | EU-27 | | |
|------------------------------------|----------|---------|------------|-------|---------|------------|
| | For | Against | Don't Know | For | Against | Don't Know |
| EMU and single currency | 77% | 19% | 4% | 51% | 42% | 7% |
| Common Foreign Policy | 77% | 18% | 5% | 64% | 27% | 9% |
| Enlargement | 52% | 40% | 8% | 37% | 53% | 10% |
| Security and Defence Policy | 86% | 10% | 4% | 74% | 17% | 7% |

Source: Standard Eurobarometer 79 (2013): T81-T84

With the exception of enlargement, Slovaks are inclined to strongly support the Economic and Monetary Union, common foreign policy and security and defence policy. A recent opinion poll by the German Marshall Fund of the United States (June 2012) suggests that the endorsement of these common policies is less straightforward. For instance, only 31% of Slovaks approve of financial aid for the troubled EU countries.

⁴⁰ Please refer to Annex 1, p.253 for the EU-27.

Slovak willingness to share the financial burden of mutual aid is at the lowest level among the 12 EU countries which participated in the survey (GMF 2012 cited in aktuality.sk 2012a).

The attitudes of younger Slovaks towards European integration, EU membership and European identity seem positive in various studies (Velšic 1999; Bunčák and Piscová 2000; Macháček 2004a; 2004b; 2012). Based on around 380,000 first-time voters in the September 1998 election, a post-election survey showed that this demographic was particularly opposed to the coalition of Mečiar and thus contributed significantly to the decisive change in Slovakia's integration history (Velšic 1999; Lášticová and Bianchi 2003). Lášticová (2009) on the other hand, highlighted a higher degree of differentiation in attitudes to European identity among young people (age 18-24) in Slovakia. She argued that respondents found it rather difficult to perceive of themselves as Europeans. At the same time, they seemed to view their belonging to Europe as a geographical, economic-political and cultural entity as a self-evident fact.

Nevertheless, despite the many benefits of EI (travel, study, employment opportunities), it was particularly the younger voters (aged 18-24) who showed the strongest indifference to the EP election in 2004 and 2009 (turnout 7% and 13% respectively, IVO 2004: 4; TASR 2013).⁴¹ On the other hand, a recent Eurobarometer survey on political engagement of young citizens in the EU-27 (Flash Eurobarometer 375, 2013) provided a more positive picture, indicating that, 58% of young Slovaks (age 17-30) are likely to take part in EP Election in 2014. What stimulates their likelihood to participate for 88% of these voters is the belief in democracy, and for 75% the conviction that voting is an optimal way of influencing politics (Flash Eurobarometer 375, 2013: 22-28).

The array of contradictory indicators makes it difficult to make conclusive, definitive statements about the attitudes of the Slovak public toward the EU and EI. Many indicators point to a very positive perception of, and satisfaction with, Slovakia's EU membership. They also suggest public support for a further deepening of EI. On the other hand, the low participation in EP elections demonstrated that this positive perspective does not automatically translate into active political participation. It seems that the activist, values-based approach of Slovakia's EU membership - as advocated by analysts in Slovakia - has not been fully internalised by the wider public.

Moreover, taking into account contemporary developments in the eurozone and the response of Slovakia's citizens to obligations of mutual financial aid, the ambivalent nature of their relationship towards the EU is obvious. A deeper analysis of this is

⁴¹ In 2004, the highest participation rate was among voters over the age of sixty (IVO 2004: 4).

beyond the scope of this dissertation. Nevertheless, these contradictions reveal *inter alia* the continuing significance of national identity for Slovaks and their somewhat problematic perspective on EI. Hence, together with the shifting and therefore fairly unpredictable EU attitudes of younger people, they draw a clear link between the background themes of this dissertation and the research questions being examined here.

Educational aspects: the on-going process of educational transformation

The instrumental role of education in the process of building a sense of national belonging and cultivating wider social cohesion has been described by several writers (Gellner 2006 [1983]; Green 1997). Being a part of the Habsburg Monarchy until 1918, the conditions for the building of a national education system in Slovakia allowing for instruction in the native language through all levels of education (primary, secondary and tertiary) were initially established in interwar Czechoslovakia. It was during this period that the educational infrastructure expanded significantly at all educational levels within Slovakia. A critical landmark in the development of the school system in Slovakia was the establishment of the Communist regime in Czechoslovakia in 1948. Based on the political and ideological monopoly of the Communist party, a centralised, public schooling system evolved and remained intact for over four decades. In spite of its ideological and qualitative shortcomings, the number of schools at all levels increased, as did, the educational attainment of Slovakia's population. Triggered by the profound political changes in 1989, the educational system – as with society in general - entered a process of transformation (Alberty 2002; Zelina 2005; Zápotočná and Lukšík 2010).

As in other post-communist countries, continuing educational reform is a complex process. In Slovakia, it also evolves within the space where the interests, views and tensions between three main sets of social actors, the political state representatives, professional circles (academia and teachers) and the wider public (mostly parents), meet, develop and interact. In addition, there are also a number of structural factors, both internal and external, which impact on the reconfiguration of Slovakia's educational system (Zelina 2005; Humajová 2008a; Humajová 2008b; Kosová and Porubský 2011).

One of the major internal influences has been the tradition of centralism. The historical practice of state control over educational administration, finances and teaching content was initially established in the Habsburg Monarchy at the end of the eighteenth century. This was maintained to some extent in inter-war Czechoslovakia and further reinforced under the communist regime and remained of lasting significance in Slovakia after 1993. A second firmly anchored tradition is the strong fact-based transmission model of

education. Rooted in the encyclopaedic approach of the didactic tradition of Moravian born Jan Amos Comenius (1592-1670), this continues to impact on pedagogic concepts and practices within Slovakia. A more recent factor shaping the educational system is the erosion of the idea that education should be valued for its own sake and its instrumentalisation to achieve economic purposes and outcomes (Kosová and Porubský 2011). Closely linked to this is the reduced status of the teaching profession in society and the lack of genuine political commitment aiming for systematic improvements of the educational sector. This is further exacerbated by the continuing poor provision of financial resources (Zelina 2005; Humajová 2008b; Kosová and Porubský 2011; Burjan 2011; INEKO 2011).⁴²

At the curricular level, the legacy of communism impacted strongly on the transformation of history and civics education. It was mainly through these school subjects that the Marxist ideology of economic determinism was channelled into the educational system up to 1989 and both areas were subject to profound re-evaluation resulting in significant curricular change. In the case of history education, this was closely linked to the complex process of liberalisation from past ideological distortions of Slovakia's historiography. This has been marked by an expansion of research, a growing diversification of opinions, and internal polarisation alongside heated public debate (Alberty 1991, 2002; KK 1997a, 1997b; Varinský 2002; Michela 2011; Kratochvíl 2012). Being inherently political, (Hudek 2010), the transformation of historiography has also impacted on the politicisation of history education.⁴³ According to Kratochvíl (2012), the establishment of the Slovak Republic in 1993 also encouraged nationalising tendencies in this context.⁴⁴ At the same time, he argued that the consequences of these

⁴² The average public expenditure on education in the EU-27 stands at more than 5% of GDP, and reaches 7% in some countries (Denmark, Cyprus and Iceland) or above 6% of GDP (Nordic countries, Malta, Belgium). However, Slovakia's expenditure is among the lowest at less than 4% of GDP (Eurostat 2012). According to an OECD report (2010, cited in INEKO 2011), Slovakia's public expenditure on education actually declined in the period of 1995-2007 from 4.7% to 4% of GDP. Moreover, according to an analysis of the Slovak Institute for Economic and Social Reforms (INEKO 2012: 7), the earnings of teachers in Slovakia, as compared with the salary levels of other sectors of the workforce with tertiary education, are the lowest within OECD countries. The salary of Slovakia's teachers (lower secondary level) with 15 years of working experiences reaches 44% of the average earnings of the labour force with tertiary education. For comparison, the average remuneration figure stands within OECD countries at 81% (e.g. in Germany at 97%, in Poland at 68% and in the Czech Republic at 52%).

⁴³ One example of such developments occurred in 1996. The trigger was the publication and dissemination of a chronological history of Slovakia (including comments) which was recommended by the Ministry of Education as supplementary teaching material for history in the eighth grade (age 14). The book, 'History of Slovakia and Slovaks' was written by Milan Ďurica (1925), a historian belonging to the group of so called 'emigration historians' known for a strongly ethnocentric interpretation of Slovak national history and uncritical evaluations of wartime Slovakia (1939-1945). The publication of the second edition of Ďurica's book, financed through EU funds (PHARE), was distributed to schools causing fierce professional and public debate which extended beyond Slovakia and eventually resulted in the withdrawal of the publication from schools (KK 1997b; Michela 2011).

⁴⁴ A more recent example of the politicisation of history education occurred in Slovakia in 2008 during the coalition government of Robert Fico (July 2006-July 2010) formed by SMER (Direction-Social Democracy), HZDS and SNS. On the occasion of the 15th anniversary celebrations of Slovakia's establishment, Fico demanded in his speech 'a reasonable state historicism' as the instrument of rising patriotism among the young generation and also described Svätopluk (ca.830-894), a central figure of Great Moravia as the king of 'Old Slovaks.' Justifying his terminological choice by referring to 'historians', he endorsed the application

developments for history education had been mixed (Kratochvíl 2012).⁴⁵ It seems that the curricular conceptualisation of national history after 1989 reflects the current discussions within Slovak historiography and, to some extent, corresponds with the preferences of the relevant state administration.

The school subject of civics, introduced into the educational system in interwar Czechoslovakia (1918-1939), underwent even greater transformation as a result of the ideological burden of Communism. In the initial transformation period of 1990-1993, the significance of civics declined and its teaching was further reduced in the years that followed (1993-1996). During this period, the time previously allocated to civics was partly filled by the subjects of ethics and religion (introduced in 1993).⁴⁶ As a result, civics remained at the lower secondary level as a separate school subject within grade eight (age 14) and, in some schools, also in grade nine (age 15). By the mid-1990s citizenship education regained greater attention in Slovakia, particularly under the influence of the activities of external organisations such as UNESCO and the Council of Europe. This eventually led to its curricular re-conceptualisation and an increase in lesson allocation (since September 1997) within lower secondary education (Mašek and Tykalová 2000; SEP-ISCED 2, 2011; Macháček and Šťava 2012).⁴⁷

The attempts to infuse greater ethnocentric and religious tendencies into Slovakian education after 1989 have been subjected to frequent criticism in the literature (KK 1997a; Varinský 2002; Alberty 2002; Macháček 2010; Michela 2011; Kosová and Porubský 2011; Kratochvíl 2012). Despite some positive evaluations of the democratisation and decentralisation of the educational system over the last two decades, vigorous criticism continues unabated, in particular regard to wider structural factors. This concerns a number of conceptual strategies developed after 1989 and their implementation, including the latest educational reform of 2008. These steps are criticised as fragmentary, unsystematic, slow and lacking a genuine endorsement at the

of these terms in public use and their introduction into education. A number of Slovakia's historians soon followed suit and advocated the incorporation of these terms into educational plans and history textbooks (Marsina and Mulík 2009). A fairly humorous example of the politicisation of history was also presented by Fico, on the above occasion, when he declared Juraj Jánošík (1688-1713), the 'Slovak Robin Hood', to be a role model for his coalition government (SME 2008a). Svätopluk became the cause of a later political debate in 2010 which accompanied the installation of a monument dedicated to this historical figure (SME 2010c; Michela 2011). It was also during Fico's cabinet in 2006-2010 that the latest curricular reform was prepared and overseen by the Ministry of Education lead by SNS representative, Ján Mikolaj. The preparation of the latest curriculum was marked by non-transparent practices in relation to the delegation of members of expert committees for school subjects. In the case of history this changed repeatedly and also included historians adhering to a stronger ethnocentric reading of Slovak history (HN 2008; SME 2008b; Findor 2011: 221).

⁴⁵ According to V. Kratochvíl (2012), the co-author of the contemporary history curriculum (2008) (actually replaced as the chief of the respective subject commission in January 2008) and the current director of the National Institute for Education (since May 2012), the nationalising attempts have been successfully resisted by the body.

⁴⁶ Students had the option to choose either religion or ethics (Macháček and Šťava 2012).

⁴⁷ Discussed in more detail in chapters 2.3 and 3.1.

political level (Zelina 2005; Humajová 2008a; Burjan 2011; Kosová and Porubský 2011; Zimenová and Havrilová 2011).⁴⁸

Despite the prevailing negative evaluations, directed predominantly against the state administration of education, a number of commentators are more positive about the engagement of teachers in the process of transformation, specifically in the decade after 1989. It has been argued that the teaching community enhanced and strengthened the pedagogic transformation and modernisation during this period (Humajová 2008a; Kosová and Porubský 2011; Macháček and Šřava 2012). The notably sharp criticism towards the broad array of internal, structural impediments (Humajová and Pupala 2008; Kosová and Porubský 2011; Zimenová and Havrilová 2011; INEKO 2012) contrasts with the evaluations of external influences. In this respect, the impact of EU institutions and the Council of Europe have been associated with largely positive impacts on educational transformation in Slovakia. The educational concepts and strategies developed at the EU level, including lifelong learning, active citizenship, key competencies, EDE, have been embraced by the wider pedagogic circles. They are seen as critical and effective instruments of modernisation, stimulating ongoing structural and curricular transformation of education in Slovakia (Alberty 2002; Kosová and Porubský 2011; Macháček and Šřava 2012).

The contemporary educational system at the pre-university level

The educational system of Slovakia is determined by a framework of laws and administered by the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport (henceforth Ministry of Education) as the highest educational authority. It is based on a fourfold structure of pre-primary, primary, secondary and tertiary education. Compulsory education comprises ten years and begins at the primary level at the age of six and is usually completed within schools of upper secondary education at the age of sixteen.⁴⁹ The free provision of education within state schools commences with the last year of pre-primary schooling in kindergartens (five years of age) and covers the completion of upper secondary education (age 18/19). In addition to state schools, there are also private and Church-funded schools. The Constitution of Slovakia guarantees the right of national minorities to education in their respective native languages.⁵⁰

⁴⁸ According to Zelina (2005), the multiple educational strategies designed since 1990 ('School's Soul, 1990; Project Constantin 1994; Milenium 1998-2001) achieved a minimum of substantial changes. As a key reason he identified low levels of financial provision particularly in relation to teachers' remuneration.

⁴⁹ For a comprehensive overview of the schooling system in Slovakia, please see Annex 2, p.253.

⁵⁰ The current educational systems provides for instruction in Hungarian and Ukrainian language at the levels of pre-primary up to the upper secondary level. In addition, there is also a University where Magyar is the designated language of instruction (UIPS 2012).

Following the adoption of the Education Law 245/2008 in Slovakia, the latest educational reform of the regional schooling system, which refers to the pre-primary, primary and secondary levels, and its content, the curriculum, became effective in September 2008 (EL 2008).⁵¹ The educational law of 2008 provides a comprehensive legal framework for pre-university education in Slovakia and outlines its principles, structure and objectives in a holistic manner. The most relevant innovation in the context of this thesis is the introduction of a two-dimensional Educational Programme from pre-primary to upper secondary education (EL 2008; SEP-ISCED 2, 2011) which will be discussed in more detail in a later chapter (2.3).

Summary

The objective of this chapter was to ease understanding of the empirical section of this thesis (Part III: Analysis). It will refer frequently to events of Slovakia's history including its path towards EU membership, public attitudes and aspects of its contemporary educational developments and structure. Hence, the above discussion provided a succinct overview of Slovakia's history, its accession experience and contemporary tendencies in respect of political and public views on the EU. Additionally, the chapter focused on the description of the most recent educational developments and structure in Slovakia. I will now turn to the second chapter of the methodological section of my thesis. This aims to develop a practical, analytical instrument for the empirical exploration of the conceptualisation of the nature of nations and EI in lower secondary education in Slovakia.

⁵¹ Tertiary education is regulated through a separate legal framework (MoE 2013).

2.2 Analytical framework

Introduction

This second chapter of the methodological part of this thesis introduces a double-structured analytical model which will be used for the later empirical analysis of the conceptualisation of the nature of nations and EI in Slovakia's lower secondary education. The first subchapter (2.2.1) focuses on the national dimension and presents the insights of three theorems of academic discussion of nationalism known under the umbrella terms of primordialism, constructivism and ethno-symbolism. Following a brief explanation of the rationale for the adopted conceptual choice, I will separately discuss each by providing terminological clarifications, main conceptual influences, key proponents and their respective arguments. I will also highlight criticisms of the three paradigms. In addition, a concise summary of their main aspects in regard to the nature of nations will be given and will serve as the frame of reference for the relevant empirical analysis.

The subsequent part of this chapter (2.2.2) concentrates on the second, EI dimension of the analytical model and introduces two categories of supranationalism and intergovernmentalism. Starting with a brief explanation, two separate discussions on the essential ideas of both approaches in relation to their historical roots, dynamics and relevant political actors as well as their objectives will be presented. Finally, the second subsection of this chapter concludes with a concise summary of the central features of both concepts which will be applied as a guide for the empirical examination of the interpretation of EI in lower secondary education in Slovakia.

2.2.1 The national dimension

Primordialism, constructivism and ethno-symbolism: a conceptual justification

References to three specific perspectives on the nature of nations, their central figures and arguments indicate an approach which might appear 'ruthlessly selective' (Brubaker 2009: 22). As Brubaker argued, this is, however, an inevitable step which needs to be taken when dealing with the immense scope of the ever-growing field of nationalism studies. Initially a subject of historiographical investigation (nineteenth and first half of the twentieth centuries), nationalism has attracted increasing attention among other academic disciplines (anthropology, political science, sociology, psychology) since the 1960s, in the context of decolonisation (Hutchinson and Smith 1994; Lawrence 2005). It

is this period which is associated with the 'consolidation' (Lawrence 2005: 132) of the scholarship of nationalism and with the beginning of the era of its 'classical' debate (Özkirimli 2010: 46) which is dated approximately until the end of the 1980s (Özkirimli 2010; Day and Thompson 2004). The recurrent manifestations of national sentiments and violent conflicts on a worldwide scale have continued to stimulate academic interest ever since. As a result, an enormous body of studies has emerged particularly over the last three decades. What is more, the key concepts of nationalism, nation, ethnicity and their various derivatives have extended beyond the academic sphere to become constant, unquestioned aspects of the daily, unobtrusive practices of 'banal nationalism' (Billing 1995). Hence, encouraged by the everyday application in the political discourse or in media, these terms are now deeply ingrained and taken for granted facts in the wider public consciousness.

Within the interdisciplinary field of nationalism studies, however, the situation differs significantly. Notwithstanding the many decades of ongoing discussion, widely accepted definitions have yet to be uncovered. Hence, an abundance of propositions, disagreements, ambiguities, inconsistencies, or in the words of Walker Connor, the renowned US scholar on nationalism, 'terminological chaos' (Connor 1994 [1978]: 91) have become its defining feature (Banks 1996: 1-5; Tishkov 2000; Lawrence 2005: 1-16). This also applies to the categorisation of approaches adopted in the scholarship of nationalism. Consequently, the terminological and paradigmatic variety constitutes a considerable challenge for its students. However, this does not dictate a complete absence of valuable insights in respect of the complex phenomenon of nationalism.

In spite of the lack of unanimity regarding the essential concepts and the research methodology, the tripartite division of primordialism, constructivism and ethno-symbolism has become a widely known and frequently applied indication of academic positioning within the scholarship of nationalism (Tishkov 1997; Bačová 1999; Day and Thompson 2004; Özkirimli, 2010; Smith 2010). What is more, ideas subsumed under the selected approaches constitute the foundation upon which even more recent debates are built or attempt to distance themselves from (Day and Thompson 2004; Lawrence 2005; Brubaker 2009; Smith 2010; Özkirimli 2010).⁵² More importantly, these perspectives seem optimally suited to the objective of this dissertation as they correlate directly with the conceptual influence of Grillparzer's and Renan's views and meaningfully address the issue of the nature of nations. Hence, they adequately serve my research objectives.

⁵² A meaningful discussion of these new approaches is beyond the scope of this chapter. An introductory debate and evaluations might be found in Lawrence (2005: Chapter 5) and Özkirimli (2010: Chapter 6).

Primordialism

Conceptual clarification

Primordialism, derived from the Latin *primordius* (original), from *primus* (first) and *ordiri* (begin) (Online Oxford Dictionaries), is an umbrella term capturing the notion of nations being timeless, essentially distinctive and immutable subcategories of humanity. There are few contemporary academics who seem to adhere to such ideas and primordialism is not considered a dominant perspective within the current scholarship of nationalism (Brubaker 2009: 28; Özkirimli 2010: 67-70).⁵³ Instead, it is seen as an historical approach which is consistent with the widely held non-academic perceptions of nations as given, self-evident facts (Özkirimli 2010: 49; Smith 2010: 55-58).

Primordialism, described also as essentialism (Bačová 1999), entered the interdisciplinary discussion of nationalism through the scholarship of anthropology and sociology. Works of the US sociologist Edward Shils (1910-1995) and the US anthropologist Clifford Geertz (1926-2006) are seen as central in highlighting the supposedly given foundation of national affiliations. As they both emphasised, the perceptions of the given nature of nations is derived from assumptions of a common descent which is determined biologically through birth. It is this very existential reality of blood ties which gives rise to the notions of a common ancestry and strong emotional attachments and loyalties to a geographically delineated community and further beliefs of the uniqueness of commonly shared attributes such as language, traditions, history or a collective character (Shils 1957, 1975; Geertz 2000 [1973], Bulmer 2001; Özkirimli 2010: Chapter 3; Smith 2010: 55-58).

Drawing the ideational roots of primordial ties back to the Greek philosopher Aristotle (384-322 BC) and his emphasis on territoriality as an aspect of group affiliation and to related ideas in the work of the German sociologist Ferdinand Tönnies (1855-1936), Shils stressed the social significance of primordial bonds which he described as

an attachment to a person by virtue of particularistic existential connections, such as biological tie of kinship or an enduring sexual connection, or the sharing of a common location on the earth's surface, is a primordial attachment. [...] Kinship, ethnic identity, and nationality all have their roots in these primordial reactions (Shils 1975 [1961]: 20).

⁵³ Özkirimli (2010: 67-70) refers in this context to Steven Grosby (2005a, 2005b) and Aviel Roshwald (2006).

Shils interpreted the quality of primordial ties in a functionalist sense as an auxiliary instrument of social cohesion. As he argued, in addition to personal, sacred and civil attachments they remain a relevant social force even in modern societies due to their 'integrative' capacity (Shils 1957: 131) which positively shape intra-group behaviour (Shils 1957, 1975 [1961]).⁵⁴ In a similar vein and focusing specifically on the formation of new states in Asia and Africa following decolonisation after the Second World War, Clifford Geertz highlighted the intensity of primordial affiliations:

By a primordial attachment is meant one that stems from the "givens"- or, more precisely, as culture is inevitably involved in such matters, the assumed "givens"- of social existence: immediate contiguity and kin connection mainly, but beyond them the givenness that stems from being born into a particular religious community, speaking a particular language, or even a dialect of a language, and following particular social practices. These congruities of blood, speech, custom, and so on, are seen to have an ineffable, and at times overpowering, coerciveness in and of themselves. One is bound to one's kinsman, one's neighbour, one's fellow believer, ipso facto, as the result not merely of personal affection, practical necessity, common interest, or incurred obligation, but at least in great part by virtue of some unaccountable absolute import attributed to the very tie itself (Geertz 2000 [1973]: 259).

Despite cross-country variations and differences in the strength of primordial attachments, Geertz emphasised, contrary to Shils, the potentially conflicting character of their socio-political impact and regarded their transformation into civil ties as a highly complex task. Pointing towards South-East Asia and North Africa he argued persuasively:

Civil discontent finds its natural outlet in the seizing, legally or illegally, of the state apparatus. Primordial discontent strives more deeply and is satisfied less easily. If severe enough, it wants not just Sukarno's or Nehru's or Moulay Hasan's head, it wants Indonesia's or India's or Morocco's (Geertz 2000 [1973]: 261).

Primordialism and its socio-political consequences have become a frequent and inconclusive topic of contemporary academic discussion (Özkirimli 2010; Malešević 2011). On the other hand, ideas of nations being given and unique entities antedates the academic interest of the last two centuries. Comparisons of peculiarities in terms of physical appearance, socio-cultural traditions or a collective character might be traced to the antique accounts of the Greek historians Herodotus (ca. 484-425 B.C.) or Polybius (ca. 203-121 B.C.).⁵⁵ However, related observations as a subject of scholarly enquiry gained in significance much later. The age of geographical discoveries between the mid-

⁵⁴ As Shils argued, it was Tönnies who first highlighted the social impact of primordial, personal, sacred and civil attachments (Shils 1975 [1961]: 32).

⁵⁵ For example Polybius argued: 'We mortals have an irresistible tendency to yield to climatic influence: and to this cause, and no other, may be traced the great distinctions which prevail among us in character, physical formation and complexion, as well as our habits, varying according to ethnea [pl. of *ethnos*-people, folk] or to separation in space' (cited in Huxley and Haddon 1935: 31-32).

fifteenth and eighteenth centuries resulted not only in the rising awareness of the existence of manifold cultural traditions and peoples unknown in Europe prior to the fifteenth century. The increasing confidence in human capacity together with the Age of Enlightenment (seventeenth and eighteenth centuries) and the advances in scholarship, including philosophy, history and the evolving field of anthropology, were all stimuli for the primordial concept of national identity (Vermuelen 1995; Özkirimli 2010: Chapter 2).

There are multiple ideational sources which are taken into account in academic discussions on the origins of nationalism. The self-determination concept of Immanuel Kant (1724-1804), the acclaimed philosopher from Königsberg in Prussia, freeing individuals from their dependency on God by endowing them with free will and autonomous moral authority, is frequently mentioned. Equally, the concept of general will, in contemporary terms, the public interest, and the related notions of a citizen, citizenship and patriotism, as shaped by the French thinker Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778), form part of the ideational roots of nationalism (Kohn 1944; Kedourie 1994 [1960]; Smith 1998: Chapter 1 and 2; Özkirimli 2010: Chapter 2). However, it is the legacy of the German theologian, poet and humanist, Johann Gottfried Herder (1744-1803) which has endured in shaping the primordial understanding of national identity.

J. G. Herder and the central arguments of primordialism

The ideas of 'national spirit' or 'cultural spirit' were already formulated in the writings of Giambattista Vico (1668-1744), the polymath from Naples, and the Swiss scholar J.G. Ritter von Zimmermann (1728-1795). Nevertheless, it is Herder who is credited with their popularisation and hence having a considerable impact on the conceptualisation of nationhood along primordialist lines (Grosby 2001; Sikka 2011). He is also considered to be among the first who applied the term of nationalism in a negative fashion, outlining it as a distorted attachment to a given nation and misconceptions of others (Grosby 2001).

Herder's concept of national identity was frequently described as cultural, organic or apolitical (Schmidt 1956; Berlin 1976; Barnard 1983, 2003; Sikka 2011). At the same time, the conceptual imprecision and inconsistency of his arguments have been highlighted alongside the imaginative appeal and political impact of his ideas. A number of national thinkers and leaders, including the German philosopher Johann Gottlieb Fichte (1762-1814) and the whole generation of German Romanticism, the central figure of the Italian national movement Giuseppe Mazzini (1805-1872), and the first president of Czechoslovakia, Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk (1850-1937), were among his adherents (Berlin 1976; Barnard 2003). Moreover, as will be shown in the empirical part of this

thesis, Herder's thoughts are easily traceable within contemporary education in Slovakia.

Herder was not preoccupied exclusively with the concept of nation in his philosophical treatises and nor did he provide a precise definition of it.⁵⁶ In spite of his critical attitudes towards the rationalism and cosmopolitanism of the Enlightenment era, Herder remained influenced by the universalism of his time and his profession as a clergyman. The central concern of his work, therefore, remained the promotion of humanity (Schmidt 1956; Berlin 1976; Barnard 1983, 2003; Sikka 2011). He portrayed it in an affirmative fashion as the unifying component of human existence and simultaneously as an inherent quality of mankind:

[humanity is] the character of our race, the treasure and profit of all human efforts, the art of our race as it were (cited in Schmidt 1956: 410).

As Schmidt suggested, Herder regarded the quest for happiness as the true goal of human existence. In the tradition of Enlightenment and its belief in reason as the source of all knowledge, he strove to identify the essential and natural forces of the past. He arrived at the conclusion that time, place and national character are the main elements of human history (Schmidt 1956).

Herder developed his ideas on individual national character and cultural diversity in his two treatises, *Ideen zur Philosophy der Geschichte der Menschheit* (The Ideas of Human History 1784-1791) and in *Briefe zu Beförderung der Humanität* (Letters for the Advancement of Humanity 1793-1797) (Schmidt 1956). The central focus of Herder's philosophy on the nation, which he viewed as an extension of family and kinship bonds, was not biology but culture and, foremost, the role of language. Being a deeply religious person, Herder accounted for the origin of language and nations in a paradoxical manner. Although he referred to Providence in this context, he did not regard them entirely as the result of a divine act or a matter of a sudden creation and appearance. Herder acknowledged the contribution of a variety of influences in a particular location and also a degree of evolutionary development. However, once formed within a given place and climate, he seemed to favour the preservation and cultivation of national uniqueness, with language as its key manifestation (Kohn 1944: 427-433; Kedourie 1994 [1960]:48-50; Berlin 1976: 165-172; Barnard 1983; Sikka 2011: Chapter 4 and 5).⁵⁷

⁵⁶Herder utilised inconsistently a number of terms while discussing the cultural diversity of humanity. Although he applied the term nation and its derivatives in his writings e.g. 'beauty of nations' (*Nationalschönheit*) he frequently used the terms 'people' (*Volk*), 'stock' (*Stamm*), 'lineage' (*Gebürt*), 'human species /human kinds' (*Menschengattungen*) (Sikka 2011: Chapter 4).

⁵⁷ By referring to Herder's *Treatises upon the origin of Language* (1772) Kedourie argues that Herder refused to see languages as the creation of God and ascribed the primary role to man and his sensations in this context (Kedourie 1994 [1960]: 56-57). Sikka on the other hand cites Herder in his treatise *On the Spirit*

In the tradition of Antiquity, Herder attributed considerable significance to the environment and climate in the formation of distinctive cultural traditions including language, and assigned to the latter a multifaceted, instrumental role. He saw it as a central part of a cognition process which, for him, resulted from incremental and practical experiences gained through socialisation within specific natural and social settings. Moreover, Herder interpreted language as a vehicle for the trans-generational transmission of ideas, traditions and culture of a given community. As languages differ from each other, so do peoples. This led him to conclude that each community has its distinctive thoughts, traditions or history and, consequently, a unique collective character. For Herder language was the crucial attribute; the source of the essence of nationhood:

Has a nation anything more precious than the language of its fathers? In it dwell its entire world of tradition, history, religion, principles of existence, its whole heart and soul (cited in Berlin 1976: 165).

Herder was actually not the first to establish the link between language and national character. The English philosopher Francis Bacon (1561-1626) opined in the seventeenth century that it is possible to derive 'significant marks of the genius and manners of people and nations from their languages' (cited in Deutscher 2011: 3). Equally, a few years before Herder in the mid-eighteenth century, the French scholar Étienne Bonnot de Condillac (1715-1780) contended:

Everything confirms that each language expresses the character of the people who speak it. For anyone who understands them well, language would be a painting of the character and genius of each people (cited in Aarsleff 1982 [1974]: 195).

As Aarsleff argued, Herder was likely to be familiar with Condillac's ideas. Nevertheless, as he maintained, due to the excellent reputation of German philology in the nineteenth century it is Herder who is associated with the notion of language as the mirror of collective identity (Aarsleff 1982 [1974]). Herder's attention to the vernacular languages and folk traditions as the most valuable repository of national cultures proved to be inspirational for early national activists across Europe, including its central and eastern parts. More importantly, Herder's idealised description of Slavs, whom he saw as one nation, their character and promising future, was well received within the respective national movements:

of Hebrew Poetry (1782/1783) where he argued that man's role in the creation of language is secondary after God (Sikka 2011: 160). According to Berlin (1976: 165-171), Herder never resolved the contradictions in his description of the origins of language.

They were generous, extremely hospitable, lovers of rural liberty, yet compliant and obedient, enemies of robbery and loot. All that did not help them against oppression; on the contrary, it encouraged it. For, as they never competed for world hegemony, as they had no war-loving hereditary princes, and preferred to pay tribute if they could only dwell on their land in peace, several nations, especially the Germans, have greatly sinned against them (cited in Kohn 1944: 437-438).

Ye deeply bowed, but once so industrious and happy peoples, you will at last awake refreshed from your long listless slumber and, having shaken off the chains of slavery, will enjoy again the possession of your fair lands from the Adriatic to the Carpathian Mountains, from the Don to the Moldau, and celebrate on them your ancient festivals in peace together with the prosperity of your industry and trade (cited in Barnard 2003: 14).

Herder paid comparatively little attention to Slavic history and population in his work. Moreover, his description of Slavs as oppressed, laborious, hospitable and freedom- and peace-loving people, drew heavily on contemporary ideas of German and Czech historiography, which in turn relied on older Byzantine and German sources, instead of his own experiences or empirical research (Drews 1990: 44-51). As Drews argued (1990: 51), even Herder's portrait of Slavs as the 'dove-like' people (*Taubenvolk*) incapable of crimes was inspired by the accounts of the theologian and pedagogue from Moravia, J.A. Comenius (1592-1670). Nevertheless, the so-called Slavs chapter in his 'Ideas' earned Herder positive appraisals in Central and Eastern Europe and he was ascribed a critical position in the development of the respective national movements (Kohn 1944, 1960; Drews 1990; Barnard 2003; Podolan 2007).⁵⁸

According to Berlin, the central concept of Herder's writings was the promotion of 'unity in difference' (Berlin 1976: 153) and this might explain his disapproval of the mixing of nations, which he associated with a decline in cultural diversity and authenticity. At the same time, he also strongly opposed cultural superiority and chauvinism. In spite of his judgemental evaluations on cultural and social practices within the diverse communities he described in his writings, Herder showed great respect for particular, national cultures and argued in favour of the free development of all, resolutely opposing European imperialism, colonialism or the missionary zeal of Christianity (Kohn 1944; Schmidt 1956; Berlin 1976; Barnard 1983, 2003; Sikka 2011).⁵⁹ In the tradition of the French political thinker Montesquieu (1689-1755), he was also preoccupied with inter-cultural

⁵⁸In Slovakia, the impact of Herder's ideas and his idealised picture of Slavs are easily traceable in the works of a number of national activists and writers of the nineteenth century. Ján Kollár (1793-1852) drew considerable inspiration from Herder's ideas on Slavs. Equally, the works of other intellectuals and poets like Pavol Jozef Šafárik (1795-1861), Ľudovít Štúr (1815-1856), Samo Chalupka (1812-1883), Andrej Sládkovič (1820-1872) are further evidence of Herder's legacy (Drews 1990:156-169; Podolan 2007: 5). Herder's influence on contemporary education in Slovakia will be also shown in chapters 3.1.2, 3.2.1 and 3.3.1 in this thesis.

⁵⁹ Herder's unfavourable remarks about the appearance and intellectual capacity of Asians, Africans and Greenlanders are also highlighted in his writings (Sikka 2011; Berlin 1976). As Sikka argued, these judgements nevertheless should not be interpreted as an expression of a racist but as 'immature' positions of an aesthete which Herder overcame in later stages of his life (Sikka 2011: Chapter 4).

interaction and the coexistence of a culturally diverse humanity. Herder believed that this problem could be resolved through his concept of *'Einfühlungsvermögen'* (Barnard 2003: 5). He argued that the cultivation of what might be translated as the capacity for empathy or compassion for others would promote the comprehension of other cultures and in turn facilitate inter-cultural understanding and interaction (Barnard 1983, 2003).

Herder was critical of the role of the state of his time. He also disagreed with Kant's notion that 'man is an animal who needs a master' (cited in Patten 2010: 677) and did not consider the existence and preservation of governments or states as vital. For Herder the most natural form of political organisation is a state consisting of 'one people [*Volk*] with one national character' (cited in Patten 2010: 658). In the third volume of his 'Ideas' he added that:

an empire consisting of one nation [*das Reich eines Volkes*] is a family, a well-ordered household: it reposes on itself, for it is founded on nature, and stands and falls by time alone. An empire forcing together a hundred peoples and a hundred and twenty provinces is a monstrosity and no body of state (cited in Patten 2010: 659).

Herder saw the self-interest of ruling, political elites as one of the underlying reasons for state inefficiency in promoting individual and collective happiness. He derived his mistrust towards the state from the concept of individual freedom that he regarded as a crucial precondition for the attainment of happiness. As he argued, by subordinating one's own freedom to state power, an individual actually gives up his or her right to self-determination. A further criticism of the state is associated with Herder's belief in individual uniqueness. This is shaped by a complex set of external and internal factors such as climate, language, social settings or individual life experiences and desires. Consequently, in Herder's view, no state institution or administration is capable of designing the conditions and actions appropriate for the attainment of individual happiness (Patten 2010).

Following these thoughts, it is hardly surprising that Herder has been described by some as an anarchist (Patten 2010: 677). He was undeniably critical of all hereditary states and privileges and has been described as 'a radical egalitarian' (Barnard 1983: 233). However, according to Patten, Herder's position is 'perfectly consistent' with his 'remedial' view of the state. He acknowledged that the state had some value in terms of correcting or limiting numerous human shortcomings. The progressive view of human history which permeates his writings implies that he saw the existence of states as temporary arrangements, without being unrealistic and anticipating their demise in the near future (Patten 2010: 673-685).

Beyond doubt, Herder's thoughts display positive attitudes to cultural diversity and optimism about the advancement of humanity. And, his understanding of national identity has certainly proved enormously influential. In addition to his impact on the academic approach of primordialism, Herder's emphasis on the cultivation of cultural distinctiveness and his concept of nation-states anchored in the principle of 'one people [Volk] with one national character' have left clear traces in the contemporary world. The positive achievements linked to the establishment of nation-states: rising educational attainment, socio-economic progress, the development of national cultures and the establishment of democratic systems cannot be denied. It is the misinterpretation and abuse of Herder's ideas leaving behind the tragic toll of ethnic cleansing which does not permit complacency.

Constructivism

Conceptual clarification

Constructivism is evaluated in the relevant literature as the broad concept which underlies contemporary academic discussion of nationalism. In the words of Rogers Brubaker, 'we are all constructivists now' (Brubaker 2009: 28). Constructivism is an antithesis to, and also the main critique of, primordialism. In sharp contrast to the primordialist perspective, it rejects the notion of nations being given, authentic and immutable. Instead, it interprets them as constructed, invented (Kohn 1944; Gellner 1964, 1983; Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983) or imagined (Anderson 1983) phenomena of modern history. Frequently also called modernism or instrumentalism, constructivism considers nations to be the results of specific historical conditions and processes which are classified under the term of modernisation.⁶⁰ This is understood as the process of socio-economic, political and cultural transformation of traditional agrarian (feudal) societies which followed industrialisation. Although a contested issue, the roots of modernisation are frequently dated back to the mid-fifteenth century (Kohn 1944; Gellner 1964, 1983; Anderson 1983; Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983; Hobsbawm 1990; Bačová 1999; Lawrence 2005; Özkirimli 2010; Smith 2010).

Despite the overwhelming dominance of constructivism in the current scholarship of nationalism, it does not represent a coherent theory with widely accepted propositions. As such, it is better understood as a broad framework which incorporates related ideas, particularly in terms of the nature and the antiquity of nations. While these might be

⁶⁰ I would argue that the concept of modernism places more significance on the conditions leading to the development of nationalism and nations and the issue of their antiquity. Instrumentalism draws attention to the functionalist aspects of nationalism. Therefore, I choose to use the term constructivism as it emphasises more adequately the focus of this thesis which is the nature of nations and, consequently, national identity.

considered its main defining features, constructivists differ in some respects. They vary in terms of the emphasis placed on factors which stimulated the appearance of nationalism, nations and their functions (Kohn 1944; Kedourie 1993 [1960]; Gellner 1964, 1983; Hroch 1968; Anderson 1983; Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983; Breuilly 2006: xxxii, Özkirimli 2010: Chapter 4). Additional distinctions are observable in relation to the modes of reproduction and maintenance of nationalism and also in views of its socio-political salience. In addition, there are also diverse methodological approaches within the relevant scholarly discussions (Billing 1995; Brubaker 1998, 2009, 2011; Calhoun 2007; Özkirimli 2010).

A variety of conceptual influences are associated with the origins of the constructivist perspective. The legacy of Marxism and its emphasis on the fragmentation of traditional societies, the contingent nature of nations and their instrumentalism in the development of an efficient market economy on a global scale have been stressed by some (Stagardt 1995; Smith 1998: Chapter 1). A further ideational source of constructivism is related to the sociological tradition of the French and German scholars Émile Durkheim (1858-1917) and Max Weber (1864-1920) respectively. Durkheim's views on religious symbolism and ceremonies and their mass-mobilising potential is traceable in the relevant discussion on nationalism according to Smith (1998: 12-13). He also credits Weber and his attention to political actions and political memories as the critical aspects of the development of the nation and nation-states which proved inspirational for later scholars. Insights of psychology have also been influential. In this context, links might be drawn to the theory of crowd psychology in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. The notion of existential disorientation due to the rapid transformation of traditional societies and the related ideas of mass emotions and behaviour also appear in constructivist arguments (Smith 1998: 12-14).

Others have focused on the impact of developments within the social sciences after the Second World War. As Lawrence argued (2005: Chapter 4) concepts of structural functionalism and modernisation theories have notably influenced constructivist arguments. In this context, he emphasised the attention of the former to social structure with its components (norms, traditions, institutions) and their complementary functions within society as a whole. In respect to modernisation theories, Lawrence stressed their focus on the processes involved in the transformation of traditional agrarian communities into industrial societies leading to new demands for their functioning and maintenance (e.g. Lerner 1958, cited in Lawrence: 135). Day and Thompson (2004) have specifically highlighted the sociological theory of social constructionism which gained prominence in the 1960s (e.g. Berger and Luckmann 1966, cited in Day and Thompson 2004: 85). Accordingly, socio-structural phenomena, including the concepts

of collective identities such as nations, cannot be seen as a reflection of a reality or nature. Rather, they need to be interpreted as man-made creations or products which are embedded in a specific context of a particular time and social setting.

The central arguments of constructivism

The central claim of constructivism is the contestation of the given nature of nations and their antiquity. Although academic discussion of nationalism gradually gained momentum during the 1960s, primordialist notions of national identity began to be challenged in academia in the interwar period by historians such as Hans Kohn (1881-1971), Carleton J.H. Hayes (1882-1964), Louis Snyder (1907-1993), Alfred Cobban (1901-1968) and E.H. Carr (1892-1982) (Lawrence 2005: Chapter 3; Özkirimli 2010: 31). The Prague-born US historian, Kohn, for instance, emphatically rejected the primordial understanding of national affiliations (Kohn 1938, 1944). In spite of the given nature of existential experiences and facts such as attachments to and familiarity with a birth place, native language or fears for the unknown, Kohn emphasised the constructed character of nationalism and its claims.

As he argued, nationalism is a social and intellectual product of a specific historical period; unthinkable without the modern state (Kohn 1944).⁶¹ In his influential study on the historical roots of nationalism, *The Idea of Nationalism* (1944), Kohn linked it to the two basic misconceptions of kinship and culture. On the other hand, he explained the appeal of nationalism and its success through its multifaceted potential which includes not only political and economic, but also emotional and intellectual dimensions (Kohn 1938, 1944:4-22). In a similar vein, Elie Kedourie (1926-1992), former scholar at the London School of Economics (LSE) viewed nationalism as a political doctrine which legitimates the establishment of nation-states. As he argued, it is, above all, a legacy of European thinkers of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries (Kedourie 1994 [1960]).

As both Kohn and Kedourie were concerned primarily with the ideational history of nationalism, they paid less attention to the transformative forces of modernisation which, in the constructivist perspective, facilitated the appearance of nationalism as an ideology and a socio-political movement and consequently led to the conception of the nation. A number of other scholars elaborated on these issues in the following years. The instrumentalisation of nationalism by modern states and politics was analysed by Tilly (1975), Brass (1979), Breuilly (1982), Giddens (1985), Mann (1993, 1995) (cited in

⁶¹ In one of his earlier treaties published in the interwar period, Kohn defined nationalism as 'all-pervading group consciousness' (Kohn 1938: 388).

Breuilly 2006: xxxii and Özkirimli 2010: Chapter 4). Nationalism as a primary economic and class conflict has been addressed in the works of Hechter (1975) and Naim (1977, 1981) (cited in Breuilly 2006: xxxii and Özkirimli 2010: Chapter 4). Benedict Anderson's conceptualisation of nations as *Imagined Communities* (1983) emphasised the cultural transformation of pre-industrial societies unleashed by modernisation and the role of the print industry and vernacular languages in creating a sense of collective affinity and loyalty.

According to Breuilly, it is the Prague-born Ernest Gellner (1925-1995), another LSE scholar, who stands out in the constructivist tradition in view of the wide applicability of his socio-historical approach to nationalism. Although a subject of considerable debate, Breuilly argued that Gellner's concept constitutes the 'most ambitious and complete theory' (Breuilly cited in Gellner 2006 [1983]: xxxii). Two decades after the publication of Kohn's study, Gellner followed in his footsteps and argued uncompromisingly:

Nationalism is not the awakening of nations to self-consciousness: it invents nations where they do not exist (Gellner 1964: 169).⁶²

Hence, nations are the results of nationalism and not its cause. In Gellner's words, 'nations, like states are a contingency, and not a universal necessity' (Gellner 2006 [1983]: 6). In order to account for their occurrence, Gellner emphasises socio-structural factors in his explanation. Consequently, nationalism is interpreted as the result of industrialisation. The transition from an agrarian society to an industrial one and its accompanying labour division facilitated the intensification of communication in which the use of one language, in spoken or written form, played a central role. In addition, the need for sustained economic growth contributed to the development of a standardised educational system which provided for the acquisition of occupational skills.

As a consequence, the process of cultural homogenisation required for an industrial society to function in a sustainable and effective way created nationalism as its instrument and, in turn, the nation. Gellner was not ignorant of the pre-existing variety of cultures and their symbolism. However, as he argued, in the pre-industrial period of history these did not constitute the essential foundation of personal or collective belonging. Instead, it was the hereditary social structure composed of particular roles (aristocracy/rulers, clergy, artisans, peasants) reinforced through their specific cultures which constituted the primary source of individual and collective identity within agrarian

⁶² In a similar vein to Kedourie, Gellner defined nationalism as a political doctrine: 'Nationalism is primarily a political principle, which holds that the political and the national unit should be congruent' (Gellner 2006 [1983]: 1).

societies. Contrary to that, in modern societies the former structure is replaced by culture which becomes the main repository and vehicle of identity formation (Gellner 1964: Chapter 7, 2006 [1983]). According to Gellner, nationalism simply utilises available cultural components in a selective manner: 'sometimes takes pre-existing culture and turns them into nations, sometimes invents them, and often obliterates pre-existing cultures' (Gellner 2006 [1983]: 47).

For Hobsbawm, the invention of nations operates through an intertwined process of 'formalisation and ritualisation' of symbolic practices (Hobsbawm 1983: 4) which establish a continuity with the past and creates an impression of the given nature of nations. However, Hobsbawm, in principle agreeing with Gellner, sees nationalism as a product of a double process 'from above and below.' In a similar vein to Kohn's emphasis on the psychological potential of nationalism, he argues that it succeeded not only through a topdown imposition by elites but also because it accommodates certain needs of the wider population (Hobsbawm 1990: 10-11). In doing so it equips individuals with the capacity to cope with uncertainty ensuing from the profound changes in traditional societal structures by providing them with a sense of orientation, belonging and transcendence (Schulze 2004: 53-54).

Although the origins of the actual formation of nationalism remain disputed,⁶³ many highlight the French Revolution (1789) as the symbolic marker in this context due to its critical impact on the formation of national movements across Europe (Kohn 1944; Smith 1998: Chapter 1; Hroch 2006; Kumar 2006). In spite of not being smooth or straightforward, the actual course of national movements in Europe was conceived of by Miroslav Hroch, a Czech historian, as a three-stage process. The first, the intellectual stage, is characterised by intensified interest in the vernacular, 'national' language, popular culture, customs and myths, and is associated with intellectuals. In the second, political phase, cultural activities are transformed into political programmes. Finally, during the third stage of nationalism, by gaining significant support within given society, it becomes a mass movement (Hroch 1968).

Walker Connor also drew attention to the mass character of national identification in order to demonstrate the weakness of primordialist assumptions of the given and ancient nature of nations. While acknowledging their evolutionary character he maintained that nations are modern phenomena rooted in the myth of common ancestry (Connor 2004: 39). In order to support his argument, Connor highlighted the hierarchically organised structure of pre-modern societies on a global scale.

⁶³ For example Acton preferred the year of first partition of Poland in 1792, Kedourie highlighted Fichte's *Adresses to the German Nation* in Berlin in 1806 (Smith 1983 [1971]: 27).

Discriminatory institutions such as serfdom, slavery or the caste system might be interpreted as serious impediments to the perception of cultural affinity on a mass scale. Consequently, the existence of national consciousness before the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries is questionable (Connor 1990, 2004, 2005). The highly acclaimed study of the Romanian-born US historian Eugen Weber (1925-2007), *Peasants into Frenchmen: The Modernization of Rural France, 1870-1914* (1976), also follows this line of argument.

Contrary to the claim of longstanding nations in Western Europe, Weber assigned the historical appearance of the French nation around the time of the end of the nineteenth and start of the twentieth century.⁶⁴ Accordingly, national consciousness among the majority of the population within the contemporary France consisting of peasants living in somewhat isolated villages and speaking a wealth of diverse languages was not completely present before the First World War (Weber 1976 cited in Connor 1994: 220). Drawing on the *Harvard Encyclopedia of American Ethnic Groups* (1980), which described the collective identities of European migrants arriving in the US before the First World War, Connor also identified further, comparable examples. Referring to fourteen cases listed in the Encyclopedia, Connor showed that the majority of the population arriving from Europe were peasants who were not fully aware of their national identity. As a rule, they referred to their immediate region or village as their origin. For instance, migrants from the present-day Slovakia mentioned the districts of Zemplín or Šariš (contemporary east of Slovakia), whereas migrants from present day Italy described their 'nationality' as Sicilian, Calabrian or Neapolitan (Connor 1990: 93-95).

While a significant number of academics have focused on the objective, structural conditions and processes which facilitated the appearance of both nationalism and nations, the Norwegian anthropologist Frederick Barth, provided 'extremely relevant' insights in relation to the understanding of the assumed given nature of inter-group distinctiveness (Day and Thompson 2004: 95). In his influential study, *Ethnic Group and Boundaries: The Social Organisation of Culture Difference* (1969), Barth questioned the possibility of explaining the origins of ethnic groups adequately. At the same time, he accepts the existence of distinctive, group characteristics. He does not, however, interpret them as given or objective facts. Barth refuses to see 'ethnicity' as an inherent and immutable quality linked to a peculiar culture or a foundation of a collective identity. Instead, he stresses the subjective nature; the self-perception of the members of a given group. Ethnic identity, according to Barth, is a result or a construct of social interactions between multiple social groups and is maintained in spite of sufficient information,

⁶⁴ Connor refers in this context to a number of prominent historians such as Marc Bloch (1886-1944), Johan Huizinga (1872-1945) or George Coulton (1858-1947) (Connor 2005: 42).

contacts and mobility through subjective belief in the existence of social inter-group boundaries. These consist of symbolic components objectively present (e.g. dress, language, house forms) and behavioural practices (for example, standards of morals). Consequently, they serve as a device of intra-group inclusion and inter-group exclusion. Barth speaks of ethnic groups as 'categories of self-ascription and ascription by others' (Barth 1969: 9-38).

As already stated, in spite of differences in emphasis with regard to the stimuli leading to the appearance of nationalism and its functions, constructivist arguments are linked by their opposition to primordialist assumptions of the given, authentic and immutable foundation of nations.

Ethno-symbolism

Conceptual clarification

Ethno-symbolism is an umbrella term which refers to the third main area of interrelated positions in contemporary academic discussions of nationalism. It is also seen as the principal critique of the constructivist perspective. According to Anthony Smith (2009: 1), the term was originally coined in the debates at the LSE in the 1980s. Daniele Conversi described ethno-symbolism as a perspective which rejects the notion that nations are the outcome of invention or manipulation by elites. Instead, it is an approach which accepts the modernity of nations, but simultaneously emphasises the relevance of a 'pre-existing texture of myths, memories, values, and finally symbols' for their development (Conversi 1995: 74).

A similar description was provided by Anthony Smith. Although continuously disputing the modernity of nations, he conceives of ethno-symbolism as a paradigm or programme of nationalism studies which focuses on 'the subjective elements in the formation of nations, the character and impact of nationalism, and the persistence of *ethnies*; and thereby seeks to enter into and comprehend the 'inner worlds' of ethnicity and nationalism' (Smith 2010: 61).

The ethno-symbolist framework reveals a significant imprint of interrelated fields of social sciences in relation to its arguments. This can be effortlessly derived from the application of the terminology and concepts which originally evolved within anthropology and sociology. In particular, the ethno-symbolist understanding of ethnicity or ethnic groups in the sense of a precursor of nations clearly demonstrates such conceptual influences. Although the German sociologist Max Weber (1864-1920) is viewed as being

the first to use both terms 'ethnicity' and ethnic group' in such a way in 1922 (Malešević 2004: 14), their actual popularisation within social sciences is associated with the US disciplines of sociology and anthropology.⁶⁵

The origins of both terms as analytical categories referring to the collective identity of a subgroup within a larger community are associated with increased immigration, mostly from Europe, in the early decades of the twentieth century and the discrediting of the race concept that followed the Second World War (Connor 1994: 101; Banks 1996; Fenton 2003). The rapid incorporation of the concepts of ethnicity and ethnic group within European social sciences was then linked with the previously mentioned publication of Frederik Barth in 1969 (Banks 1996: 12).

A further significant conceptual influence on ethno-symbolism might be associated with the field of historiography and the tradition of the French Annales School. Named after its flagship journal, *Annales d'histoire économique et sociale* (Annals of economic and social history, 1929), the school is associated with an innovative style of historical research. Through its emphasis on the developments preceding the historical period before 1789, and the inclusion of social history, it notably challenged and widened the traditional focus of historiography on political events and elites (Burke 1990).⁶⁶ First and foremost, the School's attention to the long-term nature of historical phenomena, '*longue durée*', can be easily identified within the relevant ethno-symbolist literature.

Central arguments of ethno-symbolism

Ethno-symbolism is opposed to, and also partially overlaps with, the constructivist perspective. Approached through the prism of the '*longue durée*' character of historical phenomena, one of the main assertions of ethno-symbolists is the durable, long-term character of nations. Accordingly, nations are social phenomena that might be already identified or have established their roots before the French Revolution (1789) and have developed from ethnic groups. Claims of the longevity and persistence of national identity contradicts the constructivist notion of modernity.

However, the ethno-symbolist argument also diverges from the primordialist perspective in one central aspect. In a similar vein to constructivists, ethno-symbolists also refute the primordialist view of the given and essentialist nature of nations derived from biological

⁶⁵Ethnicity is seen as a neologism within social sciences. It apparently occurred in English speaking academia for the first time in the work of David Riesman in 1953 (Glazer and Mohnihan 1975:1).

⁶⁶The origin of the School is associated with Lucien Febvre (1878-1956) and Marc Bloch (1886-1944). A number of renowned historians are also linked to its programme: Fernand Braudel (1902-1985), Georges Duby (1919-1996), Jacques Le Goff (1924), Michèle Perrot (1928), Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie (1929), Christiane Klapisch (1936) (Burke 1990).

kinship. Instead, they underline the relevance and instrumentalisation of the historically developed cultural characteristics of pre-modern communities in the transformation of collective identities unleashed by modernisation.

A further resemblance to the constructivist perspective relates to the ethno-symbolists' acceptance of the influence of industrialisation, bureaucratic states and secularisation in the process of nation formation. However, contrary to the former, ethno-symbolism is critical of the claim that there was a major rupture between collective identities of the pre-modern and the later modern period. Hence, it highlights the continuity between the more distant past and modernity (Armstrong 1982; Smith 1986, 1998, 2009, 2010; Hutchinson 1987, 2005; Conversi 1995; Hastings 1997; Kumar 2006: 15). In doing so, the historical appearance, persistence and functions of cultural microstructures consisting of various fragments such as myths, symbols, memories and customs are at the centre of their analysis (Armstrong 1982; Smith 1986, 1998, 2005, 2010; Hutchinson 2005).

Although a considerable number of scholars sympathise with its propositions, ethno-symbolism is associated predominantly with the work of John Armstrong and Anthony D. Smith (Leoussi, 2001: 84-87; Kumar 2006: 14-15; Özkirimli 2010: Chapter 5).⁶⁷ John Armstrong (1922-2010), former Professor of Political Science at the University of Wisconsin, Madison (US), is seen as the first scholar to meaningfully contribute to the concept of ethno-symbolism (Özkirimli 2010: Chapter 5; Leoussi 2001: 84). In his monograph, *Nations before Nationalism* (1982), Armstrong drew attention to the evidence of nations and their enduring character before the modern era. He argues that there is evidence for national identity in ancient history. Unlike other ethno-symbolists, Armstrong does not differentiate between nation and ethnic group and applies both terms as synonyms. Nations, for Armstrong, are powerful, collective affiliations: 'intense group identification that we today term a "nation"'. He then applies the adjective 'ethnic' as a term referring to collective identity which is a constant feature of human history (Armstrong 1982: 3).

Following in the footsteps of Barth, Armstrong disputes the given character of nations, linking the roots of collective identities with subjective perceptions of the assumed distinctiveness of inter-group boundaries. Nevertheless, instead of analysing the nature,

⁶⁷ John Armstrong, the 'pioneer' of ethno-symbolism does not apply this term in his writings (Özkirimli 2000:168). In addition, some classify Anthony Smith as a representative of primordialism (Dawisha 2002: 4) or perennialism (Kumar 2006:14-15). Perennialism, another term found in the scholarship of nationalism, was introduced by Anthony Smith for those views which do not regard nations as naturally given but as constant or recurrent phenomena of human history and do not differentiate between ethnicity and nationality. Smith gives as examples the US linguist Joshua Fishman (1926) and Walker Connor (Smith 1998:159-165).

modes of continuous replication and maintenance of their constitutive elements, Armstrong chooses to focus on the provision of evidence for their existence, durability and function. According to his argument, symbols, myths and communication are crucial to understanding national genealogy. Symbols, defined as 'major indicators of boundaries' (Armstrong 1982: 8), might appear in diverse forms such as words, gestures, drawings or music. It is their role in the process of national identity-building which he investigates. Symbols are for Armstrong essential tools of communication which are sustained over long periods of history and establish an intergenerational link between past and present communities: 'symbolic communication is communication over the *longue durée*, between the dead and the living' (Armstrong 1982: 8).

Armstrong pays attention to an array of elements referred to as the 'myth-symbol complex', which facilitated the development of national identity and safeguarded its persistence. The gradual adoption of a sedentary lifestyle by nomadic tribes is the first major influence he emphasises. As he argues, this transformation significantly shaped the formation of territorial identity, particularly in Europe. On the other hand, the prolonged nomadic tradition in the Middle East established a second, fundamentally distinctive basis of collective identity. This is termed by Armstrong as the 'genealogical or pseudo-genealogical' principle. It is this foundation upon which the non-territorial identity prevalent in the Middle East builds and is 'incompatible' with the European, territorial principle of collective affiliations. More importantly, for Armstrong, these two differing axioms of lifestyle underlie the myth-symbol complex which, combined with political factors, resulted in the development of two distinctive ethnic identities (Armstrong 1982: 12, 51-53).

Closely linked to territoriality is the development of ancient cities (polis) and also urbanism in general where Armstrong highlights the seeds for the potential bonding of a community to an enclosed geographic area. Moreover, he also accentuates the civic culture of participation in public life within ancient cities. According to Armstrong, these are the influences that contributed to the emergence of a sentimental affiliation and loyalty to a specific territory and its political organisation (city-state, kingdom, state) known as patriotism (Armstrong 1982: Chapters 2 and 4).

In addition to these broader categories of identity building, Armstrong put significant emphasis on the constitutive myths of a polity. He links them to the imperial universalism of Antiquity and to religious institutions. These are seen by Armstrong as the central promoters and guardians of the myth of descent. In this context, he draws attention to the two monotheistic religions of Islam and Christianity and their hostile relationship. He establishes a causal link between their universalism combined with the missionary drive

and their mutual confrontations which gave rise to two distinctive concepts of civilisations and eventually to national identities (Armstrong 1982: Chapters 3 and 9). On the other hand, and, somewhat surprisingly, Armstrong argued that the intra-Christian conflict between Catholicism and Protestantism was not of particular importance in this context (Armstrong 1982: 284).

Contrary to primordialist assumptions, Armstrong maintained that language as a symbol of specific national identity was of minor relevance in the pre-modern era. Mass communication was rather limited during the ancient and also the medieval periods of history. Therefore, a linguistic delineation of pre-modern communities rarely corresponded with actual political borders. In addition, a communicative (language) barrier remained along the lines of social stratification in pre-modern societies. Armstrong revised his position to some degree in his later work. Whilst he maintained that nations appeared in human history before the era of nationalism (1789), he found himself in agreement with constructivist position on the invented nature of their foundation (Özirimli 2010: 147).

Strongly reminiscent of Armstrong, Smith also emphasises the instrumental role of symbols and discusses a number of elements which facilitated the development of ethnic and, later, national identity. In addition to territory (actual physical or alleged, mythical), myth of descent, common history, shared culture (religion and language), and feelings of solidarity, he also highlights a collective name (e.g. Akkadians or Carthaginians) as a signifier of a distinctive, group affiliation (Smith 1986: 22-31).

It was Smith who decisively advocated the distinction between pre-modern and modern forms of collective belonging. Hence, he associated the former with ethnic and the latter with national identity (Smith 1986: 15). The French term *ethnie* is favoured by Smith as the denomination of the pre-modern mode of group affiliation. As he argued, *ethnie* most adequately captures the original meaning of its Greek origin – *ethnos*. Unlike the expression of *genos* (clan, kind, race) which referred to biological traits of a given community, *ethnos*, according to Smith, reflected its cultural character (Smith 1986: 21-22). Smith did not remain consistent with his ideal-typical definitions of *ethnies* and provided a variety of conceptualisations in his publications:

[*ethnies* are] named human populations with shared ancestry myths, histories and cultures, having an association with a specific territory and a sense of solidarity (Smith 1986: 32).

ethnies are constituted, not by lines of physical descent, but by the sense of continuity, shared memory and collective destiny, i.e. by lines of cultural affinity

embodied in myths, memories, symbols and values retained by a given cultural unit of population (Smith 1998: 192).

Although Smith maintained that the origins of ethnic groups are hidden in obscurity, they might be seen as persistent phenomena of human history. He argued that their historical existence is evident since the middle of the third millennium BC which marks the emergence of script in the history of mankind (Smith 1986: 32-41). *Ethnies* are not necessarily self-aware communities according to Smith. External influences such as warfare or the impact of an organised religion are of critical importance in the creation and maintenance of an ethnic identity. The role of priests and scribes, the 'custodians of the ethnic fund', is viewed as particularly important (Smith 1986: 43).

In order to account for variations of ethnic identities and their intensity, Smith distinguishes between two kinds of ethnic communities. The first category is described as 'lateral and extensive'. As he argued, this is a socially exclusive form of *ethnie* which is rather limited in size as it does not include the wider strata of population. Smith links it to the aristocracy and literate representatives of organised religions as well as affluent merchants. What is more, contrary to his earlier argument of *ethnie* being territorially bounded, a lateral *ethnie* does not always succeed in developing a specific, territorial attachment. The second type of *ethnie* is described by Smith as 'vertical or demotic' (Smith 1986: 76-77). It is composed of the wider urban strata of priests, tradesmen and also craftsmen. Whereas the former, lateral *ethnie*, is open to external influences according to Smith, the vertical / demotic *ethnie* is considerably more delineated with strong cultural and, contrary to his former assertion, even kinship roots. Hence, it displays a notable resistance to cultural assimilation (Smith 1986: 83).

Reminiscent of Kohn's (1944) controversial distinction between the rational and liberal (civic) nationalism of Western Europe and the irrational and exclusive (ethnic) form found in Central and Eastern Europe, Smith suggests that there are two modes by which the transformation of an *ethnie* into a nation takes place.⁶⁸ Before progressing to the actual discussion on 'Western territorialism' and 'Eastern ethnicism' (Smith 1986: 130)⁶⁹, Smith highlights a general, yet essential influence on nation formation. As in the case of the historical emergence of *ethnie*, Smith argues that the roots of this process are hidden in obscurity. Nevertheless, adopting a fairly constructivist perspective, he clearly links it to the formation of states in Western Europe and emphasises in this context three 'Western revolutions' (Smith 1986: 130).

⁶⁸ For a critique on Kohn's differentiation between civic and ethnic nationalism see, for example, Kuzio (2002).

⁶⁹ In his later work Smith (1991: 13, 81) also expressed some criticism on Kohn's civic-ethnic dichotomy.

The first among them is associated with a process of economic integration within a given territory which followed the gradual transformation of agrarian society into an industrial one. This period can be dated back to the late fifteenth century in Western Europe and became fully established with state mercantilism, as in the seventeenth century in France, England and Spain. The economic transformation, with the development of close links between the multiple, evolving centres of industrial production, facilitated the 'second revolution'. Smith equates this with the expansion of bureaucratic states (Smith 1986: 132). The last, crucial impact enhancing the transformation of an *ethnie* into a nation resulted from the cultural and educational shift. Unlike during the medieval period, this was overseen by the state rather than religious institutions (Smith 1986: 133).

As in the case of *ethnies*, Smith developed ideal-typical and inconsistent definitions of nations in his publications:

The nation is a large, vertically integrated and territorially mobile group featuring common citizenship rights and collective sentiment together with one (or more) common characteristic(s) which differentiate its members from those of similar groups with whom they stand in relations of alliance or conflict (Smith 1983 [1971]: 175).

[a nation is] a named and self-defining human community whose members cultivate shared memories, symbols, myths, traditions and values, inhabit and are attached to historic territories or "homelands", create and disseminate a distinctive public culture, and observe shared customs and standardised laws (Smith 2009: 29).

Smith is not suggesting that the three-part transformation process of *ethnies* spread rapidly and evenly on a world scale. Therefore, in order to account for the discontinuity and variability, he argued that the formation of nations can be explained through two models of 'territorial and ethnic nations' (Smith 1986: 134). The former is then linked to Western Europe and its first, state formations as exemplified by France, England, Holland or Spain. The second route of ethnic nations is associated cautiously by Smith with Central and Eastern Europe and also with the Middle East.

As he maintained, the triple revolutions of the West had been delayed in these areas. Hence, in a constructivist fashion, Smith identified the process of politicisation of *ethnies* carried out by the respective elites as the eventual, transformative force in this context (Smith 1986: 140-157). For Smith, modern nations 'simply extend, deepen and streamline the ways in which members of *ethnie* associated and communicated. They do not introduce startlingly novel elements, or change the goals of human association and communication' (Smith 1986: 215). Therefore, for Smith a clear continuity exists between pre-modern and modern collective identities.

Analytical Framework: the national dimension and its central aspects

The first objective of this chapter was to develop the national dimension of the double-structured analytical model for the empirical analysis. In doing so, the main academic conceptualisations of the nature of nations were discussed. Before highlighting the central features which will be used as a frame of reference in the empirical part of this research, I will consider some of the criticisms of the above approaches. While a thorough analysis in this respect would constitute a dissertation topic in its own right, I will focus on those key points which relate directly to the nature of nations.

The foregoing discussion demonstrated that there are controversial academic debates surrounding the nature of nations. On the other hand, some common ground has been also established over the decades, particularly between the two main perspectives. In spite of their conceptual divergences, constructivists and ethno-symbolists remain fairly close in relation to their critique of primordialist assumptions on the given, everlasting and fixed nature of nations and both dispute its merits on empirical grounds. They maintain that nations are not natural and fundamentally distinctive, but historically and socially developed phenomena. Equally, both perspectives tend to view nationalism as a modern ideology or socio-political movement, the occurrence of which is closely linked to the French Revolution (1789).

However, their differences remain. Both perspectives were charged with identical allegations of conceptual and empirical shortcomings. Counterarguments supporting or negating each view have been provided without offering conclusive answers to the question of the historical appearance of nations. However, the main ethno-symbolist criticism evolved around the strong emphasis of constructivism on the difference between pre-modern and modern collective identities. As Anthony Smith argued:

Modernisation may have acted as a solvent of the *ancien régime* and a catalyst of the new national order, transferring sovereignty from unelected monarchs to the nation and its citizens, but it cannot explain the incidence and the shape of nations, their 'what' and 'where'. Here we need a different kind of approach, one that gives greater weight to the elements of continuity with older ethnocultural communities and earlier sacred traditions (Smith 2005: 108).

Derived from this was the claim that the constructivist argument tended towards reductionism, rationalism and materialism. Accordingly, it is suggested that they underestimate the significance of the more distant past of modern nations. As a consequence, constructivists have been reproached for their disregard for the continuity between pre-modern and contemporary communities, alongside their failure to appreciate the psychological or political impact of symbols, memories and traditions on

the formation and persistence of nations (Smith 2005; Breuilly 2006: xxx-xiv; Özkirimli 2010: 120-137).

Related arguments have been levelled against Gellner's theory in particular, and his emphasis on industrialisation as the primary cause of the development of nationalism and nations. Gellner has been criticised for relying on a broad concept of industrialisation which failed to account for the vast and varied experiences of nationalism witnessed on a global scale. Examples were provided which challenged the causal relationship between its occurrence and industrialisation. The manifestation of nationalism as an ideology in Germany before the country's industrialisation and Gandhi's (1869-1948) opposition in India in this respect have been highlighted (Conversi 1995; Smith 1998; 2005; Hutchinson 2005; Breuilly 2006: xxxiii-xiv; Özkirimli 2010: 130-137).

While there is a degree of validity in such observations, particularly in the context of the various nationalist agendas on a global scale, other aspects of these criticisms remain too broad and too general. Considering the scope of constructivist debates, such evaluations appear to reveal a selective attention to partial aspects within their arguments. As has been shown in this chapter, constructivists do not neglect the existence of territorially bounded and culturally distinctive communities, nor their emotional significance in the pre-modern period. Rather, they question their presumed essentialist foundation and salience as the central sources of individual and collective identity in the pre-modern era and argue that these have been overemphasised by ethno-symbolists. Therefore, a number of scholars dispute the validity of the position of ethno-symbolists and emphasise the more problematic aspects of their argument.

The conceptual robustness of ethno-symbolism has been challenged convincingly by Walker Connor, who argues that Smith and other ethno-symbolists disregard semantics in their analysis. As a result, they contribute to the 'principal cause of the ambiguity and confusion plaguing the study of nationalism'(Connor 2004: 38). Drawing a line between ethnicity/ethnic group and nationality/nation evokes an impression of two, separate concepts and phenomena. In a succinct manner, Connor maintained that the prefix '*ethno*' is derived from the ancient Greek '*ethnos*' (people, folk). As its meaning is identical to the Latin term for nation, (*'nascor'*, I am born) and was used to denote a group of people of common origin (Zernato 1944), any relevant vocabulary (ethnic, ethnicity) needs to be understood in a synonymic manner as 'national' (Connor 2004: 38).

Although neologisms of the twentieth century, the two concepts of ethnic group and ethnicity are derivatives of the Greek '*ethnos*' and have their roots in the second half of the eighteenth century in the evolving field of anthropology.⁷⁰ During this time, the term 'nation' referred exclusively to a limited, privileged group belonging to the aristocracy in Europe.⁷¹ Therefore, it could not be used as a generic word for the cultural variety of global populations which European scholars began to investigate at this time. As early anthropological thinking is linked to German historiography, the eighteenth century's neologism of 'ethnology' was derived in the early 1780s from its German forerunners of *Völkerbeschreibung* (peoples' description) and *Völkerkunde* (knowledge of peoples).⁷² Following the French Revolution (1789), the concept of nation was no longer restricted to those with a privileged, socio-political status. In other words, its scope extended to include references to broad masses of people (Zernatto 2000 [1944]). The former meaning of exclusiveness defined along the lines of socio-political privileges prevailed in a transformed meaning of an inter-group distinctiveness.

As already emphasised in this chapter (pp.58-59), the connotation of ethnic in the sense of a subgroup identity was eventually established in the tradition of US anthropology and sociology in the first decades of the twentieth century. It soon also gained wider application in European scholarship and appeared in the discussion on nationalism in a slightly modified version. From the association of a minority identity within a majoritarian society, it was adapted to a pre-form of national identity. On the other hand, a synonymous application of both terms ethnic and national seems to remain a frequent occurrence in the non-Anglophone, European tradition of academia (Malešević 2004; Hroch and Malečková 2001; DFW 2008).⁷³ Therefore, as Connor argued, conceptual differentiation between ethnic and national identity is rooted first of all in semantic

⁷⁰ Contrary to Smith, other scholars highlighted the inconsistent application of *ethnos* through history. As has been argued, Herodotus already used this term in the sense of kinship connection and not only in a purely cultural connotation (Huxley and Haddon 1935:30-32; Fenton 2003:14-15). See also the footnote No.55 on p. 46 in this dissertation.

⁷¹ The derogative meaning of nation used for foreigners, non-citizens of the Roman Empire, was transformed during the Middle Ages. From a body of university students united through their shared origin and also intellectual opinions, nation acquired an exclusive connotation of being a representative body of common interests. In this meaning it was also used for the members of ecclesiastical councils of the same period. As these actually represented the interests of secular princes, the term underwent a further transformation. It came to be seen as a representative body of the aristocracy. In this elitist meaning, the term was then used across Europe during the eighteenth century (Zernatto 2000 [1944]; Tibenský 1983: 45-46).

⁷² The concept of 'description of peoples' (*Völkerbeschreibung*) is linked to Gerhard Friedrich Müller (1705-1783). Müller, the explorer of Siberia, adopted this term in relation to populations he studied during the period of 1733-1743 (the first known application by Müller goes back to 1740). Two historians of Göttingen University, August Ludwig Schlözer (1735-1809) and Johann Christoph Gatterer (1727-1799) are seen as central figures behind the popularisation of the concept of 'knowledge of peoples' (*Völkerkunde*) which they used interchangeably with 'ethnographie', the neo-Greek variant of the description of peoples. According to Vermeulen, the actual term of ethnology was then coined by Adam František Kollár (1718-1783), a Viennese scholar originating from contemporary Slovakia, in 1783 (Vermeulen 1995, 2006).

⁷³ For the understanding of these concepts in Slovakia, please refer to Annex 5, p.258.

misconceptions and is, in effect, a tautology. Hence, it seems rather redundant (Connor 2004: 39).⁷⁴

A further precarious aspect of ethno-symbolism is the logical inadequacy of its line of argument. Taking into account the positive evaluations of Fredrik Barth's boundaries approach by ethno-symbolists (Armstrong 1982: Chapter 1; Smith 1986: 10, 2009: 130; Conversi 1995: 77; Hutchinson 2005: 14-15), the partial elaboration of the presumed foundation of the myth-symbol complex of pre-modern communities in their examinations appears paradoxical. In fact, Barth's concept remains a rather inconsequentially discussed aspect in their analysis. Instead of attempting to uncover the self-ascriptive character of the constitutive elements of inter-group boundaries and the mechanism of their reproduction, operation and maintenance, ethno-symbolists limit their focus to the manifestations of their various forms, persistence and functions on a global scale prior to 1789.

Although they are correct in highlighting their existence and the potential impact on the formation of a nation, the overemphasis on the evidence for the historical appearance of the 'myth-symbol complex' and '*ethnie*' actually shifts the focus away from the central problem which, I believe, remains the question of the nature of nations. As a consequence, anchored in semantic misconceptions or reinterpretations of the terms ethnic and national, ethno-symbolists introduce (invent) a pre-form of national identity which in fact replaces the primordialist claim of the given and everlasting uniqueness of nations. It is the ethno-symbolist emphasis on the continuity between the historically, culturally and psychologically defined ethnic groups and nations which effectively supersedes the primordialist concept of their given distinctiveness derived from kinship ties. In this manner, ethno-symbolists reinforce and justify the perception that the given nature of nations may be derived from their ethnic cores.

Further arguments have been raised against the ethno-symbolists challenging the significance they attributed to ethnic affiliations. A number of scholars focused on the plurality of identity sources in pre-modern times in this context. Accordingly, the period of the Middle Ages relied on three modalities of collective bonds. Although little is known about the degree of their actual prominence, the church or multiple religious movements, feudal loyalty to a city, city-state, dynasty, monarchy or an empire, in addition to localism (region, village) accounted for the individual and collective attachments during this period (Symmons-Symonolewicz 1981; Geary 2002). Moreover, given the flexibility and adaptability of social and political identities, particularly in the

⁷⁴ On the other hand, Connor himself applies the term of 'ethnonationalism'. As he argued, this is to highlight the meaning of nationalism which he understands as 'loyalty to the nation' and not to a country (Connor 1994: xi).

early Middle Ages, the identification of a unique and continuous 'ethnic core' of future nations appears to be a futile undertaking. As Patrick Geary argued persuasively, the fourth and fifth centuries were historical periods that may be characterised by:

constant shifting of allegiances, intermarriages, transformations, and appropriations, it appears that all that remained constant were names, and these were vessels that could hold different contents at different times. Names were renewable resources; they held the potential to convince people of continuity, even if radical discontinuity was the lived reality (Geary 2002: 118).

Hence, ethnicity or collective awareness was not of absolute importance for the actual building of communities during this time. The military skills of a leader and his material wealth, measured by the size of a herd of cattle, were critical for the formation of larger groups of his followers. These two factors ensured the inception and persistence of tribes and clans (Huxley and Haddon 1935: 38; Armstrong 1982: 28-30; Geary 2002: 73-79). In similar fashion, John Breuilly did not dispute the existence of various cultural attributes of multiple communities in the pre-modern period. However, he stresses the unknown reach of their significance for a sense of collective identity and questions their political potential (Breuilly 1996: 151, 166). Moreover, he also highlighted the arbitrary selection of transmitted symbols by nationalists in the later periods. This also applies to names which, according to Smith, are signifiers of distinctive identity. As Breuilly argued, it is insufficient to point towards the existence of certain names and claim their continuity. What is crucial is the continuity in their meanings:

Societies (more precisely, individual members and/or outsiders), give themselves names which they associate with distinctive characteristics (marks). Names and marks are selectively transmitted from one generation to another [...] Primordialists confuse the antiquity of certain names with a continuity of meaning attributed to those names (Breuilly 2005: 18-19).

For instance, contemporary Bulgarians might be mentioned in this context. Although a Slavic nation, the name is inherited from Asian migrants who settled in Eastern Europe in the seventh century and had been completely assimilated by the Slavic-speaking people already present in this area. As Macartney argued (1934: 56), 'not a single word survives in the modern Bulgarian language which can be traced back to the people which first bore the name' (cited in Connor 1994: 216).

In spite of the on-going controversies in the contemporary scholarship of nationalism, primordialism, constructivism and ethno-symbolism have become its well established and widely used frames of reference. Moreover, although the debate between constructivists and ethno-symbolists remains remarkably inconclusive in some respects, they all continue to shape the most recent debates (Ichijo and Uzelac 2005; Kumar 2006; Özkirimli 2008, 2010; Wimmer 2008; Hutchinson 2008; Brubaker 2009; Elgenius

2011). Therefore, their insights, as summarised in a comprehensive manner in Table 2 below, build the first dimension of analytical framework which will guide the examination of the nature of nations in the empirical section of this dissertation.

Table 2: Analytical Framework-NI Dimension

| Primordialism | Constructivism | Ethno-symbolism |
|---|--|--|
| <p>Nature of nations given, essentialist, immutable</p> | <p>Nature of nations constructed, invented, imagined</p> | <p>Nature of nations instrumentalist, continuous, persistent</p> |
| <p>Antiquity of nations timeless</p> | <p>Antiquity of nations modern (after-1789)</p> | <p>Antiquity of nations pre-modern (before-1789)</p> |
| <p>Further aspects of nations common (kinship) origins, language, traditions, history, territory, national character</p> | <p>Further aspects of nations result of modernisation</p> | <p>Further aspects of nations result of modernisation and transformation of ethnic groups</p> |

Having identified the key aspects relevant to the first dimension of the analytical model introduced in this chapter, I will now turn to its second, the EI dimension.

2.2.2 The EI dimension

Supranationalism and intergovernmentalism: a conceptual justification

As with the scholarship of nationalism, European Integration Studies is a multidisciplinary area of academia with exponentially growing insights. This also applies to one of its sub-discipline, the 'booming field' (Wiener and Diez 2009: 1) of European integration theory upon which the second dimension of the analytical model developed here draws.⁷⁵ The several paradigms seeking to explain the emergence and progress of EI have been shaped by the 'pre-theories' (Eilstrup-Sangiovanni 2006: 1), which in turn had their historical roots in much older intellectual debates on international integration.⁷⁶ Originating in the interwar and war periods, and also in the early post-World War II years, they are known for their normative outlook and central concern for the maintenance of peace on a global scale (Eilstrup-Sangiovanni 2006; Wiener and Diez 2009).

⁷⁵ In the case of supranationalism, attention will be also given, to some extent, to political debates.

⁷⁶ Eilstrup-Sangiovanni (2006) mentions in this context the Enlightenment thinkers Abbé de Saint-Pierre (1658-1743), J.J. Rousseau (1712-1778) and Immanuel Kant (1724-1804). For a detailed account of the history of the idea of European integration see for example Gollwitzer (1964) and de Rougemont (1966).

A case in point is federalism, an example of which is associated with the political views and activities of Richard Coudenhove-Kalergi (1894-1972). He was the founder of the Pan-Europa Movement (1922) and is also known for his mixed, Japanese and European origin. Comparable to other early federalists, Coudenhove-Kalergi advocated an organisation of Europe based on voluntary power sharing between its member states and a central government. He envisaged a federal authority with control over foreign affairs, defence and macroeconomic policy, with the subfederal units maintaining their competencies in a number of public policy areas such as health, transport and education (Coudenhove-Kalergi 1924 [1923]; 1962; Wiener and Diez 2009).

Ideals of the peaceful resolution of conflicts on a global scale are also associated with David Mitrany's *A Working Peace System* (1943). Mitrany's approach, known as functionalism, was opposed to regional integration and, contrary to federalism, was also against the concept of central government, which he regarded as a source of nationalism and continuous rivalries between nation-states. Mitrany argued that international organisations arranged on the basis of technical functions are better equipped than nation-states to provide social services for citizens and solve problems. For Mitrany, functionalism offers a 'practical line of action that might overcome the deep-seated division between the needs of material unity and stubborn national loyalties' (cited in Eilstrup-Sangiovanni 2006:24).

It was over the course of the 1950s when multiple meanings of 'integration' and its nature developed. The Prague-born, US scholar Karl Deutsch (1912-1992) understood integration as 'the probability that conflicts will be resolved peacefully' (cited in Eilstrup-Sangiovanni 2006: 7). Deutsch is also linked to the approach of 'transactionalism', which identified increasing cross-boundary exchanges and communications (economic, cultural, tourism) as the drivers of integration (Eilstrup-Sangiovanni 2006; Wiener and Diez 2009).

The eventual launch of European integration in the early 1950s further stimulated the development of the ever expanding approaches to its theorising. There seems to be a clear link between the complexity of the EI process, the EU structure and functioning and the multiplicity of related theoretical conceptualisations (Eilstrup-Sangiovanni 2006; Wiener and Diez 2009; Bache *et al.* 2011). Therefore, an examination of the understanding of the nature of EI in Slovakia's lower secondary education that merely relies on the two categories of supranationalism and intergovernmentalism might appear limited. Nevertheless, this choice can be justified for four specific reasons.

Firstly and most importantly, the core arguments presented here under the umbrella terms of supranationalism and intergovernmentalism, namely, the renunciation of nation-state sovereignty versus its preservation, seem to fuel the resistance towards the

deepening of European integration among a considerable part of the EU public. Secondly, both approaches draw on the central theoretical conceptualisations of EI within academia (neofunctionalism and intergovernmentalism) which continue to have a lasting impact within the relevant field (Wiener and Diez 2009; *Bache et al.* 2011). Thirdly, these terms seem to be an adequate choice as they are well established within academia as well as the political practice of EI. Finally, the application of these two particular approaches has been selected here due to the underlying impact of Renan on this thesis as well as for the sake of clarity and coherence. In fact, as will become obvious from the discussion below, both concepts rely on a wider theoretical discussion of EI. In the case of supranationalism, this includes insights of the paradigms of supranational and multilevel governance as well as policy networks analysis which clearly reveal the influence of neofunctionalism. In relation to intergovernmentalism, this also incorporates arguments known under the term of liberal intergovernmentalism as developed in the 1990s by the US scholar Andrew Moravcsik.

Supranationalism

The history, dynamics and relevant actors of supranationalism

Since the inception of European integration, the terms of supranationalism or supranationality have been endowed with multiple meanings. Semantically derived from the Latin prefix *supra* (above/beyond), supranationalism points to political processes or structures which transcend the frameworks of nation-states. It had been introduced into the EI process through the Treaty of Paris (TP) establishing the European Coal and Steel Community in 1951 (TP 1951; Haas 1968 [1958]: 32). In the early years of EI, supranationalism has occasionally been described as the forerunner of a federal political structure. Contrary to that, Jean Monnet (1888-1979), a French businessman and civil servant and one of the central designers of EI, employed supranationalism as a synonym of federalism (Haas 1968 [1958]: 34). Some scholars also argue that supranationalism is an intergovernmental instrument of decision-making employed within international organisations (Leal-Arcas 2006: 4). According to Haas (1924-2003), a German born US scholar, the theoretical meaning of supranationality is not clear cut. The practical application and objectives of it, however, depends primarily on the human factor: 'on the behaviour of men and group of men' (Haas 1968 [1958]: 59). In the academic discussion of the 1990s, supranationalism has been linked to a governance mode within the European Union (Stone Sweet and Sandholtz 1997).

Although the process of EI was launched in the early 1950s, the historical roots of the notion of European unity might be traced back centuries. The reach of this concept remained limited to relatively small academic and intellectual circles. However, it was a recurring theme of their respective debates and therefore cannot be dismissed entirely as a source of influence on political thoughts and activity. Humanist ideals of peace maintenance incorporating also a global dimension and inter-religious reconciliation, geopolitical calculations or supremacist ideas might all be detected in the history of EI (Gollwitzer 1964; de Rougemont 1966; Fuhrmann 1981).

Despite the pro-European activities as exemplified by Coudenhove-Kalergi's Pan-Europa movement or the proposal for a 'Kind of European Federation' presented by the French Premier Aristide Briand (1862-1932) at the League of Nations in Geneva in 1929, strategies for the political unification of Europe remained unsuccessful until the second half of the twentieth century. Notwithstanding the experience of First World War, national self-determination as the principle of political organisation became the primary force informing political thinking and action during this period.

As already argued (1.2), the origins of EI are disputed by many. Whatever the decisive factor, its launch was eventually approached pragmatically by the representatives of six nation-states: Belgium, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Italy, France and Germany. Economics, the central interest shared by national governments and the then pronounced importance of coal and steel production, was selected as the initial mechanism for integration. The foundation of the ECSC also benefited from the fact that pro-European political and non-political actors held crucial political and economic decision-making positions (Urwin 1995: 46, Haas 1968[1958]: 152-159; 289-291).⁷⁷

The voluntary commitment of the initial six signatories of the Treaty of Paris (1951) to share control of a limited sector of economic production challenged the notion of sovereign nation-states as the main driving force of international relations. At the same time, it also stimulated academic enquiry. Hence, supranationalism as a practical instrument of politics found its theoretical underpinning in the integration theory of neofunctionalism. Drawing on the insights of the forerunners of EI theories (federalism, functionalism and transactionalism), neofunctionalism was originally conceived of as an approach to studying the formation of political communities among sovereign nation-states. Due to its empirical focus on developments in Western Europe, it eventually

⁷⁷For example, Konrad Adenauer (1876-1967) in Germany, Alcide De Gasperi (1881-1954) and Carlo Sforza (1872-1952) in Italy, Paul-Henri Spaak (1899-1972) in Belgium, Joseph Bech (1887-1975) in Luxembourg and Jean Monnet (1888-1979) in France. Adenauer, the German Chancellor (in office 1949-1963) and Carlos Sforza, the Italian pre-war (1920-1921) and post-war (1947-1951) Foreign Minister, became members of the Pan-Europa movement in the inter-war period (Urwin 1995:27-30; Bieber 2004:128).

came to be accepted as the first theory of European integration (Haas 1968 [1958]: xxxii; Eilstrup-Sangiovanni 2006; Wiener and Diez 2009; *Bache et al.* 2011). Facilitated by the progress of EI in the 1950s and 1960s, neofunctionalism acquired significant credibility during this period.⁷⁸ Although not a coherent whole and frequently criticised for conceptual insufficiencies, it has provided a number of valid insights in relation to why and how integration occurs and continues (Eilstrup-Sangiovanni 2006:90; Haas 1968 [1958]: xii).

Contrary to the motives of some of the initiators of EI, Haas denied the notion of cultural unity and war experiences as the actual impetus for integration. In keeping with the rationalist theories of International Relations (IR), he sees the specific interests of nation states (e.g. curbing German economic power or Germany's re-integration into international politics) and their convergence on economics as a shared goal as the catalyst for integration (Haas 1968 [1958]: xix). Neofunctionalism does not provide a generally accepted definition of integration. While distinguishing between economic and political integration, it treats the former as the stimulus for the later. As Haas argued, economic integration cannot be separated from political motivations and consequences. Therefore, he focused on the phenomenon of political integration which he defined as:

the process whereby political actors in several distinct national settings are persuaded to shift their loyalties, expectations and political activities toward a new centre, whose institutions possess or demand jurisdiction over the pre-existing national states. The end result of a process of political integration is a new political community, superimposed over the pre-existing ones (Haas, 1968 [1958]: 16).

Leon Lindberg, seen as one of the central proponents of neofunctionalism, conceived of integration in a more guarded manner:

(1) The process whereby nations forego the desire and ability to conduct foreign and domestic policies independently of each other, seeking instead to make joint decisions or to delegate the decision-making process to new central organs: and (2) the process whereby political actors in several distinct settings are persuaded to shift their expectations and political activities to a new centre (Lindberg 1963: 6).

In spite of differences in emphasis, EI is conceptualised by neofunctionalists as a transformative process of pre-existing political structures. The implicit attributes of change and continuity inherent in the process found explicit elaboration in the neofunctionalist analysis of its drivers and dynamics known as 'spill-over'. For neofunctionalists, pluralism is an inherent quality of political communities which, in (Western) Europe, take the form of nation-states. Therefore, being defined by pluralism,

⁷⁸ Ernst Haas, Leon Lindberg, Stuart Scheingold, Philippe Schmitter and Joseph Nye are regarded as the central proponents of neofunctionalism (Eilstrup-Sangiovanni 2006; Wiener and Diez 2009).

unlike rationalist theories, neofunctionalism does not treat them as static or uniform entities resistant to change. On the contrary, it highlights the multiplicity of organised political actors engaging in political actions (Haas 1968 [1958]: 3-11). On the other hand, and in a similar vein to rationalist theories, neofunctionalism regards political interest groups as rational and motivated by self-interest. Assuming their ability to learn and to recognise the limitations of domestic frameworks for achieving their objectives, an incremental change, 'fragmentation' (Haas 1968 [1958]: 350) occurs in the attitudes and behaviour of political agents. As a consequence, national interest groups, by establishing transnational contacts, networks and supranational institutions, widen their space of action and transform into supranational agents with their own agenda. Motivated not by ideological or idealistic values but by economic and political interests, political forces organised at the supranational level sustain and drive the integration process (Haas 1968 [1958]; Eilstrup-Sangiovanni 2006: 92-93). Moreover, a gradual harmonisation or convergence of interests emerges as the precondition of continuous integration.

Unlike the rationalist theory dominating the academic analysis of international relations in the 1950s, neofunctionalism highlights the relevance of multiple actors participating in politics. On the other hand, the neofunctionalist focus also remains reductionist in this context as it is limited to political elites. These are associated with the leaders of governments (high government officials), trade associations, trade unions and political parties. The exclusion of public opinion as a factor of integration was justified by the technocratic nature of the integration process and hence the indifferent attitudes of wider segments of society in its proceedings (Haas 1968 [1958]: 17-18; Niemann and Schmitter 2009).

The actual mechanism of the assumed self-sustaining process of integration is captured in the notion of the 'expansive logic of sector integration' better known under the short term of 'spill over' which Haas applied interchangeably (Haas 1968 [1958]: Chapter 8). Based on the interdependence of the economic system, economic integration gradually spreads from sector to sector and, due to its inherent political nature, also eventually spills over to the political realm (Haas 1968 [1958]: 12; Chapter 8). As Haas argued:

it is as inconceivable that this form of co-operation should not result in new patterns of profound interdependence as it is unlikely that the General Common Market can avoid a species of political federalism in order to function as an economic organ (Haas 1968 [1958]: 317).

In a similar fashion, Lindberg emphasised the elimination of tariff barriers within the European Economic Community (EEC, established by Treaty of Rome 1957) and the

likelihood of harmonisation of economic and taxation policies (Eilstrup-Sangiovanni 2006: 94).⁷⁹ In relation to the political role of supranational institutions in the integration process, he focused on the Commission's practices of networking with national civil officials and other interest groups, which would eventually result in their 'informal co-optation' and facilitate the materialisation of European strategies. This was later described in the literature as 'cultivated spillover' (Niemann and Schmitter 2009: 50). In addition to the functional (sector), which is political and cultivated, a geographical spillover also occurs according to neofunctionalism. Discussed initially by Haas in relation to British attitudes towards the ECSC, EEC and Euratom, geographical spill-over was elaborated more extensively in later literature in order to account for subsequent enlargements (Haas 1968 [1958]: Chapter 8; Bache *et al.* 2011: 9).

Developments in the 1960s, the Empty Chair crisis (1965/1966) and its concomitant, the Luxembourg Compromise (1966)⁸⁰, the stagnation of integration during the 1970s and early 1980s known as the period of Eurosclerosis, seriously undermined the authority of neofunctionalist claims. However, following the relaunching of integrationist activities marked by the Single European Act (SEA 1986) and the Maastricht Treaty (1992), which provided a schedule for completion of the internal market and the creation of economic and monetary union respectively, the insights of neofunctionalism proved to be influential once more particularly in relation to discussions on EU governance (Marks *et al.* 1996; Stone Sweet and Sandholtz 1998; Eilstrup-Sangiovanni 2006: 181-185).

Supranationalism and the outcomes of integration

Neofunctionalism analysed the issues of why and how economic and political integration evolves. Scholarship during later decades shifted the focus to the established realities, namely the European Economic Community which, following the adoption of the TEU, became the European Union. Taking the EU as a given, questions of its nature and functioning have come to the forefront of academic investigations since the late 1980s (Marks *et al.* 1996; Hix 2011). Covering a wider range of discussions, 'governance approaches' dispute, like neofunctionalism in earlier decades, the monopolist position of nation-states in the process of EI and the daily operations of the EU (Marks *et al.* 1996; Stone Sweet and Sandholtz 1998; Hooghe and Marks 2008; Peterson 2009). The existence and influence of further interest groups (public, private, governmental, non-

⁷⁹ For EEC, see also to the footnote No.2 on p.13 in this dissertation.

⁸⁰ In an attempt to hinder the introduction of majority voting in January 1966, France, under the leadership of Charles De Gaulle (1890-1970), withdrew from the Council of Ministers in July 1965 and abstained from decision-making for several months. Since decision-making in the Council was based on unanimity voting, the so-called 'empty chair' crisis seriously undermined the effectiveness of the Community and its supranational influence. The 'compromise of Luxembourg' of January 1966 allowing for de facto continuance of unanimity rule due to the introduction of veto rights on issues of vital national interests, settled the crisis (Urwin 1995: 107-115).

governmental) which, due to their mutuality and interdependence, operate freely of governmental control, is acknowledged (Marks *et al.* 1996; Peterson 2009) or, in some instances, viewed as a superior authority (Stone Sweet and Sandholtz 1998). The process of EI is conceived of, therefore, as a transformative influence triggering the development of a post-national political community in which interests are channelled and managed through multiple, interconnected levels of governance: subnational (regions), national (states) and supranational: European Commission, European Parliament (EP), European Court of Justice (ECJ). These might further interact with additional political players (for example industry specialists, academics and so on) and create together policy networks of experts of both national and international provenance (Marks *et al.* 1996; Peterson 2009).

Although lacking a widely accepted definition, governance in relation to EI is interpreted as the 'capacity of the EU to govern effectively' (Peters and Pierre 2009: 91) or, as Stone Sweet and Sandholtz phrased it, 'the competence of the EC to make binding rules in any given policy sector' (Stone Sweet and Sandholtz 1997: 297). Governance approaches do not dismiss the role of national governments in the EU or EI process as irrelevant. Instead this is classified as participatory but not exclusive:

Multilevel governance does not confront the sovereignty of states directly. Instead of being explicitly challenged, states in the European Union are being melded gently into a multi-level polity by their leaders and the actions of numerous subnational and supranational actors (Marks and *et al.* 1996: 371).

In a more categorical manner Stone Sweet and Sandholtz argued that supranational governance unambiguously diminishes the political powers of national governments. This results from the acceleration of transnational activities, which by virtue of increasing the costs of diverse national regulations, stimulate correlated regulatory activities at both the supranational and national levels. Derived from this, there are three constitutive elements upon which supranational governance rests. First, there is the 'transnational society' which includes non-governmental actors (social, economic and political) who participate in transnational activities and channel their interests and influence through the supranational level. The second feature relates to supranational rules. Following the demands of transnational actors, both national and supranational representatives are urged to design suitable regulatory frameworks for their activities. Finally, the third defining component of supranational governance refers to supranational institutions such as European Commission, EP, ECJ which 'produce, execute, and interpret' rules (Stone Sweet and Sandholtz 1998: 3-9).

Supranational governance can then be understood as the exercise of ultimate authority by supranational institutions which 'possess jurisdiction over a specific policy domain within the territory comprised by the member-states' (Stone Sweet and Sandholtz 1998: 8). Although not spread evenly across all policies areas, such competencies include restrictions on governmental actions within the policy field in question. As a result, government control is reduced (Sandholtz and Stone Sweet 1998).

For a variety of reasons, the delegation of decision-making powers from the national to the supranational level is eased. Member states are willing to reduce their sovereignty when the political benefits of efficient delivery of demands compensate satisfactorily for the costs of sovereignty transfer (e.g. agricultural subsidies). A genuine disposition of national governments, for instance in relation to environmental policies, might also play a role in sovereignty transfer. Moreover, substitutive factors, such as path dependency ensuing from the institutionalisation of intended or unintended consequences of past decisions, equally contribute to the transformation of the capacity of the nation-state to act uncompromisingly (Marks *et al.* 1996: 348-356; Stone Sweet and Sandholtz 1998: 11-20).

As previously indicated (1.2), the finality issue of EI is not a recent topic. Relevant ideas have emerged, particularly in the wake of Empty Chair Crisis (1965/66) and the first enlargement of 1973, which brought more sceptical countries into the community (UK, Denmark). These have been taking shape in the form of flexible integration or the multispeed concepts. The 'Core Europe' (1994), as proposed by the German politicians W. Schäuble and K.Lamers⁸¹ or the call for European Federation a few years later by the former foreign minister of Germany, Joschka Fischer (2000), received due attention within wider political, academic and also public circles. Although not without their opponents, related proposals followed.⁸²

The most recent economic and financial crisis (2008) has generated considerable dissatisfaction with the European project. Yet, at the same time, it has also been embraced by the pro-European public and political practitioners as an opportunity to bring to completion the long-term transformation of Europe (1.2). As two representatives of the latter group argued passionately:

⁸¹ Schäuble-Lamers Paper (Stub 1996).

⁸²The list of propositions includes a number of names in European politics: the former French Prime Minister, E. Balladur (1993-1995), J. Delors, the president of the European Commission (1985-1994), the French President J. Chirac (1995-2007), Guy Verhofstad, the former Prime Minister of Belgium (1999-2008) and current leader of the EP Liberals and co-initiator of the Spinelli Group, the EP alliance of European Federalist or Andrew Duff, the British Liberal and member of the EP (Wall *et al.* 2005; Verhofstad 2006; Duff 2011).

Europe must shake off its national demons once and for all. Europe must move on from the navel-gazing of its nations for good. A radical shift is truly needed in Europe. A genuine revolution. A European federal Union must be established. A federal Union which allows Europe to take its place in the forthcoming post-national world as quickly as possible. The heads of state and government who do not realise this are cowardly, lazy and short-sighted. Let us shake them from their inertia. Hold a mirror up to their powerlessness. Not leave them alone for a single day. Let us go forwards to the other Europe, the Europe of the future (Cohn-Bendit and Verhofstadt 2012: 71).⁸³

Intergovernmentalism

The history, dynamics and relevant actors of intergovernmentalism

In a similar vein to supranationalism, intergovernmentalism has been associated with a variety of meanings. Derived from the Latin prefix *inter* (between), the term clearly indicates its relation to matters between governments. The origin of the concept is linked to the political sciences and Stanley Hoffmann, the French-educated US scholar and his critique of neofunctionalism developed in the 1960s. Intergovernmentalism is typically understood as a theory of EI which emphasises the role of national governments in the integration process. At the same time, it is also seen as a method of political practice applied by member states within the EU (Moravcsik and Schimmelfenning 2009; Spinelli Group 2010).

As with the idea of European unity, there is an ongoing notion of nation-states as the sole, legitimate foundation of political power. Whereas the early medieval chroniclers celebrated Charlemagne (742-814) as the father of Europe, '*pater Europae*', and referred to the territory of his political influence as Europe or the kingdom of Charles, '*Europa vel regnum Caroli*' (de Rougemont 1966: 46), historical developments also allow for an interpretation of the past from a national perspective (Fuhrmann 1981; de Rougemont 1966). The historical roots of the contemporary international system are usually associated with the Peace of Westphalia (1648) which concluded the Thirty Years War in Europe (1618-1648). Preceded by thousands of years of coexistence by heterogeneous territorialised forms of political organisations (tribes, city-states, monarchies, principalities, empires), the Peace of Westphalia marked a significant change. It anchored the principle of territorial integrity and also the concept of the state as the sole, unitary and sovereign institutional agent in the political praxis (Opello and Rosow 2004).

⁸³ For Cohn-Bendit and Verhofstad (2012) a genuine European Federation is the creation of a European government equipped with authority over economic, budgetary and fiscal policies (own financial resources derived from direct taxes), a European Parliament answerable to the European electorate and a European Senate representing member states .

The notion of an autonomous (sovereign) exercise of power within clearly delineated territory, associated initially with a monarch as its legitimate bearer, took a firm hold in political thinking and practice after 1648 (Opello and Rosow 2004). Facilitated by the broader process of modernisation of the agrarian structure of Europe, the late eighteenth and nineteenth century saw the gradual replacement of the former theorem with a new concept of popular sovereignty and the ideology of nationalism as the dominant principle of political thinking and practice. Consequently, the notion of nation-states as the optimal framework of political organisation and main political force was established and resulted in their formation within and also beyond the borders of Europe. Therefore, it is not surprising that this political reality has also impacted on studies of European integration evolving since the second half of the twentieth century.

In spite of some overlaps, particularly in relation to economic interests as a salient factor of integration, intergovernmentalism differs in a number of aspects from the neofunctionalist perspective. Drawing on the intellectual legacy of realism within the scholarship of IR, and in stark contrast to supranationalist assumptions, intergovernmentalism ascribed the central role to nation-states in the process of EI (Hoffmann 1966; Hansen [1969] in Eilstrup-Sangiovanni 2006). A number of early criticisms of neofunctionalism had been raised by Stanley Hoffmann, as previously mentioned.

Following his line of argument developed in the 1960s, Hoffmann regarded the main shortcoming of neofunctionalism as the misguided assessment of the status of nation-states in the integration process. Evaluating the assumptions of a self-sustaining dynamic of integration and the eventual political spill-over as highly optimistic, Hoffmann identified two missing, but critical, aspects of the integration process. As he argued, external influences (for example, the Cold War) and potential shifts in domestic environments (for instance, the election of President de Gaulle in France) are critical aspects missing from supranationalist analyses. In addition, the absence of differentiation between 'high' and 'low' politics leads to a misreading of the nature of integration. While governments might be willing to surrender their sovereignty in unproblematic areas (economic co-operation) in order to deliver welfare demands, they are very unlikely to follow the same path in those domains directly related to the highly sensitive issues of security or defence policies (Hoffmann 1966; Hansen [1969] in Eilstrup-Sangiovanni 2006).

A rather similar line of argument was offered by the British historian Alan Milward (1935-2010). Being an historian, Milward emphasised the critical position of history in any

serious analysis of socio-political phenomena. Departing from the rigorous evaluation of industrial production and trade statistics, he developed his realist perspective on European integration principally in two publications, *The Reconstruction of Western Europe, 1945-51* (1984) and in *The European Rescue of the Nation-State* (1992). As he argued, European integration is not an instrument of transformation of Europe controlled by supranationalists. Rather, this is conceived of as a vehicle driven by national governments towards the ultimate goal of post-war reconstruction, or in the words of Milward, the 'rescuing' of the nation-state. Milward regarded the economic motivation of Western European nation-states as the major force behind European integration. Economic co-operation within Western Europe was established to secure sufficient economic means which would enable nation-states to finance welfare provisions. In this way, so Milward argues, national governments aimed to regain the allegiance of their citizens which had been significantly compromised in the inter-war and war periods of the first half of the twentieth century. Rather than the beginning of a new, supranational political order being associated with European integration, Milward sees this as a further stage in the history of the nation-state (Milward 2000 [1992]; Newman 2012).

Milward's account of EI was not the last in the realist tradition to contest the supranationalist objectives of eventual outcomes of integration and also dispute the impact of values and ideals on the process of EI. In the early 1990s, Andrew Moravcsik, a US scholar, also formed his ideas along the lines of the rationalist tradition of IR. Introduced in an article in 1993 as 'liberal intergovernmentalism', Moravcsik developed his perspective on EI by utilising insights of multiple theories of political science. Conceived of as a comprehensive, 'grand theory', liberal intergovernmentalism is a 'multi-causal' approach seeking to trace the trajectory of EI over time by focusing on its essentials (Moravcsik 1993; Moravcsik and Schimmelfenning 2009).

As in Hoffmann's and Milward's accounts, it also rests upon two main assumptions: states are the main actors in politics and are rational. Derived from this, integration might be explained as a three-stage process. States as rational actors recognise their interdependence and unleash integration. Starting with preference formation, integration progresses through interstate bargaining to the institutionalisation of achieved results. Moravcsik acknowledges shifts and limits in the selection of national (internal) priorities, which also evolve under the influence of changeable external, geopolitical realities. Equally, he also pays attention to the variety of bargaining positions among national governments based on 'asymmetrical interdependence'. As Moravcsik argued, integration results from 'the economic interests of powerful domestic constituents, the relative power of each state in the international system, and the role of international institutions' (Moravcsik 1998: 18).

Intergovernmentalism associates the establishment and functioning of European institutions with the outcomes of intergovernmental bargains. In line with rationalist institutionalism as discussed within the scholarship of IR, liberal intergovernmentalism ascribes supranational institutions the role of safeguarding the agreed outcomes of interstate negotiations. Hence, the supranational level of governance does not ensue from autonomous behaviour by transnational interests groups. Rather, this is rooted in the principal-agent relationship. In other words, supranational institutions do not act independently but on behalf of nation-states (Moravcsik and Schimmelfennig 2009).

In relation to the finality question of EI, intergovernmentalists refuse to see the contemporary EU as the precursor to an eventual political union. Moravcsik describes the results of EI in a highly positive manner as 'the most ambitious and successful example of voluntary international co-operation in world history' (Moravcsik 2012: 68). At the same time, he underlines that integration has reached a stage of maturity which only requires to be maintained. This in turn is necessary to ensure the continuity of the nation-state system in Europe (Moravcsik and Schimmelfennig 2009: 83-84). In other words, EI continues to be seen as an intergovernmental instrument of co-operation within Europe which is administered through the supranational level, the EU institutions. As Moravcsik argued categorically:

The movement toward the "ever-closer union" of which the E.U.'s founding fathers dreamed when they signed the Treaty of Rome in 1957 will have to stop at some point; there will never be an all-encompassing European federal state. But within the increasingly clear mandate of a stable constitutional settlement, Europe will continue to respond boldly to the challenges of an increasingly interdependent world (Moravcsik 2012: 68).

Analytical framework: the EI dimension and its central aspects

The nature of European integration, the role of the EU and the future shape of Europe remain academically, politically and publically contested. The validity and robustness of the insights presented in this dissertation under the two concepts of supranationalism and intergovernmentalism have been frequently challenged. A number of shortcomings have been highlighted over many years of academic discussion of the integration process. The main criticism in relation to neofunctionalism focused on the overstated impact of transnational actors and insufficient attention to shifts in domestic and international developments. Intergovernmentalism, on the other hand, was judged unfavourably, predominantly due to its overemphasis on the power of nation-states and dismissal of the impact of additional political interest groups or the significance of ideals

and values. Although both approaches have received a comparable share of criticism, the lasting impact of their insights in regard to the scholarship of EI is widely accepted within academia (Wiener and Diez 2009; Bache *et al.* 2011).

The objective of the second part of this chapter was not to decide upon the conceptual superiority of either approach to EI. Nor was it the ambition to develop a revised or completely new concept of integration. Instead, this is an attempt to utilise existing, available insights to create a coherent and practical analytical tool which will be applied to the case study of lower level of secondary education in Slovakia. Consequently, in this dissertation, supranationalism is conceived of as an instrument of post-national transformation of Europe. It is historically linked to the notion of Europe being a socio-cultural and geopolitical unity and advocates the dismantling of nation-states' sovereignty and the eventual establishment of a singular political organisation within Europe (e.g. European Federation). In addition, it draws attention to supranational political actors and interest groups, e.g. European Commission, ECJ, EP or non-governmental organisations and networks, as the relevant political forces which impact on the process of EI and EU functioning. The EU is then interpreted the institutional structure of post-national governance of Europe.

In a similar vein, intergovernmentalism is applied here as a coherent and concise conceptualisation of European integration. It is historically connected to the understanding of Europe as a geographical area filled by distinct nations and nation-states and considers the latter the main driving force of the integration process. Consequently, EI is defined as an instrument of intergovernmental co-operation controlled by member states which engage in and support its development in order to reinforce and maintain their political powers. Hence, the European Union is seen as a platform of interstate co-operation within clearly defined areas of competencies.

Table 3 below presents the essential aspects of both paradigms summarised in this dissertation under the umbrella terms of supranationalism and intergovernmentalism. These categories will be used as a guide for evaluating the presentation of EI in the relevant curricula and textbooks for history education, geography and civics, and also in teachers' and students' views.

Table 3: Analytical Framework – EI Dimension

| SUPRANATIONALISM | INTERGOVERNMENTALISM |
|--|--|
| <p>Europe socio-cultural and geopolitical unity</p> | <p>Europe geographical area of multiple nations and nation states</p> |
| <p>EI instrument of post-national transformation of Europe</p> | <p>EI instrument of interstate co-operation in Europe</p> |
| <p>Sovereignty of nation-states dismantlement</p> | <p>Sovereignty of nation-states preservation</p> |
| <p>Relevant political actors supranational interest groups and institutions</p> | <p>Relevant political actors national governments</p> |
| <p>EU institutional architecture of post-national governance of Europe</p> | <p>EU platform of interstate co-operation in Europe</p> |
| <p>Future European Federation</p> | <p>Future status quo: continuity of nation-states</p> |

Summary

The second chapter of the methodological section of this thesis was dedicated to the development of a practical analytical instrument for the empirical examination of the conceptual tendencies in the understanding of the nature of nations and EI in lower secondary education in Slovakia. Subdivided into two sections, it focused first on the national dimension by identifying and discussing the central arguments in the three main paradigms of the scholarship of nationalism, namely, primordialism, constructivism and ethno-symbolism. The chapter subsequently turned to the EI dimension of the analytical model and introduced the key elements of two concepts, supranationalism and intergovernmentalism. Before focusing on the analysis, a detailed outline of the empirical research design will be provided in the next chapter.

2.3 Empirical research design

Introduction

This chapter describes the empirical research design, the data sources that were utilised, the instruments and process of data gathering and how the data was analysed. It begins with a brief outline of the curricular changes introduced in Slovakia in 2008 most relevant to this thesis, and then discusses the rationale for selecting the lower secondary education as a case study. This is followed by an account of the primary sources that were used and the tools and procedure of data collection applied in the empirical examination. The chapter concludes with a description of the approach utilised for data analysis.

A case study: lower secondary education

As previously stated (2.1), the most relevant innovation of the Educational Law of 2008 in the context of this thesis is the introduction of a two-dimensional Educational Programme from pre-primary to upper secondary education (EL 2008; SEP-ISCED 2, 2011). The first dimension of this educational programme, described as the 'State Educational Programme' (SEP), is defined as the authoritative and binding conceptualisation of education and constitutes the compulsory national curriculum. It is designed by experts of the National Institute of Education in conjunction with other pedagogic professionals (academics, teachers) and approved by the Ministry of Education. At the lower secondary level (elementary school, grades 5-9, ages 11-15)⁸⁴ which is the focus of this analysis, the SEP comprises eight educational areas of inter-related school subjects. Table 4 below provides a comprehensive overview of the SEP developed for the lower secondary education.

⁸⁴For the sake of clarity and to avoid double referencing, the age categories do not indicate the age at which students enter the respective grades but the age reached in the course of it.

Table 4: SEP - Lower Secondary Education

| Educational areas | School Subjects | Number of lessons for grades 5-9 (in total, per week) |
|---|---------------------------------|---|
| Language and Communication | Slovak Language and Literature | 23 |
| | First Foreign Language | 15 |
| | Second Foreign Language | 4 |
| | | 42 |
| People and Nature | Physics | 5 |
| | Chemistry | 4 |
| | Biology | 5 |
| | | 14 |
| People and Society | History | 6 |
| | Geography | 5 |
| | Civics | 4 |
| | | 15 |
| People and Values | Ethics / Religion ⁸⁵ | 4 |
| | | 4 |
| Mathematics and Application of Information | Mathematics | 19 |
| | Information Technology | 2 |
| | | 21 |
| People and the World of Labour | World of Labour | 1 |
| | Technology | 1 |
| | | 2 |
| Art and Culture | Musical Education | 3 |
| | Art Education | 3 |
| | Aesthetics Education | 1 |
| | | 7 |
| Health and Exercise | Physical and Sport Education | 10 |
| | | 10 |
| Compulsory lessons | | 115 |
| Optional lessons | | 31 |
| Total number of lessons⁸⁶ | | 146 |

Source: RUP-ISCED 2 (2011)

The SEP sets the minimum number of compulsory lessons for each subject and the maximum total lessons for all educational areas within grades 5-9. The second dimension of the educational programme is described as the 'School Educational Programme'. This gives individual schools the opportunity to create their own, specific profiles. In doing so, schools are free to decide how to utilise the lesson allowance above the obligatory minimum by adding an emphasis to particular subjects of their choice e.g. foreign languages, sport, art or natural sciences and technology. They might

⁸⁵ Students (parents) have the option to choose between Religion or Ethics.

⁸⁶ Maximum number of lessons might be increased to 161 with the authorisation of the Ministry (SEP-ISCED 2, 2011).

also create new school subjects such as regional history (EL 2008; SEP-ISCED 2, 2011).

The empirical analysis that is the basis of this thesis is based on a qualitative case study of lower secondary education in Slovakia (ages 11-15). The rationale for a case-study approach, and for selecting this particular phase of education, is set out in this section. First, instead of seeking to confirm a specific hypothesis, this thesis aims to identify and analyse conceptual trends in the understanding of the nature of nations and European integration. A qualitative approach that is flexible and open-ended seems optimal for such exploratory research. In addition, a case study focusing on one particular educational level was adopted in order to facilitate in-depth engagement with the research questions (Yin 2009; Krueger and Casey 2009).

More specifically, the lower secondary level has been selected because the teaching of national identity and European integration is addressed in a more systematic and extensive manner at this stage than at the primary level of education. More importantly, although educational differentiation begins in Slovakia at the age of 12 at grade six (when there is an optional transfer to eight grade gymnasias),⁸⁷ the curricular content does not diversify until the upper secondary level. Accordingly, all students follow an identical compulsory curriculum until the completion of their lower secondary education at the age of 15, regardless of the type of school that they attend.

Data sources and instruments of data gathering

Despite the controversies surrounding the role of the curriculum and of textbooks among academics and educational practitioners, both remain central aspects of formal schooling. Curricula underlie the teaching process and textbooks are seen as their 'dominant translations' (Repoussi and Tutiaux-Guillon 2010: 156) and both continue to be an integral component of pedagogic practices (Issitt 2004; Repoussi and Tutiaux-Guillon 2010; Korostelina *et al.* 2013). In Slovakia, as already argued, the issues of national identity and European integration are addressed most extensively in lower secondary education within the subjects of history education, geography and civics, which together build the educational area referred to as 'People and Society.' The data analysed for this study was therefore derived from curricula and textbooks for all three of these subjects.

Teachers have an even more crucial role in education, as they facilitate the implementation and transmission of the selected and centrally authorised content of

⁸⁷ Please refer to Annex 2, p.255 for more details on Slovakia's schooling system.

instruction. Based on their knowledge and experience, they might display approval or disapproval of both curricula and textbooks (Kmeť 2010; Lässig 2013). There are also studies which indicate that teachers' values and beliefs are influential in the teaching process (Wilkins 2005; Rubie-Davies *et al.* 2012). Moreover, some studies suggest that students seem to display trust in teachers' opinions about historical phenomena and also acknowledge their interest in school subjects such as history (Angvik and von Borries 1997; Bocková 2008).

Therefore, gaining an insight into both teachers' and students' views of national identity and European integration will be useful and significant for this study. The data sources used include both the views of teachers with relevant qualifications (history education, geography and civics) and those of students aged 12-15. These were gathered by using one-to-one interviews, focus group discussions (2-5 participants) and small and large group interviews (2-4 and 14-26 participants respectively). A more detailed description of all sources of analysis and the instruments of the actual data collection is provided below.

Curricula and textbooks

As already highlighted, following the latest education reform of 2008, the national curriculum of Slovakia (SEP) has been regarded as binding by the central educational administration. At the lower secondary level, it is summarised within one central document and complemented by separate, subject-specific supplements. These elaborate in more detail the actual content of each subject, alongside the knowledge and abilities students are expected to develop through the learning process. In this respect, a central curricular document for the subject area of 'People and Society' together with three separate supplements for history, geography and civics were collected for the analysis.

Textbook production in Slovakia is centrally organised and overseen by the Ministry of Education. In practice, the National Institute of Education evaluates textbook proposals which are then approved by the Ministry as the highest educational authority.⁸⁸ Therefore, textbook authors must comply with the content and objectives as defined in the official education plan. There are two broad categories of textbooks in Slovakia, described as 'authorised' and 'recommended'. The Ministry finances the publication, delivery and provision of the first category to students, while 'recommended' textbooks must be paid for by schools or parents. In theory, schools in Slovakia are able to select

⁸⁸ A textbook 'licence' is issued, as a rule, for the period of four years (Guideline 10/2011). All textbooks analysed in this thesis received a licence of five years.

textbooks of their choice (Guideline 10/2011), but in practice multiple and complete sets of textbooks in both categories (authorised and recommended) for the three subjects analysed in this thesis were not available for classes in the period of the completion of this thesis (academic year of 2012/2013) (ATB 2012; RTB 2012).⁸⁹ Due to the financial arrangements for textbook provision and the absence of alternative and complete sets of books, it seems very likely that most schools are using 'authorised' textbooks that were published in Slovakia in the period of 2009-2012. Only these titles will be considered in this thesis.⁹⁰

The textbooks of all three subjects analysed in this thesis follow a comparable didactic structure. Each chapter in history, geography and civics is divided into two basic parts, the explanatory and practical. The actual theme is introduced and explained to students within the first section. The explanatory text of any single chapter is also accompanied by secondary, brief text additions which provide concise, encyclopaedic descriptions of terms (e.g. nationalism or integration), biographical references of people or commentaries on image materials (pictures, maps, tables) included. The second, practical part of each chapter then comprises multiple tasks or questions that students are expected to complete in order to apply and demonstrate the knowledge gained. It also includes excerpts of primary sources (mostly in history). In practice, it is then the teacher who selects the exercise activities to be performed by students.

The textbook analysis, to follow in later chapters (3.1.2 and 3.1.3), takes into consideration the complete texts, including both explanatory and practical sections. To make the sources of quotations understandable, I use an English translation for the relevant textbooks accompanied by a number as a reference to the relevant school grade: e.g. 'History 6/1, 2009' indicates that a referenced textbook is used in the sixth grade of elementary school (grades 1-9) and in the first grade of eight years gymnasias.⁹¹

Teachers

Given the exploratory character of the empirical research and practical limitations in relation to the availability of research participants, I did not intend to collect representative data. Therefore, the sampling strategy I used might best be described as opportunity sampling (Cohen *et al.*, 2011: Chapter 8): I relied on personal networks of

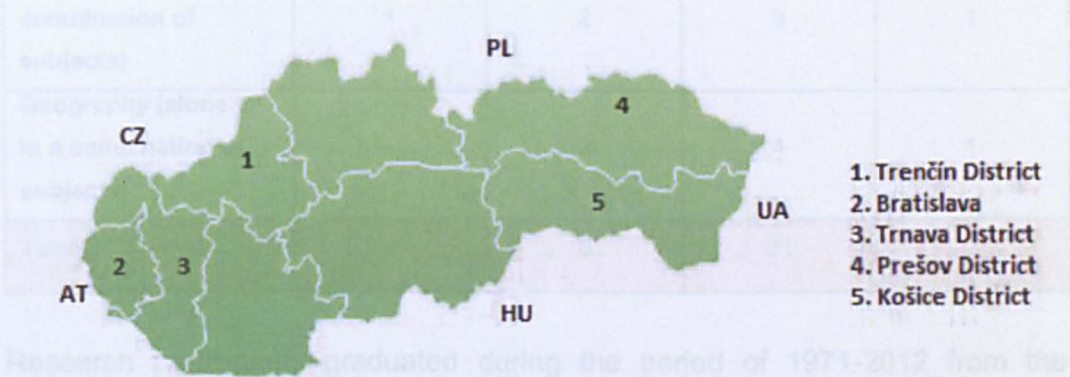
⁸⁹ In the category of 'recommended' textbooks, one complete set (grades 5-9) of geography textbooks became available in the academic year 2012/2013. In 2011, a 'recommended' textbook for history, grade five was published (ATB 2012, RTB 2012).

⁹⁰ Please refer to 'Primary Sources-Slovak Documentation' in 'References' for the complete set of textbooks used here.

⁹¹ Please refer to Annex 2, p.255 for a concise overview of the educational structure and institutions in Slovakia.

family and friends to gain access to participants among teachers in Slovakia. As I come from the Trenčín district, the majority of participants were drawn from the mid-west region of Slovakia. Nevertheless, the whole sample also includes respondents from other urban and rural locations in the following areas: the Trnava district and the capital city of Bratislava (both located in the south) and the districts of Košice and Prešov (in the east) of Slovakia. The Map 1 below displays the areas of conducted fieldwork.

Map 1: Areas of Fieldwork (Teachers)



In total, thirty one teachers (six males and 25 females) between the ages of 27 and 60 participated in the research. This also includes one participant from a pilot study which preceded the empirical research (March 2011). The fieldwork was then conducted in two phases. During the first period of data gathering (May-June 2011) I approached 19 teachers (four males and 15 females). A preliminary analysis of data related to EI revealed a need for supplementary information in order to obtain more accurate results. Additional one-to-one interviews (six) and focus group discussions (two) were conducted during a subsequent period (April-May 2012).

During this second cycle of data collection, 11 teachers in total (two males and nine females) from the lower level of secondary education (students' age 11-15) were added to the sample. In addition, four participants from the first cycle were contacted anew in order to obtain extra information. Table 5 below summarises the total number of teachers, their professional qualification and regional location of employment.

Table 5: Number of Teachers by Qualification and Region of Employment

| Subject (s) Combination | Region | | | |
|---|------------|--------------------|---------------------|-----------------------------------|
| | Bratislava | Trnava District | Trenčín District | Prešov and Košice Districts |
| Civics (alone or in a combination of subjects) | 1 | 1 | 8 | 1 |
| History (alone or in a combination of subjects) | 1 | 2 | 9 | 1 |
| Geography (alone or in a combination of subjects) | | 2 | 4 | 1 |
| Total | 2 | 5 | 21 | 3 |

Research participants graduated during the period of 1971-2012 from the various institutions of tertiary education which provide pre-service teacher training in Slovakia in these specific school subjects. Table 6 below summarises the number of teachers by their university and period of graduation.

Table 6: Number of Teachers by University and Period of Graduation

| University | Number of Teachers by Period of Graduation | | | |
|--|--|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| | 1971-1980 | 1981-1990 | 1991-2000 | 2001-2012 |
| Catholic University Ružomberok | | | | 2 |
| Comenius University Bratislava | | 3 | 1 | 4 |
| Comenius University Trnava | 5 | 1 | | |
| Matej Bell University Banská Bystrica | | 3 | | 2 |
| Trnava University in Trnava | | | | 1 |
| University of Konštantín Philosoph Nitra | | | 3 | 4 |
| University of Prešov | | | 1 | 1 |
| Total | 5 | 7 | 5 | 14 |

In total, I conducted seven focus group discussions (FG) with teachers. Each group comprised between two and five participants. I also talked to 12 teachers in one-to-one

interviews (OOI). Table 7 below provides an overview of all focus group discussions and one-to-one interviews by year of data gathering, number and gender of participants.

Table 7: FG and OOI (2011 and 2012)

| Method (Year) | Gender | |
|---------------|-----------|----------|
| | Female | Male |
| FG-2 (2011) | 2 | |
| FG-2 (2011) | 1 | 1 |
| FG-2 (2011) | 2 | |
| FG-3 (2011) | 3 | |
| FG-5 (2011) | 3 | 2 |
| FG-2 (2012) | 2 | |
| FG-3 (2012) | 2 | 1 |
| OOI (2011) | | 1 |
| OOI (2011) | 5 | |
| OOI (2012) | 5 | 1 |
| Total | 25 | 6 |

The procedure of data collection applied was flexible as I was relying on opportunity sampling, and was the result of practical necessity. The original design of the thesis intended to focus on both the lower and upper levels of secondary education. Therefore, the complete sample includes 26 teachers from the lower secondary level and five from the upper secondary level (students' ages 11-15 and 15-19 respectively). As the research progressed, the initial objective was adjusted to concentrate on the rich data from the lower secondary education. Nevertheless, I decided not to exclude the smaller unit of five teachers from the whole sample. The first reason was the nature of teachers' education in Slovakia, where there is no difference in the pre-service training in general subjects such as history, civics and geography between teachers at lower and upper secondary level. Secondly, I did not wish to leave valuable data unutilised.

Students

As with the teachers, I used opportunity sampling. The whole sample is best described as varied, and comprises students from the lower secondary education (ages 12-15)

from both urban and rural areas of Slovakia. The majority came from the Trenčín district but also includes students from the Trnava district in the south and Košice and Prešov districts in the east of Slovakia. Map 2 below displays the regions where I conducted interviews with students.

Map 2: Areas of Fieldwork (Students)



Preceded by two pilot studies (March 2011 - not included in the total count of participants), the fieldwork with students was conducted in two stages.⁹² As was the case with teachers, the preliminary analysis of data about European integration demonstrated the need for additional information to gain fuller results. Therefore, in addition to my initial period of data collection during the period of May-June 2011, a second cycle of fieldwork followed between May-October 2012.

The number of students who participated in my research is relatively high when compared to the number of teachers interviewed. In total, I met with 148 students in the 12-15 years age group in conducting my fieldwork (80 boys and 68 girls). Table 8 below displays the total number of students interviewed by region, age and gender.

Table 8: Total Number of Students by Age, Region and Gender

| Grades and Age | Trenčín District | | Trnava District | | Prešov District | | Košice District | |
|------------------|------------------|-----------|-----------------|-------|-----------------|----------|-----------------|-----------|
| | Boys | Girls | Boys | Girls | Boys | Girls | Boys | Girls |
| Grade 6 (age 12) | 23 | 15 | | | | | | |
| Grade 7 (age 13) | 9 | 10 | | | | | | |
| Grade 8 (age 14) | 8 | 9 | 3 | | | | 15 | 11 |
| Grade 9 (age 15) | 20 | 21 | | | 2 | 2 | | |
| Total | 60 | 55 | 3 | | 2 | 2 | 15 | 11 |

⁹² One pilot interview was conducted with a student from the upper level of secondary education and was therefore ultimately discounted. The second pilot interview was completed with one boy from the lower secondary education. However, as this interview did not lead to any particularly significant information, I decided not to include this in the complete count.

This final number was not the outcome of a deliberate strategy, but resulted from unplanned opportunities for interviewing large groups which emerged during the first cycle of my fieldwork. In view of this positive experience, I decided to adopt the same method for the second stage of fieldwork. In the first cycle of data gathering (May-June 2011), I conducted fieldwork with 108 students (59 boys and 49 girls) and in the second phase (May-October 2012), with 40 students (21 boys and 19 girls).

In total, I completed five small group interviews (SGI) of between three and four students aged 13-15. On two of these occasions, which were conducted in formal school settings, a total of four boys and four girls were selected by teachers on the basis of my previously submitted specifications. I had asked teachers to choose students not by their academic achievements, but by their ability to express their views freely. Nevertheless, I felt that an academic bias was perhaps unavoidable in the teachers' selection of the eight students. Three small group interviews which were not pre-selected, and a single one-to-one interview (OOI) were arranged through my personal contacts thereby eliminating any potential academic bias. In these cases, interviews were conducted in informal settings. Table 9 below provides an overview of all small group discussions and one-to-one interviews by year of data gathering, number and gender of participants.

Table 9: SGI and OOI (2011 and 2012)

| Method (Year) | Gender | |
|---------------|-----------|-----------|
| | Boys | Girls |
| SGI-3 (2011) | 3 | |
| SGI-4 (2011) | 2 | 2 |
| SGI-4 (2011) | 2 | 2 |
| SGI-4 (2011) | 2 | 2 |
| SGI-4 (2012) | | 4 |
| OOI (2012) | 1 | |
| Total | 10 | 10 |

I also completed large group interviews (LGI) on seven occasions with whole classes of students across grades 6-9 (ages 12-15). Table 10 below provides an overview of these by year of data gathering, number and gender of participants.

Table 10: LGI (2011 and 2012)

| Method (Year) | Gender | |
|---------------|-----------|-----------|
| | Boys | Girls |
| LGI-20 (2011) | 11 | 9 |
| LGI-17 (2011) | 8 | 9 |
| LGI-14 (2011) | 7 | 7 |
| LGI-16 (2011) | 9 | 7 |
| LGI-26 (2011) | 15 | 11 |
| LGI-18 (2012) | 12 | 6 |
| LGI-17 (2012) | 8 | 9 |
| Total | 70 | 58 |

With the exception of one case, teaching staff were also present during the large group interviews. Initially, I had feared that this might impact negatively on the data as students might not express their views freely. However, contrary to my expectations this proved to be rather fruitful. The presence of a familiar person (the teacher) seemed to diminish the potential unease of the students, none of whom had previous experience of participating in a research project. Moreover, one of the teachers during my first cycle of fieldwork actually assumed the role of a research assistant as she continuously encouraged students to participate and provide answers. Although not all students in these larger groups engaged equally in the discussions, these opportunities proved to be invaluable. As the students were not selected on grounds of academic achievement, I gained particular insight into a wide range of their opinions.

Data validity and collection procedure (teachers and students)

As a considerable part of the empirical research involved teachers and students, ethical issues were considered at the outset. Hence, the validity of data collected was ensured through compliance with ethical research practices. I obtained the appropriate clearance in the early stages of my research studies from the Research Ethics Review Panel of London Metropolitan University (Spring 2010). All teachers and students participated in the empirical research on the basis of their written informed consent and were made aware of the option to withdraw at any time. In the specific case of students, a consent form was signed by either parents or teachers. I also took into consideration a number of further interrelated issues to minimise the risk of data invalidation.

In specific relation to students, I was aware that in order to obtain authentic opinions I needed to pay attention to a number of elements. I was apprehensive of being perceived as a stranger, and also as an adult or figure of authority, both conditions that could potentially affect their willingness to reveal their thoughts and attitudes. As such, I aimed to diminish the potential tensions of the unusual situation being presented to them through initial conversations which were unrelated to the actual research. This was obviously easier to achieve in meetings beyond the formal school setting where a more informal atmosphere could be created with the help of refreshments.

On the other hand, I feel that the collection of data within the school environment did not impact profoundly on the quality. Whilst the situation was rather atypical for students, they were in familiar settings as they spend a considerable part of their daily lives at school in a particular class surrounded by their peers and teachers. In relation to teachers, the process of data gathering was less problematic as an equality basis was easier to establish. It was also helpful, I believe, that all participants were approached through my personal contacts. With a number of teachers in the Trenčín region, communications were also enhanced by my personal background and the fact that I was not a complete stranger to a number of them. In addition, having studied history previously, the collection of data was further simplified by the interrelated interests between research participants and myself.

Drawing on the double-structured analytical model introduced in the previous chapter (2.2), I designed a topic guide for the fieldwork. This helped to initiate and navigate the group discussions and interviews with both teachers and students in order to obtain insights into the conceptual inclinations in their understanding of the nature of nations and European integration. In addition, the topic guide and the pre-prepared open ended questions further enhanced the reliability of collected data as they ensured consistency in the process of data collection irrespective of applied methods. In relation to national identity, the empirical research was guided by six open-ended questions.⁹³ Following the introductory question about teachers' and students' personal nationality, the examination focused on the following aspects:

- **Understanding of nationality and nation**

How do teachers and students understand what nationality and nation is?

⁹³ Please refer to Annexes 3 and 4, pp.256-257 for the topic guides.

- **National character**

Do they believe that national (collective) character exists? What are the typical national traits of the Slovak nation?

- **Antiquity of nation**

How do teachers and students conceive of the Slovak nation in terms of its age?
To what historical period do they trace its origins?

These topics were explored with both teachers and students, with three additional questions put to teachers alone. These focused on their familiarity with the scholarship of nationalism and the presence of this, or otherwise, during their pre-service or in-service training.

Teachers' and students' discussions of European integration were also facilitated with open-ended questions. The issues explored were European (supranational) identity, the evaluation of EI and Slovakia's EU membership and the impact on the sovereignty of Slovakia and the national identity of Slovaks. In addition, I concentrated on issues about support or resistance towards the eventual transformation of the nation-state structure in Europe with both teachers and students. The topics discussed are summarised as follows:

- **Europe and European identity**

Is any degree of European (supranational) self-perception discernible in teachers' and students' opinions? Do they feel they are strictly nationals? Or do they also perceive themselves as Europeans? If so, to what extent? And why?

- **Evaluation of EI and Slovakia's EU membership**

What do teachers and students think of the process of EI? Where do they see advantages or disadvantages in EI? Are they approaching this issue from an instrumentalist perspective rooted in their national affiliation or do their views also display a European (supranational) dimension?

- **Impact of EI on the sovereignty of Slovakia and Slovak national identity⁹⁴**

Is EI perceived as a threat to the sovereignty of Slovakia and the national identity of Slovaks?

⁹⁴ This particular issue was discussed with teachers only. Based on experiences from two pilot interviews and interviewing two small groups, conducted at the beginning of the first cycle of fieldwork, I decided to exclude this particular topic. This proved to be a rather complex (abstract) question for students.

- **Support or resistance for a post- national structure of Europe**

Would teachers and students favour an increase or a deepening of EI? Would they endorse the creation of a genuine European government and the replacement of national parliaments with a single, European one?

As previously mentioned, I conducted my fieldwork in two cycles. One point ought to be highlighted in this context. The final question, which sought to explore the support for or resistance towards a post-national Europe, was used only during the second cycle of my research. Consequently, 15 teachers provided their views on this, while 16 respondents in the first stage of my fieldwork did not receive this question. In the case of the students, relevant data was derived from discussions with 40 of them in total (aged 12-15).

The conversations lasted between 20 and 45 minutes, although in two cases conversations with teachers lasted up to two hours. All were recorded and transcribed in Slovak. As the majority of my research participants do not understand English, the accuracy and authenticity of meanings given by teachers and students in Slovak were validated in translations by a friend with a confident command of English. In addition, two additional interviewees (teachers) who also speak English personally validated the accuracy of their own statements and respective translations. In order to avoid unnecessary linguistic confusion between English and Slovak which could result from nuances in meanings attached to concepts examined in this thesis, I include a clarification sheet (Annex 5, p.258). This clarifies a number of terms relevant for this thesis (e.g. nation, nationality, ethnic, citizenship) as commonly understood in the Slovak language.

As a few participating teachers wished to remain anonymous, all views will be presented in the later chapters by their pseudonyms, the subject they teach (relevant in the context of this thesis), age group and the method by which the data was collected. The names of schools and their precise locations are omitted in the cases of both teachers and students. In order to ensure the anonymity of the students, pseudonyms have been used in the transcriptions and in quotations. Hence, students' opinions will also be quoted by pseudonyms, age and the method of data gathering. Whenever necessary, clarifications will be added in brackets to the given citations. In the case of focus groups or group interviews, a figure indicating the actual number of participants will be also given. For example:

FG-2

Monika, history, age group 30-35

Data analysis

Considering the imperfections and criticism related to all qualitative research methods (Krueger and Casey 2009; Cohen *et al.* 2011; Marshall and Rossman 2011), the combination of methods employed as a result of practical necessity ultimately proved fruitful for this thesis. Firstly, the quality of the information derived from interviews and discussions with teachers and students was improved. In this manner, a number of likely methodological shortcomings, such as discomfort of research participants and potential problems with trust building, eliciting answers in individual interviews or mutual opinion dependency and unbalanced engagement in larger groups, could be offset and minimised (Krueger and Casey 2009; Cohen *et al.* 2011; Marshall and Rossman 2011). Secondly, supplemented with textual sources (curricula and textbooks), the combination of diverse sources of analysis and multiple instruments of data collection ultimately enhanced the reliability of findings.

The analysis of all collected data was based on the method of abductive inference. Closely linked to interpretivism, the methodological tradition of sociological research, the abduction method helps to not only describe, but also to understand the views of social actors. In doing so, it pays attention to their perceptions and simultaneously attempts to explain these through aligning their meanings to available scholarly concepts (Blaikie 1993; 2004; Wyse *et al.* 2012). Although there is a wide variety of methods of qualitative analysis, abduction seemed particularly suited for my research objectives as it includes pre-existing scholarly categories into an empirical exploration.⁹⁵ In this way, scientific understanding of the 'mundane and taken for granted' (Blaikie 2004: 1) of social practices is enabled and critical positions on these may be taken into account (Blaikie 1993; 2004; Wyse *et al.* 2012).

Consequently, the central aspects of the double-structured analytical model introduced in the previous chapter (2.2) and the open ended questions developed for the topic guides served as a frame of reference for the empirical analysis. In other words, these were utilised as categories for the initial coding of data and the subsequent process of describing, understanding and critically evaluating all primary sources examined here. The whole procedure consisted of multiple re-readings of all original documentation

⁹⁵ A meaningful description of the variety of analytical approaches would go beyond the scope of this chapter. The following literature guided my selection: Lewis-Beck *et al.* (2004); Denzin and Lincoln (2005); Cohen *et al.* 2011.

(curricula, textbooks, transcriptions). In this way, the identification of the pre-defined units of analysis and also the additional themes that emerged during meetings with teachers and students was achieved. Following the separate analysis of all data sources, I could pinpoint and classify conceptual trends in relation to both the nature of nations and EI in each of them. The subsequent comparison of the established findings in turn facilitated the articulation of conclusions in relation to the defined research questions: To what extent does lower secondary education in Slovakia promote the idea of a post-national Europe? Or does it, by contrast, reinforce a nationalist approach and therefore take an instrumental outlook on European integration?

Summary

The objective of this chapter was to provide a detailed description of the empirical research design. Simultaneously, it attempted to justify the selection of the research methodology applied. To this end, it explained the decision to choose a case study of a particular educational level, primary sources, methods and the procedure of data gathering as well as the approach undertaken in their analysis. The above discussion also concludes the second, methodological part of the research presented here. In the next section, III: Analysis, I will turn to the empirical examination of conceptual patterns in relation to the nature of nations and EI in the lower secondary education in Slovakia. This will begin in the first chapter with curriculum and textbooks for the subjects of history, geography and civics.

PART III: ANALYSIS

3.1 Curriculum and Textbooks

3.1.1 The conceptualisation of nations and EI in Curriculum

Introduction

This chapter focuses on the analysis of the most recent curriculum in Slovakia (2008) designed at the lower secondary level of education (ages 11-15) for the subjects of history, geography and civics which, together, constitute the educational area of 'People and Society'. Based on the double-structured analytical model developed in the earlier section of this thesis (2.2), this chapter strives to identify the conceptual patterns in relation to the nature of nations and European integration in the curriculum. Hence, two fundamental questions will be examined below:

1. Does the interpretation of the nature of nations show inclinations towards the perspectives of primordialism, constructivism or ethno-symbolism?
2. Does the interpretation of European integration show inclinations towards the perspectives of supranationalism or intergovernmentalism?

The chapter begins with a brief discussion of the position assigned to all three subjects in the latest curriculum in terms of lesson allocation. It then proceeds to the actual analysis, starting with the central curricular document. This is followed by subsequent accounts of the conceptualisation of both phenomena within particular curricula developed for each subject of the educational area 'People and Society'.

The educational area 'People and Society' in the national curriculum

As already highlighted in the earlier description of the research design devised for this thesis, the national curriculum of Slovakia, the State Educational Programme (SEP), comprises eight educational areas with each incorporating interrelated school subjects. History education, geography and civics together comprise one block of subjects summarised under the headline of 'People and Society'. The contents and objectives of the SEP are presented in one central document which is further elaborated in additional, separate, subject-specific supplements. The complete curricular documentation is prescriptive by its nature and is articulated in normative terms.

The main curricular document which comprises 37 A4 pages begins with a general section and discusses the structure and objectives of lower secondary education. By highlighting its interdisciplinary character, the primary purpose is defined as the identification and fostering of students' individual abilities and of the acquisition of key competencies.⁹⁶ This in turn is described as a precondition enabling students to select an optimal path for further study. The SEP also introduces the student profile in terms of competencies expected to be acquired upon the completion of this educational level. These are defined as a sum of skills comprising cognitive (knowledge), socio-psychological (communication and behaviour) and ethical abilities (values) which ensure the meaningful progression of students on a personal level and also in relation to their participation in social and professional life.

The document then proceeds to describe all eight educational areas. In addition, it refers to the organisational conditions of education in terms of human and material resources by stipulating the necessary professional qualifications of teachers and the equipment of schools and classes. The SEP also pays attention to the facilitation of instruction to students with specific educational needs. It concludes with guidelines for the so-called school educational programme (discussed in chapter 2.3), the second dimension of the curriculum (SEP-ISCED 2, 2011).

The educational intentions of 'People and Society' are briefly introduced on less than two A4 pages in a separate section within the central curricular document. The main objective of this particular subject area is outlined against a wider European and multicultural context and defined as the maintenance of Slovak national identity together with the development of broader civic attitudes and values (discussed in more detail below). The SEP assigns 'People and Society' third place in terms of lesson allocation, following 'Language and Communication' at the top and 'Mathematics and Application of Information' in second place.⁹⁷

In terms of the compulsory part of the curriculum (as discussed in chapter 2.3), history enjoys a comparatively high status in the group of subjects within 'People and Society'. However, following the latest education reform of 2008, its overall scope has been reduced by one third.⁹⁸ The number of history lessons for lower secondary education (ages 11-15) is currently six in total. Based on this total number, it is likely that students will receive one lesson (45 minutes) of history at least once per week within each grade.

⁹⁶ Key competencies are summarised briefly in the curriculum as a set of skills that enable an individual to apply gained knowledge in his / her professional, civic, family and personal life (SEP-ISCED 2, 2011:7).

⁹⁷ Please refer to the previous chapter (2.3) and Table 4 for an overview of lesson allocation of all subjects for lower secondary education.

⁹⁸ Before 2008, with the exception of grade five (1 lesson per week), there were 2 lessons per week (45 minutes) for grades six to nine (ages 12-15) assigned to history education (Curriculum 1997).

Considering the curriculum emphasis on the history of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, it is probable that the remaining obligatory allowance of one lesson will be allocated either to grade eight (age 14) or grade nine (age 15).

The contemporary curriculum provides geography education for grades five to nine with five lessons in total. This constitutes a reduction of 40% as compared to the period before the latest education reform of 2008.⁹⁹ As a result, one lesson per week might be allocated to each grade. The educational provision of four lessons in total for grades five to nine for citizenship education is the lowest within the 'People and Society' area. It remains unchanged since the academic year of 1997/1998. Based on my interviews with teachers, schools seem to assign one lesson per week up to grade seven (age 13) and half a lesson in grades eight and nine (ages 14-15). In practice this means that there is one lesson per week for half of the school year or one lesson every second week.

As already mentioned in the previous discussion on research design (2.3), individual schools are free to increase the number of lessons within those subjects of their choosing up to the maximum prescribed by the educational state authorities. In addition, the latest education reform encourages schools to use alternative teaching approaches such as 'bloc teaching'. Hence, interrelated subjects might be combined into teaching sessions which would address cross-cutting themes (for example EI). This in turn could potentially result in an uneven lesson allocation across grades as well as the actual time dedicated to specific topics such as national identity and European integration. Consequently, the precise number of teaching lessons in Slovakia's schools dedicated to these particular themes in the educational area of 'People and Society' cannot be determined exactly.

The nature of nations and EI in the educational area of 'People and Society'

The central SEP document

An examination of the central document (37 A4 pages in length) of the national curriculum unambiguously exposes the significance attached to national identity. As already mentioned in the above section, it begins with a general introduction which discusses the overall objectives of lower secondary education. Following references to its main goals, the SEP emphasises in second place the need to develop 'a clear consciousness of a national and a worldwide cultural heritage' by students (SEP-ISCED 2, 2011: 6). In the subsequent paragraphs, while describing civic competencies

⁹⁹ With the exception of grade nine, there were two lessons per week within grades five to eight (ages 11-14) before 2008 (Curriculum 1997).

expected to be acquired by students, the curriculum highlights the need to foster in them an understanding of 'national cultural heritage' and an openness towards 'a cultural and ethnic diversity' (SEP-ISCED 2, 2011: 8).

The character of the central SEP document, by being prescriptive rather than explanatory, does not permit a precise classification of interpretative patterns in regard to either of the issues explored in this thesis. However, the straightforward emphasis on national consciousness, national heritage and ethnic diversity, presenting these phenomena in a self-evident fashion as given facts, allows for some preliminary observations in relation to the conceptual foundation of the nature of nations in Slovakia's lower secondary education. In spite of the brevity of these references, they are indicative of the unobtrusive practices of 'banal nationalism', namely, taking a fixed national distinctiveness for granted. Hence, they might tentatively be associated with the primordialist paradigm. The preservation of Slovak authenticity is presented as an imperative and education is assigned a critical role in this context. The wider world also appears to be portrayed from a fairly primordialist perspective since it is depicted implicitly as a geographical and cultural space inhabited by distinctive nations. At the same time, on the basis of the applied vocabulary, references to cultural and ethnic diversity could be also linked to ethno-symbolism.

All eight educational areas of the lower secondary level and their objectives are then described separately in subsequent pages. The central objective of the subject group of 'People and Society' remains the promotion of national identity and also of patriotism, despite the emphasis on the European, integrationist context and references to universal values. The first paragraph begins by stating:

The educational area ['People and Society'] strives through its content to preserve the continuity of the traditional values of our society in harmony with contemporary integrationist processes; to lead towards the perception of patriotism and national pride in the context of Europeanism and multiculturalism. [...] It cultivates in students a love for their homeland and simultaneously develops and strengthens a consciousness of belonging to European civilisation and culture (SEP-ISCED 2, 2011: 15).

Similarly, the specific part dedicated to the elaboration of the main objectives of the subject bloc of 'People and Society' (pp.15-16) suggests specific conceptual influences in relation to the nature of nations. With references to the importance of ensuring the continuity of 'traditional values', the roots of the unique and culturally homogenous Slovak community are implicitly established in an indeterminable past and presented as essentially distinctive in comparison to other societies. Knowledge of the history of Slovakia and other nations is described later in the text in a functionalist fashion. Reminiscent of Shils's emphasis on the 'integrative' role of primordialist attachments

(2.2.1), historical proficiency is conceived of as an auxiliary instrument of social cohesion as it contributes to the development of students' broader social and civic competencies. These are then described as the ability to comprehend the context of wider socio-political processes within and also beyond Slovakia. The role of history, geography and civics in enhancing the development of critical thinking is seen as primary in this regard. All three subjects are expected to provide students with the necessary insights into historical developments occurring through time and within a specific geographical space and also to introduce them to the principles and functioning of civil, democratic society (SEP-ISCED 2, 2011).

The process of EI is portrayed with a lesser degree of conceptual clarity within the main curricular document. On the other hand, the text shows that educational policies and activities developed at the EU level have been embraced positively within the wider education community in Slovakia. Pro-European attitudes and the acceptance of multiple approaches of EU education policy are clearly reflected within the contemporary national curriculum of lower secondary education. Ideas of lifelong learning, key competences and the concept of active citizenship with a European dimension are easily traceable throughout the SEP documentation.

The emphasis on the national context, however, allows for a classification of the interpretation of European integration as implicitly intergovernmentalist. Nevertheless, the central curricular document presents European and national identities as perfectly compatible. References to Europe, the European Union and its institutions (SEP-ISCED 2, 2011: 3, 7, 12, 14, 15) and also to the 'context of Europeanism' (SEP-ISCED 2, 2011:15) or 'European culture and civilisation' (SEP-ISCED 2, 2011: 15, 16, 17) throughout the main curricular text indicate a slight, Eurocentric bias. At the same time, these might be seen as positive indicators of Slovakia's participation in EI and EU membership. Equally, these remarks might also be interpreted as an attempt to bolster the European dimension in education and European identity. In addition to these initial and general tendencies, a more differentiated picture emerges upon detailed examination of curricular supplements developed for all three subjects of the educational area 'People and Society'.

History curriculum

The curricular supplement for history education is summarised within 17 A4 pages and is divided into two broad sections. The first section characterises the subject of history teaching, its main objectives, and the competencies that students are expected to acquire. The main function of history is defined as the maintenance of the continuity of

historical memory. This is described as an historical experience in the context of local, regional, national, European and also global perspectives. History teaching is expected to enhance in students a respect for their own nation as well as the development of patriotism through the simultaneous appreciation of other nations and cultures (SEP-ISCED 2-History, 2011). Hence, as in the central SEP document, the history curriculum continues along similar lines and is suggestive of primordialist inclinations through the unobtrusive style of banal nationalism in the representation of nations as given and immutable.

The actual content of history education is then described in more detail in the second section. However, the document does not specify the assignment of topics (historical periods) explicitly within grades five to nine (age 11-15). The division of teaching content by grades might be assumed on the basis of page breaks, but this is unclear, and also with the help of the textbooks. The specification of history education starts in the curricular supplement with topics which are addressed in grade five (age 11). These focus on historiography, the rationale for an exploration of the past and also its methodology and instruments. Starting with the educational content for grade six (age 12), the curriculum continues in chronological order.

The whole of history instruction is divided into multiple thematic areas, 23 in total. These are then split into specific, topical subsections with multiple issues (keywords) to be addressed in history lessons, which are together defined as 'content standards'. In addition, the document also describes 'performance standards', the expected competencies of students to be gained as an outcome of history education. The headings of thematic areas in particular are then applied frequently within textbooks as titles of broader periodical sections.¹⁰⁰ Table 11 below presents examples of the history curriculum.

¹⁰⁰ Headings of topical subsections are also frequently applied in textbooks as titles of separate chapters within the broader thematic areas. For a complete list of textbook content please refer to Annexes 7.1.-7.5, pp.261-266.

Table 11: Selected Examples of History Curriculum (NI)

| Thematic Area | Content Standards | | Performance Standards |
|--|---|---|---|
| | Topic | Terms | Competencies |
| Ancestors of Slovaks in the Carpathian Basin ¹⁰¹ | Arrival of Slavs | antique homeland, migration, Samo | Students [are able to]: - describe the antique homeland of Slavs, reasons for and territories of migration [Slavs moved into] - identify relationships between Slavs and Avars - name reasons for the founding of Samo's realm and its significance - describe foundation and expansion of Great Moravia - evaluate merits of Cyril and Methodius for the development of our culture and statehood |
| | Great Moravia | Christian missions, Cyril and Methodius, Pribina, Rastislav, Svätopluk | |
| Slovaks in Hungarian Kingdom ¹⁰² | Kingdom of multiple languages and customs | House of Stephan I, Ondrej II, Karl-Robert, Louis I, Sigismund of Luxemburg, Mathias Corvinus | - explain the foundation of the Hungarian Kingdom and the contribution of the predecessors of the Slovaks to its Development |
| Habsburg Monarchy ¹⁰³ | Mining towns | Kremnica, Banská Štiavnica, Banská Bystrica | - evaluate the significance of mining towns in Slovakia, the gold mine of Hungary |

Source: adapted from SEP-ISCED 2-History (2011)

Overall, the curricular supplement of history shows an emphasis on events that significantly influenced developments in contemporary Slovak society. Hence, a substantial part of history instruction concentrates on European and Slovak national history and in particular on the history of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. According to the supplement on history, the roots of multiple, contemporary societal

¹⁰¹ This broader section consists of four separate chapters in the textbook for grade seven (History 7/2, 2011).

¹⁰² This heading appears in the textbook for the seventh grade as the second broad subsection which consists of eight chapters in total (History 7/2, 2011).

¹⁰³ In a slightly modified form, this heading is applied for the last, fourth subsection of the history textbook for grade seven.

problems lie in these specific historical periods. Out of 23 thematic areas in total, three are dedicated to historiography in general and four to periods of Prehistory and Antiquity. Both European and Slovak history are then covered within 16 thematic areas.¹⁰⁴

Concepts of academic discussion on nationalism (nation, nationalism, modern nations, nation state, ethnic group, traditions) are not explained or analysed within the curricular supplement. They are simply applied as conventional terms of historiography in a descriptive manner throughout the text. Nevertheless, conceptual inclinations analysed in this thesis in relation to the nature of nations become apparent. Following a singular reference to Slovakia in the content specification for history instruction in the fifth grade in the context of an introduction to the notions of space and time, a gradual increase of relevant references is notable from the seventh grade (age 13) onwards. At this level, the origins of Slovak national history are addressed and traced back to the first political formations of Slavs in Central Europe, the Samo's realm (ca. 620-658) and Great Moravia (833-906/7).

The instruction within the eighth grade concentrates on the historical period from the late eighteenth century (French Revolution, 1789) to the outbreak of the First World War in 1914. This was clearly a period of history which covers the development of national movements in Europe and consequently provides further indications of the conceptual foundation of NI as analysed here. History education in the final grade of the lower secondary level (nine, age 15) addresses the developments of the twentieth century up to the most recent events in the twenty-first century such as Slovakia's accession to the EU in 2004.

The curricular supplement of history education contains elements which allow for both a primordialist and an ethno-symbolist categorisation in regard to the conceptualisation of the nature of nations. The primordialist patterns might be derived from the implicit and also explicit references to nations as given, self-aware, culturally homogenous communities. Ethno-symbolist inclinations are particularly discernible from the presentation of the formation of Slovak nation. These appear directly in the description of history education designed for grade seven. References to Slavs as the ancestors of Slovaks and to Samo's realm and Great Moravia as the historical origins of Slovak statehood establish a continuity of a culturally homogeneous Slovak nation and an enduring national consciousness. A subsequent thematic area, 'Slovaks in the Hungarian Kingdom', together with one of its sub topics, 'Kingdom of multiple languages

¹⁰⁴ The curriculum does not outline precisely the number of topics exclusively dedicated to European and national issues.

and customs', which cover the historical period from the end of tenth to the late fifteenth (1492) century, also conveys a conceptually mixed impression. The main heading evokes the existence of a distinctive Slovak nation during this period in a primordialist fashion. In addition, a sense of collective consciousness and of belonging to a commonly shared territory during this historical era is strengthened through the additional reference within the section relating to competencies students are intended to acquire.

Despite the historical fact that 'Slovakia' as a separate administrative or political unit did not exist until the creation of Czechoslovakia in 1918 (Kováč 2011a: 3), in a factually erroneous manner, students are expected to 'evaluate the significance of mining towns in Slovakia, the gold mine of Hungary' (SEP-ISCED 2-History, 2011: 11). Hence, notion of a longstanding, national territory and community is reinforced. At the same time, in an ethno-symbolist style, curriculum designers refer to the ancestors of Slovaks and ask students to judge their contribution to the building of the Hungarian Kingdom.

Further examples of a primordialist presentation of a Slovak nation, which is depicted as a nationally self-aware entity located within a clearly delineated territory before the historical period of modernity (before 1789), might also be found within the following thematic area entitled 'Habsburg Monarchy' (grade seven, age 13). Within its topical subsection of 'Slovakia on the frontier of two worlds' students are expected to:

- elucidate the position of Slovakia in the Habsburg Monarchy
- characterise the position of Slovakia in the neighbourhood of the Ottoman Empire
- present significant Slovak personalities in a short essay or a Power Point Presentation (SEP-ISCED 2-History 2011: 12)

From the period of the late eighteenth century onwards, the discussion of nationalism penetrates the curricular supplement of history even further. Clear lines are drawn between 'us and them', the Slovaks and other European nations. Within the thematic areas of 'Europe on the path toward modern nations', 'The Modern Slovak nation' and 'Austria-Hungary' (grade eight, age 14) students are expected to be able to:

- understand the process of the formation of modern nations
- name some attributes of modern nations
- describe and explain in a short essay the situation of national minorities in Hungary (Romanians, Croats, Slovaks) and their struggle for national freedom
- analyse the Slovak political programme
- specify the position of Slovaks in Austria-Hungary
- take a critical position on Magyarisation (SEP-ISCED 2-History 2011: 13-14).

The existence of nations continues to be presented in a conceptually mixed fashion. Remarks on modern nations and their formation are indicative of ethno-symbolism as

they presuppose the existence of pre-modern forms of collective identities. On the other hand, the reference to 'struggle for national freedom' could be seen as characteristic of the primordialist understanding of nations. The specific emphasis on the position of diverse nations within the Kingdom of Hungary suggests the existence of multiple socio-politically disadvantaged, but self-aware and essentially distinctive communities, already united through a widely shared sense of belonging during the historical periods which preceded the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Hence, this contradicts both a constructivist notion of the instrumental role of nationalism in creating nations and the ethno-symbolist emphasis on the significance of pre-national communities in the process of their crystallisation.

A self-evident portrayal of nations is then continued in the description of the educational content for grade nine (age 15). This is presented predominantly as a history of Europe, European states and nations (e.g. Germany, Italy, UK, Czechoslovakia) and the era of ideologies (democracy, fascism, Nazism, Communism). A global perspective of history remains marginal.¹⁰⁵

The conceptual inclinations in relation to the interpretation of European integration as analysed in this thesis may also be drawn from multiple indicators. References to Europe, EI and EU occur in the history supplement as keywords among a multiplicity of others in the topical and terminological sections of content standards alongside the performance standards section (students' competencies). The themes of instruction for the fifth grade also contain a brief remark on the EU as a topic which is to be addressed at this stage in the context of discussion surrounding the concepts of space and time. Further references to Europe as a cultural or political unity may be found in the description of history education for grade six (age 12). Within two thematic areas of the historical period of Antiquity, 'Pictures of the Antiquity' and 'World Religions', students' competencies are defined in relation to an evaluation of the legacy of Greek and Roman cultures, Christianity and also of Arab culture in Europe:

Students are able:

- to recognise the prominence of Greek and Roman cultures in the development of European culture
- evaluate the significance and legacy of Christianity for European culture
- identify the legacy of Arab culture for European culture (SEP-ISCED 2-History 2011: 10).

Although overt references to Europe are not made in the teaching content for grade seven (age 13), multiple historical phenomena affecting the whole continent are

¹⁰⁵ Although the textbook also pays attention to the Russian Empire and later Soviet Union or decolonisation, the European and national (Slovak) focus is clearly more extensive. Please refer to Annex 7.5., pp.265-266 for an overview of chapters in the grade nine textbook.

presented throughout the themes designed for this educational level as pan-European experiences. These include influences which contributed to the gradual transformation of Medieval Europe. Hence, the history curriculum highlights the period of the Renaissance and Humanism, the Enlightenment era (around the fourteenth to the end of the eighteenth century), a number of scientific and technological advances¹⁰⁶, the Protestant Reformation (sixteenth century) and the Catholic Counter-reformation (the second half of the sixteenth and first half of the seventeenth century).

Further explicit references to Europe as a cultural, political and geographical unity re-emerge within the description of history instruction designed for grade eight (age 14). History instruction at this level begins with the broader thematic area of 'Europe on the path towards modern nations'. Within this context, students are expected to be able to 'find on the historical map and describe the political situation in Europe after the Congress of Vienna' (September 1814-June 1815) (SEP-ISCED 2-History 2011:13). With the outbreak of the First World War, political divisions within Europe are highlighted. In referring to 'Divided Europe' and 'Changes on the map of Europe', the former picture of Europe as a united entity is transforming into a portrayal of a geopolitical area of multiple nation-states. Based on the historical developments after the First World War, the presentation of Europe as a continent of nation-states is reinforced in the subsequent teaching content delineated for the last grade of lower secondary education.

'Europe in the interwar period' is the opening theme for grade nine (age 15) and includes topics which focus mostly on the political developments within European states such as Italy, Germany and Czechoslovakia alongside the Soviet Union. Among other competencies that students are anticipated to develop are the abilities to:

- show on an historical map new states which were created in Europe [after First World War]
- describe the situation in Russia in 1917
- explain the causes of the formation of fascism in Italy
- explain the causes of the formation of Nazism in Germany
- analyse the position of Slovaks in Czechoslovakia
- identify national minorities in Czechoslovakia (SEP-ISCED 2-History 2011: 15).

It is within the description of history instruction covering the period after 1945 that some insights into the conceptualisation of the actual process of European integration in the curriculum for the lower secondary level of education may be gained. The rationale for

¹⁰⁶ The curriculum refers for instance to the invention of print by Gutenberg (circa 1395-1468), or the heliocentric model of the universe by Copernicus (1473-1543) (SEP-ISCED 2-History 2011: 11-12).

EI remains rather unclear in the curricular supplement of history. However, in the context of the diverse competencies that students are expected to develop, the beginning of EI may be interpreted as a political response or an instrument of power balance employed by the governments of Western Europe in an ideologically divided post-war Europe. Consequently, nation-states are portrayed as the drivers of the integration process.

Additional references to EI and EU in the curricular text of history also convey the sentiments of an intergovernmentalist perspective. European integration is referred to in terms of advantages and disadvantages for Slovakia. Hence, there is clear evidence of an instrumental approach to the European Union. Table 12 below provides relevant examples taken from the history curriculum.

Table 12: Selected Examples of History Curriculum (EI)

| Thematic Area | Content Standards | | Performance Standards |
|-----------------------------|---|---|---|
| | Topic | Terms | Competencies |
| Post-war World | Divided World | Cold War Iron Curtain political blocs | Students [are able to]: - describe the outcomes of WW II - introduce reasons for the development of two power blocs - document the process of sovietisation in Central and Eastern Europe - characterise the Cold War - describe the co-operation of West-European countries and politicians who initiated the beginning of European integration |
| Slovak Republic 1993 | Reform attempts Velvet Revolution Period of changes | Integration of Slovakia into NATO, EU, Schengen, Euro EU, NATO, globalisation, terrorism, the Internet, global warming | - identify advantages and disadvantages of the accession of Slovakia to the EU and NATO - evaluate the adoption of the Euro - identify advantages and disadvantages of European integration |

Source: SEP-ISCED 2-History (2011)

To summarise, in relation to the interpretation of the nature of national identity as analysed in this thesis, the curriculum of history education displays somewhat intertwined conceptual tendencies. While the presentation of the antiquity of the Slovak nation allows for an ethno-symbolist classification due to the references to Slavs, primordialist tendencies might be derived from the self-evident presentation of nations and the implicit suggestion of collectively shared national consciousness within particular geographical areas, mostly in Europe, prior to the era of modernity (1789). The conceptual inclination discernible in the curriculum in regard to EI seems to come closer to the instrumentalist understanding of intergovernmentalism than to that of supranationalism. Although Europe is not depicted exclusively as a geographical space

filled with nation-states but also as a cultural and political entity, the process of EI comes across as a vehicle of co-operation driven by European nation-states. The history curriculum lacks any indication of EI theorising in the sense of supranationalism as an instrument of an eventual post-national transformation of Europe.

Geography curriculum

As in the case of history, the 21-page curriculum for geography is divided into two broad parts. The first, general section, describes the subject of geography and its main objectives which is then followed by a more specific outline of the educational content of geography. Unlike history however, the curricular document for geography mentions a broad division of the educational content of geography within grades five to nine (ages 11-15).

The educational objectives of geography are conceived of as the provision of knowledge and understanding of the planet Earth. Drawing on insights from physical, human and regional geography, students are expected to be able to comprehend the complex relationship between nature and human activities. This should lead them towards an appreciation of the need to balance an optimal utilisation of the Earth with its preservation (SEP-ISCED 2-Geography 2010: 2).

The teaching content begins in the fifth grade with an introduction to the planet Earth in terms of its physical, natural and cultural characteristics. In the subsequent school years, geography is treated from a regional perspective (continent and states introduction: Africa, America, Asia, Australia and Oceania, Antarctica, Europe, Slovakia). The presentation of continents follows a triple, interconnected structure: basic information on the region in question embedded in the context of planet Earth, natural and man-made peculiarities of the region alongside a comparison with Slovakia and, finally, environmental contexts enlivened with regional curiosities (interesting information).

Concepts relating to the scholarship of nationalism are present only to a moderate degree in the curricular supplement of geography. Nevertheless, aspects of primordialism in the sense of given and unique distinctions between nations, including the Slovak nation (language, culture, lifestyle), are evoked to some degree through the emphasis on the importance of preserving the immutable, national authenticity as a part of the educational objectives of geography:

Studying Earth is a basic precondition of its protection. Every location of Earth is distinctive, differs through climate, vegetation, animal kingdom, population and their creations. People from various parts of world vary by language and their culture or lifestyle. Knowledge and appreciation of these characteristics leads to a greater understanding of the mutual environmental connections. [...] Suggestions related to what everyone could do for their own town and region, are also a part of a practical outcome of geography applicable in everyday life. [...] Geography teaches one to appreciate other cultures by preserving one's own identity, [and] it presents folk and cultural traditions (SEP-ISCED 2-Geography 2010: 2-3).

Slovakia appears in the content specification of geography in the form of a neutral, territorial reference of comparison within a given thematic area. Terminology related to European integration appears explicitly on two occasions in the supplement of geography. Table 13 below provides examples of the geography curriculum.

Table 13: Selected Examples of Geography Curriculum (NI and EI)¹⁰⁷

| Thematic Area | Topic | General Aspects of Physical Geography and Human Geography | Examples of Geographical Features in a Region |
|--|--|--|--|
| Europe-our continent¹⁰⁸ | | | |
| An old world? - project about Europe, EU | | | |
| Exploration of natural and man-made peculiarities of the region and their comparison with Slovakia (local landscape) | Division of Europe- south, south-east, east, north, central, west, Surface and waters of Europe, climate, population of Europe, religions, states within regions of Europe, economy of Europe (briefly), exploring natural beauties | Variability of climate, ageing population, immigration, European Union | Alps, Carpathians, Pyrenees, Apennines, Scandinavian mountains, plains, basins, Pannonian Basin, Ural, Mont Blanc, Etna, Vesuvius, East European Plain |
| Project: Slovakia our¹⁰⁹ homeland | | | |
| Basic information of the region in the context of planet Earth | Location and display of Slovakia on maps- Slovakia in the northern hemisphere | Work with map- geographical co-ordinates, parallels, meridians | |
| Exploration of natural and man-made peculiarities of the region and their comparison with Slovakia (local landscape) | The beauties of Nature, historical events in Slovakia, development of Slovakia, population and cities, economic activities in Slovakia, well-known Slovak specifics, Slovakia as a tourist destination, opportunities for regional development of Slovakia | Development of mountains and basins | High Tatras, Low Tatras, Small Carpathians etc. |

Source: SEP-ISCED 2-Geography (2010)

While references to EI or EU are very sparse in the geography curriculum, there are multiple references to Europe as a continent in the supplement. Europe is introduced as both a united ('our') entity as well as a geographical space comprising multiple states. In

¹⁰⁷ Unlike history, the curricular supplement of geography does not provide educational outcomes.

¹⁰⁸ Europe (continent) builds the educational content in the eighth grade (age 14). For a complete list of content of geography textbooks please refer to Annexes 8.1.-8.5, pp.267-272.

¹⁰⁹ Slovakia constitutes the content of geography education in grade nine (age 15).

terms of the conceptualisation of European integration as an instrument of interstate co-operation (intergovernmentalism) or a vehicle of post-national transformation (supranationalism), the curricular document remains inconclusive and does not provide any straightforward evidence in this respect.

Civics curriculum

Contemporary citizenship education in Slovakia combines multiple disciplines of social sciences into one distinctive school subject. Insights derived from history, political science, psychology, philosophy, sociology and economics are expected to enable students to become self-conscious individuals and active citizens within a local and national setting and also within the European Union.

The curricular supplement for civics is marked by the strongest national narrative and might also be described as the most patriotic document in the subject group of 'People and Society'. The curriculum emphatically highlights the necessity to develop and maintain Slovak national identity, national pride and a positive relationship to the Slovak Republic. The Slovak nation is presented as inherently unique and given. At the same time, the curricular document also reveals a significant EI focus and accentuates explicitly the link between Slovak national and European identity (SEP-ISCED 2-Civics 2011: 9).

The curriculum for civics is summarised within 17 A4 pages and, as in history education and geography, it is also divided into two broad sections. The first, general part briefly introduces the profile of the subject and elaborates on its main learning objectives:

The subject [Citizenship education] contributes toward the orientation of students in family and school settings. It leads them toward learning about their own place, region, country and the European Union. In this way, it enables students to understand themselves, help them in their socialisation process. It teaches them to think and act democratically, to acquire knowledge about their rights and obligations and to defend the rights of others. It provides students with basic knowledge within the areas of state and law and leads them to active civic engagement and facilitates students' understanding of economic life of society (SEP-ISCED 2-Civics 2011: 2).

The content specific part of the curricular supplement of CE is divided into three sections. Thematic, broad areas are subdivided into multiple parts which constitute the actual topic within a single school lesson. As in history and geography, the titles of thematic areas are found in textbooks as headings of a wider teaching area which is then subdivided into separate chapters. The curriculum of civics also specifies in more detail (keywords) particular issues which are then addressed within each lesson.

In addition, it lists competencies (performance standards) which students are expected to gain. In a similar manner to history and geography, the supplement of civics does not overtly highlight the divisions between the actual educational content across grades five to nine (ages 11-15). This becomes obvious with the help of page breaks in the document and also from the textbooks themselves.

Citizenship education includes various topics which are devoted to the building of students' personal identity. This is conceptualised as a sum of multiple identities: local, regional, national and also European. Students are expected to develop pride in their local, regional and national settings. Knowledge of history (local, regional, national), personalities and symbols are seen as the most suitable vehicle to achieve this aim. In relation to European integration, the content of civics strives to enable students to understand the significance of European integration for Slovakia. They should gain and be able to locate and apply basic information about the EU in everyday life. In addition, students are led to appreciate the necessity to preserve Slovak national identity and also its connection to a European identity. Table 14 below provides examples of the curriculum in relation to national and state identity as well as EI topics.

Table 14: Selected Examples of Civics' Curriculum (NI and EI)

| Thematic Area | Content Standards ¹¹⁰ | Performance Standards |
|--|---|---|
| My community, region, homeland, European Union ¹¹¹ | History and contemporary times of my community | [Students:] - know history and contemporary affairs of community in which (s)he lives |
| | What makes me proud in my community and its surroundings (monuments and nature) | - build a feeling of pride in own community through learning about its nature and monuments |
| | My homeland-Slovak Republic State symbols | - develop pride in own homeland through learning about its past, present, monuments and nature - are familiar with state symbols and know how to show respect towards them |
| | European Union | - comprehend the significance of European integration for the life of citizens of SR - find and use in everyday life some basic information about EU |
| | Interconnection of national identity with European identity | - are aware of the necessity to preserve Slovak national identity with the interconnection to European identity - support a diffusion of acceptance and tolerance among nations within EU |
| Social relationships in society ¹¹² | Structure of population Races [sic], nations, nationalities, ethnic groups | - comprehend the national and ethnic composition of population - are able to enumerate races [sic] and their attributes - are tolerant to races [sic], nations and nationalities. - strengthen own national identity |

Source: SEP-ISCED 2-Civics (2011)

The overt references to Slovak national identity and the particular emphasis on its preservation, together with the factual references to other nations by supposing their

¹¹⁰ Content standards refer to aspects addressed within a chapter (lesson).

¹¹¹ This is a broader area also divided into numerous chapters which constitute the instruction in civics within the first half of the academic year in the sixth grade (age 12).

¹¹² This is the first broader thematic area in the grade seven (age 13).

essentially outstanding and constant character, could be seen as indicative of the primordialist paradigm. In relation to the conceptualisation of EI, the focus on state belonging and the significance of the integration process for the citizens of the Slovak Republic together with remarks on other states within the EU suggest intergovernmentalist tendencies.

Summary

As the discussion in this chapter indicates, themes related to the nature of nations and European integration constitute an integral and notable part of the instruction designed for the educational area of 'People and Society'. On the other hand, they appear to be distributed across all three subjects in an uneven manner. This applies to the scope and to the particular questions addressed in both contexts. There seems to be a degree of thematic overlap between history and civics, particularly with regard to the significance of advantages or disadvantages of EI for Slovakia and its citizens. At the same time, some differences also occur across all three schools subjects. The history curriculum conveys the impression of addressing issues related to the nature of nations and European integration most extensively. It also provides fairly clear indications in respect of the conceptual foundations of both phenomena examined here. These appear to suggest a rather mixed understanding of the nature of nations by revealing the impact of primordialist and ethno-symbolist paradigms and an intergovernmentalist approach towards the EI and Slovakia's EU membership.

Contrary to history education, the geography curriculum displays a fairly modest array of keys related to both issues. A slight degree of primordialist inclination in relation to the conceptualisation of nations might be detected in the presentation of the educational goals. At the same time, these also reveal a stronger global perspective or, to be more precise, a 'Geocentric' view when compared to the curriculum of history and civics. In terms of the theoretical tendencies of EI, conclusions cannot be drawn at this stage.

Citizenship education also touches upon topics related to both aspects explored in this thesis across all grades. Based on the clues identified in the curriculum, civics seems to take a similar approach to history education in relation to the nature of nations and EI. Consequently, it remains to be seen how the predefined objectives of the subject block of 'People and Society' are implemented in the actual textbooks.¹¹³ The relevant analysis will be presented in the following two chapters.

¹¹³ Please refer to Annex 6, pp.259-260 for an overview of the curricular content of the area 'People and Society'.

3.1.2 The conceptualisation of nations in textbooks

Introduction

As in the previous examination of the curricular documentation, this chapter will continue by analysing the textbooks designed for the educational area of 'People and Society' in relation to the conceptualisation of the nature of nations. Starting with the analysis of history textbooks, it progresses through geography to civics and closes with a summary of their central interpretative patterns.

History textbooks

History education is the subject where national identities are discussed most extensively. As mentioned earlier in the curriculum analysis, it is within history instruction in the eighth grade (age 14) that the nineteenth-century development of national movements across Europe is addressed. Nevertheless, textbooks used in lower grades (five, six and seven, ages 11, 12 and 13 respectively) and in the final year of lower secondary education (grade nine, age 15) also provide relevant material that helps to identify and analyse the conceptual patterns examined in this chapter.

A primordialist influence is notable in the content of the textbook for the fifth grade. As highlighted in the previous chapter, the teaching content concentrates at this stage on the subject of historiography, the introduction to its objectives, instruments and peoples' place in the historical process.¹¹⁴ Given this focus of history instruction, the central concepts of nationalism studies (nation, nationalism, ethnic group) are not addressed explicitly in the text. Nevertheless, some conclusions can be drawn with respect to the conceptual patterns examined here. The text narrative reveals a primordialist perspective through the presentation of nations. In spite of the prevalent application of the generic terms of 'people' (*ludia*), 'inhabitants' (*obyvatelia*), 'population' (*obyvateľsto*) or 'humanity' (*ľudstvo*), textbook authors frequently resort to the word 'nations' and utilise it in the context of the general discussion on the history of mankind in their descriptions. In the convention of 'banal nationalism' (Billig 1995), nations are therefore portrayed unobtrusively as constant features of history and the world as a space filled by them from time "immemorial":

In this textbook, you will begin to familiarise yourself with the life of people in the past (History 5, 2009: 8).

¹¹⁴ Please refer to Annex 7.1., p.261 for an overview of chapters in the textbook for grade five.

Inhabitants of a large part of Europe from nearly two thousand years ago-Celts, always commemorated the period around November 1 because of the adverse weather that was approaching (History 5, 2009: 16).

Antiquity - a period of big empires of ancient nations (Egyptians, Sumerians, Babylonians, Greeks, Romans) until the fall of the Roman Empire (4 000 BC-476 AD) (History 5, 2009: 14).

Some thousands of years ago, ancient nations succeeded in devising language. Script was created - records of human thoughts by signs (History 5, 2009: 26).

An overt ethno-symbolist perspective is also discernible in the same textbook. The interpretation of festive days (public holidays, for instance Christmas, Easter) and their function is presented in an unambiguous, ethno-symbolist fashion. Clearly reminiscent of Armstrong's emphasis (2.2.1), these are described as an integral part of traditions which in turn are presented as an instrument of intergenerational communication. At the same time, they are not attributed a contingent character nor linked to a deliberate strategy by elites. As if it is beyond dispute, they are associated with human experiences and observations of nature and the circles of the seasons:

The oldest festive days are interrelated with changes which man observed in the nature. This is because these changes were significantly influencing peoples' life. [...] In this way the first festive days developed. We are still commemorating a number of them. They connect us with our ancestors. Therefore they constitute an integral part of our traditions (History 5, 2009: 16).

Textbook authors establish the distinctiveness and immutable nature of the Slovak nation and others by employing a language of intergroup comparison. In an inoffensive manner, a language of differentiation is applied and consequently highlights implicitly and also explicitly the boundaries between 'us' and 'them' and 'our history', 'our traditions' and 'their customs' and 'their history':

Each nation also commemorates diverse events which significantly influenced its fate and which it therefore does not wish to forget. Each nation has its own memorable days and feasts. Some of them, however, are common within Europe. Our commemorative day is the foundation day of the Slovak Republic (January 1), Constitution Day (September 1) and also the Slovak National Uprising (August 29) or Saints' Day of the Slavic missionaries Cyril and Methodius (July 5) (History 5, 2009: 18-19).

The most widely known festive days from our villages remain until today the celebrations of the grain and wine harvests (History 5, 2009: 17).

The question of the antiquity of the Slovak nation remains inconclusive in relation to primordialist and ethno-symbolist classification as the difference between the two perspectives cannot be readily determined in this respect. However, the origins of the Slovak nation pre-date the French Revolution (1789) and its existence as a

geographically and culturally bounded group sharing a collective awareness is presented as a self-evident fact:

Slovaks lived in diverse states. Our contemporary territory was a part of the Habsburg Monarchy, Austria-Hungary and Czechoslovakia (History 5, 2009: 34).

In a similar vein, evidence of primordialist and also ethno-symbolist tendencies are recognisable in the textbook for the sixth grade. At this level, the historical periods of Prehistory (circa 3 mil -3.500 BC) including anthropogenesis, Ancient history (circa 3.500 BC-circa 500 AD) and the Early Middle Ages (fifth – tenth centuries) are addressed. The ancient world with the civilisations of Mesopotamia (Sumer civilisation, Assyria, Babylonia) and the Greek and Roman empires are also overtly portrayed as national communities. Their populations are introduced as distinctive and culturally homogeneous groups with inherent and unique, national characteristics:

Sumerians were the first known nation in the Mediterranean area. [...] Sumerians were the first who started to use script and were skilled traders, craftsmen and artists. Their culture, scholarship and technology had a lasting influence on other nations (History 6/1, 2011: 21)

What connected Greeks

In spite of their differences, all Greek states were connected through a common language, history, the arts, a love of philosophy, a belief in the same Gods, the Oracle in Delphi and the Olympic Games (History 6/1, 2011: 28).

A similar pattern of narrative is also found in the description of the subsequent period of the Early Middle Ages. However, through the terminology of clans, tribes, or tribe unions, a rather ethno-symbolist perspective is also evoked:

To the north of the Roman borders lived tribes that we call (for short) Germans. In the north and east of Germans lived Slavs. From the savannahs of Asia, nomadic tribes were moving into Europe (History 6/1, 2009: 58).

The concepts and terminology of the academic discussion of nationalism (ethnic group, nation, nationality) are applied frequently and inconsistently throughout the textbooks across all grades. The terms 'nation' and 'ethnic group' are used interchangeably as synonyms and are characterised by nearly identical aspects. For example, the textbook for the sixth grade defines an ethnic group (*etnikum* in Slovak) as 'a group of people who are bound through a common historical origin, a type of race [sic], a language and cultural traditions' (History 6/1, 2011: 40).

Different wording is applied in the textbook for grade seven: 'ethnic group - a national community, nation, nationality' (History 7/3, 2011: 21). In a similar vein, the textbook for grade eight defines ethnic group as a community encompassing 'members of a

nationality or a nation' (History 8/3: 39). Nation is then defined in the same text as a 'community of people with a common history, language, culture, lifestyle and a common territory' (History 8/3, 2011: 39). Nationality is explained as a term referring to membership of a nation or a national minority within a state.

The same page also explains in succinct fashion the terms ethnography and national movement. Accordingly, ethnography is an academic discipline which studies the nation and its cultural, social and religious relationships. A national movement is then defined in an ethno-symbolist manner as a long-term and complex process which leads to the crystallisation of modern forms of nations and proceeds through various stages of development. Textbook authors do not specify in any detail the pre-modern formations of collective identities or their forms in the relevant chapter (History 8/3, 2011: 39). Yet this is not the first introduction to the concept of national development, the process of which is described for sixth grade students.

Here, it is also presented in the teleological fashion of ethno-symbolism. Nations are portrayed as the ultimate results of a lineal historical transformation of their earlier forms. This evolutionary development is illustrated with reference to the arrival of the Indo-European population in Europe in the Bronze Age (circa 2000-800 BC):

At the dusk of the Bronze era, Indo-European ancestors of Germans, Celts, Slavs, and also Romanic nations, from which contemporary nations developed, gradually arrived in Europe (History 6/1, 2011: 14).

An additional and more detailed explanation of the process of nation formation is elaborated in the textbook for the seventh grade (age 13). The content of history teaching at this stage covers the period from the Early Middle Ages (circa fifth century) up to the era of the Enlightenment (circa 1780). This entire period is addressed within four central thematic areas that are further subdivided into multiple chapters.¹¹⁵ The textbook narrative, relying on the language of comparison, creates an impression of unique and homogenous nations. Contrary to the constructivist emphasis on social engineering by elites and the ethno-symbolist understanding of the instrumentalist role of the myth-symbol complex, textbook authors present national features in an essentialist fashion of primordialism as the inherent, defining quality of nations.

This narrative is immediately apparent in the first main thematic area, 'The ancestors of Slovaks in the Carpathian Basin' and its opening chapter, 'The life of our ancestors'. The chapter introduces a more elaborate account of the development of nations as

¹¹⁵ Please refer to Annex 7.3, p.263 for an overview of thematic areas and chapters in the textbook for grade seven.

compared to the previous textbook volume (grade six). In an ethno-symbolist perspective, their crystallisation is described as a long-term historical process. At the same time, in true primordialist style, textbook authors put a strong emphasis on its given distinctiveness and it is overtly outlined as a nationally specific and unique, incomparable development. To reinforce their argument, the authors rely on the continuity of names which is equated with the persistence of their meanings:

The formation of each nation is a complex, unique and non-recurring process. The beginnings of some big nations are relatively clear and recorded in historical sources. The genesis of smaller ethnic groups is not as straightforward and intelligible. This statement also applies to Slovaks. The oldest denomination of our nation (ethnonym) was Sloveni which is very close to a general description for Slavs. What is more, this antique name changed in the course of the fourteenth century from Sloven to Slovak in the masculine form. In the female form (*Slovenka*) and in the adjective form (*slovenský*), the original shape remained (History 7/2, 2011: 8).

By utilising the name of a particular Slavic tribe, the 'Sloveni', the textbook authors aim to establish in the clearly essentialist fashion of primordialism the collective authenticity of the Slovak nation. This is also apparent from the notable emphasis they put on the difference between the language of the 'Sloveni' people within the contemporary area of Slovakia and the wider Slavic population within Europe:

The cultural and liturgical language used within Great Moravia will be described [in the textbook] as Slavic liturgical language or Slavic liturgy because this was not the language of Sloveni but it was based on a dialect of the southern Macedonian Slavs (History 7/2, 2011: 8).

The tribe of Sloveni continues to serve the textbook authors as a demarcation line between other Slavic tribes. While their first political organisation, Samo's realm, is described as a tribe union of Slavs, the formation of the Nitra Principality (contemporary Slovakia) in the second half of the eighth century is exclusively associated with the Sloveni people (History 7/2, 2011: 9). The primordialist understanding of Slovak identity is also apparent from, and reinforced by, the constant employment of the language of inclusion and exclusion throughout the chapters of the textbook. Their text refers frequently to 'our ancestors' who always succeeded in maintaining their 'own traditions and lifestyle' which set them apart from other nations. In order to firmly anchor the roots of the given characteristics of the Slovak nation, 'unique Slovak traditions' are considered part of an indeterminate, remote past which lies before the arrival of the tribe of Sloveni in the Carpathian Basin.

At the same time, textbook authors implicitly and explicitly emphasise the existence of other, distinctive nations. In addition, the writing style which is applied in the textbook for

the seventh grade does not completely escape the romantic influences of the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Herder's idealised concepts of the peacefulness and victimisation of Slavs are instantly recognisable. Therefore, 'our ancestors' appear occasionally in a more positive light when compared to the 'outsiders'. These patterns already occur in the initial lines of the first chapter (The life of our ancestors) which begins with a description of the relationship between Avars and Slavs:

At the end of the fifth and the beginning of the sixth century, the tribe of Sloveni settled in the territory of Slovakia. However, the peaceful life of the new settlers was violated by nomadic and combative Avars. [...] Our ancestors maintained their own lifestyle even after their arrival in the Carpathian basin. [...] Our ancestors were predominantly farmers (History 7/2, 2011: 8).

Although the question of antiquity remains open from both a Herderian understanding as well as an ethno-symbolist perspective, the formation of the Slovak nation is linked to the tribe of Sloveni and explained as an ultimate goal of a *longue durée* process. However, the notable emphasis on the authentic aspects of 'our' predecessors, rooted in a distant past, clearly follows primordialist logic as it emphasises the essential distinctiveness of the Slovak nation. The lifestyle of Slovak ancestors is not interpreted in the instrumentalist sense of ethno-symbolism but rather as an inherent quality. On other occasions, however, the text accidentally contradicts previous statements on the continuity between the pre-modern community of Sloveni and the contemporary Slovak nation and its historically rooted uniqueness:

In the period of Great Moravia new elements occurred gradually in the lifestyle of our ancestors. First of all, the ruling stratum (dynasty, members of military retinue) began to imitate Franks in their dress, lifestyle and military equipment (History 7/1, 2011: 19).

In spite of the subsequent, mitigating statement limiting the transformation of ancestral traditions to the elite, the text clearly exposes the weakness of primordialist and ethno-symbolist assumptions. Both the primordialist authenticity of national characteristics and the ethno-symbolist emphasis on the continuity of the myth-symbol complex of pre-national communities are evidently undermined. On the other hand, the establishment and dissolution of the realm of Great Moravia is presented in less crude terms. Simultaneously, however, the political and cultural significance and direct line between Great Moravia and contemporary Slovakia and Slovaks is emphasised.

The Herderian idealisation of the peaceful Slavs uninterested in military conquest and power expansion is also challenged in the relevant text. At the same time, the textbook applies a very positive, almost celebratory approach towards one of its central figures,

Svätopluk (ca.840-894). Described as the king of Great Moravia, the textbook authors underline Svätopluk's military and political capabilities:

Around the year of 833, the Moravian count Mojmir I., expelled Pribina and overran the principality of Nitra. Through the fusion of the principalities of Moravia and Nitra, Great Moravia was founded. [...]

Svätopluk was an extremely skilled ruler. Within a space of a short time, he consolidated the land internally and started to conquer surrounding Slavic countries. [...]

Within less than a quarter of century, Svätopluk transformed Great Moravia into a strong and large realm which even the kings of the East Franks had to respect. [...]

[Through the establishment of an episcopate in Great Moravia in 880 the Pope] acknowledged the independence of Great Moravia and Svätopluk was accredited the same status as other rulers of the Europe of the era. Therefore we can describe him as a king. [...]

Fatricidal wars were one of the reasons for the dissolution of Great Moravia. [...]

In the following year, 907, old-Magyar warriors also defeated the Bavarians and became the new rulers of the Carpathian Basin (History 7/2, 2011: 11-13).

In spite of the disintegration of Great Moravia, however, the primordialist narrative (timeless national authenticity) intertwined with ethno-symbolist patterns (continuity of myth-symbol complex) is maintained and applied in order to firmly establish the antiquity and essentialism of the Slovak nation. In order to further this objective, attention is given to archaeological evidence which is employed to legitimise the territorial rootedness of the Slovak nation within the area of contemporary Slovakia. Hence, references to the tribe of Sloveni, their culture and Christianity, are presented as an original repository of Slovak distinctiveness and common ancestry:

The period of Great Moravia constitutes a very significant stage of our oldest history. [...] Although Great Moravia disintegrated eventually, the local ethnic community did not vanish. Neither did its culture and Christianity which already had strong roots. As archaeological explorations prove, a lasting rupture in the settlement development did not occur. Thanks to a living historical tradition, Sloveni did maintain a consciousness of a common origin, lifestyle, folk culture and language (History 7/2, 2011: 18-20).

Despite the strong emphasis on an uninterrupted, continuous settlement of a culturally distinctive and self-aware group of Sloveni within the boundaries of contemporary Slovakia, the text contradicts itself once more. Again, the shortcomings of primordialism (timeless national authenticity) and ethno-symbolism (continuity of myth-symbol complex) become, albeit unintentionally, clearly manifest:

At the end of April 1241, the contemporary territory of Slovakia was invaded by an additional squad of Tatars which approached through Moravia and started to ravage densely populated southwest Slovakia. [...] Tatars left a devastated land [after themselves]. The following winter, famine struck which claimed, allegedly, more victims than the looting Tatars. [...]

The repercussions of the Tatar invasion were disastrous for Hungary. In the central areas of the land, nearly half of the population perished.¹¹⁶ Villages and churches were burned down and whole areas were abandoned. Only those who had hidden in forests or good fortified places escaped. [...] The devastated land had to be re-settled. The king and aristocrats invited guests to their estates. In particular German settlers arrived here and settled in developing cities, in the mining area of Middle Slovakia and on the Spiš (History 7/1, 2011: 32).

As already mentioned in the curriculum analysis, Slovakia as an administrative or political unit did not exist under this name until the creation of Czechoslovakia in 1918. Nevertheless, textbook authors resort to the application of 'Slovakia' and 'Slovaks' in their narratives pertaining to much earlier historical periods. Consequently, they reinforce the notion of a fully fledged Slovak nation in the pre-modern era. While the first thematic area, 'The ancestors of Slovaks in the Carpathian Basin', in the textbook talks of 'Sloveni', the second theme, 'Slovaks in Hungarian Kingdom', adopts the terms 'Slovaks and Slovakia' for the historical period of the tenth century.

The Hungarian Kingdom is depicted in the self-evident fashion of primordialism as a multinational realm united through Christianity but encompassing a multiplicity of culturally and territorially bounded groups of people with an awareness of a distinctive collective identity. A slight degree of cultural superiority of the 'Slovak' settlers in relation to the Magyar population might be inferred from the emphasis the textbook authors put on the historical rootedness of Slovak ancestors in the region and their adherence to Christianity:

The dynasty of Arpads ruled in Hungary until the fourteenth century. The first Hungarian king was Stephen I. Hungary was founded as a Christian state of multiple nations. Slovaks and Slovakia were an integral part of this state until 1918. [...] King Stephen I. supported the diffusion of Christianity among the predominantly pagan Magyar population. The process developed speedily in regions where the Magyar ethnic group lived together with the historically settled Slovak population (History 7/2, 2011: 22).

In the same vein, the textbook continues to differentiate between the Kingdom of Hungary and its multiple nations and territories in the subsequent thematic areas:

Mining played a significant role in the Hungarian Kingdom from its beginnings. [...] Slovakia was among the most significant mining producers of gold, copper and silver not only in Hungary but also in the whole Europe (History 7/2, 2011: 38).

The battle of Mohács concludes a prime period of the Hungarian Kingdom and the period of the Middle Ages in our land. Slovakia as a part of Hungary enters the modern period. In Central Europe, a new state unit is formed which is led by the dynasty of the Habsburgs (History 7/2, 2011:78).

¹¹⁶ The number of people living within the area of contemporary Slovakia may have been around 200,000-250,000 at the end of twelfth century (Lukačka 2000a: 103).

In spite of the primordialist narrative already applied in the textbook for grade seven (age 13), manifestations of nationalism within Europe are dominant topics within the eighth grade (age 14). The relevant textbook is divided into four central thematic areas which together cover the historical period from the French Revolution in 1789 until the establishment of Czechoslovakia in 1918. The first thematic section is summarised under the heading of 'On the route towards modern nations' and begins with a European contextualisation of national movements. In eight subsequent chapters, the French Revolution (1789-1799), Napoleonic Wars (1803-1815), revolutionary movements in Tsarist Russia, France, Germany and Italy are described. In addition, developments in North America (1756-1865) are covered as well as industrialisation and art in the nineteenth century.¹¹⁷

The narrative of the textbook for the eighth grade becomes less conceptually intertwined when compared with the textbooks for grades six and seven. Despite the vocabulary indicative of the academic approach of constructivism (modern nations), however, the prevailing writing style displays stronger primordialist inclinations. The development of national identities is not presented as a result of industrialisation and the interference of elites or state authorities. As the content of the textbook shows, the application of the term 'modern' does not relate to the constructivist interpretation of national identities. Instead, it refers to the gradual process of socio-political transformation (modernisation) in Europe which followed the French Revolution of 1789. A number of European nations in Central, South and South East Europe (Germans, Italians, Poles, Slovaks) and in the Balkans are presented both implicitly and explicitly as socially and politically disadvantaged but territorially and culturally bounded communities already sharing a mass consciousness.

The historical phenomenon of nationalism is introduced three times in the textbook. First, contextualised against the French Revolution of 1789 and European revolutionary developments (1830-1848/49), nationalism is portrayed as a progressive, socio-political movement. Attempts to transform discriminatory social structures rooted in hereditary privilege within Europe by implementing a constitutional and republican legal order, as well as national unification and autonomy, are presented in a positive light:

Several European nations strove for the adoption of a new constitution, the introduction of a republican political order, recognition and unification. Such manifestations were described by the term of nationalism. National tendencies grew stronger particularly in Italy, Germany, Poland and in the Balkans (History 8/3, 2011: 20).

¹¹⁷ Please refer to Annex 7.4, p.264 for an overview of thematic areas and chapters in the textbook for grade eight.

The second presentation of nationalism appears in the textbook in a brief, definition of the term. Although presented in a slightly critical manner, the actual existence of nations remains unquestioned:

Nationalism- a stream of political and cultural thought which exalts nation, its interests, history and uniqueness (History 8/3, 2011: 23).

Hence, nations continue to be explicitly portrayed throughout the text from a primordialist perspective as already formed, given and culturally homogenous collective bodies. This logic also applies to the presentation of the Slovak national movement. The second relevant thematic area of the textbooks is summarised under the headline of 'The Modern Slovak Nation' within 26 A4 pages. It is within this broad section, subdivided into six separate chapters, that nationalism is described explicitly for the third time.¹¹⁸ On this occasion, nationalism is introduced as a specific and original set of beliefs from a socio-psychological perspective which again unintentionally challenges the primordialist conceptualisation of national identity.

Against the background of the Enlightenment and romanticism, the ideas of academics and intellectuals of the late eighteenth century are briefly discussed within one paragraph (eleven lines). Notions of belonging and feelings of an inner bond with a distinctive group, defined predominantly through linguistic affinity and cultural customs, are presented as a novel, unusual perspective on collective identities. The innovative character of this stream of thought is contrasted with the traditional, collective awareness derived from social hierarchy anchored in the principles of hereditary privilege and confessional affiliations:

From the end of the eighteenth century, a lively discussion about nations had been conducted within Europe. This was previously a fairly unknown theme because in society until the eighteenth century belonging to an estate or a religion was decisive. During this time, however, scholars argued that there are special bonds between people which link them in a rather extraordinary manner. This bondage is a membership of a nation. National consciousness - the conviction that a person is a natural member of a nation into which (s)he is born or speaks its language - began to rise in the world. Scholars pondered questions such as what is a nation, who builds it and what are the aspects which might describe a nation. They maintained that the nation is like the family, linked through emotional ties and common language. They considered folk culture (folklore), national traditions, customs, and particularly language to be the most important features of a nation (History 8/3, 2011: 37).

Nevertheless, despite this fairly constructivist approach, the subsequent paragraphs and chapters do not elaborate further on this brief discussion. Instead, the description of the Slovak national movement continues in a mixed narrative of primordialism and ethno-

¹¹⁸ Please refer to Annex 7.4, p.264 for an overview of chapters' headings.

symbolism. The term of 'ethnic group' is again applied inconsistently as the pre-form of a nation and simultaneously as its synonym:

The Habsburg Monarchy was a multinational state while each ethnic group was at a different stage of national development. The politically dominant nations, Germans and Magyars, which were using their native tongues as the language of instruction in schools, in published literature or newspapers and founded cultural institutions, had more favourable conditions for national development. Slovaks, Czechs, Ruthenians, Serbs, Slovenians, Romanians were in a more complicated situation (History 8, 2011: 37).

In the pages that follow, the textbook, once again unintentionally yet unmistakably, reveals the constructed character of the Slovak nation. This becomes obvious in the context of the discussion on the codification of the Slovak literary language. Consequently, a significant aspect of a primordialist conceptualisation of national identity, the native language, is undermined:

The big disadvantage of Slovaks was that they did not have a common literary language. They had spoken various dialects and were also divided through liturgical language.¹¹⁹ [...] Therefore, a pressing issue was the creation of a unified literary language that would unite Slovaks (History 8/3, 2011: 38).

Nevertheless, in spite of such notable contradictions, the process of the Slovak national movement is presented as a just, progressive movement focusing on the emancipation of a socially and politically disadvantaged but culturally homogenous community. The existence of a Slovak nation is interpreted as an objective fact and its origins predate the period of Great Moravia (circa 833-902 AD).

It is also within this thematic section (Modern Slovak nation) that the topic of Magyarisation is discussed for the first time. The attempts pursued by Magyar-speaking politicians in transforming the Hungarian Kingdom into a mono-national state with one official language are described. In this context, the socio-political opportunism of the non-Magyar population of the Kingdom, which began to appear around the first half of the nineteenth century, is also highlighted. As the textbook authors argue, some city residents and other wealthy inhabitants started to adapt their lifestyles or magyarised their names in order to gain personal advantages.

The first half of the nineteenth century is also associated with Pan-Slavism, initially a cultural movement stressing the unity of the Slavic population of the Kingdom.

¹¹⁹ For Catholics, the liturgical language had traditionally been Latin. For Protestants, this was the so called 'bibličtina' (old Czech), the language of the Kralice Bible. The historical Czech language version (bibličtina) was used in the first translation of the Bible published between 1579-94 in Kralice upon Oder. It was applied as the liturgical language of the Slovak Protestant Church until the 1960s (Frimmová 2011: 65).

Consequently, the textbook mentions the fears of the representatives of the Magyar national movement due to this parallel development, which was seen as a potential political danger within the whole Habsburg Monarchy and ultimately led to police surveillance of Slavic activities (History 8/3, 2011: 44-45).

The Slovak nation and its socio-political history remains a central focus also in the subsequent, third thematic area of the textbook. The thematic section of 'Austria-Hungary' is addressed within three separate chapters¹²⁰ and covers the historical period following the Austro-Hungarian Compromise of 1867 which was dominated by the politics of Magyarisation.¹²¹ The unfavourable socio-political conditions within contemporary Slovakia, including a discussion of Slovak political activities, are the central topic of these chapters. Although portrayed in a unemotional, factual style, the interpretation of Magyarisation is approached from the perspective of Slovak nationalism. Hence, it is portrayed as the oppression of non-Magyar nations and of the Slovak nation in particular:

Magyar politicians strove to transform the multinational country into a state of one, Magyar nation. Although the new national law of 1868 formally granted national rights to non-Magyar nations, it was not adhered to in practice. The Magyar language became the state language in the Kingdom. A period of increased national oppression set in which affected Slovaks and Ruthenians the most. [...] Hungarian governments financed multiple societies and organisations which had the objective of developing magyarisation activities in Slovak regions. Magyarisation damaged relationships between the nations of Hungary and led to defensive reactions (History 8/3, 2011: 64).

The politics of Magyarisation also serves to explain the background of the gradual intensification of political and cultural contact between Czech and Slovak political activists of the late nineteenth century. The emerging concept of political Czechoslovakism (discussed in chapter 2.1) is presented as a political strategy with the potential to improve the unfavourable position of the Slovak nation within Austria-Hungary. At the same time, it is portrayed as a political programme endorsed particularly among Slovak students of T.G. Masaryk. It is emphasised, however, that this line of argument was not shared by the entire spectrum of political actors gradually re-engaging in Slovakia at the end of the nineteenth century.

Further political positions, renewed pan-Slavic inclinations and also the concept of a sovereign Slovak nation are highlighted in the same chapter. In addition, attention is

¹²⁰ Please refer to Annex 7.4, p.264 for an overview of chapter headings.

¹²¹ Following the defeat of Austria in the war with Prussia (1866), the Austro-Hungarian Compromise established the so-called dualism of two administratively autonomous parts of the monarchy (Kingdoms of Austria and Hungary) with one king and common ministry of finance, defence and foreign affairs. The Hungarian Diet became the sole legislative power and the Hungarian government was endowed with exclusive executive powers (History 8 /3, 2011: 62; Kováč 2011b: 129-130).

paid to the political activities of emigrant communities, particularly in North America, and their contribution to the ultimate establishment of Czechoslovakia is evaluated positively. The last central theme in the textbook for the eighth grade, 'First World War', is subdivided into six chapters and continues in its primordialist perspective.¹²² Nations within the Habsburg Monarchy and Ottoman Empire are presented as given and culturally homogenous social groups. The Habsburg Monarchy on the eve of the First World War is portrayed as unable to satisfy the national demands of its multiple nations. Equally, the Balkan Wars (1912-1913) are described as liberation wars of multiple Balkan nations (Serbs, Romanians, Greeks, Bulgarians and Montenegrins) oppressed under the rule of the Ottoman Empire (History 8/3, 2011: 72-74).

Traces of Herder's idealised portrayal of Slavs appear again within one of the final chapters of the textbook. The chapter 'Slovak soldiers at the frontlines', begins by emphasising the resistance of Slovaks to the imminent war. The peaceful character of the Slovak nation is then contrasted with the war enthusiasm within Europe:

Although the majority of Slovaks remained unaffected by the European fanaticism and tended to view the approaching war with anxiety, directly after its outbreak some Slovak papers encouraged the loyalty of Slovaks towards Habsburgs and allegiance to the monarchy (History 8/3, 2011: 80).

In spite of the idealisation of the peace-loving Slovaks, textbook authors do not fail to include a celebratory account of the Czecho-Slovak legionnaires. These were composed mostly of Czech and Slovak captives of the Entente forces and were formed during the First World War under the auspices of Czecho-Slovak political circles as part of their political strategy aiming for the establishment of Czechoslovakia after the war. Regardless of the earlier emphasis on the opposition of Slovaks to war, the performance and military skills of the Czecho-Slovak legions and particularly their participation in conflicts with the Bolsheviks in 1917 are assessed affirmatively in the textbook:

[Czecho-Slovak Legions] were capable and disciplined military units which were active on the side of the Entente states. [...] A great success of the Czecho-Slovak legionnaires in Russia was a combat at the village of Zborov in July 1917 which was also reported by the foreign media. Legionaries came into conflict with Russian Bolsheviks. [...] All the accomplishments of the legionaries constituted for Czechs and Slovaks encouragement for the creation of a common state (History 8/3, 2011: 84).

Did you know that: there was an international response following the seizing of the Trans-Siberian Railway by the units of Czecho-Slovak legions in the period of 1918-1920 when legionaries triumphed against the Russian Bolsheviks? (History 8/3, 2011: 85)

¹²² Please refer to Annex 7.4, p.264 for an overview of chapter headings.

The eventual establishment of Czechoslovakia in the autumn of 1918 is presented in a factual, unemotional, but positive fashion. It is interpreted as an opportunity for the socio-political progress of both Czechs and Slovaks (History 8/3, 2011: 87-88).

A comparable, primordialist narrative applied in the textbook for grade eight also continues in the subsequent, last volume for grade nine. The textbook covers the historical period of the early twentieth century and concludes with the entry of Slovakia to the EU and NATO in 2004 and the adoption of the Euro in Slovakia in 2009. As in the previous volumes, the teaching content is divided into a five central thematic areas which are further organised into multiple chapters.¹²³ Corresponding with the narrative in previous grades, nations continue to be presented as self-evident facts and homogenous entities sharing a collective awareness of belonging in the textbook for the final year of lower secondary schooling:

The defeat of Germany and Austria-Hungary opened new opportunities also for Slavic nations which were until then living in the monarchy of Austria-Hungary (History 9/4, 2012: 28).

Following the Second World War, nations of Africa and Asia, who were under a lasting, colonial administration and had already striven for decades for independence, succeeded in achieving state independence (History 9/4, 2012: 98).

The key concepts in the academic discussion of nationalism appear explicitly on two occasions in the textbook. In a brief, concise clarification, the concepts of 'national self-determination' and 'nationalism' are addressed. In a factual manner, national self-determination is defined as a right to independence and national freedom (History 9/4, 2011:17). Nationalism is described as an ideational and political concept which considers nations to be the basic units of societal structure (History 9/4, 2011: 39).

Although the textbook for grade eight had already addressed the topic of the First World War, the final textbook starts with the year of its outbreak in 1914. Like the previous volume (grade eight, age 14), the textbook describes the opposition of the Slovak population to the war and also emphasises the significance of Czecho-Slovak legions and the activities of political forces overseas, particularly in France, Russia and the US, for the eventual creation of Czechoslovakia.

The actual establishment of Czechoslovakia is credited with making a substantial contribution to the socio-economic progress of Slovakia and Slovaks. A brief argument supporting the constructivist perspective on the nature of the nation also emerges within

¹²³ Please refer to Annex 7.5, p.265 for a complete overview of all thematic areas and chapters.

one sentence in the chapter with the heading of 'Slovakia in the search for its path'. It highlights the limited national consciousness among the population of contemporary Slovakia in the period immediately following the establishment of Czechoslovakia in 1918. However, the impact of this statement is directly softened by the subsequent implicit allusions to the illiberal socio-political conditions within the Monarchy of Austria-Hungary before 1918:

Before the year of 1918 only a section of Slovaks acknowledged Slovak identity. In the favourable conditions [of the newly established Czechoslovakia] Slovaks could complete their crystallisation as one of the multiple modern European nations (History 9/4, 2012: 42).

This presentation allows a link to be made to the absence of collective identity to the Magyarisation policies described in the textbook of the previous grade. The lack of national consciousness thus becomes the result of a deliberate strategy adopted by the Slovak population out of an existential, socio-economic necessity or opportunism preconditioned by the discriminatory policies within Austria-Hungary, rather than a reflection of reality.

Overall, the account of interwar Czechoslovakia is consistently very positive and textbook authors emphasise its benefits for the cultural, socio-economic and also political progress of Slovakia and its population. Although the challenging economic situation and diverging levels of industrialisation within the two parts of the new Republic are also discussed critically, the text seems to put less emphasis on the issue of nation building. The plurality of views within the political spectrum with regard to the relationship between Czechs and Slovaks and also the complexity of the issue of national minorities, particularly in relation to Germans and Magyars, are acknowledged. Nevertheless, external influences (Germany and Hungary) are identified as the primary forces behind the national frictions within inter-war Czechoslovakia.¹²⁴

Czechoslovakia was a multinational state. In addition to Slovaks and Czechs, national minorities lived within its territory which had become a lasting problem for the newly established state. Magyars constituted the largest national minority in Slovakia. They had considerable problems in adapting to new conditions because, having come from a ruling nation in the former Kingdom of Hungary, they suddenly became a national minority. [...] National diversity in Slovakia did not only lead to problems or conflicts but also had positive aspects. [...] The majority of the Slovak population and members of other nationalities lived in harmony. Although they had different opinions on the resolution of numerous issues, they shared common economic, civic and social interests and sorrows. [...] Coexistence was complicated particularly through external influences, mostly when Germany and Hungary strove to use German and Magyar minorities as the instruments of their

¹²⁴ The national minorities within Slovakia after 1918 - Magyars, Ruthenians, Poles, Czechs, Jews, Roma and others - represented almost 20% of the total population (Krajčovičová, 2011: 141).

politics. The national issue in Central Europe and consequently also in Slovakia was very sensitive. It had never been resolved to the satisfaction of all nationalities (History 9/4, 2012: 50).

Regardless of the recurring theme of national identities¹²⁵, the historical period of 1918-1938 is associated primarily with the building of democracy and the importance of active citizenship. The establishment of a democratic political system and the gradual evolution of a civic culture within interwar Czechoslovakia are strongly emphasised. This constitutes the dominant message the textbook authors attempt to transmit to students:

For Slovaks, the establishment of Czecho-Slovakia had great significance. [...] The democratic system had great significance for Slovaks because for the first time in history a Slovak person became a citizen who had electoral rights. Suffrage was also granted to women which in contemporary Europe was not the norm. [...] For a Slovak citizen it was critical that through his active participation he could contribute to the formation of modern Slovakia and search for a path for the country which he considered as optimal (History 9/4, 2012: 42).

Slovak residents who were in the period of the Hungarian Kingdom [*Uhorsko*] only a mass without rights, became in Czechoslovakia equal citizens for the first time. [...] democracy is not only suffrage. Democracy means a lifestyle and communication between people. Democracy teaches people not only to speak freely but also to listen to others and respect a plurality of opinions (History 9/4, 2012: 46).

The attempt by textbook authors to provide a well-balanced account of history is evident, particularly when dealing with the rather complex history of the 'independent' Slovak Republic under the influence of Nazi Germany during the Second World War (1939-1945). The expansionist politics of Nazi Germany are identified by the textbook authors as the primary cause of the eventual disintegration of inter-war Czechoslovakia in March 1939. The authoritarian transformation of the Slovak political system following the Munich agreement (September 1938) and the subsequent Vienna Arbitration (November 1938), as well as the impact of radical political forces within Slovakia, are evaluated critically in this context.

Equally, although the political dependency of Slovakia on Nazi Germany during the Second World War is emphasised, the textbook authors take a critical position towards its political structure. This specifically applies to the persecution of Jews which led to their forced transportation to Nazi extermination camps. At the same time, domestic resistance to the wartime Slovak state, resulting in the 'Slovak National Uprising' in

¹²⁵ The textbook devotes one separate chapter, 'Co-citizens or opponents?' specifically to the topic of national minorities in inter-war Czechoslovakia. In addition, relevant discussion also appears in two additional chapters, 'Slovakia in search of its own path' and 'Unknown freedom'. In the context of the description of the democratic structure of interwar Czechoslovakia, the political rights of national minorities and their practical application are also highlighted (History 9/4, 2012).

August 1944, is highlighted. It is interpreted as critical evidence of the Slovak dissatisfaction with the prevailing undemocratic system.

The presence of chapters dedicated to the socio-political history of Slovakia and Slovaks in the last textbook volume is notable.¹²⁶ So remains the primordialist inclination of the text narrative, which presents the existence of authentic nations in a self-evident fashion. Nevertheless, the writing style applied within the history textbook of the ninth grade continues to be prudent and factual. The building of Slovak nationhood does not seem to be the primary objective of its authors. Rather, they seek to provide an objective account of the complex history of the twentieth century within the scope provided by the curriculum. This might also be derived from the presentation of the establishment of the Slovak Republic in January 1993.

The political organisation of the mutual relationship of Czechs and Slovaks in the period of 1945-1989 is described in the textbook as a sensitive issue which was not optimally resolved. However, the eventual dissolution of the common state is not presented as the result of the desire of both nations for self-determination. Pointing towards the lengthy political discussion after 1989, this is interpreted dispassionately as the consequence of a political decision taken by the winners of the last common election in Czechoslovakia in 1992. An overt evaluation of this event is not given by the textbook authors. Instead, students are encouraged to formulate their own views through the exercise questions concluding the relevant chapter, 'On the route to democracy and independence':

The revolutionary transformations [of 1989] inexorably promoted in Slovakia the sensitive and not yet satisfactorily resolved constitutional issue. The political representatives of the Slovak and Czech Republics were in dispute and embroiled in negotiations for almost three years about their mutual relationship in a common, federative state. In the election of 1992, in Slovakia as well as in Czech lands, the triumphant political parties and forces decided to settle this issue through the partition of the federative Czecho-Slovakia and the creation of two independent states (History 9/4, 2012: 122).

We are searching

Explain why many citizens favoured the preservation of the Czech and Slovak Federative Republic and many advocated the establishment of an independent Slovak Republic (History 9/4, 2012: 123).

Ask your parents or grandparents how they perceived the atmosphere of the discussions and negotiations about the future constitutional organisation of Slovakia (History 9/4, 2012: 123).

¹²⁶ From 52 chapters in total, 30 are dedicated to Slovak national history. The remaining 22 chapters focus on socio-political and also cultural developments mostly within Europe. One chapter is dedicated to the issue of decolonisation (History 9/4, 2012). Please refer to Annex 7.5, pp.265-266 for a complete overview of chapters.

Overall, the interpretation of the nature of national identity in all the history textbooks examined here (grades five to nine, ages 11-15 respectively) discloses a mixed conceptual foundation. However, the prevalent impression remains primordialist. This is derived from the way in which nations are presented. They are portrayed as constant historical phenomena, as self-evident, distinctive and self-aware social groups defined by the aspects of common origin, shared territory, traditions, history, language and national character (in the case of Slovaks as peaceful and oppressed). This line of argument permeates all the history textbooks analysed here. A clear-cut distinction between primordialism and ethno-symbolism in relation to the antiquity of nations cannot be determined. However, an ethno-symbolist conceptualisation might be detected in this context through the implicit assumptions and explicit statements related to the account of their development. This predates the French Revolution considerably and, as such, is interpreted as a *longue durée* process of an unparalleled nature linked in a teleological fashion to tribes and clans.

Although notably intertwined with primordialist patterns, this conceptualisation is more pronounced in the textbooks for grade six and seven (ages 12 and 13 respectively). An obvious but marginal constructivist line of interpretation of national identity occurs in the textbook for grades eight and nine. However, this is immediately diluted in the subsequent narrative amid mitigating claims which reinforce a primordialist perspective. As a result, these two occasions do not suggest a deliberate conceptual decision or strategy by textbook authors in an attempt to challenge the paradigm of primordialism.

Geography Textbooks

The interpretation of national identity might be traced in the textbooks of geography, as in the case of history, from explicit statements and implicit assumptions manifest throughout the texts. Overt elaborations of the central concepts of the scholarship of nationalism are present in geography textbooks to a lesser extent than in the history textbooks. Specific explanations of the concepts of nations, national minority and clans are provided within the textbook for grade seven. At this stage, the teaching content is dedicated to the presentation of two continents, Africa and Asia.¹²⁷

The first, main thematic area of the textbook, 'World', is composed of two chapters related to human geography. The first chapter, briefly entitled 'Settlement' (three A4 pages) focuses on an introduction to demography and population dynamics. Conditions which facilitated the development of human settlements (climate and livelihood availability) and their types (villages and cities) are discussed together with population

¹²⁷ Please refer to Annex 8.3, p.269 for a complete overview of chapters.

density before proceeding to a more specific description of the world population. This is further expanded in the second chapter with an equally succinct heading of 'Population' (six A4 pages). The chapter begins with an anthropological categorisation of humanity into 'races' which are explained as a result of natural conditions:

The differences in external appearance of people developed through an adjustment to diverse conditions of nature. For example, a darker skin colour is typical for people who live closer to the equator because darker skin protects better against sunshine. [...] Based on biological differences, people are divided into three big groups - races [sic]. [...] All races [sic] are equal. [...] People who use the differences in appearance of people of diverse races [sic] to incite mutual hatred are called racists (Geography 7/2, 2010: 6).

In the two following paragraphs an explanation of nation is provided. It is a description which might be seen as evidence of the terminological variety and also the conceptual ambiguity which is characteristic of the academic discussion on nationalism. Reflecting a primordialist perspective of the nature of nations, this is first described in the textbook as a large group of people bound through common territory, common history, language, culture and traditions. At the same time, the explanation continues by maintaining that members of a nation do not necessarily need to display all these common characteristics. As the text emphasises, a subjective perception of belonging to a nation is more important than cultural aspects or a territory:

Large groups of people who are bound through a common territory where they live, a common history, language, culture and traditions, are called nations. The members of a nation do not need to have all of the listed characteristics in common. There are nations which do not have a common language (Swiss) or a common territory (Jews) or a common religion (Germans). The important point is that their members have a feeling of belonging, consider themselves to be one community - a nation. The territory where a nation developed or lives now does not need to be congruent with the borders of a state (Geography 7/2, 2010: 6-7).

The existence of nations is depicted as given, but the attributes of a nation do not correspond precisely with the analytical categories of primordialism or ethno-symbolism. Unlike history, geography textbooks do not provide an explanation of the concept of 'ethnic group'. On the other hand, some degree of ethno-symbolist understanding of collective identities might be inferred from the above chapter. The concepts of tribes and clans are also briefly mentioned in the text and compared with that of nation. In one sentence, these are briefly described as minor groupings of potential significance within certain areas of the world:

For people within some parts of the Earth, however, belonging to even smaller groups, to tribes or lineages, which are also called clans, is even more important. Therefore it is difficult to figure out the precise number of nations. On the Earth,

there are more than 2000 diverse nations and additional hundreds of various clans (Geography 7/2, 2010: 7).

The text does not address the process of national development extensively. As already argued, a clear-cut distinction between primordialist and ethno-symbolist conceptualisation with regard to the antiquity of nations is hard to establish. A degree of Herderian understanding might be derived in this context from the first textbook chapter (Settlements). As with Herder, this part draws attention to climate as the precondition for the dispersion of mankind over the Earth. Hence, these implicit assumptions might be considered as a tentative indication of primordialism. At the same time, such a conceptualisation could also be linked to ethno-symbolism as it indicates a *longue durée* process. A stronger ethno-symbolist tendency is revealed in this regard in the textbook for grade nine.

At this stage, teaching instruction focuses on the presentation of Slovakia. Within the thematic area of 'History, population, settlements and economy', the history of Slovakia is presented within one chapter under the headline of 'Historical developments in Slovakia, the establishment of Slovakia'.¹²⁸ Although an historical variety of human settlements within the contemporary territory of Slovakia is highlighted, the actual development of the Slovak nation is linked to the arrival of Slavic settlers between the fifth and sixth centuries. The text then continues in the self-evident manner of primordialism and argues that the Hungarian Kingdom was founded by the Magyar dynasty of Arpads in the tenth century. Nevertheless, it continues to emphasise that it was a multinational and multilingual realm with Latin as the communication language of the nobility (Geography 9/4, 2012: 16).

In spite of the rather unclear conceptualisation of nations in geography, their actual existence remains unquestioned. Nations are overwhelmingly portrayed as given entities within the presentation of continents and single states. This line of presentation runs throughout all textbooks with the exception of the textbook for the fifth grade. At this stage, as already mentioned in the curriculum analysis, the teaching content focuses on the insights of the physical geography of the planet Earth. Aspects of human geography are addressed within one chapter under the thematic area, 'The most beautiful places on Earth created by people'. The chapter 'Cities and villages', focuses within three A4 pages on the characteristics of cities and villages in a worldwide context. The term 'nation' is not applied by textbook authors in this context. Instead, they utilise the more generic idioms of 'people' (*fudia*), 'inhabitants' (*obyvatelia*) or 'population' (*obyvateľstvo*) in their descriptions:

¹²⁸ Please refer to Annex 8.5, p.272 for a complete overview of chapters.

People settled down nearly everywhere on earth in the course of recent centuries. [...] Settlements differ not only by size (by the number of inhabitants) but also by the type of buildings or by the accommodation of diverse activities of man. [...] People in cities usually have different work than inhabitants in rural areas, and work predominantly in services or in industry (Geography 5, 2009: 68).

A comparable approach is then adopted within subsequent volumes for all grades. However, the term 'nation' occurs alongside the above mentioned general terms. All are then used frequently as a frame of reference of human geography:

In America [the continent], more than 900 million inhabitants live. [...] In the US live a large number of nationalities (Geography 6/1, 2011: 54, 65).

Several nations live in Africa and numerous languages are spoken here (Geography 7/2, 2010: 31).

The national composition of the inhabitants of Asia is very diverse. The largest nation on Earth is the Chinese-Hans, who constitute as much as one third of all inhabitants of Asia (Geography 7/2, 2010: 69).

The majority of inhabitants are Bulgarians. In the south and southeast there is a Turkish minority which constitutes 10% of population (Geography 8/3, 2011: 109).

Slovaks predominate within the territory of Slovakia. [...] Nearly one in ten of inhabitants identifies as Magyar. [...] The ratio of the Roma inhabitants is growing gradually. A part of the population in the west or in the cities acknowledges Czech, Moravian and Silesian national identity. The Ruthenian and Ukrainian national minorities are significantly present in the east and north-east of Slovakia (Geography 9/4, 2012: 20).

In spite of the primordialist inclination to present nations as given facts, the textbook authors use a dispassionate tone throughout the text. However, within the discussion of the European continent (grade eight, age 14), the chapter dedicated to Slovakia begins in a more emotive style:

Slovakia - the most beautiful country in the world. We belong to Europe, we take pride in the nature of our homeland, in numerous cultural landmarks, in the success of scientists, artists and sportsmen (Geography 8/3, 2011: 42).

In addition to the overwhelmingly factual writing style adopted by the textbook authors, a further resemblance to the primordialist narrative of history becomes apparent. The language of group comparison is also employed in geography and establishes a clear dividing line between nations. At the same time, the textbooks emphasise cultural similarities within continents:

The inhabitants of East Asia have a very relaxed relationship to religion, frequently confessing to several simultaneously. The whole culture of inhabitants of East Asia is, however, notably shaped by Buddhism (Geography 7/2, 2010: 92).

Although the inhabitants of Europe have a lot in common (they belong with the exception of some immigrants and their descendants to a white race [sic], profess the Christian religion in the majority), yet they differ in certain respects. Within a rather small territory, approximately 80 nations and nationalities live which differ by the language they use (Geography 8/3, 2011: 25).

The Czech Republic is our neighbour to the west. It is the closest because we are linked not only through a common state border and the history of a common state but also as nations through linguistic and cultural closeness (Geography 8/3, 2011: 44).

In addition to language and religions as the main distinguishing traits, positive stereotypes are also utilised occasionally in the text to highlight the differences between nations. A 'typical national character' by which nations differ is portrayed in an implicit manner when discussing the states of Austria, Switzerland and Germany. The influences of Bacon's, Condillac's and Herder's legacy become apparent in the description of the respective inhabitants through an emphasis on the link between language and national character:

The Austrians and the Swiss have a very positive, occasionally anxious, relationship to the environment' (Geography 8/3, 2011: 53).

Germans, similar to Austrians and German-speaking Swiss, are known for their punctuality. The attribute of meticulousness is also frequently linked to being German (Geography 8/3, 2011: 58).

As in history, the textbooks of geography also contain some elements which undermine both the primordialist and ethno-symbolist assumptions. While discussing the historical multiplicity of regional traditions in terms of food, folklore or building materials used for houses within the area of contemporary Slovakia, the textbook authors unintentionally challenge the notion of a continuous cultural homogeneity within the Slovak nation. In doing so they expose the unsustainability of the claims of primordialism (timeless national authenticity) and also of ethno-symbolism (continuity of myth-symbol complex):

Each region of Slovakia has typical customs and traditions. [...] In each particular region, typical food and drinks were prepared, distinct songs were sung and unique dances were danced. Buildings were made of typical materials with a distinctive architecture (Geography 9/4, 2012: 18).

Overall, the interpretation of the nature of nations as presented in geography textbooks largely displays primordialist tendencies. Despite the relatively ambiguous explanation of nations, these are consistently presented in the self-evident fashion of banal nationalism as fixed and immutable. The traits of particular nations are not questioned. On the contrary, the existence of a 'typical national character' is openly emphasised with the aid of positive stereotyping. As with history education, a slight degree of ethno-symbolist

understanding could be detected in relation to the process of nation formation. A further resemblance is the absence of a critical conceptual discussion on nationalism.

Civics textbooks

Citizenship education addresses the issue of national identity most extensively in the sixth grade (age 12). In addition, some insights might also be derived from the textbooks for the fifth and seventh grades (ages 11 and 13 respectively). The notable emphasis on nationhood is apparent in the style of all three volumes. They are written in a personalised form and the instruction content is presented via the personal stories of a student 'Jakub Slovák'. The textbook for grade six reveals a particularly strong focus on the development and preservation of national and state identity.

'Municipality, Region, Homeland, European Union' is the heading of a thematic area that forms the content of Citizenship education (CE) for half the school year.¹²⁹ Subtopics within this area aim to enhance the students' pride in their local, regional and state settings and sense of belonging. In doing so, they are encouraged to explore local and regional history, and familiarise themselves with symbols (coat of arms, flags). Each chapter concludes with a number of questions and suggestions for further activities. Students are exhorted to:

Express love and pride in your municipality. Apply the information as arguments when explaining why you are taking pride in it. [...] Gather information about your municipality. It will become a source of your pride in it (CE 6/1, 2009: 7).

Show an interest in history, take an active part in the current life of your community, you will reinforce your roots (CE 6/1, 2009: 9).

Create an exhibition of state symbols in the visitors' room in your school (CE 6/1, 2009: 27).

The textbook for grade six provides two conceptual clarifications of the term nation. As in history education, the first reference does not allow for a precise interpretation of the antiquity of nation. Both Herderian and ethno-symbolist understandings might be gleaned from the brief, concise explanation which associates national formation with a long historical process. In a primordialist style, it links this to inherent and commonly shared aspects:

Nation - historically developed community of people with a common language, territory, economic system, history, culture, traditions (CE 6/1, 2009: 24).

¹²⁹ Please refer to Annex 9.2., p.274 for a complete overview of the contents of civics textbooks.

An unambiguous, primordialist notion is presented on the page which follows. In this case, the textbook authors describe nations as an extension of family and kinship bonds. Five collectively shared components are pinpointed as the main national characteristics. At the same time, unlike the frequent practice among scholars of nationalism (Connor 1994), the textbook for the sixth grade clearly distinguishes between the two concepts of nation and state:

Families build together bigger groups (communities) which we call nations. Nations have these common characteristics:

- territory
- language
- customs, traditions
- culture

In addition to Slovaks, other nationalities also live in our territory - Hungarians, Germans, Poles, Czechs, Ruthenians, Romas. We created a state - Slovak Republic, which is our common homeland (CE 6/1, 2009: 25).

State - a fundamental, legal organisation of political power of a society within a specific territory (CE 6/1, 2009: 24).

As with history education, the concepts prevalent in the scholarship of nationalism are not applied consistently across the grades. The textbook for the seventh grade provides a slightly altered explanation of nation. In addition, it also defines ethnic group. In a chapter under the headline of 'Jakub is becoming acquainted with the diversity of populations on our planet', the national diversity of mankind is discussed. Along the lines of the Herderian conceptualisation of nation, language is emphasised as its central aspect:

Human society is diverse and heterogeneous also in terms of nations and nationalities. Jakub has read somewhere that there are more than 300 nations and 600 nationalities. What a number! One of the main markers of a nation is a common language, speech (CE, 7/2, 2012: 14).

The link between language and national character also occurs in the same text in the definitions of nationality and ethnic group. Although still used with nationality in a synonymous manner, both terms are interpreted in a mixed fashion which reveals elements of both primordialism and ethno-symbolism.

nation - historically developed community of people with a common language, territory, culture (CE 7/2, 2012: 14).

nationality, ethnic group - national community; community of people with common origin, language, culture, mentality, before the rise of nation (CE 7/2, 2012: 14).

While the question of the transformation process of 'ethnic group' into 'nation' is not addressed, 'nation' is also explained in the same chapter as the reflection of an inherent, social need of mankind, as the 'social nature of man' (CE 7/2, 2012: 15). In spite of the notable primordialist tendency, the textbook authors explicitly emphasise the values of acceptance and respect for diverse nations and cultures on multiple occasions throughout the chapters of citizenship education. Nationalism is also presented in a rather critical manner as 'one-sided accentuation of the significance of a given nation'. Chauvinism is then described as 'excessive nationalism, hatred towards other nations' (CE 7/2, 2012: 14). The chapter concludes by highlighting 'Jakub's pivotal idea'. This summary acknowledges the diversity of mankind which is nevertheless united in its rights:

Human society is heterogeneous in terms of races [sic], nations and nationalities but is homogenous in terms of rights (CE, 7/2, 2012: 14).

The conceptualisation of national identity is predominantly presented in citizenship education, as in history and geography, from the perspective of primordialism. A Herderian influence becomes clearly visible as language is identified as the central defining component of a nation. An ethno-symbolist interpretation of nation is evident in the textbook for the seventh grade. The notion of an ethnic group, although still intertwined with primordialism, is overtly portrayed as a precursor of nation.

Summary

Without a doubt, it is an extremely intricate task to present highly complex and controversial academic discussions to a pre-university audience. A further significant difficulty for both the designers of curricula and textbook authors arises from the fairly limited scope in the curriculum which is dedicated to the subjects of 'People and Society'. This is exacerbated by a further notable reduction in lessons devoted to this area within history and geography following the latest educational reform of 2008. Consequently, they are confronted with the enormously difficult task of compressing and transmitting a vast amount of information in an adequate form to students. However, the conceptualisation of the nature of nations demonstrates some obvious shortcomings in this context which are unrelated to these broader didactic challenges.

In spite of being an academic topic of pronounced importance for decades, advances in the scholarship of nationalism seem to have barely influenced lower secondary education in Slovakia. The understanding of the nature of nations, as presented in the curricula and textbooks for history, geography and civics demonstrate a binary conceptual composition with a notable prevalence of primordialism. Limited, ethno-

symbolist tendencies are visible particularly in the context of the antiquity of nations. Whilst steering clear of portraying nations as a result of a sudden appearance or as God-given entities, in general, once eventually formed, they continue to be depicted as constant and as fixed historical and social phenomena with authentic, essential features which distinguish them from each other. In particular, the impact of Herder's ideas became visible in the above analysis.

Contrary to the argument of constructivism and ethno-symbolism in relation to the insignificant role of language as a marker of group belonging in the pre-modern period, this is represented as the dominant national trait within the textbooks for all three subjects. Moreover, it is also linked to the idea of being a reflection of a collective character in geography. In relation to the Slovak national character, Herderian, idealised notions of Slavic peacefulness and victimisation may be identified, especially in the history textbooks.

What is more, the presentation of national identity as a theme is not completely free of evident inconsistencies and contradictions in relation to some of the central concepts in the scholarship of nationalism. Nation and ethnic groups are applied as synonyms and also as two distinct concepts. Insights of the constructivist perspective of the scholarship of nationalism appear in the history textbooks on two occasions but not as convincing, counter-arguments to primordialism. Rather, they convey the impression of being unintended and were effectively diluted by the subsequent, traditional (primordialist) line of history narrative. A conceptual, critical discussion on nationalism is entirely absent in all the textbooks.

The strong emphasis on national and state belonging, particularly in civics textbooks, and the significant focus on the topics of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries in history teaching suggest a somewhat nationally oriented lower level of secondary education. Moreover, this automatically leads to the second question examined in this thesis, the interpretation of European integration, which will be analysed in the next chapter.

3.1.3 The conceptualisation of EI in textbooks

Introduction

This chapter proceeds further with the textbook analysis and focuses on the conceptualisation of European integration in the sense of supranationalism and intergovernmentalism as defined in this thesis. In this respect, it asks whether the process of EI is presented as an instrument of the post-national transformation of Europe or, instead, as a tool of interstate co-operation within clearly defined areas of national interests. The chapter begins with history and continues through geography to the textbooks of civics. It concludes by highlighting the interpretative tendencies in relation to EI within all three subjects.

History textbooks

As already outlined in the introduction of this thesis (1.3), a wider European contextualisation of teaching content is not a pedagogic innovation in Slovakia. This also applies to history education. Nevertheless, a more conspicuous presentation of a European dimension is clearly visible in the textbooks published in Slovakia after the last educational reform in 2008. In view of the underlying, chronological structure of history instruction, issues related to the actual process of EI are not approached explicitly in the history textbooks prior to grade nine. On the other hand, overt references to Europe in the sense of a socio-cultural and geopolitical unity and also its conceptualisation as a geographic area filled with nations and nation-states runs through all the history textbooks examined here (grades five to nine, ages 11-15).

Relevant evidence for an accentuated European dimension is already discernible in the history textbook as early as grade five. This can be found in the main, explanatory text of chapters and also in the supplementary, iconographic material. The first chapter, 'Why are we studying history?', discusses the rationale for history education and provides four straightforward hallmarks of European dimension in education. The opening page presents a photographic collage of Euro banknotes and a group of people waving EU flags. The picture is accompanied by text explaining that an historical event need not be limited to an episode from a distant past, but can also include occurrences from the previous day. The same chapter also provides the first indicators with regard to the historical foundation of the analytical categories of supranationalism and intergovernmentalism as applied in this thesis.

While locating Slovakia in historical space and time, the relevant references display a degree of intergovernmentalist inclination in relation to EI. Slovakia is presented as one among other European states which share a membership within one interstate organisation, the European Union. In addition, a slight Eurocentric bias occurs in the same text as the rest of the world remains excluded from the description of historical processes and changes on this occasion:

The country where you live is Slovak Republic. It is a member of the European Union. Many changes occurred since our ancestors settled in the contemporary territory of Slovakia. Changes appeared not only within Slovakia but also in the whole of Europe (History 5, 2009: 10).

European Union- an association of multiple European states; Slovakia became a member of the Union on May 1, 2004 (History 5, 2009: 10).

Do we need to know also how Slovakia has changed? Do we need to know how life was in Slovakia, in its surroundings and also within the whole Europe in the past? (History 5, 2009: 10).

A binary interpretation of Europe as a geopolitical and socio-cultural unity and also as a geographical space filled with nations and nation-states might already be inferred from the grade five textbook at this stage. While the EU is briefly and overtly portrayed as an association of European states, the cultural homogeneity of Europe is reinforced simultaneously through the adoption of a partial perspective of history. As a result, a Eurocentric bias which excludes the rest of the world from the historical process is established in the first chapter of the textbook. Hence, in addition to inter-national boundaries, textbook authors also create an intercontinental divide by deploying the language of comparison. Whereas in the case of the understanding of national identity lines were drawn between 'our nation and their nation', a similar approach is taken with respect to the relationship between Europe and the rest of the world.

The presentation of national traditions discussed in the previous chapter of this thesis (3.1.2) overlaps with this Eurocentric line of argument. While national uniqueness is emphasised, commonalities with other nations located within the borders of Europe are simultaneously acknowledged in the textbook for grade five. Hence, students learn that, notwithstanding national particularities there are some aspects which 'we Europeans' share and that distinguish us from the other, non-Europeans:

Some [traditions], nevertheless, we have in common within Europe. [...] The end of the Second World War (May 8), however, we commemorate together with the whole Europe (History 5, 2009: 18-19).

The dichotomy between 'European and non-European' becomes historically anchored at this stage. Multiple historical experiences and phenomena are highlighted by textbook

authors as the signifiers of European unity. The textbook for fifth grade selects as one among them 'The traditions of the European family'. It is within this chapter, which discusses changing family structures and functions through history, that the traditions of the European family are firmly linked to Christianity as the main determinant of their specific nature. These are implicitly presented as unique and different from other, non-European and particularly, non-Christian, families. A degree of cultural superiority in the form of a light anti-Muslim bias occurs in the text when polygamy is mentioned in the form of a sweeping generalisation as a common practice within all Muslim countries. This is implicitly presented as a banned, hence undesirable, practice and contrasted with the Christian tradition of monogamy:

The rules of a family life changed gradually. However, in countries which adopted Christianity, all families were always very similar. A family followed the principles of a family life anchored in the axioms of the Christian religion. A Christian, European family also follows its rules until today. One of the major rules was the sanctity of matrimony. [...] An equally important rule was also child care. [...] Christianity prohibited a man from marrying more than one wife. [...] In Muslim countries a man can marry more women (History 5, 2009: 44).

The theme of Christianity as one of central aspects of European collective belonging also permeates the history textbooks for the sixth and seventh grade. In spite of the emphasis on the polytheistic Greek culture as one of the 'fundamental pillars of European civilisation' (History 6/1, 2011: 25), Christianity seems to receive a status of greater significance as a commonly shared, European quality. It is identified as the overarching influence which formed all aspects of life (politics, culture, education, science) in medieval Europe and lastingly shaped its whole development. Christianity is described in a functionalist sense as the central cohesive force of existential importance for medieval Europeans:

The Christian Church had held on to traditions from late Antiquity. In this manner, it succeeded in maintaining many institutions which were necessary for the safeguarding of a more or less secure life for ordinary people. During centuries, when across the whole of Europe tribes, new nations and kingdoms were constantly fighting each other, it was very important (History 6/1, 2011: 77).

The cultural and educational impact of Christianity is emphasised strongly and evaluated positively. The Church and monasteries are depicted as 'guardians of scholarship and cultural centres' within medieval Europe (History 6/1, 2011: 86). In addition to the positive role of the Church, however, the intra-Christian conflicts and violence, mainly between Protestantism and Catholicism from the early decades of the sixteenth century, are also presented as an historical experience shared across Europe. Although the European interfaith backlash is interpreted as a pretext for the Thirty Years War (1618-1648), this is nevertheless portrayed as the 'first pan-European conflict of the Modern

Era' (History 7/2, 2011: 69), which impoverished considerable parts of Europe. In addition, the warfare between Christianity and Islam is also presented as an historical event which impacted on the formation of the socio-cultural unity of Europeans:

With the fall of the Byzantine Empire, the whole of Europe suffered. A protective dam collapsed which had guarded Western Europe from the invasions of new conquerors from the area of the Near East (History 6/1, 2011: 67).

The textbook authors also draw attention to subsequent historical periods and their positive achievements in order to identify further aspects of the socio-cultural and geopolitical unity of Europe. The era of Renaissance and Humanism (fourteenth - sixteenth centuries), described as the foundation of European modern society, together with the latter period of the Enlightenment and scientific progress (end of seventeenth and eighteenth centuries), are highlighted in this context. Nevertheless, subsequent deplorable incidents of modern history are not omitted. While the new geographical discoveries of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries are described as a European success, the colonisation of the formerly unknown World is judged critically:

In 1492, three small Spanish ships landed on the coast of a rather small isle of the Bahaman archipelago in the Caribbean Sea. On the ship decks were the first Europeans who had ever entered these areas. [...] Why were Europeans so successful? They were driven by a zeal for wealth but also by curiosity and a thirst for knowledge. [...] After the initial discoveries, campaigns of conquest followed. [...] Europeans simply realised that their continent constitutes only a small part of the Earth. However, they did not satisfy themselves with a minority position. On the contrary, they strove to settle down within the new areas and establish their culture there. They converted the inhabitants of the subjugated lands to Christianity, frequently by violence (History 7/2, 2011: 56-63).

The socio-political structure of the Middle Ages anchored in the principle of hereditary privilege and its gradual transformation in the course of modernisation is also highlighted as a mutual, European experience. Equally, the development of absolutism (seventeenth and eighteenth centuries), and the centralisation of political power in the hands of a monarch, is portrayed as a European phenomenon albeit with the exception of England and the Netherlands (History 6/1, 2011: 75-76, 80-85, History 7/2, 2011: 70-77).

Modern society then was not the same as the medieval one. Changes in production and commerce caused the changes. Big feudal lords - for long centuries the central and most influential group in every state - still had some privileges but their competitors were emerging: the influence of underprivileged but rich burghers grew. The significance of the knighthood institution was declining. Knights began to be replaced in wars with hired soldiers - mercenaries. [...] In the course of the eighteenth century Europe advanced significantly in science and technology. [...] London and Paris became the main centres of scholarship (History 7/1, 2011: 72-74).

As already mentioned, parallel to the presentation of historical phenomena which might identify Europe as a geopolitical and socio-cultural unity, history textbooks also reveal opposing tendencies. This double line of argument runs throughout all history textbooks. Hence, whilst a narrative emphasising commonly shared historical events, which could be seen as the historical foundation of the concept of supranationalism as applied in this thesis, a simultaneous account of the history of nations and an incremental formation of nation-states within the boundaries of Europe is also given.

While the textbook for the sixth grade (age 12) refers to the 'constant shifting of allegiances, and appropriations' (Geary 2002: 118) of the socio-political organisation within early medieval Europe, it links the later centuries in an affirmative manner with the origins of nation-states. These are associated in particular with the disintegration of the Frankish Empire (843) after the demise of Charlemagne (742-814), who is described as 'the most famous Frank, European emperor' and the founder of 'European culture' (History, 6/1, 2011: 72).

And now, in the territory of the one-time powerful empire [Roman Empire], barbarian tribes began to build their state-kingdoms. In fact, these kingdoms generally did not last long. [...] Therefore, within the whole of Europe life changed. States were changing and so was the lifestyle. [...] At the beginning of the Middle Ages, state borders in Europe were constantly shifting (History 6/1, 2011: 62-65).

Contrary to Gellner's dictum 'nations, like states are a contingency, and not a universal necessity' (Gellner 2006 [1983]: 6), the textbook links the development of nation-states with existential needs. By describing the beginnings of Germany, France and England, it interprets their foundation as the result of a natural, human desire by arguing that other states existed because 'Everyone wants a fatherland' (History 6/1, 2011: 73):

The Byzantine Empire and Frankish Empire were for a long period of time the largest and most powerful European states. In medieval Europe, however, several other states also existed - smaller and bigger, stronger and weaker. For example on the British Isles, the kingdoms of German tribes developed, in Scandinavia, kingdoms of northern tribes. In the east and south-east of Europe, Slavs established several kingdoms (History 6/1, 2011: 73).

A parallel and fairly balanced line of argument in relation to the presentation of historical developments within Europe (socio-cultural and geopolitical unity vs. multiplicity of nations and nation-states) seems to prevail within the textbooks for grades five, six and seven. The mode of presenting European history shifts in grade eight as it takes account of historical developments after the French Revolution and the subsequent and gradual foundation of nation-states within Europe during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. European nations are portrayed in the textbook as already fully fledged and self-aware groups legitimately demanding socio-political rights and the creation of nation-states. As

a result, the approach in the textbooks for grade eight and nine tells the history of nations, nation-states and their relationships within Europe rather than of Europe as a unitary entity:

Czecho-Slovakia relied predominantly on the support of France in foreign policy. In 1921, it established together with Romania and Yugoslavia the so-called Little Entente. This was supposed to protect it against the territorial demands of Hungary (History 9, 2012: 30).

The strengthened national narrative might also be identified within themes which were previously presented as European experiences or achievements. While in the earlier volumes the textbook authors highlighted, for example, progress in scholarship and scientific advancements from a European perspective, comparable events of the nineteenth century, given the historical realities, are portrayed first and foremost from a nation-state viewpoint:

The second half of the nineteenth century was defined by an unprecedented growth of science and technology. New scientific advancements had a positive impact on the economics of individual states. States with underdeveloped scientific potential were lagging behind states which supported scientific research. The speediest scientific and technological progress and industrial expansion occurred in Germany and the US. [...] The fast growth of Germany was followed by France and Great Britain with displeasure (History 8/3, 2011: 30).

The last volume of the history textbooks provides additional information which facilitates an understanding of the conceptualisation of the nature of the process of EI and its objectives. The topic is addressed on three occasions within three separate chapters. First, the contextualisation of integration is set against a broader background of early post-war Europe in the thematic area of 'The World after the Second World War'.¹³⁰ Within the chapter, 'In the west of the "iron curtain", the beginnings of European co-operation are placed in a wider context of the political situation in Europe after 1945.

The impact of the expansion of Soviet influence in Central and South-East Europe is highlighted as the central factor which stimulated the post-war engagement of the US on the continent and its support for integrationist developments. The initial movements towards integration are then linked to the Marshall Plan (in operation 1948-1952) and the subsequent establishment of the European Organisation for Economic Co-operation (1948) and Council of Europe (1949). Within two paragraphs, these are presented as an uneasy start for the economic co-operation of (West) European states.¹³¹

¹³⁰ Please refer to Annex 7.5., p.265 for a complete overview of thematic areas and chapters.

¹³¹ The textbook refers to the dissatisfaction of Western European states with US demands for privileged access to sources of raw materials which were linked to the Marshall Plan. In addition, French fears about the inclusion of West Germany in European structures and the UK aversion to the elimination of customs duties in foreign trade are also mentioned in this context (History 9/4, 2012: 92).

Although the complexity of the initial period of integration is reinforced, given the excerpts of primary sources provided in the chapter, steps taken in Western Europe towards economic co-operation might be interpreted as an instrument of national reconciliation and peace maintenance. Relevant evidence is derived from two quotations provided in the practical part of the chapter. Evidence can be suggested by the remarks of the French Prime Minister (1947-1948) and Minister of Foreign Affairs (1948-1952), Robert Schuman (1886-1963), in relation to his concept of European policy:

European politics, as we understand it, is by no means in contradiction to the patriotism of any one of us. We do not deny and we never have denied fatherland [vlast' in Slovak]. However, we place above each fatherland increasingly the existence of common good, superior to national interests, this common good in which the singular interests of our countries are vanishing and blending (Schuman 1949 cited in History 9/4, 2012: 93).

This conceptualisation is further reinforced in a brief citation from the US official George Ball (1909-1994). Ball's statement identifies German reparation obligations following the First World War as the reason for the rise of Nazi power. It then refers to the Marshall Plan as a tool for the political and economic consolidation of Europe:

Germany was so overwhelmed by the burden of extraordinary debts that it was unable to repay them. The result was the Hitler phenomenon. In an attempt to avoid the repetition of history, the Marshall Plan seemed an understandable response. I think that this plan was an act of historical importance (Ball 1959 cited in History 9/4, 2012: 93)

While both extracts undermine the rationalism of the intergovernmentalists and their denial of the role of ideals in the early years of integration, they do not challenge their views in regard to the central position of states in this respect.

The same chapter also provides a brief, concise explanation of the term 'integration'. This is presented in an intergovernmentalist sense as a process of interstate co-operation within several areas and of varying degrees:

Integration - coming together of diverse states in interest groupings within various areas and to different extents (History 9/4, 2012: 93).

The second instance in which the process of European integration is addressed is within the next thematic section of 'Contemporary History'¹³² in a separate chapter (two A4 pages) entitled 'On the path towards European Union'. It is divided into two parts and discusses in an informative, factual fashion the integrationist developments within two periods: 1951-1992 and 1989-present. The process of European integration is

¹³² Please refer to the Annex 7.5, p.265 for a complete overview of chapters.

presented in the chapter from conceptually intertwined perspectives. The first chapter section, 'Economic and political integration of West Europe', portrays EI as an instrument of peace politics devised by governments. Consequently, contrary to the realism of intergovernmentalists, the first paragraph links the rationale for the integration process to the devastating experiences of Second World War. The textbook authors attribute economic considerations a mere supplementary role in the beginnings of integration. Jean Monnet is described as one of central initiators of integration and the actual initiator of the ECSC established in 1951. The Maastricht Treaty is then briefly referred to as the act leading to the establishment of the European Union in 1992:

Experiences from the devastating Second World War led a number of politicians to the idea of the integration of Europe as the guarantee of peace maintenance. It also seemed that the economic integration of states was a precondition for economic growth. One among these politicians was also the French economist and diplomat Jean Monnet, who elaborated an unusual plan. [...] Monnet's plan became a reality, when in 1951 representatives of six European countries signed an agreement on the establishment of the European Coal and Steel Community. [...] Through the signing of a treaty in Maastricht in 1992, European Union (EU) was eventually established (History 9/4, 2012: 120).

The second section of the chapter, 'Europe after the fall of Communism', focuses on the integration process after 1989 and discloses some patterns of intergovernmentalism. It identifies the nation-states of post-communist Europe as the main drivers of these developments. In doing so, the second part of the chapter highlights the transformation after 1989 and the dissolution of the East European economic and military institutions of co-operation, the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (Comecon, 1949-1991) and the Warsaw Pact (1955-1991) as the precursors to further integration within Europe. It then highlights the interest of post-communist countries in participating in the expansion of EU. The European Union is presented as a platform for interstate co-operation within the domains of economics, common foreign and defence policy and also in the area of justice and internal security. In addition, the willingness of the EU to accept new participants is emphasised:

The fall of Communism and the dissolution of Comecon and the Warsaw Pact facilitated the continuation of European integration. The free countries of Central and East Europe, which were heading towards democracy, expressed interest in the integration into the economic, political and military structures of West Europe. [...] The European Union strives contemporarily for a deepening of economic integration and also for common foreign and defence policy, and the reinforcement of integration in the area of justice and internal security. It is open to further widening (History 9/4, 2012: 120).

Additionally, elements of EI conceptualisation might be derived from the extract from the Charter of Fundamental Rights of European Union (Charter 2010 [2000]) and exercise

questions included in the chapter. By emphasising universal values, the citation undermines the rationalist calculations of intergovernmentalists.

The nations of Europe, in creating an ever closer union amongst themselves, are resolved to share a peaceful future based on common values. [...] The Union contributes to the preservation and to the development of these common values while respecting the diversity of the cultures and traditions of the nations of Europe as well as the national identities of the member states and the organisation of their public authorities at national, regional and local levels [...] (History 9/4, 2012: 121).

On the other hand, the subsequent practical task is articulated directly from the instrumental perspective of intergovernmentalism:

Find positive and negative influences of European integration on the functioning of states and their residents (History 9/4, 2012: 121).

At the same time, some degree of supranationalism might be inferred from the chapter text. The understanding of EI as a tool of the post-national transformation of Europe is linked to Jean Monnet (1888-1979). In addition to being introduced as a French economist and diplomat, Monnet is also presented as the supporter of an eventual establishment of the United States of Europe:

[Jean Monnet] saw establishment of United States of Europe as the ultimate objective (History 9/4, 2012: 120).

An intertwined, supranationalist and intergovernmentalist line of argument might be inferred from the presentation on the establishment of European Economic Community (EEC, 1957). The introduction of some aspects of political integration, in addition to the economic dimension, is mentioned by textbook authors in this context. However, nation states and not supranational agents are identified as the force behind this development. The same logic might also be applied to the excerpt from the Schuman Declaration of 1950 presented in the chapter. This mixed presentation of EI again challenges the realism of intergovernmentalists who dispute the existence of post-national objectives by governments in the initial periods of integration:

In addition to economic integration, some aspects of political integration also came into effect through it' [EEC agreement] (History 9/4, 2012: 120).

Europe will not be made all at once, or according to a single plan. It will be built through concrete achievements which first create a de facto solidarity. The coming together of the nations of Europe requires the elimination of the age-old opposition of France and Germany. Any action taken must in the first place concern these two countries. With this aim in view, the French Government proposes that action be taken immediately on one limited but decisive point (Schuman Declaration 1950 cited in History 9/4, 2012: 121).

In addition to Jean Monnet, the chapter again pays attention to Robert Schuman, and Konrad Adenauer (1876-1967). Schuman is mentioned as the supporter of Monnet's plan and an ardent advocate of reconciliation between France and Germany. Adenauer, the Prime Minister of the Federal Republic of Germany (1949-1963), is associated with the establishment of the democratic system of contemporary Germany. He is also described as one among the principal initiators of the ECSC in 1951. The chapter also refers to the largest enlargement of EU in 2004 (NMS-10) and the subsequent enlargement in 2007 (Bulgaria and Romania). In addition, the creation of the eurozone including Slovakia's adoption of the common currency (2009) is mentioned. The complexity of the integration process is briefly addressed and linked in one sentence to the heterogeneity of the participating states.

The third and last occasion which provides evidence of the understanding of EI as examined in this thesis is presented in the concluding chapter of the textbook. Under the headline of 'Slovakia's accession to the EU and NATO', the period of the socio-political situation in Slovakia after the dissolution of Czecho-Slovakia in December 1992 is addressed. Political developments in the period from 1993-1998 are highlighted as 'problems with the functioning of democracy' (History 9/4, 2012: 124) and identified as the reason behind Slovakia's exclusion from the first round of the integration process (discussed in chapter 2.1).

Political changes after the election in Slovakia in 1998 are then linked to the renewed EU negotiations from 2000. The actual accession of Slovakia to the EU in 2004 is approached from an intergovernmentalist perspective. It is the Slovak Republic which is presented in the chapter as the central actor in this respect. In an instrumentalist fashion of intergovernmentalism, students are also encouraged through the concluding exercise questions to evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of Slovakia's accession:

The Velvet Revolution of 1989 resulted not only in the renewal of a democratic, political system. [...] The country could decide freely about its international orientation. The federative Czecho-Slovakia declared its accession to Euro-Atlantic structures, hence into the integrating Europe and NATO, as the objectives of its politics. This orientation was also adopted by the Slovak Republic. [...] Negotiations were successful and on May 1, 2004 Slovakia became an [EU] member and shortly afterwards also a member of the NATO (History 9/4, 2012: 124).

Express your view on the accession of Slovakia to the EU. Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of the accession (History 9/4, 2012: 125).

The textbook authors also ask students to discuss the attitudes of the Slovak public towards the EU. In this context, the chapter highlights the low participation of Slovaks

(52.15%) in the referendum (May 2003) preceding Slovakia's accession in May 2004 which was approved by 92.46% of votes cast:

On the basis of the referendum figures and its result, give your own comment in regard to the attitudes of citizens of Slovakia towards EU (History 9/4, 2012: 125).

The presentation of European integration in the history textbooks reveals a conceptually mixed picture. A number of signifiers of the historical foundation of supranationalism and intergovernmentalism may be identified. Through the marginal attention to historical developments outside Europe, the textbooks offer a partial account of the past by developing some degree of Eurocentric bias. Both positive and negative intra-European historical experiences are employed in an attempt to strengthen students' sense of belonging to Europe as a socio-cultural and geopolitical entity. Christianity appears as one of the central, unifying aspects in this context. Despite polytheism, religious diversity and multiple intra-Christian movements being an integral part of European history, textbook authors provide a rather exclusive notion of a shared identity and seem to remain in denial of the contemporary multicultural reality of Europe.

At the same time, rooted in the primordialist understanding of nations, a parallel intergovernmentalist presentation of Europe as a geographical space filled with essentially distinctive nations and nation-states also runs throughout all history textbooks. A balanced presentation of Europe (socio-cultural and geopolitical unity vs. multiplicity of nations and nation-states) permeates the textbooks for the fifth, sixth and seventh grades. Given the historical events of the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, an intergovernmentalist inclination seems to prevail in the last two volumes for grades eight and nine.

On the basis of a number of clues: nation-states as the drivers of EI, the EU as an association of nation-states, EI as an instrument of co-operation within a number of policy areas, the understanding of the nature of the integration process might be associated with intergovernmentalism. Some evidence of a supranationalist notion of EI as the vehicle of post-national transformation of Europe might also be derived from the textbook for the ninth grade. However, this remains very limited in its elaboration. Moreover, it might be associated once more with national governments rather than with independent actions of supranational agents. Nor is the European Union conceived of in a supranationalist sense as the institutional architecture of the post-national organisation of Europe. The history textbook for ninth grade does not actually present the EU institutions and their functions. Hence, the EU seems to be conceived of as a platform of interstate co-operation within a number of policy areas.

In addition to aspects which could be classified with the help of the EI dimension of the analytical framework developed here, there were also indicators defying such a clear cut approach. The emphasis on such values as peace maintenance which was presented as the foundation of governmental action (grade nine) undermined, in particular, the rationalist argument of intergovernmentalism. Moreover, economic motivation as a factor impacting on the inception of EI was associated with a supplementary function. While the concepts of supranationalism and intergovernmentalism are not explicitly discussed in the textbooks, EI is portrayed as an ongoing process, control over which is exercised by the national governments. An overt, substantial account of the future of EI, the EU and their impact on the sovereignty of nation-states is not presented in the central text.¹³³

European Integration in geography textbooks

The topic of EI is tackled quite extensively in the textbook for the eighth and, more briefly, within the volume for the final grade of lower secondary education. It is approached first in the general section of the textbook for the eighth grade under the heading 'Nature and the manmade distinctiveness of Europe'.¹³⁴ Divided into several sections, this thematic unit discusses various aspects of physical and human geography related to the continent of Europe. Within six A4 pages, European civilisation and its history and characteristics are addressed. In addition, the demographic structure of Europe's population and its settlements are also introduced.

Although textbook authors highlight the difficulty in defining Europe in a geographical sense, an emphasis on Europe as a singular, distinctive civilisation clearly appears. Unlike the history textbooks, geography underlines only positive historical events in this context. The antique legacy of Greek and Roman history, Christianity, the historical periods of Humanism and the Renaissance, the Industrial Revolution together with the development of the political tradition of democracy are all interpreted as a common, European heritage:

Although Europe is not the oldest continent, its civilisation had already attained a relatively high level before our era. European culture, traditions and lifestyle have continuously built on this epoch. [...] Democracy, theatre, Olympics - all these terms are inseparably associated with Greece and to a lesser degree also with Rome. [...] Christianity also has its roots in the antique period - in the era of ancient Rome but it influenced European culture, education and scholarship mostly in the period of the Middle Ages. [...] The Industrial Revolution brought a

¹³³ A related reference in this context appeared in the practical part of one chapter and was presented from an instrumentalist perspective in the form of a question students are asked to answer (pp.154 -155 in this thesis).

¹³⁴ Please refer to Annex 8.4, pp.270-271 for a complete overview of all thematic areas and chapters.

completely new life to millions of people, it moved them into cities. [...] Already at the beginning of the Middle Ages it is possible to see crucial elements of democracy in England and they gradually evolved also within other states, for example in Holland and the north of Europe (Geography 8/3, 2011: 22-23).

In addition to historical processes, the geography textbook also pays attention to the urbanisation of Europe as a marker of European unity and identity. In particular, the contemporary structure of cities is highlighted by the authors and also used as a variable for intercontinental comparison:

The rich history of the whole continent is reflected in the contemporary shape of European cities. The historical centres of cities with antique churches, burghers' houses, maintained parks and gardens are frequently a great attraction for tourists and enchant people by their beauty. [...] This pattern of the historical centres of cities is especially typical for Europe. In other continents, this is present only sporadically (Geography 8/3, 2011: 26).

While the geography textbook focuses only on positive historical developments as the signifiers of European belonging, it also discusses a number of contemporary challenges. In a separate chapter 'Problems of Europe' (Geography 8/3, 2011: 38-39) textbook authors pay attention to a number of socio-economic, political or environmental issues and also mention those states which are not members of the contemporary EU (former Yugoslavia, Moldova and Russia).¹³⁵

The chapter underlines economic differences across regions of the whole of Europe including states within its western parts. Furthermore, while referring to the national diversity of many European states and the conflict-free relationship between various national groups, the text also refers to national tensions. In this context, from a rather undifferentiated perspective, it highlights migration as their source. Ageing populations and illegal immigration are identified in the same text as additional current and commonly shared challenges within Europe. In the concluding paragraphs, the chapter's emphasis is on extreme climate changes and natural disasters (for example, floods) occurring across the whole of Europe.

In addition to the conceptualisation of Europe as a socio-cultural and geopolitical unity, its description as a geographical area of multiple nations and nation-states is easily traceable in the textbook. In a similar vein to history textbooks, national distinctiveness and uniqueness within Europe are emphasised in the same section of the geography textbook (Nature and manmade distinctiveness of Europe). As previously discussed, language is highlighted as a significant marker of national differences in Europe.

¹³⁵ In the case of the former Yugoslavia, the textbook does not list all former republics separately and mentions the former federation as an example of ethnic conflicts in Europe.

European integration is also briefly mentioned within the general description of European civilisation. It is introduced succinctly as a contemporary, significant and complex development. In the same section, the future of Europe is also briefly addressed. Although the relevant exercise task does not focus specifically on the future of EI, students are asked to think about possible changes which might occur in Europe within the next twenty, fifty or hundreds of years (Geography 8/3, 2011: 23). The actual process of European integration is then addressed separately in a chapter entitled 'Integration of Europe-European Union (EU)'.

A conceptual combination identified in history textbooks in relation to the interpretation of EI is also observable in geography. The chapter starts with a short excerpt from a news item published in April 2010. It briefly discusses the issue of the access of workers from Eastern Europe to labour markets in Germany and Austria from May 1, 2011. Fears of a significant migration of East-Europeans to the countries in question are described as unfounded in this context and the needs of labour markets for a qualified workforce are highlighted. A professional qualification is then emphasised as being significantly more important than the origin of the labour force. Through questions which follow the short article, students are encouraged to consider both the ideas that may now be viewed as outdated and those that remain relevant. They are also asked to ponder its potential, personal implications.

A clearly critical approach to the description of the process of EI is established through this particular choice for introducing the chapter. At the same time, it could also be interpreted as an attempt to highlight the benefits of education for students in the future. The contemporary EU and the history of EI are approached from an intergovernmentalist perspective and nation-states are identified as their main driving forces. The EU is briefly described as an association of European states. However, geography authors emphasise the enhanced quality of life resulting from integration for the European population, including Slovakia's, instead of interstate co-operation within specific policy domains:

The fact that citizens of member states of the European Union can study and work within any of them is one of the most significant achievements of European integration. We now take it for granted but in the early periods of the whole process - in the 1950s – it was hardly conceivable that we would ever take part (Geography 8/3, 2011: 35).

An unambiguous discussion of the rationale for integration is not presented in the text. In a brief and informative way, EI is conceived of as a tool of economic and trade co-operation designed in the 1950s by six European states. Robert Schuman is mentioned as the author of the project of European integration:

We talk of European Union first from the 1990s. The first associations which aimed at the simplification of trade and closer co-operation in economics had an entirely different name, for example, the European Coal and Steel Community and European Economic Community. In the beginnings of European integration there were 6 states. [...] The author of the project of European integration was the French Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, Robert Schuman (Geography 8/3, 2011: 35).

In the absence of a discussion on the reasons for EI, economic considerations seem to overshadow the relevant presentation of the chapter. A number of contemporary and very complex themes within the European Union are briefly listed. The issue of budget discipline and excessive debts within countries such as Greece and Portugal are approached and evaluated as a threat to the common currency. Regional discrepancies within the EU, together with the reform of pension systems within the member states and the agricultural policy of the EU are also included in the few brief paragraphs which address some of the contemporary problems faced within its borders. Indicators of an intergovernmentalist approach might be found in the concluding section of the chapter. In one sentence, the European Union is portrayed as a platform of economic and political co-operation between 27 member states (at the time of textbook publication):

The current European Union consists of 27 member states which cooperate economically and politically (Geography 8/3, 2011: 37).

On the other hand, a supranationalist line of argument is evident in the description of the institutional structure of the EU. The chapter focuses on the Council of European Union, European Parliament (EP) and European Commission. The functioning of the EU is then presented from a fairly supranationalist perspective. Although the dominant role of nation-states in the decision making process is stressed, the functions of EP and European Commission are not approached through the lens of principal-agent relationship. In other words, they are not portrayed as administrators acting on behalf of national governments but as institutions in their own right, each having specific tasks to fulfil in the governance structure of the EU:

The Council of the European Union takes the most important decisions. It is constituted of heads of states and governments of member states. [...] Following the implementation of the Lisbon Treaty, the Council of the EU has its own chairman who performs the function of the EU president in relation to other countries of the World. [...] The European Parliament discusses and issues laws and law regulations which should be applicable in all member states. This is not always easy. [...] The European Commission acts as the government of the European Union. Its members are ministers-commissioners (Geography 8/3, 2011: 36).

An additional and very brief demonstration of supranationalism is presented in the last volume of the geography textbooks. While discussing Slovakia's accession to the EU in

2004, the textbook authors portray this act as an instrument of the transformation of its sovereignty. Contrary to the history textbook, however, they ascribe its deployment to the Slovak public. Consequently, given this short description, the European Union might be tentatively identified as a partial, post-national political organisation of Europe:

Following the public referendum in 2004, however, [Slovakia] lost part of its sovereignty and entered the European Union (Geography 9/4, 2012: 16).

As in the case of history, the conceptualisation of EI and the EU is approached in geography textbooks through a combination of perspectives. These reveal elements which might be associated with both supranationalism and intergovernmentalism. While being portrayed as a socio-cultural and geographical unity, Europe is concurrently described as a territory of multiple and diverse nations and nation-states. A comparable, mixed approach might also be applied to the interpretation of the nature of the actual integration process.

EI is portrayed as both an instrument of interstate co-operation and, to some extent, also as a tool for the incremental transformation of nation-state sovereignty. However, in addition to nation states, geography also identifies the Slovak public as one of its drivers. Consequently, the European Union appears to be the platform of interstate co-operation and at the same time a partial, post-national form of political structure currently encompassing 27 states of Europe (at the time of textbook publication) with diminished sovereignty. However, the future of EI is not addressed explicitly by the textbook authors. As in the history textbooks, this remains an open question. The particular emphasis on values in the form of references to positive historical experiences and contemporary demographic and environmental issues together with the anticipation of a better quality of life does not comply entirely with the rationalist calculations upon which intergovernmentalism rests.

Civics textbooks

Based on the representation of national identity and the topics focusing on statehood-building within the civics textbook, some preliminary conclusions might be drawn in regard to the interpretation of European integration and the European Union. The strong emphasis on national and state belonging clearly indicates intergovernmentalist tendencies in this respect. Nevertheless, EI and the EU are both presented in the textbooks for civics in a notably positive way. In particular, the teaching content for the sixth grade pays specific attention to the topic of EI. In addition, a strengthened European dimension might also be identified within all remaining textbooks (fifth, seventh, eighth and ninth grades).

The textbook for the fifth grade includes two chapters which focus on a comparison of educational systems within the European Union. Within two chapters, 'Jakub becomes acquainted with school systems in other European countries' and 'Jakub compares his school life with the life of Dan from Bobrovec¹³⁶ and of Jean in France'. In this way, students learn and are encouraged to search for similarities and differences in the educational practices among EU member states (the Czech Republic, Austria, Germany, France, Spain). As 'Jakub' concludes enthusiastically, there are minimal differences within the EU in this respect and therefore everyone can study and work in any EU country in the future:

Through the comparison of school systems in some European countries Jakub arrived at the conclusion that they differ only in a few details. This is excellent. In the future, a student would not have any problems in studying and later working in any country of the European Union (CE 5, 2009: 66).

Comparable examples, which provide relatively minimal hints as to their supranationalist or intergovernmentalist inclinations, of the nature of EI also appear in subsequent volumes of citizenship education. The textbook for the seventh grade also highlights the theme of EI and EU in the context of discussion on multiculturalism. Approached from the perspective of intergovernmentalism, 'Jakub' tells the story of 'Days of national cultures in the countries of EU' which was organised within his school in the previous academic year. The chapter concludes with the central idea of tolerance towards other cultures:

Jakub's pivotal idea

Respect and tolerance towards diverse cultures are the foundation of a multicultural world (CE 7/2, 2012: 20).

The textbook for the eighth grade is divided into two main thematic areas, 'State and Law' and 'Human rights and freedoms'.¹³⁷ A moderate intergovernmentalist conceptualisation of the EU might be traced at this stage. Within a subsection of the second thematic area, 'Fundamental documents of human rights', in addition to the Declaration of Human Rights and the European Convention on Human Rights (adopted by UNO in 1948 and the Council of Europe in 1950 respectively), The Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union (2010 [2000]) is also highlighted. As the textbook authors argue, the member states of European Union also agreed to comply with the protection of human rights and freedoms.

¹³⁶ 'Dan from Bobrovec' is presented in the chapter as a student from the Czech Republic.

¹³⁷ The first thematic area comprises the obligatory teaching content and the second area serves as supplementary teaching material which might be utilised for deepening the topics addressed within the first textbook section (CE 8/3, 2012). Please refer to Annex 9.4, p.276 for an overview of chapters.

A further accentuation of a broader European dimension is also observable within the textbook for the final year of lower secondary education. At this stage, the teaching content focuses on the insights of economics and is subdivided into two main areas, 'Economic life in society' and 'Widening teaching material' which introduce students to basic information about economics.¹³⁸ Within the second section of the textbook, the authors provide students with information on the common currency, including its symbols and their meanings, and anti-fraud markers which enhance the protection of Euro banknotes against forgery. In addition, the teaching material also refers within two A4 pages to the topic of consumer rights in the EU (CE 9/4, 2012: 53-55; 69-70).

The actual process of European integration is approached more extensively in three chapters in the textbook for the sixth grade: 'Jakub gets acquainted with the Regions of Slovakia', 'The little EU citizen Jakub explores how Europe is integrating' and 'Jakub thinks about the integration of nations in Europe'. In a notably favourable way, a number of EI-related issues are addressed. The first relevant chapter discusses the administrative structure of Slovakia, including the regional, socio-economic differences. In this context, European regional policy is highlighted and evaluated positively. In addition, EU is portrayed as a supportive community adhering to the principle of solidarity:

You have certainly picked up information from the media that the European Union wishes to support less developed regions of our country. [...] It is very good that the European Union supports the development of these regions. Jakub keeps his fingers crossed for them. [...] Jakub was thinking about why he has come across the word regions so frequently in papers and in television recently. Why are funds from the European Union directed towards regions? Perhaps because when people living within a larger territory come together, help and support each other, they are more likely to improve the situation (CE 6/1, 2009: 22).

The second chapter then addresses the actual process of integration. It begins with a territorial comparison between the continent of Europe, the US and Russia. Although approached initially from a supranationalist, European perspective, the actual integration process is conceived of as an instrument of interstate co-operation in the economic domain. A wider contextualisation of the process of EI is missing. The rationale for integration is reduced largely to economic considerations. Hence, European integration comes across as predominantly an economic project. The increased competitiveness of Europe in the global market is outlined as the first reason and necessity for its integration. Further personal benefits of integration, such as the possibility of studying and living in a country of choice are also emphasised:

¹³⁸ Please refer to Annex 9.5, p.277 for an overview of thematic areas and chapters.

Through an abolition of borders between states, much will change in the economy and also in peoples' lives. [...]. If Europe wishes to prevail in economic competition against other states of the world, it must integrate. In a united Europe, the economy will develop faster and so will the quality of life of the population. People might live where they like, study in the country which has the best schools, work where they might apply their skills at best (CE 6, 2009: 28).

The chapter summary is then approached from an intergovernmentalist perspective and identifies the EU as an association of 27 member states (at the time of textbook publication). Economic co-operation is re-emphasised and portrayed in a rather simplistic manner as the foundation of the European Union. In addition, the concluding section describes Robert Schuman and Jean Monnet as the central figures of EI.

The idea of European integration was developed by politicians in the aftermath of the Second World War. [...] The European Economic Community (EEC) became the foundation of the contemporary European Union. [...] At present, the European Union has 27 [member] states (CE 6, 2009: 29).

Little attention is paid in the text to EU institutions. The Council of the European Union, European Parliament and European Commission are merely listed and described as institutions which represent the national and common interests of member states. In summary, the second chapter portrays the EU as a platform of economic co-operation between the multiple states of Europe.

The issue of European identity is then separately addressed in the subsequent (third) chapter and displays an inclination towards primordialism. 'Unity in diversity', a notion conceived at the EU level in the context of identity policies, clearly underlies its conceptualisation (Shore 2000: 51-52). European identity is presented positively as the enrichment of, or an addition to, but not a replacement for, Slovak national identity. This is then summed up and described as 'supranational' identity. Textbook authors accentuate very clearly that belonging to Europe does not lead to the creation of a uniform, fabricated culture and an eventual transformation of national identity:

Belonging to a unified Europe does not mean an artificial creation of a kind of unified culture. Each nation [and] nationality will maintain its own national identity and will enrich it through a new, 'supranational' – European identity.' [...] People have to be proud of their own nation, in the particularities that are unique for them (CE 6/1, 2009: 30).

Hence, European identity is presented from a fairly primordialist perspective as it is based on the acceptance of the national peculiarities which are implicitly described as authentic and fixed. Therefore these ought to be preserved and not absorbed in the EU. A diversity of national identities is then declared to be a foundation of European identity. Textbook authors clearly strive to reinforce the belief in the compatibility of multiple

national and European identities. A reference to a campaign title of the Council of Europe from 1995, 'All different, All equal', is linked to the EU concept of 'active citizenship' and presented as its essence (CE 6/1, 2009: 30-31).

Although the process of EI, as presented in citizenship education, shows aspects of an intergovernmentalist perspective, it remains significantly positive. Possible disadvantages of European integration or any critical questions in relation to the process of EI are not raised explicitly in the text. Nevertheless, some implicit criticism is apparent in the textbook for the sixth grade with regard to potential manifestations of, or attempts to introduce, cultural inequality and domination. Within the concluding sections of the two chapters dedicated to the actual process of EI and European identity¹³⁹, which focus on suggestions of further activities and questions, students are asked to consider the following issues:

Would you agree if the following decision was taken by EU politicians?
From January 1, 2011, English will become the official language in a unified Europe' (CE 6/1, 2009: 29)

'Convention on the Rights of the Child'

Selma, a Muslim girl who lives in Paris would like, together with her friends, to wear a burqa. The school director prohibited it. He considers it to be an expression of extremist, Muslim groups.

Try to solve the problem. Does the decision of the school director comply with ideas that are valid in the EU? Could a dress symbolise extremism? What does it symbolise in your opinion? (CE 6/1, 2009: 31).

As in the case of history and geography, textbooks designed for civics display a mixed conceptualisation of European integration. There are indicators which might be associated with both concepts of supranationalism and intergovernmentalism as conceived of in this thesis. In addition, a values-based dimension of EI is clearly stressed. Hence, Europe is presented as a socio-cultural and geopolitical unity embedded in commonly shared universal values: solidarity, respect for, and tolerance of, cultural and religious diversity, and also the anticipation of a better quality of life. Simultaneously, Europe is also described as a geographical assembly of various nations and national cultures. While EI is portrayed as an instrument of predominantly economic interstate co-operation, the mild, implicit suggestion of a gradual transformation of the nation-state structure in Europe might be inferred from one of the chapters dedicated to EI-related issues (The little EU citizen Jakub explores how Europe is integrating). However, it is questionable whether, in the context of the absence of overt discussion on

¹³⁹ 'The little EU citizen Jakub explores how Europe is integrating' and 'Jakub' reflects on the integration of nations in Europe' (CE 6/1, 2009: 28-31).

the impact of EI on nation-state sovereignty and any elaboration in regard to the finality of integration, the implicit assumptions are of any major significance.

Summary

In a similar vein to the conceptualisation of the nature of national identity, the presentation of European integration in the textbooks of history, geography and civics faces comparable didactic challenges. The complexity of the discussed topics and the limited scope which is available within the educational area of 'People and Society' are also applicable here. The analytical model developed in this thesis for the examination of EI understanding was helpful in identifying a number of elements in this context. On the other hand, the textbooks also revealed additional patterns which resist a straightforward categorisation along the lines of supranationalism and intergovernmentalism.

The first notable aspect which might be highlighted in the context of EI interpretation is the visible presence of topics dedicated to this theme. Moreover, considering the influence of primordialism on the interpretation of nations and the short history of Slovakia as a nation-state, the overwhelmingly positive account of EI and the clearly accentuated European dimension in education are striking. The EI process is not conceived of as a threat or a contradiction to the national and state sovereignty of Slovakia. On the contrary, it is portrayed as perfectly compatible and advantageous for both Slovakia and Slovaks.

As with the interpretation of national identity, an intertwined conceptualisation of European integration is manifest in the textbooks. Multiple, positive and also conflicting historical and contemporary experiences have been identified as signifiers of European unity. However, a supranationalist line of argument remains marginal in all three subjects. It appears in the form of a handful of brief, implicit assumptions which were discernible in all three textbooks. Nevertheless, such issues were not elaborated explicitly nor substantially in relation to the sovereignty of nation-states and their further existence or functions.

An overt discussion of a post-national transformation of Europe was lacking in the main explanatory sections of textbooks and also in the practical aspects dedicated to suggestions for further activities and questions. Therefore, it might be argued that supranationalism does not appear to be the prevalent foundation of teaching instruction within the three subjects examined here.

Parallel to the marginal supranationalist elements, an intergovernmentalist line runs throughout all three subjects. This is historically anchored in a notion conceiving of Europe as a geographical area composed of nations and nation-states. Nation-states appear to be the main drivers of integration which is deployed by them as an instrument of interstate co-operation within Europe and also, to some extent, beyond its geographical borders. With the exception of geography textbooks, European Union is implicitly portrayed as an institutionalised structure of interstate co-operation. An inadequate, fairly exclusive account of European identity, moderately overemphasising Christianity, is given in history textbooks. In contrast, by taking into account the contemporary cultural diversity of Europe, civics textbooks provide a more inclusive concept of identity. However, this is combined with a primordialist understanding of a given, essentially distinctive and immutable national identity.

The evident limits of economic instrumentalism (Euro crisis, Maastricht Treaty), were not taken into consideration by textbook authors. Hence, it remains a significant part of the explanatory framework of European integration within the textbooks of civics and geography. The history textbook (grade nine) links the rationale for the integration process with national reconciliation and peace maintenance. On the other hand, values-based elements of the conceptual foundation of EI might also be gleaned in geography and civics. In addition to peace maintenance in history, they can also be associated with the concepts of solidarity, respect and tolerance for cultural diversity (civics) and also with the appreciation of democracy (geography) and a better quality of life (all textbooks).

Such indicators undermine the dominance of rationalist assumptions of intergovernmentalism and its minimal consideration of ideals in the context of EI origins and further developments. Therefore, together with economic and marginal supranationalist aspects, universal values seem to cultivate a new approach to the interpretation of European integration in all three subjects, which seems to emerge as the central paradigm of EI understanding in the textbooks. Despite some shortcomings (European identity in history and accentuated attention to economics in geography and civics), this additional approach is best described as values-based pragmatism. Advanced through this perspective, EI is represented as an ongoing, open-ended process embedded in a three-dimensional rationale and driven by three relevant actors: national governments (primarily), supranational institutions and, to some degree, the European public. Table 15 below provides a comprehensive summary of this concept.

Table 15: Values-Based Pragmatism

| Rationale of European Integration | | |
|--|--|---|
| Historical Dimension | Contemporary-Geopolitical Dimension | Universal Dimension |
| positive and negative historical events within Europe | socio-economic, political and climate developments and challenges on a European and global scale | peace maintenance, solidarity, respect for and tolerance of cultural and religious diversity, appreciation of democracy, enhancement of quality of life |
| Relevant actors | | |
| national governments, supranational institutions, public | | |
| Future of EI | | |
| Open | | |

Textbook authors seem to effortlessly accept the integration process within Europe as a given. By combining both positive and negative historical experiences with contemporary geopolitical challenges and universal values, they attempt to explain and legitimise it. And it is this line of argument presented in the textbooks which ultimately appears to reconcile the apparent contradiction between the process of a sovereign nation-state building with the concurrent participation of Slovakia in European integration.

The above summary on the conceptual lines of EI interpretation in the textbooks of the subject area of 'People and Society' concludes the first part of the empirical analysis presented in this thesis. The following two chapters will turn to the second primary source examined here: teachers and their understanding of the nature of national identity and European integration.

3.2 Teachers' views

3.2.1 Teachers' conceptualization of nations

Introduction

As described in chapter 2.3 (Empirical research design), there is evidence to suggest that the views and beliefs of teachers are relevant in shaping students' perceptions and opinions. Therefore, this chapter discusses teachers' understanding of the nature of national identity. In order to determine whether their interpretations reveal patterns which might be aligned with scholarly approaches to nationalism, summarised under the umbrella terms of primordialism, constructivism and ethno-symbolism, two issues will be explored below. First, the chapter introduces teachers' conceptions of the nation by focusing on four aspects: nationality, nation, national character and the antiquity of the Slovak nation. This will be followed by an account of their awareness of the scholarship of nationalism. In this context, degrees of familiarity among teachers with the 'classical' debate (Özkirimli 2010: 46) and its central protagonists, Ernest Gellner, Benedict Anderson, Eric Hobsbawm, Miroslav Hroch and Anthony Smith, will be addressed. The chapter will conclude with a discussion of the main conceptual lines derived from teachers' views on the nature of nations.

Although the majority of the teachers taking part in interviews were aware of the research context in advance, I started our discussions with a brief introduction to the overall objectives of my project. I explained to participants that I was exploring the relationship between European integration and nationalism and the role of education in this context. I highlighted some research evidence which indicates the potential of teachers' beliefs and values to be influential in shaping the views of students. Therefore, I stressed my interest in their personal opinions, first of all in relation to their understanding of the nation.

In spite of sending information to the teachers well in advance of the interviews and once again on the actual interview day, it became apparent that two questions in particular - 'What is nationality?' and 'What is a nation?' - were perceived as rather unusual and unexpected. This became obvious from teachers' verbal and non-verbal reactions which testified to their surprise. Raised eyebrows, spontaneous laughter or requests for clarification, asking me whether I was indeed interested in them explaining to me what nationality or a nation is, were common reactions. Nevertheless, in spite of some initial hesitation, I was able to proceed with my questions.

Nationality

As I was conducting all of my discussions in border regions of Slovakia in close proximity to the Czech Republic, Austria, Hungary, Ukraine and Poland, I justified my first question examining teachers' nationality by highlighting the likelihood of their mixed origin. The majority of participating teachers (30) declared holding Slovak and in one case Ruthenian nationality. Nevertheless, two teachers also described themselves as being of a mixed, Slovak and Magyar parentage and one referred to her Czech and Slovak background. The introductory interview question was then followed by a second one which explored the actual understanding of nationality by the teachers. The most frequent descriptions that teachers provided linked nationality to the meaning of membership of or belonging to a nation.

Question: Please could you tell me what nationality is?

OOI

Marek, history and geography, age group 30-35: Oh, well, basically, a person, a citizen of the Slovak Republic does not need to have Slovak nationality...you see, you have surprised me a little bit, membership of a nation. We have here [in Slovakia] other nationalities as well.

OOI

Katka, history, age group 25-30: What is nationality? Well, [it is] membership of a nation.

OOI

Zuzana, history, age group 40-45: [laughter] belonging to a nation, simply what is close to my heart, something I grew up with.

Teachers repeatedly interpreted nationality in a functionalist sense as a bond to a wider community of culturally interrelated people or a place of origin. This was then further associated with common roots, childhood memories and also with pride in belonging to Slovakia and the Slovak nation. In this context respondents assigned a psychological function to nationality and interpreted it as an instrument which enhances individual wellbeing by satisfying specific emotional needs. One interviewee explained her understanding and the significance she attached to nationality through her personal family history. Others highlighted feelings of gratification in the context of successful achievements of other Slovaks in diverse areas of social activity such as culture, science or sport. Occasionally, as quoted in the first example above, nationality was also applied in the latter course of our discussions synonymously with national minority.

Question: Please could you tell me what nationality is?

FG-3

Vierka, geography, age group 50-55: It is a kind of feeling that I belong somewhere...fellowship, that I belong somewhere.

Jarka, history, age group 50-55: Perhaps it is such an [empty] phrase but I do feel it as a kind of pride that I belong somewhere. It was demonstrated in my family in the period of Magyarisation during the Second World War when my father lived with his parents in Komárno [south of Slovakia]¹⁴⁰ where there was strong Magyarisation. When we refused to be Magyarised, my grandfather had to take part in forced labour but we resisted Magyarisation because he did not want to and this is perhaps why we feel Slovak since childhood.

OOI

Danka, history, age group 30-35: Belonging to a nation, when one basically feels, yes, I am Slovak. We can apply it now to the World Cup in Ice Hockey¹⁴¹ or anything linked to sport, that simply we support our own, or when a Slovak scientist succeeds in something, a person feels like belonging somewhere, a pride in our [people].

As the question 'What is nationality' seemed to cause some degree of confusion, I frequently offered further clarification by asking teachers to think how they would explain the meaning and the mode of acquisition of nationality to students. This appeared to be a less perplexing request. Teachers responded with references to birth as the mode of nationality attainment. Nationality was perceived by them as something given, self-evident and acquired by birth. Reminiscent of Clifford Geertz's argument of the coerciveness of primordial attachments (2.2.1), nationality was also occasionally portrayed either implicitly or explicitly as a fairly inescapable aspect of life which remains beyond individual control and power.

On the other hand, affirmative connotations clearly prevailed in the teachers' responses. In addition, their views actually provided unintentional support for the constructivist argument by revealing the primacy of socialisation in the development of national affiliation. The role of the family or a wider community in addition to the educational system were highlighted in this context by teachers. At the same time, the emphasis on the psychological function of belonging revealed the value they attached to national identity.

OOI

Marek, history and geography, age group 30-35: You cannot influence where you are born. Equally, you cannot influence to what nation you belong just as you cannot influence the colour of your eyes or your psychological characteristics.

¹⁴⁰ Following the Vienna Arbitration (November 1938) the city of Komárno became part of Hungary. After World War Two, Komárno once again became part of the reestablished Czechoslovakia.

¹⁴¹ I conducted both cycles of fieldwork in a period when the Ice Hockey World Championship was taking place.

FG-5

Alenka, civics, age group 55-60: I see nationality as something entirely natural. It is acquired by birth into a certain environment. One automatically adopts traditions, language. I never came across a case that a child would have a different nationality from that of its parents.

Juraj, geography, age group 35-40: [nationality] is acquired in the place where one grows up; if one moves as a little child into a new environment this might affect him or her; on the other hand, [nationality] is shaped by parents.

OOI

Dagmar, teacher of civics, age group 50-55: Parents need to lead towards it [nationality] and then also in history education, geography or in civics.

One teacher provided a fairly ethno-symbolist account of nationality. This later appeared as a precursor of nation or a quality which underlies the formation of a nation. Referring to nationality as a group of people with a common language, culture, traditions and history, he further explained that it is subordinated to the nation. The historical appearance of a nation was then linked by him to the establishment of nation-states:

OOI

Peter, teacher of history, age group 25-30: [nationality is] a group of people sharing the same language, culture, traditions and history.

Question: And how would you then describe a nation please?

Peter: Nation is something superior to nationality. It is something more than nationality, a group of people who strive for national sovereignty. Nationality does not try to define itself in sharp opposition to other nationalities. Nation is a unified nationality.

Nation

The next aspect I explored in my discussion with teachers was their understanding of a nation. As with nationality, this issue stimulated a certain degree of confusion. Once again I encouraged them to talk about their teaching practices in this context and asked for the explanations they would usually provide to students. The Herderian concept of nation clearly dominated in teachers' responses. The aspects of language, traditions, history and territory featured prominently in this context. A number of teachers also highlighted the fact that not all nations build a state.

Question: What is a nation, how would you describe a nation please?

FG-2

Martin, geography, age group 35-40: I deal with these issues in the fifth grade. We mention them briefly, we do not analyse them extensively. We compare race [sic] and nation. Race [sic] is a group of people formed on the basis of biological elements and a nation on the basis of cultural elements such as common language, territory, traditions and culture.

Monika, history and civics, age group 35-40: [laughter] Language, history and territory are specific for a group of people, for a nation.

FG-3

Matej, civics, age group 25-30: A community of people with common attributes, language, territory.

OOI

Anna, civics and geography, age group 50-55: A nation is defined as a bigger group of people which has formed in the past on the basis of a common language, because language is the central aspect; then also on the basis of certain traditions, customs and later perhaps also territory. Yes, there are also nations which did not build their own states.

As I asked the teachers to describe their teaching practices during our discussions on nationality and the nation, two additional related themes emerged: nationalism in pedagogic practices and students' national attitudes. A number of respondents referred to the teaching strategies they adopt while addressing this theme in history, civics or geography lessons. A group of teachers (five) interviewed in the south of Slovakia in the Trnava district considered the issues of nationalism and its related concepts of national identity as rather complex and conflict-laden. In this context, one of the interviewees highlighted the mixed, Slovak and Magyar composition of the school's students. In light of this, she overwhelmingly preferred to avoid an extensive elaboration of the concept of nation in history lessons. Her colleague, a teacher of civics, stated that she did not address the issue at all in her classes, choosing instead to focus on the concept of citizenship. As she emphasised, unlike the nation which is derived from cultural components, citizenship is less conflictual and more inclusive.

FG-5

Elena, history and civics, age group 55-60: We, for example in history, we discuss the revolutionary years of forty eight – forty nine [1848-1849]. Textbooks discuss the demands of the Slovak nation or Memorandum¹⁴², but mostly the Slovak language is emphasised. However, students do not even ask what does the Springtime of nations mean because we ask them to remember only five out of ten points and they remember literary language and the nation, they take it automatically and nobody even asks and I, to be honest, I do avoid it because it is difficult to define the concept [nation].

Alenka, civics, age group 55-60: We have seen a variety of definitions over the years. I never discussed the concept of the nation. In civics, we only talk about citizenship. This can be treated so decently, without any conflicts. In my opinion, this is less dangerous, less nationalistic because we explain the meaning of citizenship, what are the advantages and disadvantages for a person. Why should we analyse the nation, initiating conflicts among our students?

Eva, history and civics, age group 55-60: Actually, this is a very sensitive issue. Obviously, all of us are aware of it. Besides, we know the students, we are also year advisers and we do have students from both Slovak and Magyar nationalities. They do not have to say anything and I can see that they are reacting to this topic in a very sensitive manner. Therefore, we need to explain it in a very sensitive way.

¹⁴² Memorandum is the abbreviated reference to the 'Memorandum of Slovak Nation', a political programme formulated in 1861 by Slovak national activists.

The salience and the conflict potential of nationalism were also highlighted by teachers in the Trenčín district. Unlike the south of Slovakia, this is a more nationally homogeneous region than Trnava.¹⁴³ Nevertheless, a number of teachers (six) mentioned the negative reactions of students to issues of national identity. Teachers referred to students' stereotypes and unfavourable attitudes towards Czechs, Jews, Magyars and Roma. While the influence of the family was highlighted, teachers emphasised what they saw as the detrimental impact of heightened Slovak media attention to negative issues or phenomena.

OOI

Peter, history, age group 25-30: Students react very negatively towards Magyars and - which is very odd - although we are here very close to the Czech Republic, students display some sort of rivalry towards Czechs. Equally, they make negative remarks about Jews in spite of not having any experience of them at all. When I ask them about their personal experiences with Magyars or Jews or whether someone hurt them, then they admit never meeting any Magyars or Jews, that they do not have any kind of experiences.

FG-2

Lenka, civics, age group 55-60: I feel that we have stopped praising, we are only seeking negatives and criticism. Perhaps this comes from the media. There is little positive news about Slovakia. It is so regrettable, not only at the level of people's interactions but also in politics, we only search for negatives, but praising should be primary. We are trying to instil it in students. I asked in civics: find positive attributes in your friend. I suggested, me an optimist, five [positive aspects]. Students were able to find only negatives. There was a problem in finding positives. This comes from families. When we talked in civics about other ethnic groups, students displayed negative attitudes towards Roma. When I pointed towards the differences in behaviour among us [non Roma] even within our village, they accepted that but this is so [deeply] rooted in them. Perhaps it would be helpful to present it differently in the media.

Another history teacher from the Trenčín region highlighted the emotionally laden demonstrations and adverse attitudes of students towards Magyars in the context of the discussion about Magyarisation politics, which constitutes a part of history instruction in the eighth grade. She also shared her observations about the strength of national consciousness within her area of origin. In spite of the close proximity to the Czech Republic and mixed family or friends' networks within this region, she noticed a solid national affiliation among its citizens. At the same time, her views unintentionally revealed the shortcomings of primordialist and ethno-symbolist assumptions.

Highlighting the resemblance between the traditional folk dress typical in her village with the one in the neighbouring region of Moravian Wallachia in the mid-eastern part of the

¹⁴³ According to the latest census (2011), the national structure of Trnava district is more varied with 71.2% Slovak, 21.8% Magyar, 0.6% Czech, 0.5 % Roma and 'other' nationalities between 0.1%-0.2%. Trenčín district is 91.8% of Slovak and the percentage of other nationalities ranges between 0.1-0.7%. The largest non-Slovak community in this case is the Czech nationality (0.7%) (SODB 2012).

Czech Republic (*Valašsko* in Slovak), she unintentionally challenged the primordialist claims of the uniqueness of national traditions of a territorially delineated community. Simultaneously, her comments also undermined the ethno-symbolist argument of continuity between an 'ethnie' and a nation and their 'myth-symbol complex':

OOI

Danka, history, age group 30-35: I am myself from a frontier village and when Czechoslovakia was divided, a custom house was built in the middle of it. Many people have family in Moravia, we understand the Czech language so well. Nevertheless, everyone maintains that they are Slovak and simply, it was so obvious that national consciousness is there.

Question: You mentioned the Slovak-Czech frontier region. Would you say that there are significant differences between Czechs and Slovaks?

Danka: Not really, I think. It seems that [here] we are [all] Valachs, more or less.¹⁴⁴ Even the folk costumes display this. Recently, we went on an excursion to the ethnographic museum in Martin. The folk costumes precisely demonstrated that our costume [from the teacher's village] differs completely from those in the east or south of Slovakia, ours resembles more the one in Moravia. Hence, it is difficult to find the borders. Borders are more or less the result of an agreement, of what was agreed in the past.

Although this particular teacher also placed an emotional significance on nationality (quoted above) and later described the nation along Herderian lines (language, territory, collective distinctiveness), her views appear to demonstrate that she was preoccupied with interrelated issues prior to our meeting. Throughout our discussion she continued to articulate her opinions in a less definitive primordialist sense when compared to the majority of participants. As these observations indicate, her thoughts also seemed to evolve along the lines of constructivist arguments.

National character

According to Herder, each nation has its unique collective character. In order to explore teachers' beliefs in this respect, I firstly asked them what they thought of the existence of national character. On this occasion, a large group of interviewees presented fairly strong convictions in this regard and responded by arguing confidently that national character does indeed exist. Personal or mediated experiences were used by teachers to strengthen their position. In addition, I requested a description of the typical traits of the Slovak nation.

¹⁴⁴ The region of Moravian Wallachia (*Valašsko*) is located in close proximity to the frontier region of the Trenčín district where I conducted my fieldwork. It derives its name from the Valachs/Vlachs, migrants from the present-day Romania who began to settle in the contemporary Slovakia in the fourteenth century (Lukačka 2000b: 124).

Question: Would you say that nations differ by national character? Do you think that there is a typical national character?

OOI

Janka, history, age group 35-40: Yes, certainly. Nevertheless, I also emphasise to students that we are here in Central Europe, that a diversity of ethnic groups swept across this territory and this also has had an impact on us. In spite of that, we have preserved our traditions and culture.

FG-3

Vierka, geography, age group 50-55: Yes, it [a typical national character] exists. When we compare Germans and us, my personal experience, when you visit previously Western Germany, cordiality there is not the same as here. There, even if they know you, they won't invite you inside [their house], they won't show much hospitality. They will only talk to you but they won't invite you into the house. On the other hand, here, you will be invited inside, you will be treated with hospitality. Perhaps not in Bratislava but they will do it in Orava or in middle Slovakia.

Slovaks were compared with Czechs, Russians, Italians, English, French or Americans. One interviewee referred to broader regional differences between southern and northern Europe. As he argued, the Slovak nation shows an affinity with other Slavic nations in close geographical proximity such as the Czechs, Poles or Ukrainians. In a similar vein to Herder or writers of Antiquity, he also argued that differences are greater between Slovaks and the nations in the north or south of Europe, such as Swedes or Italians respectively. Another participant saw little resemblance between Slovaks and Russians or Serbs.

Accordingly, both Russians and Serbs are the most militant of Slavic nations and therefore show less affinity with Slovaks. The English were seen as friendly and at the same time reserved and as having a dry sense of humour. The French were described as very proud of, and strongly attached to, their culture. Czechs were seen as more rational than Slovaks who were viewed as fairly emotional. Americans and Italians were presented as having different ways of thinking, different values or lifestyles compared to Slovaks. One teacher highlighted her personal insights due to family links and argued that Italians have a different mentality, different attitudes to work and leisure and dissimilar parenting traditions compared to Slovaks.

Question: Would you say that nations differ by national character? Do you think that there is a typical national character?

OOI

Zuzana, history, age group 40-45: Certainly, absolutely. My brother in law is an Italian [laughter].

Question: What are the differences, then?

Zuzana: There is a completely different mentality and also lifestyle. We are completely different to Italians. They are more vivacious, but in terms of attitudes to work, they can somehow better divide their time, simply they can relax, which

we cannot do so well. The other thing I noticed is that although children are very important for them, the father does not engage so much in their actual upbringing.

The majority of teachers demonstrated confidence in relation to the existence of a collective, national character. Simultaneously, however, they also displayed a noticeable degree of critical self-reflection when providing replies to this particular question. In addition to positive characteristics, respondents highlighted a variety of negative traits associated with the Slovak nation. A lack of confidence and indifference or distrust towards cultural and religious minorities were listed alongside a number of agreeable attributes. A smaller number of teachers (five), showed a higher degree of doubt in relation to the existence of a national character. Nevertheless, this option was not ruled out completely.

OOI

Peter, history, age group 25-30: Yes, I think it exists, to some extent. Typical Slovak character, I don't know. It used to be said that we are hospitable. Perhaps this is not true any longer. My feeling is, unfortunately, there are negatives, for example fear of new things, of something alien, fear of, let's say religious or national minorities, etc.

FG-2

Martin, geography, age group 35-40: Well, I don't know. Something like that [national character] exists in culture. For example, Czechs and Slovaks are different. Slovaks are more emotional and Czechs are more rational. It might be perceived in this way, that there are characteristics applicable to particular nations but I am somehow more sceptical whether it [national character] actually exists.

Some of the explanations given by teachers also clearly revealed the lasting impact of Herder's ideas and his idealised description of Slavs. Herder's notions of the friendly, hardworking, hospitable, peaceful, obedient or victimised people also transpired from teachers' opinions. At the same time, they challenged his portrayal through their critical observations.

FG-3

Jarka, history, age group 50-55: We are diligent, perhaps less confident, we are not assertive, too obedient. This follows perhaps from history. We got accustomed to it during Austria-Hungary and we still have not overcome it, but we are friendly, sociable.

Vierka, geography, age group 50-55: We are more open, another thing I see is that we are hardworking but I rather feel that we do not appreciate freedom. We are fairly undisciplined. There is criminality, indifference to many issues and so on. This comes with the current times. This is my feeling. Perhaps we are hardworking but undisciplined. Germans, no matter how they are and regardless of their history...their discipline has brought them very far but we, we consider discipline as something demeaning. And democracy is discipline and this is what we are not capable of. This is characteristic of the contemporary [Slovak] nation. On the other hand, we can hold together in bad times, we have always been a dove-like nation. We have always rather succumbed, one thousand years of Magyars and so on. We were never the branch of Slavs leading wars.

One history teacher also mentioned her pedagogic approach in the context of our discussion on Slovak national character. Her views were in opposition to Herder's portrayal of Slavs. As she explained, she strives to challenge such broad generalisations and also the idealisation of Slavic nature in her lessons while discussing the topics of national history.

OOI

Danka, history, age group 30-35: Well, it is said broadly that Slavs are a dove-like nation but I have tried to challenge this in history lessons by arguing that during the era of the Byzantine Empire they were also aggressively conquering others. It was not always as the catchphrase has it that we do not desire what does not belong to us¹⁴⁵, this simply is not true at all times, we simply cannot generalise.

The antiquity of the Slovak nation

As already highlighted in the chapter on the scholarship of nationalism (2.1), the issue of the antiquity of nations has received significant attention in the literature. While a precise distinction cannot be drawn in this context between primordialism and ethno-symbolism, the constructivist argument disputes the ancient origins of nations. Moreover, it sets the beginning of their formation at the end of the eighteenth century and even assigns the appearance or significance of national consciousness to the end of the nineteenth and the early twentieth century (Weber 1976; Connor 1990, 2004, 2005). Therefore, in order to explore teachers' opinions in this respect I asked for their views on the age of the Slovak nation.

The majority of participants confidently dated the existence of the Slovak nation from before the period of modernity. On the other hand, they did not present it as a sudden creation or given from time immemorial, but instead regarded it as the result of an historical process. The origins of the formation of the Slovak nation, however, were linked to the first Slavic political organisation in Central Europe, the Samo realm (circa 620-658) and Great Moravia (833-906/7).

Question: How old would you say the Slovak nation is?

FG-2

Danka, civics, age group 50-55: When we go back to history, yes, the fifth and sixth century, Samo's realm.

Miroslava, geography, age group 35-40: Yes, the fifth, sixth centuries, when we talk of Samo's realm and Great Moravia, there are the roots of the Slovaks. Before then, Slavs were not present in the Carpathian Basin.

¹⁴⁵ The catchphrase refers to verses from a romantic poem written in 1864 by the Slovak poet Samo Chalupka (1812-1883). Strongly reflecting the idealised Slavic picture of Herder, Chalupka composed a romantic portrayal of the ancestors of Slovaks as peace- and freedom-loving people who do not engage in military conquests but prefer to 'sow and harvest' only their own acres and are willing to die rather than to live in slavery.

Considering the recurring references to Slavic tribes, their views could therefore be associated with the ethno-symbolist approach. One of interviewees presented his opinion in very ethno-symbolist manner by drawing a clear line between pre-modern and modern forms of nations. As he argued, modern nations are linked to an articulation of political demands and the formation of nation-states which he located in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

OOI

Peter, history, age group 25-30: Well, clearly, there is a difference in the age of nations. For example, we can talk of Slovaks from the twelfth and thirteenth centuries based on the evidence of the use of the name.¹⁴⁶ In terms of a modern understanding of nations, we could date [Slovaks] perhaps from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. I think that nations had not always been around because there was a certain development. We can talk first about tribes or tribal unions. Nations, we can talk of them first from the period of Antiquity onwards when the first kingdoms of Antiquity started to evolve.

Question: What do you mean by a modern nation, how would you explain, please, what a pre-modern nation is?

Peter: Modern nations are linked to the [historical] period when the formation of nation-states began. I would explain the pre-modern nation, for example in relation to Slovak history when, basically, the Slovak nationality was formed in the Hungarian Kingdom but was not demanding the foundation of an independent state.

Despite a seamless and confident association of the origins of the Slovak nation with the period from the fifth and sixth centuries as conveyed in a considerable number of responses, a smaller number of teachers openly admitted their doubts and need for clarity in this respect. For example, a history teacher in the Trnava district argued that she considers this particular issue rather problematic and difficult to discuss with students. She also pointed towards significant differences in academic opinions in this respect and questioned the meanings and application of the terms Slovak and Slavic. A comparable discussion also evolved among a focus group of three teachers in the Trenčín district. Like their colleague in the south of Slovakia, this particular group of teachers also admitted to their uncertainties. Moreover, the impact of Herder's ideas again transpired from the teachers' responses.

FG-3

Vierka, geography, age group 50-55: Slovaks certainly belong to old nations but can we consider one thousand years of oppression as the [evidence] of our existence?

Miriam, history and civics, age group 25-30: Certainly, we were oppressed for one thousand years but we already existed then as Slovaks. Although we were oppressed we did succeed in maintaining our language and traditions.

Vierka: But did we exist as Slovaks or Slavs? This still poses a dilemma for me.

Miriam: This is seen as Slovaks in history.

Vierka: But since when? I am a geographer [geography teacher]...

¹⁴⁶ The teacher referred to the historical appearance of the term Slovak (etnonym) which is also discussed in the history textbook (History 7/3, 2011: 8).

Jarka, history, age group 50-55: The textbook [history] mentions the division of Slavs...

Miriam: This is quite difficult but there are Slovaks [mentioned] in the textbook.

Vierka: I teach in geography that we belong to the Slavs. From an historical perspective, there were Slavs, but since when can we talk of Slovaks? There was once a TV programme about it...

Jarka: But we already had a delineated territory in the period of Austria-Hungary. We just did not have a state, a president or constitution.

Miriam: This is difficult for many but we are an old nation, we did not have a state.

Although this particular issue proved rather problematic for some interviewees, overall their views displayed a notable resemblance. Based on the reference to Slavic tribes and their historical appearance in the Carpathian Basin, teachers' perspective could be classified in relation to the antiquity of the Slovak nation as ethno-symbolist.

One teacher of history and geography presented quite different opinions in our discussions. Following the initial question about her personal national affiliation (What is your nationality?) she bluntly opposed primordialist assumptions about the distinctive nature and characteristics of the Slovak nation. Responding to my second question of 'Please can you tell me what nationality is?' she articulated her views along distinctly constructivist lines by highlighting the 'constant shifting of allegiances, and appropriations'(Geary 2002: 118) throughout history, as well as within contemporary Slovakia. In this way, she was effectively questioning the prevailing assumptions of historically rooted national authenticity and the collective character of Slovaks.

OOI

Zlatica, history and geography, age group 35-40: I would put it like this: I am trying to see nationality and nation in a wider historical context, in terms of people who moved through the territory of current Slovakia. What then is a Slovak identity? I am certainly not able to talk of a nation in a sense of a community that was formed in an isolated manner. It is interesting to realise how many nationalities or nations swept across here: Tatars, Turks, or later Croats, Valachs. These all mixed here and therefore it is hard to tell where to look for pure-breed Slovaks or a Slavic race [sic].

As a geography teacher, she pointed towards the demographic situation within the contemporary area of Slovakia during the period of the Middle Ages. In this context she highlighted the fairly low population density before the invasion of Tatars in the thirteenth century, a description which also appears in the history textbooks (discussed in chapter 3.1.2).¹⁴⁷ She argued that history education in particular needs to develop a critical perspective on these historical facts and reevaluate the notion of an historically continuous cultural distinctiveness in the Slovak nation.

¹⁴⁷ Please see also the footnote No.116 on p.128 in this dissertation for the estimation of the population size during this historical period.

Based on the preliminary evidence gathered from the most recent curricula and textbooks published in Slovakia before and after the latest educational reform (2008), it had seemed, in advance of my discussions with teachers, that lower secondary education in Slovakia continues to be shaped by a primordialist conceptualisation of nation. On this basis, I began to question the scope, reach and utilisation of the ever-growing academic literature on nationalism within education in Slovakia and decided to explore this particular issue in my research. In doing so, I prepared two additional open-ended questions. The first sought to gain an insight into teachers' awareness on the scholarship of nationalism by exploring their familiarity with the concepts of primordialism, constructivism/modernism¹⁴⁸ and ethno-symbolism. The second question referred to their knowledge of the central figures of the 'classical' debate (Özirimli 2010: 46): Ernest Gellner, Eric Hobsbawm, Benedict Anderson, Miroslav Hroch and Anthony Smith.

Pointing towards our discussions on nationality and nation, I explained to participants that there are multiple and contradictory approaches within academia addressing these topics and that they are captured under specific terms. I then prompted them to think about their pre-service and in-service training and how this particular topic was addressed. I continued by asking all participants whether they came across these concepts in the course of their studies or professional career or whether they had learned about them on the basis of their personal interests.

Question: Please could you tell me whether you came across the following terms and names during your studies, teaching career or continuous education in the context of the debate on nationalism:

Terms: primordialism, constructivism/ modernism and ethno-symbolism

Names: Ernest Gellner, Miroslav Hroch, Benedict Anderson, Eric Hobsbawm and Anthony Smith?

The 31 teachers participating in this research were unanimous in responding to confirm that they had never come across these particular concepts (words). In terms of the central figures of the 'classical' debate (Özirimli 2010: 46), four teachers recalled the name of the Czech historian Miroslav Hroch. All four graduated in different periods (1976, 1996, 2006, 2003/2012¹⁴⁹) from various institutions providing teacher training in Slovakia. However, upon being presented with Hroch's three stage model of national development (discussed in chapter 2.2.1) the same four respondents said that, while they were unfamiliar with this particular thesis, they were aware of him being a

¹⁴⁸ As modernism is frequently used instead of constructivism in the scholarship of nationalism, I used both terms during my research.

¹⁴⁹ In this case, the relevant teacher graduated in History in 2003 and in Geography in 2012.

historian.¹⁵⁰ One of these teachers, although disagreeing, was able to recall Gellner's view, 'Nationalism invents nations where they do not exist' (Gellner 1964: 169).¹⁵¹

As the data on these particular issues indicate, the conceptual discussion of the scholarship of nationalism and their associated paradigms and arguments seem to remain generally unknown among the teaching professionals of Slovakia, irrespective of the year of teachers' graduation or teacher training institution attended. Considering that the intensive academic debate of nationalism might be traced back to the mid-1980s (Day and Thompson 2004; Özkirimli 2010), it is no surprise that teachers graduating prior to 1985 were unlikely to have come across these concepts or the publications of their central proponents.¹⁵²

In addition, taking into account the undemocratic socio-political conditions and the highly restrictive access to academic works of western provenance in Slovakia prior to 1989, it is understandable that teachers graduating in the period of 1986-1990 were also very unlikely to be familiar with these ideas. However, I was unable to discern any significant change in this respect for the group of teachers graduating in the period between 1991-2012. Like their 12 colleagues who graduated prior to 1991, the 19 teachers graduating after 1990 remained largely oblivious to the wider academic discussion on nationalism.

As a number of my interviewees explained, the discussion on the development of national identities, or more precisely on the Slovak nation and Slovak national history, in their pre-service training remained overwhelmingly descriptive and was based on a detailed presentation of facts without a wider critical analysis of these concepts. One of the teachers interviewed recalled her studies of History and Citizenship Education at Comenius University in Bratislava in following way:

OOI

Ema, history and civics, age group 30-35: When I look back, I dealt with these issues in the same way as in my primary and secondary education and during my studies at university. At university, it was only more detailed and actually they did not prepare us for teaching. Teachers leave universities unprepared, with personal intuition or feeling. It is not diverse opinions that I am supposed to discuss, it is only about a personal opinion. If the future teacher favours tolerance, [he or she] is going to lead students in this way as well. On the other hand, if the teacher leans towards nationalism [he or she] will lead the students in that way because [he or she] feels it so.

¹⁵⁰ I also prepared for this particular part of the discussions a brief overview of quotations from all authors classified as central proponents within the 'classical' academic debate on nationalism in order to provide teachers with more precise information and clarity on my question.

¹⁵¹ In this case, the teacher graduated in History in 1996.

¹⁵² Ernest Gellner's *Nations and Nationalism*, Benedict Anderson's *Imagined Communities* and Eric Hobsbawm's and Terence Ranger's *The Invention of Tradition* were all published in 1983. Anthony Smith's study, *The Ethnic Origins of Nations*, was published 3 years later in 1986.

Summary

As the interviews conducted with teachers indicate, with the exception of one case, their understanding of the nature of nations displayed a fairly high degree of similarity. This seems to point towards a deeply rooted influence of the essentialist ideas of primordialism. The relative strength of the primordialist perceptions of teachers emerged even from their initial verbal and non-verbal reactions to interview questions seeking to explore their understanding of nationality and nation. Such feedback might be suggestive of the profound influence exercised by the 'banal nationalism' (Billig 1995) on teachers' perspectives. These convincingly demonstrated the extent to which the ideas of nationalism have become an unobtrusive and integral part of everyday social practices. Even among the participating teachers, namely, professionals with a solid historical knowledge, these appear to remain unquestioned and taken for granted common knowledge.

This impression was further reinforced by the responses provided in the course of our discussions. While teachers' interpretation of the antiquity of the Slovak nation allows for an ethno-symbolist classification on the basis of links drawn to Slavic tribes and their first political formation in Central Europe, all their other references to the concept of nation suggest the continuous influence of the academically most contested primordialist theorem. This could be deduced from their understanding of nationality, nation and national character. The majority of respondents interpreted nationality as a collectively shared quality acquired by virtue of birth into certain geographical and socio-cultural settings.

Although one teacher adopted a rather ethno-symbolist position and conceived of nationality as a precursor of a nation, many participants endowed it with a meaningful, psychological function. Even though nationality came across occasionally as an inevitable condition, it was mostly seen in a positive light as a bond connecting individuals with other members into a unique, Slovak community. In this sense, nationality was also assigned the capacity to contribute positively to personal wellbeing and confidence by satisfying the emotional needs of belonging and achievement.

Contrary to the instrumentalist perspective of constructivism and ethno-symbolism, national characteristics, although seen as a result of an historical process, were endowed with an essentialist quality by participants. Herder's impact was clearly demonstrated in teachers' accounts of the nation and the national character of Slovaks. Language, traditions, history and territory were the constant features referred to by participants in their descriptions. Moreover, his idealised portrayal of Slavs as peaceful,

obedient, hardworking and hospitable or, in some instances, as an oppressed people, emerged frequently in the teachers' presentation of the Slovak national character. In spite of expressing some doubt about the actual existence of the Slovak character and some degree of critical self-reflection, the majority of interviewees seem to hold such conceptions strongly.

Few teachers gave the impression of any deeper preoccupation with issues related to the nature of national identity. However, based on the reactions to my questions, I was able to observe that, for many, our discussion was perhaps the first occasion when they had been asked to question their everyday, assumed notions of nationalism. As some participants also spontaneously acknowledged, they had never previously thought about or queried their national identity.

FG-2

Janka, geography, age group 30-35: Even when I am travelling and meeting other people here in Europe, I see myself as a Slovak. To be honest, I never thought about it [national and European identity], until just now as you are asking.

It seems that the impact of 'banal nationalism' could be regarded as a contributory influence on the lack of engagement with issues about the nature of nations among the participating teachers. On the other hand, many participants acknowledged the salience of the phenomena. Interviewees displayed genuine concern in respect of the consequences and even conflict potential surrounding the issues examined here. They frequently and spontaneously drew attention to the demonstration of prejudiced views among students. In this respect, they highlighted the detrimental impact of media overemphasis on negative social phenomena, including issues concerning the relationship between the majority population and national minorities in Slovakia.

Teachers then frequently questioned and underlined the limited potential of education to counter this profound impact on students' views. Considering the significant reduction of lesson allocation within history and geography following the latest educational reform in 2008 (discussed in chapter 3.1.1), this does not appear to be an inaccurate assessment. The collected data also indicates a variety of pedagogic approaches adopted by interviewees in their teaching practices in the NI context. While it is disputable that evading a conceptual discussion of nationalism with students at the lower secondary level is an optimal teaching strategy, it became obvious that this might be linked to the scant attention paid to these themes in both pre-service and in-service teacher training in Slovakia. As the exploration of teachers' awareness of the scholarship of nationalism illustrates, a critical conceptual discussion appears to be absent from the relevant programmes. Consequently, they remain unequipped with the necessary skills to adequately address these issues in the classroom.

As it seems, Rogers Brubaker's assertion, 'we are all constructivists now' (Brubaker 2009: 28) does not possess a universal validity. The views of teachers suggest that it cannot be applied to all academics within Slovakia and might, therefore, require a critical empirical examination. Whether this would also lead to a re-evaluation of his claim remains inconclusive and cannot be explored at this stage. However, having established the interpretative lines along which teachers conceptualise their understanding of the nature of nations, the next chapter will turn to their views on the nature of European integration.

3.2.2 Teachers' conceptualisation of EI

Introduction

This chapter seeks to evaluate teachers' views in relation to their conceptualisation of European integration along the lines defined in this thesis (2.2.2). As the process of EI and the actual functioning of the EU are fairly complex themes and their comprehension demands a deeper engagement with these issues, I was not interested in investigating the factual knowledge of the teachers in this respect. On this basis, I did not use the developed analytical framework as the actual questionnaire for my empirical investigation of teachers' views. Instead, this was applied as a frame of reference around which I formulated my questions and which later served as a guide for analysing the data collected. Below I will present three interrelated aspects which I investigated during my focus group discussion and one-to-one interviews in order to determine whether teachers' views reveal supranationalist or intergovernmentalist inclinations in relation to EI:

- Teachers' affiliation with Europe
- Teachers' evaluation of EI and Slovakia's EU membership
- Teachers' support or resistance to a supranational transformation of Europe

The question of a sense of belonging to Europe served as a link between the preceding topic of teachers' interpretations of the nature of nations and their understanding of EI. Together with the subsequent issue of perceived advantages and disadvantages of EI, it also provided a broader context to explore the central theme in this thesis in relation to EI. This was then investigated in more detail with discussions surrounding the third aspect related to the topic of EI finality. The chapter starts with a discussion of teachers' views on their European identity. It then proceeds to their evaluation of EI and Slovakia's EU membership before it turns to the specific issues of support or resistance towards an eventual transformation of Europe into a European Federation - in the words of Guy Verhofstad and Daniel Cohn-Bendit (2012), a post-national Europe.

Teachers' affiliation with Europe

As already emphasised in the introduction of this dissertation, national identity has, since the early 1990s, become increasingly recognised in academic circles as a principal factor impacting on public attitudes towards European integration. A direct link between national affiliation and public resistance towards further EI deepening and widening has been suggested by some scholars. Equally, the primacy of national

identity over European identity has been highlighted by others (chapter 1.3). While the negative response of the wider public to the Maastricht Treaty drew scholarly attention predominantly to identity dynamics in the EU-15¹⁵³, subsequent enlargements in 2004 and 2007 broadened the scope of this initial focus. As Checkel and Katzenstein argued, the latter enlargements, constitutional debate and the revived role of religion resulted in a significant politicisation of identity (Checkel and Katzenstein 2009: 11).

Having already pointed towards some studies indicating the impact of teachers' opinion on the formation of students' perspectives (chapter 2.3), I was interested to explore teachers' views in relation to their conceptualisation of the process of EI. The first question in this context focused on their affiliation with Europe. I introduced this topic with references to previous interview questions related to their understanding of nations and proceeded to ask them whether they consider themselves as Europeans in addition to their national identity. This particular question seemed to me a suitable instrument to identify teachers' conceptualisation of Europe. Would they go beyond an exclusive, national affiliation and identify with Europe as a socio-cultural and geopolitical entity? And on what basis? Or would they be inclined to regard Europe only as a geographical space filled with nations or nation-states?

Some preliminary indications of teachers' perspectives in this respect had already been revealed during the previous interviews and focus group discussions related to their conceptualisation of nations. Foremost questions addressing the issues of what is a nation and the existence of national character were suggestive in this context. As highlighted in the previous chapter (3.2.1), teachers presented their perceptions on the existence of a typical national character by using a number of comparison groups from other European nations. Hence, Europe was portrayed in their opinions as a geographical space inhabited by various, distinctive nations which differ through traditions, lifestyle and national character. Although this tendency was maintained in their responses to the initial question exploring their understanding of EI, teachers also attested to their belonging to Europe and its wider population beyond the borders of Slovakia.

Responses to the question of European belonging demonstrated varying levels of teachers' identification with Europe. Age seemed to be an irrelevant factor in this regard and the majority of interviewees acknowledged a European identity. Although their views were presented in this instance without hesitation, it was evident that European identity is understood as an addition to a national identity, not as its replacement.

¹⁵³ Please refer to Annex 1, p.252 for EU-15.

Question: Would you say that in addition to your national identity you also feel European and why?

FG-5

Eva, history and civics, age group 55-60: I think yes, certainly. I personally feel that, yes, we are a part of Europe. We are part of Europe in the sense of belonging to a community. Despite that I still think that we need to keep a certain degree of national identity that we have to maintain our national identity. Otherwise we would be all alike whether a Belgian, Pole, Slovak etc. I do think, and now I am not talking only on behalf of Slovaks, that every nation within Europe needs to maintain, to protect its own heritage.

OOI

Janka, history, age group 35-40: In comparison with other nations, yes, I do feel as a European. One feels it particularly while travelling. We can take continents into consideration. As we live here in one region and perhaps also through the wars, common history. I believe this is what connects us.

From the opinions of teachers who directly identified themselves as Europeans, a conceptualisation of Europe as a socio-cultural and geopolitical unity was discernible. References to a commonly shared geographical location, historical experiences and influences such as the legacy of Antique or military conflicts within Europe were used by interviewees as signifiers of a collective, European identity. In this context, group comparison was also applied by respondents and differences between 'us, Europeans', and 'them, non-Europeans' were highlighted.

A clear line was drawn along a continental divide. Europe was contrasted with Africa, Asia or America and described as one socio-cultural and geopolitical unity or a civilisation. Teachers' descriptions of the 'others', namely, non-Europeans, were evidenced through their personal (limited) or mediated experiences and observations of friends and family members. Three teachers used the US as the comparison group which was described as a country or people with a different mentality and values from Europe.

One interviewee highlighted the differences in traditions, ways of thinking and attitudes between Europeans and US citizens. Another history teacher emphasised the two World Wars of the first half of twentieth century. She argued that both wars constitute a significant and specific experience shaping the collective memory of Europeans. She then interpreted this as the most defining aspect of common identity and also as a critical historical lesson which impacts on the formation, selection and application of political instruments of conflict resolution within or beyond Europe. She further highlighted the humanist value of peace maintenance as the foundation of European foreign policy and contrasted this with the US approach which she described as aggressive and hazardous. On this basis, the teacher also claimed that the US population is quite distinct from that of Europe.

On the other hand, not all teachers embraced an equally strong notion of their personal belonging to Europe. A rather hesitant identification with Europe occasionally featured in their opinions. Nearly a third of respondents (nine), openly admitted to not having a strong sense of a shared, European identity.

Question: Would you say that in addition to your national identity you also feel as a European and why?

FG-3

Matej, civics, age group 25-30: It is hard to talk about it. The EU has problems but I do not know...yes, of course, I do feel as European but I do not perceive it somehow through my heart.

FG-5

Alenka, civics, age group 55-60: I still feel like a Slovak, I do not know, I cannot get used to Europe. We travel, go on holidays, move within Schengen, we do not need passports. However, I am a Slovak in Greece. I do not feel like a European. When I first feel like home everywhere then I will be a European.

A variety of reasons were mentioned by teachers on these occasions which prevent the development of a common identity. These could be classified broadly as socio-economic and closely interrelated communication and generational barriers. Teachers referred to socio-economic discrepancies, including the contemporary economic problems within the EU, as serious impediments. In this respect, teachers seemed inclined to believe that Slovakia and Slovaks are not accepted as an equal partner within the European Union.

In relation to the communication obstacles hindering the feeling of belonging to Europe, low proficiency in foreign languages, especially in English, among the generation who completed their education before 1989, was highlighted by teachers. In the context of the generational obstacles, two teachers stressed the short period of Slovakia's EU membership. One history teacher also emphasised his personal recollection of Slovakia being part of Czechoslovakia and then an independent state. Others (three) also admitted to never having thought about their European identity.

FG-3

Vierka, geography, age group 50-55: I would like to say that this economic inequality is a problem. They do not see us as equals because of this. The discrepancies need to be addressed.

OOI

Peter, history, age group 25-30: European identity? So far, I admit, I do not perceive myself primarily as a European. The reason is perhaps that I had a few years of experiences living in communism, then a few years before we became member of European Union. So far, I would see myself primarily as Slovak but being also part of Europe but not first as a European.

Evaluation of EI and Slovakia's EU membership

As already highlighted in the introduction of this chapter, teachers' evaluations of EI and Slovakia's EU membership provided, together with the previous question on identification with Europe, a broader context for the central theme explored in this thesis in relation to EI. In addition, questions surrounding the perceived advantages and disadvantages of EI and Slovakia's participation in the integration process also revealed relevant information. In this particular context, the data derived from focus group discussions and one-to-one interviews provided balanced evidence suggesting both intergovernmentalist and supranationalist patterns in teachers' arguments. Teachers were inclined to see European integration not only from the perspective of Slovakia's national interests and personal benefits, but also argued from a European position when responding to this specific question.

Question: How do you see the process of EI? What are the advantages and disadvantages?

OOI

Danka, history, age group 30-35:

Everything has pros and cons. I think it is more positive for us as a small nation that we are an integral part of a bigger whole. Europe is small and therefore it needs to integrate so it could compete against the US or other states. It has to integrate in order to achieve a [political] counterbalance. I am pleased that we have a more internationally recognised currency than a Slovak crown. It was not known by anybody. Well, yes, there is a problem with Greece and so we have to wait and see how it will evolve but I see it [EI] absolutely positively. There are contingent limits which we need to adhere to. This is perhaps more negative but there is always a tax to be paid for everything.

In a similar vein, interviewees approached their assessment of European integration from both a Slovakian perspective and also a European one. Hence, both intergovernmentalist and supranationalist logic on EI were clearly detectable from teachers' judgements alongside a broader, global dimension. Although economic and geopolitical considerations were taken into account by teachers, they were overwhelmingly more likely to emphasise humanist and liberal values as advantages of European integration.

OOI

Ema, history and civics, age group 30-35: Obviously, there are positives and negatives to everything. Well, essentially, I see it positively. In this globalised world in which we live, we cannot pretend otherwise, we cannot live [remain closed] behind some kind of borders. I perceive European integration positively, that there is actually an interconnection between us. We have a lot in common. There is a lot that we can learn from each other. And this also needs to be a part of education in schools. It is absurd to be afraid of people with a different language or a different skin colour.

The shortcomings of the overemphasis on rationalist calculations in regard to the integration process were previously identified by Ernst Haas. As he argued, such a foundation is unreliable and does not guarantee the durability of its progress because:

pragmatic-interest politics, concerned with economic welfare, has its own built-in limits [...] Pragmatic interests, because they are pragmatic and not reinforced with deep ideological or philosophical commitment, are ephemeral [...] And a political process that is built and projected from pragmatic interests, therefore, is bound to be a frail process susceptible to reversal (Haas 1968 [1958]: xxiii).

Some teachers also openly expressed their dissatisfaction with the instrumentalist approach and the dominance of economic aspects of the integration process. Reminiscent of Haas, the deficiency of rational political calculations deprived of values was also highlighted by two participants. Martin, a geography teacher, emphasised the inadequacy of economic pragmatism as the primary motivation of integration. This was seen by him and his colleague Monika, a history and civics teacher, as a significant drawback and also as an insufficient basis for the future of EI:

FG-2

Martin, geography, age group 35-40: I am in favour of EI, I see it positively. However, integration seems to evolve only in the economic sphere. A second part is missing which would also mean an integration of the cultural side. Without a kind of cultural integration, economics is dominant and this is a handicap. As we are here in a church [-funded] school, perhaps to add something to integration that would be a foundation, like Christian Democracy. Well, there were some anti-Christian voices, a criticism because of this. Well, different roots and traditions could also be found. It is just necessary to find something cultural because if we are integrating only on the basis of economic interests when a crisis comes everything begins to crumble.

Monika, history and civics, age group 35-40: Yes, I agree. Economic integration is insufficient.

Pointing towards the undemocratic, communist regime before 1989, teachers displayed a genuine appreciation of democratic values, free travel within the Schengen area, opportunities of studying, living and working abroad. The benefits of free movement across Europe together with opportunities for education and employment in other EU member states were interpreted in an educational sense, as a crucial component in the personal development of the younger generation.

FG-2

Eva, civics, age group 50-55: [I see EI] certainly in a more positive light.

Mária, civics, age group 50-55: Me too. We as children of socialism, we could not travel, there was religious discrimination. The opening of borders is certainly the biggest benefit. And also the initial motive of our politicians who wanted us to become a part of the EU, that it would also help the economy.

FG-2

Lenka, civics, age group 55-60: I see free travel positively, there are no controls on the borders, we have a common currency, young people can travel, study, see the world, gain experiences. They can live abroad or return, not like in the past when people were limited. This is all very positive.

None of my interviewees opposed or disagreed with Slovakia's membership in the EU. Moreover, despite teachers' criticisms of EI and concerns raised in the context of contemporary economic developments within the EU, they clearly gravitated toward an affirmative evaluation of the adoption of the common currency in Slovakia. Nevertheless, despite their notably positive attitudes, a cautious evaluation of integration emerged in discussions. Unfavourable historical experiences and the inadequate provision of information seemed to influence teachers' views in this context.

FG-5

Alenka, civics, age group 55-60: We do not know, we are just waiting. We do not want to be fooled again. We are a generation that was fooled already on a number of occasions. We are waiting to see what it brings. One day I admire the Czechs and Klaus because they did not adopt the Euro, on another day [I change my opinion]. At the moment, we do not comprehend it all. One politician says that we will support the Euro-wall and I agree. Others say that we will not and I agree again.

In spite of an occasionally guarded evaluation of Slovakia's EU membership, a positive approach appeared to prevail among teachers. However, some criticism of EI was not entirely absent in their responses. In such instances, a degree of intergovernmentalist conceptualisation of EI was discernible in teachers' opinions. The evaluation of EI was then approached through the prism of their sense of belonging to a nation-state and economic drawbacks for Slovakia were emphasised. Teachers expressed dissatisfaction with certain practices of economic regulation in the EU. Regulations of agricultural or industrial production were equated with the former methods employed under Communism and were consequently assessed as totalitarian and damaging for Slovak economy.

FG-3

Vierka, geography, age group 50-55: And when it comes to a kind of a dictate of economic conditions in terms of what to produce and how much or what not to export, it is as if we were going back to Communism. Then, we were also instructed what to produce and export.

FG-2

Martinka, geography, age group 30-35: I also agree that it is an advantage that there are not border controls, free travel, common currency, [opportunities for] studies. However, I do not like it that some of our products or our producers are facing a decline predominantly in agriculture. We are importing crops which are not controlled or are genetically modified. I believe that home production should be foremost and also our products should be supported, not only foreign imports.

Lenka, civics, age group 55-60: And that we have to adjust significantly to the EU. Every state has something good. We are dictated strict rules without considering what is advantageous for a particular state. This should be taken more into account. I do not know, I am a layman but our good products have been limited and we have to import now.

The examination of the issue of advantages and disadvantages of EI displayed a mixed picture in terms of teachers' conceptualisation of the process of EI. As in the case of textbook analysis, teachers' opinions did not fit neatly into the two categories of supranationalism and intergovernmentalism as defined in this thesis. A broader European (supranational) tendency in teachers' views could be inferred from their consideration of the geopolitical and economic position of Europe in the world. Equally, these could be also derived from teachers' critical evaluation of the overemphasis on economic aspects of EI and the links drawn to the increasing interconnections on a global scale, frequently described in academic or public debates as globalisation.

Therefore, such arguments could be simultaneously categorised as values-based pragmatism described in the context of the textbook analysis (3.1.3). On the other hand, intergovernmentalist patterns within the teachers' conceptualisation of EI could be found in their criticism of economic regulation within the EU and its negative impact on Slovakia's economic interests. In this respect, they approached the evaluation of EI and Slovakia's membership strictly from a state perspective on the basis of a rational cost-benefits calculation. However, despite the criticism articulated, a positive assessment on EI seemed to prevail overall in teachers' accounts. In addition, economic motivations or benefits did not appear to excessively dominate participants' attitudes towards EI in general or in respect of Slovakia's EU membership.

Support and resistance to a post-national transformation of Europe

As already highlighted (1.2 and 2.2.1), the issue of EI finality is a controversial but recurring theme in political and academic circles as well as wider public debates. The credibility and consistency of political commitments to a post-national transformation of Europe by the early integrationists (e.g. Adenauer, Spaak, Schuman, de Gasperi) has been questioned in academia (Milward 2000 [1992]: 318-344; Moravcsik 1998: 4). Nevertheless, views on an eventual transformation of the nation-state structure in Europe continue to be expressed within the contemporary political circles and are supported by parts of the wider European public (1.2 and 2.2.2). As previously stated, however, the Maastricht Treaty (1992) is regarded as a key indicator of the politicisation of EI which attracted academic attention to nationalism as a potential factor contributing to public resistance to a post-national scenario of Europe. Parts of the EU citizenry clearly disapprove of an ever increasing pooling of state sovereignty and do not favour

the potential creation of a genuine European Federation as espoused, for example, in the recent publication co-authored by Guy Verhofstadt and Daniel Cohn-Bendit, 'For Europe' (2012).¹⁵⁴

Fears of a reduction of state sovereignty and an erosion of national culture have been interpreted in the academic discussion as one of the underlying reasons for negative public attitudes towards further European integration. Therefore, I also focused on this aspect in my empirical investigation. In spite of the criticism voiced by some teachers' towards EI and their dissatisfaction with the limited state control over agricultural and industrial production in Slovakia, participants in interviews and focus group discussions tended to dismiss the notion of EI as a perceived threat to Slovakia's state sovereignty and national identity. Some teachers were inclined to see EI as a force which curtails the power of Slovakia's government to take action to some degree. On the other hand, a number of them (five) reacted with notable surprise when I posed my question. Spontaneous laughter also occurred occasionally as a manifestation of their astonishment in this context.

Question: Do you see EI as a threat to the sovereignty of Slovakia and Slovak national identity?

OOI

Miriam, history, age group 45-50: [EI is] certainly an advantage, not a threat to Slovak identity, for God's sake no, certainly not. [It is] more of an advantage.

FG-2

Lenka, civics, age group 55-60: Certainly not. Why?

Martinka, geography, age group 30-35: No, this is about people and about how they keep their traditions.

As the data on this particular issue indicates, the majority of teachers appeared to believe that European integration does not pose any major threat in terms of Slovakia's state sovereignty and collective, national identity. One history teacher referred to history in a positive fashion and emphasised the historical experiences of Slovaks and Slovakia in terms of involvement in multinational political formations (Habsburg Monarchy and Czechoslovakia) as a justification for positive attitudes towards integration. As she continued, the awareness of being a small state also enhances public approval of EI. In the views of other teachers, the persistence and maintenance of Slovak national identity and culture depends, above all, on Slovakia's citizens and its educational policies. Some teachers demonstrated an outspoken supranationalist perspective. The potential

¹⁵⁴ Please refer to footnote No.83, on p.79 in this dissertation for Cohn-Bendit's and Verhofstadt's concept of a genuine European Federation.

dissolution of state sovereignty was interpreted by some as a natural part of an historical process.

Question: Do you see EI as a threat to the sovereignty of Slovakia and Slovak national identity?

OOI

Ema, history and civics, age group 30-35: I? No, not at all [laughter]. I do not worry about some kind of statehood or its threat. I am not afraid of other people. As long as it does not result in military interference and a serious restriction of peoples' rights. If a state ceases to exist on a natural basis, if there is a popular will for that, so I would think it has to be that way.

OOI

Katka, history, age group 25-30: No, I do not see integration as a threat. After all, it came about naturally, as a part of a wide process. Because of the sovietisation of Eastern Europe Western Europe also started to integrate. So it simply follows somewhat naturally from [historical] development.

In addition to formidable supranationalist leanings among some teachers, a sporadic concern for national identity was articulated by a number of them. However, teachers were likely to associate a potential erosion of Slovak culture with deficiencies inherent in the education system in Slovakia and also with Slovakia's citizens as opposed to the process of integration itself. During one focus group discussion, participants were rather inclined to define it as a feature of Slovak national character. As they argued, Slovaks are prone to adjust easily to new influences.

FG-2

Martin, geography, age group 35-40: In my opinion it could happen but it also depends on the character of the particular state. It depends on the way it created the fiction or the reality of the nation. And this also depends on education policies, on what students receive in school, how they perceive themselves. If I take for example Hungary, as far as I am aware, they emphasise nationality much more in education compared to us. Perhaps this diminished here during Czechoslovakia and perhaps we Slovaks are less proud. Perhaps we could have a problem with losing our identity because Slovaks immediately adjust. Therefore I would see a problem there since we are like this.

Monika, history and civics, age group 35-40: Yes, indeed. I was for example in France and a colleague wanted to communicate in English but a French colleague did not want this. On this, national pride was visible. We are making a mistake, for example in history teaching. I had two hours [of history lessons] per week and following the new reform it was reduced from sixty hours to thirty [within a school year]. Therefore we cannot give students as much as we would like within history. From two textbooks I only have one now.¹⁵⁵

While the actual process of EI was not regarded by the majority of teachers as a serious danger for Slovakia and its national culture, a few (six) seemed to demonstrate a degree

¹⁵⁵ Before the last education reform (2008), there were two separate history textbooks for each grade. One focused on World/European history and the second on national (Slovak) history.

of concern in this respect. One drew attention to contemporary developments in the EU. Feelings of inequality or diminished negotiation power due to Slovakia's small size featured in teachers' answers. Added to that, governance instruments and their application in practice within EU also received some criticism.

FG-3

Matej, civics, age group 25-30: Well, at the moment it is perhaps a threat. An ugly shadow hangs over the EU now because of the financial situation, bank bankruptcies everywhere. At the moment it [EI] does not seem to be an advantage.

OOI

Zuzana, history, age group 40-45: We are a small state, so it could happen that we will be absorbed by the bigger states. They may adopt certain rules and we will not have the strength to prevent this.

As in the discussion on advantages and disadvantages, teachers appeared to display somewhat positive views when asked about their perception of the impact of EI on Slovakia's sovereignty and national identity. A number of them demonstrated notably supranationalist inclinations. The integration process was not related to a decline of state sovereignty and a dilution of Slovak national culture or distinctiveness by the majority of participants. The transformation or restriction of state power was seen as an integral part of the integration process. This was perceived as necessary for the achievement of multiple gains on the European, state and also personal level. Nevertheless, some teachers responded from a fairly intergovernmentalist position in this context and associated the integration process with some detrimental repercussions for Slovakia's state sovereignty and its national distinctiveness.

The above analysis of teachers' attitudes in Slovakia displayed notable support for EI and, to some extent, supranationalist leanings, alongside intergovernmentalist and values-based pragmatist approaches. As a result, I decided to probe deeper into teachers' opinions. Would they also support an eventual transformation of the political structure in Europe? As already mentioned (chapter 2.3), 15 teachers received one further question which aimed at exploring their attitudes towards a potential European government and the replacement of national parliaments with a single, European Parliament. On this occasion, opinions emerged which might be summarised in three categories.

The creation of a European government and a single EP was endorsed by some of my interviewees. Seven teachers expressed outright supranationalist support, the majority of whom (five) displayed a visible degree of scepticism towards the actual likelihood of such a future scenario. This emanated from concerns related to diverse obstacles to its practical implementation and possible consequences. The last, third group of opinions

might be defined as intergovernmentalist. Although teachers from within this category did not oppose the actual process of EI and Slovakia's EU membership, they clearly revealed their preferred position which was shaped by their perception of national identity.

Question: What do you think of the possible creation of a single European Government, pan-European political parties and a replacement of national parliaments by a single European one?

OOI

Dagmar, civics, age group 50-55:

I do indeed think that, even when I read on the Internet, I think that this would be great if there was only one government and one European parliament. If we take the [Slovak] budget, such a considerable proportion is spent on wages for MPs. Yes, I think it would be great for us. But perhaps this is just idealism.

In addition to implicit and explicit criticism of political representatives and references to corruption in Slovakia's politics and state institutions, the establishment of a European government was supported through an array of further arguments. Socio-economic discrepancies or the significant variety of educational practices within Europe were highlighted by teachers as the basis of their support for the deepening of European integration. As Janka, a teacher of history argued, one single government would be able to act more effectively while addressing these problems within Europe and in turn facilitate the development of a European sense of belonging.

OOI

Janka, history, age group 35-40: I think yes, it would be beneficial.

Question: Why do you think that?

Janka: For what one is experiencing. When you travel within Europe, you see it. How to put it? You see abnormal differences, not only the economic and social but also the education, the way of instruction, the way of studies and methods. Not to mention the diverse currencies. I think it would be much better to make it more similar. For now, there is such chaos, such a mess, such huge differences. Everybody is playing within their own sand-pit. And one feels like a foreigner in other EU countries. This is not just because of the national differences. This is all because there is not coherence and the nations perceive it. When I leave Slovakia, I feel like a foreigner. [There are] these significant social differences. This will not be solved without a single parliament. And therefore I think to have EU parties would be beneficial. It would be good.

Comparisons between the higher quality of state institutions and their operations in the old member states (West Europe) and Slovakia were drawn by teachers. In this context, a greater respect for the rule of law was highlighted by Lenka, a civics teacher. In her view, the creation of a European government would impact positively on the judicial system and its functioning in Slovakia. In a similar vein, Miroslava, a geography teacher linked her endorsement of a genuine European government to a greater trust in contemporary EU institutions. She compared these to the domestic state administration

which was deemed inadequate and corrupt. On the other hand, her colleague expressed scepticism towards the possibility of the creation of a European Federation. She related her doubts to the role of nation-states in EI and identified them as the actual source of resistance to a transformation of political structure in Europe.

Question: What do you think of a possible creation of a single European Government, pan-European political parties and the replacement of national parliaments by a single European one?

FG-2

Miroslava, geography, age group 35-40: Well, yes. In fact, we simply seem to need a common Europe. It would be fine if the negatives in Slovakia would disappear. If it was done well, it would be fine. I follow for example [the activities] of the European Court. If somebody is dealing with issues through the European Court, the decisions taken there are fair. In Slovakia this is not the case. More pressure from the EU on the judicial system in Slovakia and the extermination of corruption would be good.

Question: Would you say then that you trust supranational institutions?

Miroslava: More perhaps, yes.

Question: Would you then support the creation of one single European government and the replacement of national parliaments by a European one?

Miroslava: European parliament? A nice vision, a utopia.

Question: Where would you see a problem?

Miroslava: I am not talking here about ordinary people but about those who would lose their big money. The whole of integration is about money, money underlies the whole development.

Danka, civics, age group 50-55: The development seems to prove that states cannot find an agreement, they are unable to cooperate.

A number of teachers seemed to favour the political reconfiguration of the nation-state structure within Europe. At the same time, however, they felt that the establishment of a potential European government with one single pan-European Parliament is an ideal and, perhaps, unrealistic option. As the above dialogues exemplify, some teachers are inclined to see the economic interests of powerful players (multinationals or financial investors) and national governments, particularly of large member states, as the critical source of resistance towards a deepening of EI.

Contemporary economic and financial developments within the EU also clearly impacted on teachers' views in this respect. Doubts expressed were linked to the detrimental impact of these events on the motivation aimed at further deepening the integration process. However, contrary to some conclusions drawn from the relevant academic discussion, public opposition was not seen by interviewees as the main impediment to EI deepening. As some among the group of teachers who appeared to favour the post-national transformation of Europe argued, the Slovak public would likely be rather supportive in this regard.

One history teacher displayed a similar point of view when expressing her scepticism towards the possibility of a single European government. Considerations related to political accountability, transparency and concerns about the potential abuse of political power and opposition towards centralism figured in her argument.

OOI

Katka, history, age group 25-30: It is hard to conceive that everything would concentrate in one centre, that it would be managed by European deputies. When I think of the control, I do not know how that might be possible because to concentrate power in one centre with a big array of competences, I do not know if that would be desirable. It is a huge territory and every country is different in terms of its economics. [European] countries differ. I do not know how it could be managed from one centre. It is possible, but I do not know how it could be done in practice.

Albeit with some degree of doubt, a number of teachers demonstrated their supranationalist attitudes in respect to the future of EI. On the other hand, some participants (eight) argued from a staunchly intergovernmentalist perspective. Preferences for an intergovernmentalist or a minimalist position were supported by emphasis placed on the historical experience of Slovakia from the period of Communist rule. Fears of a loss of state sovereignty in the area of economics featured in teachers' arguments.

Question: What do you think of a possible creation of a single European Government, pan-European political parties, and the replacement of national parliaments by a single European one?

OOI

Marek, history and geography, age group 30-35: It is hard to tell. Everything is relative. If integration deepened, it would also certainly result in economic limitations. It could become an economic diktat. I would rather clearly delineate rules as a basis for integration. I would not hurry into some kind of supranational or cultural integration. Rather, I would keep it on an economic basis. However, it should not be like some thirty years ago when we were dictated to.

The concern for reduced state control over economic matters was supplemented by the argument of a potentially negative impact of a post-national Europe on the preservation of Slovak national culture and distinctiveness. Such concerns seemed to dominate in responses within this group of teachers. In these instances, the primordialist belief in the existence of a given collective national uniqueness could be inferred from teachers' opinions. In addition, the influence of international personalities on the crystallisation of their views also became evident in their answers.

OOI

Danka, history, age group 30-35: I rather think that a compromise would be more suitable. It [supranational structure] is not good. Even many internationally respected personalities like for example the Pope [Benedict XVI] warn against making the EU into a super-state. Something specific should be preserved. I do

not know, for example, Germans should keep their punctuality, Slovaks their hospitality. It is not good to lose our differences. In sport or in science, competition is good because it brings us forwards. On the other hand, in other issues, for example in foreign policy, we should act as a unit so we could be a counterbalance to the US and other states.

OOI

Peter, history, age group 25-30: I cannot imagine it (European government). I would see it rather negatively because I think national individuality and differences between nations would be suppressed. I believe that in this manner it would come to imperil national culture. I hope this will not happen. I am in favour of the EU and in co-operation but not in this way [a European government] of functioning.

Teachers also highlighted on this occasion the complexity of these issues. During a focus group discussion with three teachers about contemporary developments within the EU, interviewees identified their lack of expertise on interrelated EI matters. As they argued, this is a factor which influences their perception of further developments within the EU.

FG-3

Matej, civics, age group 25-30: Rather no. I would rather disagree. As a small country we should perhaps become more inward looking instead of helping other states which are financially better off. We have economics which may be managed easily.

Question: Do you think that Slovakia would be better off without the EU?

Matej: Hard to tell. European funds are European funds. These are difficult questions.

Danka, geography, age group 35-40 and Eva, history, age group 45-50: These are difficult questions for a teacher. We do not understand it all.

The complexity of EI issues appeared frequently during my fieldwork with teachers and lead naturally to discussions on their inclusion in their pre-service and in-service education. Participants graduating before 2000 (19) denied receiving any specific instruction on the actual process of EI. Interviewees leaving their initial education after 2000 (14) acknowledged gaining some insights. However, this applied to graduates in civics and geography only. While history teachers who completed training during the period of 2001-2012 referred to a broader European focus in their studies, they did not recall any specific attention to the process of EI and the EU. Equally, teachers' evaluation of in-service education in this context indicated an absence of relevant topics after 2004. While teachers referred to training opportunities just before Slovakia's EU accession, they highlighted the lack of such themes in the years that followed.

In spite of the shortcomings of teacher training in relation to EI, it was obvious that they engaged on a personal basis with the discussed issues. At the same time, they also admitted the challenging nature of some questions, especially in regard to the last point concerning the finality of EI. Nevertheless, this particular topic resulted in a balanced

outcome. Seven out of the 15 participating teachers displayed their support for an eventual reconfiguration of the nation-state structure in Europe.

However, a significant portion of this particular group (five) also demonstrated their scepticism towards the practical implementation of this scenario for a variety of reasons. Eight teachers presented a clear intergovernmentalist perspective in relation to the future of EI. A primordialist conceptualisation of nations in the sense of an essentialist, immutable notion was a factor which appeared to influence their resistance. Teachers' answers on this occasion clearly manifested their concerns for the potential loss of national distinctiveness. This uncertainty shaped their opposition towards the transformative role of EI and to the option of a genuine European government.

Summary

This chapter focused on the interpretation of the EI process by teachers and aimed to discern their inclinations along the conceptual lines defined in this thesis. In order to achieve this objective, three interrelated themes were explored. The first focused on European identity and was conceived of as a link between the earlier analysis of teachers' understanding of the nature of nations and the topic of EI. It also provided, together with the second aspect of benefits and drawbacks of EI, a wider context for the exploration of specific issues which concentrated on actual support or resistance towards the potential establishment of a genuine European Federation.

As the data indicate, teachers conceive of Europe simultaneously as a geographical space filled with distinctive nations and nation-states and also as a socio-cultural and geopolitical unity. The majority of research participants perceive themselves as Europeans in addition to their national identity. Despite some barriers influencing the formation of a deeper bond between them and other fellow citizens within Europe, a large number of interviewees could easily establish links on the basis of common historical experiences and consciousness, which were formed within a mutually shared geographical location. Although a group of teachers (nine) seemed hesitant on the grounds of socio-economic, communication and generational reasons, this nevertheless was not conveyed as having an adverse impact on their attitudes towards the process of EI. Regardless of criticisms directed toward some aspects of integration, an affirmative position appeared to be the most defining feature in teachers' views. These in turn were rooted in rational or pragmatic assessments of the economic and geopolitical situation of both Slovakia and Europe.

A purely instrumentalist calculation did not predominate in respondents' reasoning. In a similar vein to the analysis of textbooks, teachers' attitudes also appeared to be

embedded in values-based pragmatism. The notions of peace maintenance, the appreciation of democratic values and also a better quality of life could easily be detected in their opinions as the foundation upon which their judgements were based. The actual process of EI and EU membership was not perceived by the majority of teachers as a threat to Slovakia's sovereignty or national identity.

However, it was the last question which proved polarising. A significant number of research participants (seven out of 15) were generally not hostile to an eventual dismantlement of the nation-state structure within Europe. A more effective approach towards a reduction of socio-economic discrepancies within Europe, enhancement of European belonging or improvements in corruption levels and rule of law in Slovakia were mentioned within this group of teachers as the basis of their support for this notion. On the other hand, teachers also highlighted a number of challenging obstacles in this context.

Current economic developments, regional socio-economic imbalances within the contemporary EU and issues of democratic control and accountability were taken into consideration by teachers and evaluated as serious impediments. It also became obvious that these aspects were not necessarily rooted in nationalism nor a specific conceptualisation of the nature of nations. The influence and interests of powerful political forces associated with large EU member states and economic interest groups were identified by some interviewees as the main hurdle for a post-national transformation of Europe.

Primordialism did not appear to fuel significantly negative or instrumentalist attitudes towards EI and the EU. However, its impact cannot be overlooked in teachers' resistance to EI as a tool in an eventual conversion of the nation-state structure within Europe. Despite their generally positive attitudes, eight research participants disapproved of the specific, transformative function of EI. The responses provided on these occasions seemed to indicate a link between the primordialist understanding of nations as given and unique socio-cultural entities and teachers' opposition to this particular option in relation to the future of EI.

The above discussion on teachers' views on the nature of EI concludes the second part of my empirical research. The following two chapters will focus on the last primary source examined in this thesis. The first begins with the identification and analysis of students' views in relation to their conceptualisation of the nature of nations. The second will then proceed to their understanding of European integration.

3.3 Students' views

3.3.1 Students' conceptualisation of nations

Introduction

This chapter discusses the understanding of the nature of nations among students in the lower level of secondary education in Slovakia (ages 12-15). It is not concerned with their knowledge on the history of the Slovak national movement or nationalism as such. Nor does it illuminate the broader conditions or processes leading to students' construction of national identity. Instead, on the basis of students' responses to my questions, I have attempted to discern the inclinations in their understanding of national identity in accordance with the academic discussion on nationalism as summarised within the tripartite division of primordialism, constructivism and ethno-symbolism.

The interpretative patterns of national identity were examined by means of four aspects which will be presented thematically in this chapter. Accordingly, I will begin with students' opinions in relation to nationality, nation, national character and the question of the antiquity of the Slovak nation. The chapter closes with a summary of the main tendencies identified in their responses.

Nationality

In spite of cross-country variations, research examining children's national identification indicates that up to the age of 5 years they do not have a firmly established notion of nationhood. However, in subsequent years, children begin to acquire, through a multiplicity of sources (media, travel, parents, school, peers), more specific information to the extent that, by the age of 10-11 they already poses a well-founded basis of knowledge which helps them to define national in-group and out-group characteristics (Barrett *et al.* 2003; Barrett and Oppenheimer 2011).

During my empirical research with students across all age groups it became apparent that the issue of national identity is not a topic that dominates their daily life or preoccupies their thoughts profoundly. This was demonstrated by the brevity of their answers to my questions which frequently consisted of few words or were, in some cases, even monosyllabic (yes and no or don't know responses). In spite of this, all the students I interviewed displayed a clear notion of national identity and belonging.

The first introductory question provided evidence in this regard. I began my exploration of students' understanding of the nature of nations by asking them about their nationality. As I was conducting my fieldwork in areas which may be described as border regions, (Slovakia-Czech Republic, Slovakia-Hungary and Slovakia-Ukraine), I usually justified my question by pointing towards the possibility of the mixed composition of the population or parentage and simply asked them whether anyone was not Slovakian. None of students conveyed the impression of misunderstanding the meaning of this question. All participants provided responses effortlessly in this context.

With only five exceptions, students declared that they were of Slovak nationality. In one case, a girl in the Trenčín district in the mid-west of Slovakia described herself as having a Czechoslovak nationality. She explained that her mother came from the Czech Republic and then proceeded to articulate in a logical manner that she held Czechoslovak nationality, although this no longer exists in political or cultural terms. At the same time, she was implicitly portraying it as an inborn, biologically determined attribute of her individual self. Another student replied to my question by saying that he has Czech nationality because he was born in the Czech Republic. In the Košice district in eastern Slovakia, two boys claimed to be of Magyar descent and one girl of Vietnamese nationality. Consequently, all the students seemed to display a national consciousness and sense of belonging to a certain national group.

While the first interview question was clearly understood by students across all age groups, the subsequent question, 'What is a nationality?' appeared less obvious. A number of students were unable to answer this question and admitted this quite openly. Others provided varied answers. As already discussed in the analysis of contemporary history textbooks, the terms of nation and nationality are often applied interchangeably and inconsistently. History textbooks sometimes refer to nationality in the sense of a group of people with a set of specific aspects (nation) or as a term describing membership of a nation.

Students' responses were also articulated along these lines. A number of them across all age groups interpreted nationality as a synonym of nation. Consequently, they were linking nationality with a group of people speaking one language (Slovak), sharing the same traditions, culture and living within a territory or simply in the state of Slovakia. At the same time, nationality was also implicitly associated with the notion of a bond which connects individuals into a separate, unique and solidary association.

Question: Please could you tell me what does nationality actually mean?

LGI-20, age 12

Martin: This is actually that our nation, that all Slovaks, that it is a group of people who speak the same language, have the same culture and traditions.

SIG-4, age 15

Eva: It means that it is a group of people who simply live within one territory and have [differ by] a language. For example we are Slovaks, we will held together or somehow so.

Territoriality or space as a factor shaping the development of identities (Warf & Arias 2009) also clearly transpired in students' conceptualisation of nationality. There were participants among the students who articulated their ideas about nationality in a spatial sense. On these occasions, although maintaining the description of a bond, nationality was linked to a place of their actual physical existence, their country of origin. In addition, some interviewees were inclined to phrase their notions in a more abstract sense of belonging and rootedness.

LGI-17, age 13

Pavol: Country of origin.

Milan: A place where we were born.

LGI-16, age 15

Adam, Ivanka: Where I am from.

SIG-4, age 15

Rachel: That we belong somewhere.

While a number of students did not appear to experience any difficulty in describing nationality, others first provided answers to the slightly different question 'How can we acquire a nationality?' This appeared to be less problematic as students seemed inclined to respond with greater ease on this occasion. In this context the majority referred to birth as the means of nationality acquisition. In addition, references to a place or location of their existence ('where we live') were also frequent associations in this case.

Occasionally, students seemed to link or confuse nationality with the concept of state citizenship which is normally understood in Slovakia as a legal status of state membership.¹⁵⁶ In these instances, a few students argued that a nationality is acquired after reaching a 'specific age' or by being born within a territory of a 'state'. With references to age as a way of obtaining nationality, students implicitly pointed towards the acquisition of a personal identity card. This is obligatory in Slovakia and must be

¹⁵⁶ Please see also Annex 5, p.258.

acquired at the age of fifteen and serves as proof of personal identity and Slovakia's state membership.

Students' reactions to the questions of nationality and its acquisition seem to confirm the observations of Lášticová (2009) who examined national and European identification among young adults (age 18-24) in Slovakia. Nationality as a place of birth or a country of origin was a frequent association among the participants of her study. As she argued, this may be linked to the semantics of the Slovak language. Unlike English, the Slovak terms (substantives) of 'nationality' (*národnosť*) and 'nation' (*národ*) have the same linguistic roots as the verb of 'to be born' (*narodiť sa*). Consequently, students' answers linking nationality acquisition with birth and regarding it in the sense of a given personal or collective quality could be interpreted in this context as logically adequate conclusions.

The non-verbal and occasionally verbal reactions of students to this particular question (How can we acquire nationality?) appeared to indicate that national affiliation is taken for granted by them. It seemed to be understood as something obvious and known to everybody. In this respect, it does not require questioning which appeared to be seen as unnecessary and rather bizarre. Hence, the students' reactions showed a degree of surprise as they tended to begin their answers rather hesitantly. Sporadically, they responded by putting forward a question as well.

Question: How can we acquire a nationality?

SGI-4, age 15

Jozef: I am Slovak, I was born here, this is important and, I do not know, when parents are Slovak I am as well. When a person lives somewhere....How else is it possible to acquire it?

Considering the aspects of the analytical framework applied in this dissertation, students' interpretation of nationality could be linked to primordialist logic. This was displayed in the context of all three initial interview questions addressing nationality. All the students, including those who admitted not knowing, or were apparently unable to describe, what nationality is, presented their collective awareness of belonging to a particular large group of people, mostly to the Slovak nation, automatically and confidently as a self-evident fact. Following the latter explanations, nationality was conceived of by them as an attribute related to their individual and collective identity. It was described as a bond which is shared by a culturally and geographically delineated group of people. In this way nationality came across as a device of intra-group inclusion and inter-group exclusion. In terms of their views related to the question of nationality

acquisition, the majority of students interpreted this as a given and inborn quality or linked it to the territory of their physical existence (Slovakia).

A socio-psychological function of nationality, in the words of Edward Shils 'integrative' capacity (Shils 1957: 131), could also be derived from students' opinions ('we held together', 'we belong'). Moreover, their descriptions of nationality as a group of people with common features clearly mirrored Herder's concept of a nation. Language, culture, traditions and a territory were seen by students as the basis which determines their collective belonging and uniqueness. At the same time this implicitly differentiates them from other groups of people or nations.

Nation

Primordialist logic appeared to transpire in students' answers to my next question which focused on the nation. As a number of students described nationality in the sense of a group of people, the question 'What is a nation?' was rather confusing for them. On the other hand, their bewilderment might also be interpreted as evidence of the true extent to which the nation is taken for granted and its meaning perceived as common knowledge which does not require questioning or further thoughts. For this very reason their reaction revealed anew that issues related to national consciousness are not topics which preoccupy them intensely. Nevertheless, it seemed that for many students it was easier to provide a description of a nation than nationality. The most reoccurring responses corresponded unambiguously to Herder's conceptualisation of a nation.

Question: Please could you tell me now what is a nation?

LGI-18, age 12

Matej: I know! [a loud call]. Nation is a kind of a country.

Ivan: No, people in any country like Czechs or Slovaks.

LGI-20, age 12

Vladko: People with a language, they have common language, religion and script.

SGI-4, age 14

Mirka: A group of people inhabiting a particular state, they speak with their own language, have their own norms of behaviour and rules.

SGI-4, age 14 and 15

L'ubka and Janka: A group of people, they have the same history, traditions, the same roots.

As with the question of nationality, some students appeared to confuse state and nation which, as previously highlighted, are normally understood in Slovakia as two different concepts. Although students occasionally referred to the state and also state symbols

(flag, anthem or President) in their accounts of a nation, the majority interpreted this as a group of people sharing unique features. Language, culture, traditions and a shared territory or even a typical behaviour constituted the most frequent themes in students' replies. Sporadically, they also referred to physical features such as skin colour as a typical national attribute.

National Character

In Herder's writings, as already emphasised in earlier chapters (2.2.1, 3.1.1, 3.2.1), language is the most crucial element in his understanding of a nation. Herder understood language as a mirror of thoughts and at the same time as a critical marker of the collective character of a given nation. As languages differ from each other so do national communities. This leads Herder to conclude that each community has its own way of thinking, its own history and customs and, consequently, its particular and unique national character. Accordingly, I was interested to explore students' views in relation to national character. First, I was curious to learn what they think of the actual existence of a national character. Secondly, I explored their views in relation to the typical character traits of the Slovak nation.

In order to make this section of my discussion comprehensible for students, I introduced it by way of a brief explanation of the concept of a personal character. I argued that each person might be described by a diverse set of specific personal traits, like being talkative, shy, serious or funny. Then I asked them whether it is possible to describe a group of people and their typical national character in a similar way. This question appeared rather complex, particularly for students in the youngest age group (12 years), and they seemed unable to answer this question directly. Older groups of students (years 13-15) were inclined to provide monosyllabic responses. On such occasions, they tended to respond with 'Yes'. A few also provided arguments to support their views and referred to mediated opinions or their own experiences.

Question: What do you think, can we say that a nation, like a person, has its own character?

SGL-4, age 15

Eva: Well, all [nations] have their own temperament and they also have a different history and perhaps also character. For example it is said about Germans that they have a kind of harder temperament, so this is said about them.

Occasionally, some students expressed their doubts about the existence of a collective, national character and argued 'I do not think so'. One of my interviewees provided a more explanatory argument and refused to accept any broad generalisation in relation to

the idea of a collective character. He emphasised that the concept of a personal character cannot be ascribed in a collective sense to a large group of people or nations.

SGI-4, age 15

Matúš: I do not think that, it rather depends on what kind of a person it is but not for a bigger group. I do not think, for example, a part of Slovakia or Ukraine could be linked to a whole group of people, rather it depends on how a person is.

As doubts on collective characteristics were presented infrequently and the affirmation of their existence was normally brief ('Yes'), I also requested examples from students in order to clarify their understanding of the question. Hence, I asked for their thoughts on the typical national traits of Slovaks and also comparisons between other nations. With reference to the students' own experiences from travels or holidays with parents, I encouraged them to describe these. In this context, I utilised the factor of border regions and asked them whether they had visited the respective neighbouring states of the Czech Republic, Hungary, Austria, Ukraine, Poland or any other. Following these questions, students easily referred to their experiences and shared their observations and thoughts in relation to national characteristics. A variety of aspects related to Slovakia and other nations were highlighted on these occasions. Students held that differences in mentality, temperament, behaviour or economic, environmental or broad material features were aspects of typical national characters.

The most striking element of students' description of the Slovak national character was their inclination towards depicting negative traits. While the youngest group of my interviewees (age 12) was more likely to highlight positive aspects (traditional costumes, nature, cultural traditions or typical beverages), students in the age groups of 13-15 portrayed a rather negative picture of the Slovak national character. This tendency was most apparent in my discussions with large groups of students. Although even within these groups (seven in total) students mentioned positive characteristics (charitableness, traditional culture or nature), adverse accounts remained prevalent. They referred to a variety of problematic social phenomena such as alcoholism, drugs or corruption, as typical aspects of the Slovak nation. Slovaks were characterised as thugs, alcoholics, swindlers or thieves.

Question: How would you then describe the Slovak national character, what are typical Slovak traits?

LGI-14, age 14

Simona: Slovaks are easily corruptible.

Ivanka: They like to spend money.

LGI-16, age 15

Jaroslav: A nation of swindlers and thieves.

Question: How about positive traits?

LGI-14, age 14
Lenka: Positives do not exist.

LGI-16, age 15
Ivan: We have given all the options.

Although the above answers were frequent they do require a critical evaluation. These replies could be seen to some extent as pretence – potentially a reflection of typical teenage attitudes. In this context a number of factors could be taken into consideration. The inclination to reject authority and dismiss ethical norms or values could be highlighted alongside an oversimplified world perspective. Peer pressure and group dynamics might also be seen to be relevant in this context. All these aspects became most visible in my meetings with large groups of students. An initial, negative opinion expressed by one student invariably stimulated additional and related reactions among the whole class.

On the other hand, influences beyond the educational system, particularly the media, appeared to be rather significant. Students' responses were consistent with teachers' accounts of the profound impact of media attention to negative phenomena and events on the formation of their views (chapter 3.2.1). While the multiple references to negative traits in Slovak national character could be interpreted to some degree as the theatrical pose of a specific age group or a reflection of negative media impact, students nevertheless disclosed their genuine opinions, critical observation skills and awareness of serious social issues. The authenticity of their judgements could be inferred from their mutual disagreements and the contestation of views articulated by their peers.

Question: How would you then describe Slovak national character, what are the typical Slovak traits?

LGI-17, age 13

Oliver: [Slovaks are] racists.

Question: Where did you come across racist attitudes of Slovaks?

Oliver: We hear what is happening to others.

LGI-14, age 14

Gabika: That Slovaks quite protect their nature.

Andrej: In comparison with Croatia it is completely different. We have here black [illegal] dumping grounds around each corner. We do not protect nature that much.

While describing differences between nations, frequent references were made, particularly in the Trenčín district in the mid-west of Slovakia, to Czechs. Students found it easy to draw a comparison as the majority of them reported on their trips to Czech Republic. They usually argued that notable contrasts exist between Czech and Slovaks. Differences in language, mentality, size of country or the religious and environmental

attitudes of the respective populations were highlighted. As one of my interviewees maintained, Czechs are atheists while Slovakia is a Christian country.¹⁵⁷ Others argued that Czechs have a higher sensibility towards nature. Particularly in discussions with whole classes, statements emphasising positive attributes of other nations (for instance, the positive environmental attitudes of Czechs) stimulated controversy among the students. In this way, disagreements simultaneously contradicted and ultimately corrected their negative self-portrayal of Slovaks. The ascription of positive characteristics to other nations resulted in a straightforward accreditation of identical traits to the Slovak nation. Occasionally, negative views related to national characters were a forthright reflection of students' personal experiences.

One girl, aged 14, strongly argued that there is an eternal rivalry and hatred between Czechs and Slovaks. In this particular instance, her conviction was clearly shaped by her own experience, which she mentioned during our focus group discussion. She talked spontaneously about her exposure to bullying because of her origin, of mixed, Czech-Slovak parentage. In spite of speaking flawless Slovak, the girl was victimised in school. I had already been made aware of her case in my discussions with her teachers. As they argued, this case was the most serious and puzzling they had ever experienced within the school, although teachers did mention other occurrences of anti-Czech attitudes among students. In teachers' opinions, students' attitudes were significantly shaped by their parents and other influences outside of school. In this context, they highlighted the relative strength of the Slovak National Party within the particular location of this school. Yet, at the same time, teachers tended to see it as a paradox due to the school's location in such close proximity to the Czech Republic in an area with mixed family and friendship networks.

Although the case above was a clear example of national intolerance, this does not appear to be reflective of a general tendency across Slovakia. Studies examining the relationship between Czechs and Slovaks conducted over the last two decades following the dissolution of Czechoslovakia in 1993 tend to show fairly positive results in this respect. In spite of a degree of political friction in the immediate aftermath of 1993, the political parties of both states continue to declare their interest in maintaining an exceptional quality in their mutual relationship. Equally, the Slovak and Czech populations tend to ascribe the status of most liked foreigners to each other's respective nationals (Sedlár 2003; Novinky Cz. 2008; Mesežnikov 2009; Pravda 2012b). Moreover,

¹⁵⁷ According to a recent survey by Winn-Gallup International, which involved 57 countries, in addition to Japan and China, the highest ratio of atheists was recorded in the Czech Republic (aktuality.sk 2012b). Following the latest census (2011), nearly 72% of Slovakia's citizens declared their religious affiliation: Roman Catholic Church (62%); Protestant Church (a.c.:5.9%); Greek Catholic (3.8%). The absence of confessional or religious affiliation was recorded by 13.4%. In addition, 10.6% did not respond to this census question (SODB 2012).

in regard to the above mentioned case, teachers also mentioned two siblings of this particular girl who were not confronted with any comparable experiences of bullying within the same school.

On the other hand, stereotyping was also present in students' views in regard to other nations including national minorities within Slovakia. Again, this became most visible during my discussion with whole classes in the Trenčín district in the mid-west of Slovakia. Some students displayed negative views, particularly towards Roma and also towards Magyars, in spite of the improbability of any direct, personal, negative experiences. Following the census results of 2011, there are 14 national minorities within Slovakia.¹⁵⁸ Roma (105 738: 2%)¹⁵⁹ and Magyars (458 647: 8.5%) represent the biggest national minorities. However, Trenčín region recorded the lowest levels (0.1%) in regard to both groups of population (SODB 2012).

Nevertheless, the views of a number of students within this particular region revealed deep-seated stereotypes which were also articulated in the form of racist arguments. At the same time, these equally exposed the primordialist logic of collective essentialism. Interviewees drew a very clear dividing line between Roma and Slovaks. Roma were presented very negatively, as distinctively 'other'. Students' views also clearly demonstrated an additional, contemporary, socio-economic dimension of the highly complex character of the Slovak-Roma relationship. Several problems such as low educational attainment, high unemployment rates, intergenerational dependency on social benefits and antisocial behaviour among a part of Roma community are recurring themes in the public debate in Slovakia (Mesežnikov and Gayarfášová 2008; Polgáriová and Liptáková 2012).

It was particularly the media focus on the whole array of correlated socio-economic aspects which contributes to the social exclusion of Roma in Slovakia that was so evident in students' responses. In an oversimplified manner, Roma were overwhelmingly portrayed by students as lazy, unwilling to work and abusing the social system of Slovakia.

¹⁵⁸ The following nationalities were recorded: Slovak (5 397 036: 80.7%), Magyar (458 467: 8.5%), Roma (105 738: 2%), Ruthenian (33 482: 0.6%), Ukrainian (7 430: 0.1%), Czech (30 367: 0.6%), German (4 690: 0.1%), Polish (3 084: 0.1%), Croatian (1022: 0%), Serbian (698: 0%), Russian (1 997: 0%), Jewish (631: 0%), Moravian (3286: 0.1%), Bulgarian (1051: 0%). In addition, census results also refer to the category of 'other' (9 825: 0.2%) and 'unknown' (382 493: 7%) (SODB 2012).

¹⁵⁹ This figure is based on self-identification. The estimates refer to a higher figure ranging between 6-10% (Lajčáková 2012).

Question: How would you then describe Slovak national character, what are the typical Slovak traits?

LGI-14, age 14

Martinka: There is a lot of theft here.

Jakub: Theft is everywhere [also in other countries].

Martin: There are many homeless people and Gypsies here.

Monika: And problems with those Gypsies are not addressed. In some countries they have started to deal with it [the problem] but not yet here [in Slovakia].

Andrej: And why should we deal with it?

Monika: Because everybody is bothered by that.

Matej: They are unemployed and lazy.

Question: And how should the issue be addressed then?

Petra: Evict them.

Matej: It is impossible to convince them.

Monika: Well, Gypsies are a good work force. They could be used in many factories because they can really work when they want.

Question: Why do you think they behave in this way?

Monika: Well, perhaps because many people are unjust to them, perhaps not all Gypsies are like that.

Question: So is it probably a fault of us, the majority?

Danka: But they exploit it [behaviour of the majority, Slovaks] and complain about being discriminated against.

Šimon: They were given a block of flats and within one year it was damaged and now they demand a new one.

Simona: A white [non-Roma, Slovak] will not get it [a flat].

A similar debate also evolved spontaneously within the same school in the final class (age 15). A number of students presented comparable views and argued that Roma should be evicted because they are unable to adopt the behaviour of the majority (Slovaks) and they abuse the social system of Slovakia. Other areas I visited during my fieldwork, Prešov and Košice districts in eastern Slovakia, have the highest ratio of Roma population within Slovakia with 5.3% and 4.6% respectively. In the Trnava district, in the south west of Slovakia, this is 0.5% (SODB 2012). However, unlike the debates with two large groups of students in the Trenčín district, the Roma issue did not emerge as a controversial topic during my empirical research in these regions.

The relationship between Roma and the majority of Slovak society is complex and a frequently discussed issue in the mass media in Slovakia. Students' views do not seem to differ considerably from the wider public mind-set. Following the socio-political changes of 1989, the relationship between Roma and Slovakia's population became a significant matter of public debate and academic attention. Research conducted after 1989 continues to confirm its problematic character and the existence of high social distance between Roma and Slovakia's public. At the same time, the relevant research is inclined to interpret the Roma-Slovak relationship as a complex social problem and not as an essentially nationally motivated conflict (Mesežnikov and Gayarľášová 2008; Vašečka 2011).

While the Slovak-Roma situation is evaluated as an intricate social issue in a number of studies, the relationship between the Magyar minority and Slovak majority populations clearly reveals an historically shaped, one-dimensional, national character. In the academic debate, this is interpreted as a result of political populism. Although varied in accentuation and modes of expression, it seems to permeate the whole political spectrum in Slovakia, including mainstream parties (Mesežnikov and Gyarfášová 2008; Petöcz 2009). The populist arguments also resonated unambiguously during my interviews with students. In addition, these also revealed that history education, in particular, continues to provide opportunities which may stimulate anti-Magyar attitudes.

As in the above case of Roma, anti-Magyar stereotypes became visible during my fieldwork in the Trenčín district. Students' prejudiced views had already emerged as a topic during my meetings with teachers. Based on teachers' arguments, particularly in the context of history education and the theme of Magyarisation politics (grade eight), some students are inclined to present strong attitudes.

As already indicated in this dissertation in the context of textbooks analysis, this topic is portrayed predominantly through the lens of Slovak national history as socio-political injustice and oppression. It was precisely this interpretation which transpired in my discussions with students. Shaped through the discourse of past socio-political unfairness experienced by Slovaks, Magyars were negatively portrayed as odd, having an ugly language, treating the Slovak nation in a discriminatory manner and being unwilling to speak Slovak. Although the history of Magyarisation is a topic in history education in grade eight (age 14), a few students presented a negative image of Magyars and described them as oppressors of the Slovak nation, even among the youngest group (aged 12). The relative strength of prejudiced attitudes became obvious through spontaneous responses of students to interview questions which were not directly related to the history of the Slovak-Magyar relationship.

Question: How would you then describe the national character of Slovaks?

LGI-18, age 12

Ivan: We are oppressed, Magyars oppressed us.

Patrik: Magyars are odd, they do not know what they do.

LGI-17, age 13

Question: Tomáš, you mentioned that you visited Hungary with your football team, could you then compare Slovaks with Magyars?

Tomáš: They have an odd language, an ugly language, it is impossible to understand them, their hostels are ugly.

Question: If you were representing Slovakia in the European Parliament, what would you strive to change in regard to EU and Slovakia?

LGI-16, age 15

Samuel: The Magyar issue because there are many of them here and I do not understand why Magyar is spoken within the territory of Slovakia. There is a Magyar party in Slovakia and in Hungary, is there a Slovak party? And I do not like them.

Question: Why do you not like them?

Samuel: Because there are many of them here. And we are Slovaks here so Slovak should be spoken here.

The above findings related to the Slovak-Magyar relationship are consistent to some degree with the conclusion of a quantitative study published in 2009 in Slovakia (Galová-Kriglerová and Kadlečiková 2009). According to the authors, the attitudes towards cultural diversity among students of lower secondary education in Slovakia (age 14-15) are shaped by their experiences. In relation to the perception of Magyars as a national minority, the authors argued, this also tends to be more positive in nationally mixed regions (Galová-Kriglerová and Kadlečiková 2009: 36-37).

Some regional discrepancies also seemed to occur during my debates with students in the context of comparison between nations. While the negative portrayal of the Slovak nation appeared to be a cross-regional tendency, the national stereotyping presented by students indicated a more regionally specific character in regard to anti-Magyar opinions. Considering the regional differences in terms of size of the samples, precise and valid conclusions about possible regional discrepancies cannot be drawn. Therefore only an indicative comparison may be presented here.

Within the districts I visited during my interviews, the Trnava district in the south of Slovakia has the second highest percentage of the Magyar population (21.8%).¹⁶⁰ In the Košice and Prešov districts in eastern Slovakia, this stands at 9.4% and 0.1% respectively (SODB 2012). Consequently, students in the Trnava and Košice districts are more likely to be exposed to contact with the Magyar minority either in school or through their daily routine outside of educational settings. While some students in the Trenčín region were inclined to identify differences between Slovaks and Magyars and expressed their dislike towards them, three boys of Slovak nationality from a nationally mixed school¹⁶¹ in the Trnava district (age 13 and 14) did not disclose comparable opinions during interviews. They did not even mention language when asked to draw a comparison between these two nations.

¹⁶⁰ The highest ratio of Magyar minority of 24.6% is in Nitra district (SODB 2012).

¹⁶¹ Although this particular school had students of both Slovak and Magyar nationalities, the language of instruction is Slovak.

Equally, a nationally mixed group of twenty six participating students in the Košice district (age 14) and four students in Prešov (age 15) presented views on differences between Magyars and Slovaks completely free of stereotypes. On all these occasions they referred in their comparisons to economic or infrastructure differences. The adoption of the Euro in Slovakia and divergences in the quality of roads and shopping centres were highlighted in this context. In addition, differences in culture in terms of language or traditional cuisine also occurred in their arguments without any negative, evaluative attributes.

In spite of some indications of a broader, cross-regional tendency towards an adverse portrayal of Slovaks and regionally specific inclinations towards national stereotypes, students were able to acknowledge positive traits in other nations. Based on their personal experiences, they emphasised positive environmental attitudes among Czechs or Austrians, and friendliness and good manners in Swedes, Austrians or Croats. As I was conducting my first cycle of empirical research in May 2011, when Slovakia was hosting the World Championship in Ice Hockey, students referred positively to the capabilities of other national teams, for example Germany or Canada. In addition, although rarely, a few argued that there are minimal or no differences among nations. At the same time, they also displayed critical thinking by not presenting their personal views on the basis of the mediated experience of peers.

Question: If you compare for example Slovaks, Czechs or Croats, where would you see a difference between them?

OOI, age 14

Jakub: Except for language, there is not really one.

SGI-4 age 14 and 15

Lubka: If I take us and Croats, they are somehow less willing to work. They simply have their four hours of siesta.

Question: Janka, would you agree with L'ubka?

Janka: I do not know. I have not been to Croatia.

SGI-3, age 14

Question: Alexander, I know that you regularly spend part of your summer holiday in Croatia. Where would you see the differences between Slovaks and Croats?

Alexander: There is not one.

Although the above views demonstrated critical thinking and observational skills in a number of students, they represent a small minority. The majority clearly showed an inclination to believe in the existence of a fixed collective, national character. Although their replies were frequently contradictory and they mixed personal characteristics with broader social or economic phenomena in their accounts, national character was seen by many of them as a fact. Limited direct experiences, and in some cases, their

complete absence, vigorously demonstrated the strength of transmitted views or media impact in shaping the arguments of a significant section of participating students.

Antiquity of the Slovak nation

The question of 'When is a nation?', as formulated by Walker Connor (1990), succinctly captures a substantial part of the academic discussion on nationalism. As already highlighted in two earlier chapters of this dissertation (2.2.1 and 3.2.1), this remains a controversial aspect and lies at the centre of discussions among proponents of the two dominant schools of thought of constructivism and ethno-symbolism. For this reason, I also included the issue of the antiquity of nations into my discussions with students.

In a similar vein to the discussions on nationality, the question of the antiquity of the Slovak nation proved to be more challenging for students. Although the transmission of historical knowledge related to Slovak national history is incorporated to some extent into the curriculum at the primary level of education (ages 6-10)¹⁶², the formation of the Slovak nation is not explicitly addressed before history education in grade seven (age 13). Nevertheless, some students, even within the youngest age group, displayed familiarity with relevant historical knowledge and were able to provide an answer to my question exploring the issue of the antiquity of the Slovak nation. On the other hand, as this particular question seemed to be rather unusual or too difficult, once a view was presented, students tended to express their agreement in line with their peers.

A number of them occasionally seemed to link the origins of the Slovak nation back to the establishment of the Slovak Republic in 1993 or provided approximate numbers of years (12 or 18 years). Nevertheless, others confidently pre-dated the establishment of the Slovak nation long before the French Revolution.

Question: What would you say, how old is the Slovak nation?

LGI-18, age 12

Maroš: Slovaks lived in Czechoslovakia.

Question: And how about the time before Czechoslovakia?

Martin: They lived in the Hungarian Kingdom.

SGI-3, age 13

Ferko: We will deal with it [in history] first next year.

OOI, age 14

Jakub: I honestly do not know.

¹⁶² This is within a school subject which might be literally translated as Home land study (*Vlastiveda*) and includes insights related to Slovak geography and history.

LGI-17, age 15

Pavol: It is young, eighteen years.

Question: Are you saying that before the creation of the Slovak Republic in 1993 Slovaks did not exist?

Pavol: No, they also lived in Czechoslovakia.

Question: And how about the time before Czechoslovakia was established in 1918?

Pavol: They were in Samo's realm and Great Moravia.

According to the students' arguments, Slovaks, in spite of being involved in diverse political formations, already existed in the period of Samo's realm, the first historically known political organisation of Slavs in Central and Eastern Europe (seventh century). Others linked the existence of the Slovak nation with the realm of Great Moravia (ninth century). Both Samo's realm and Great Moravia are presented in school history as political formations of Slavs or the tribe of Sloveni, who are identified as the actual predecessors of Slovaks. Hence, the relevant textbook suggests and actually describes the development of the Slovak nation, albeit in an essentialist fashion, as a non-recurring, result of an historical process. Contrary to that, students tended to associate Samo's realm and Great Moravia with a fully formed and culturally homogenous Slovak nation. Opinions expressed during one focus group discussion appeared to be motivated by the victimisation of Slavs, and also the historical period of nineteenth century and Magyarisation policies.

SGI-4, age 15

Question: What would you say, how old is the Slovak nation?

David: More than one thousand years, there was Samo's realm, Slovaks lived there, we were actually not unified. We were always allocated to others.

Eva: And it is actually a miracle that we survived, first Magyars wanted us, then Czechs and now, we are on our own.

As already discussed in the analysis of history textbooks, the interpretation of the antiquity of the Slovak nation in school history might be equally aligned to a Herderian interpretation of nation formation (primordialism) and also to ethno-symbolism, as a precise analytical division cannot be drawn between the two approaches in this respect. On the other hand, students' responses to the above question conveyed that they were conceptualising Slovaks as politically disadvantaged or lacking an independent state, but nevertheless as a culturally homogeneous group already in possession of a collective awareness in the period of early Middle Ages. In other words, students portrayed the Slovak nation as a fixed and everlasting entity. Herder's idealised description of Slavs could also be easily traced in the views of some students' in the context of the issue of the antiquity of the Slovak nation. Therefore their understanding of this particular question could be linked to the concept of primordialism.

The occasional responses of students presenting it as a recent phenomenon (twelve or eighteen years), most likely associated with the establishment of Slovakia (1993), can hardly be seen as an indication of their constructivist understanding of nation formation. These instances are better described as evidence of the limited preoccupation of students with issues related to national identity. At the same time, they could be seen as a reflection of their specific age and corresponding cognitive abilities. On the other hand, this could also be linked to an inadequate presentation of the specific topic of nation formations in history lessons, alongside the recent reduction in teaching hours dedicated to history after 2008. Equally, pedagogic strategies adopted by teachers and, perhaps, a lack of attention or interest by students in history education could be considered in this context.

Summary

The issues of national identity do not seem to be a priority in the lives of the interviewed students. This could be derived from their responses, which were frequently brief and did not convey the impression of being the result of profound reflection. The inconsistencies and conceptual confusion conveyed in their views suggest that lower secondary students are unlikely to be considerably preoccupied with related questions. It is also understood that their views are neither fully formed nor fixed. Nevertheless, their replies demonstrated a deeply rooted awareness of national identity. Questions concerning the meaning of nationality and the antiquity of the Slovak nation appeared to be fairly challenging for a number of them in view of their years and corresponding cognitive abilities. Despite this, all students disclosed a clear sense of national consciousness and belonging. This was demonstrated through the confident acknowledgement of their nationality and their answers to the subsequent questions exploring their understanding of the concepts of nation and national character.

Nationality was portrayed by students as an inborn quality or a special bond to a distinctive group of people within a particular territory or a country. Nations were presented in comparable fashion as distinctive groups of people defined by a set of specific aspects. The notion of a collective, national character was seldom questioned. Although students presented a variety of contradictory characteristics of the Slovak nation and included broader social or economic aspects in their responses they seemed to regard the existence of national character as a self-evident fact. This became particularly clear in relation to the strong views articulated by some students in relation to Roma and the national minority of Magyars in Slovakia. In spite of occasional evidence of independent critical thinking, the majority of student responses reflected the influence of primordialist ideas.

Herder's notion of the nation as a group of people linked through a common origin, language, character, history and shared territory was easily traceable in their responses. A significant majority of participating students drew a very clear dividing line between diverse nations. Their existence, including that of the Slovak nation, alongside specific national characteristics, were seen by students as objective facts and appeared to be taken for granted. As with textbooks and teachers, Herder's portrayal of the victimised and oppressed Slavs could also be detected in students' opinions. The impact of a primordialist conceptualisation of the nature of the Slovak nation was particularly evident in relation to the last aspect examined in this chapter.

Although this specific question seemed to be rather difficult for them to answer, the replies provide a further indication of the exposure of students to a tendentially primordialist understanding of the nature of nations in the sense of an historically given and fixed socio-cultural entity. The given responses related to the antiquity of the Slovak nation traced its existence through centuries. However, unlike teachers, students tended to associate the first political formations of Slavs during the period of the Middle Ages, Samo's realm and Great Moravia, with a fully fledged and culturally homogenous Slovak nation. Considering the reduced allocation of lessons within the subject block of 'People and Society', lower secondary education can hardly be seen as the primary influence in this context. The significance and pervasiveness of 'banal nationalism' appears to be a more plausible explanation.

Having identified and analysed the conceptual lines along which students form their understanding of the nature of nations, I will now proceed to the second aspect examined in this thesis. Accordingly, the nature of European integration in students' opinions will be investigated in the next chapter.

3.3.2 Students' conceptualisation of EI

Introduction

This chapter seeks to establish the tendencies in relation to the understanding of European integration among students in the lower secondary education level in Slovakia. In order to determine whether their views indicate a supranationalist position or remain rooted in a nation-state perspective and consequently in an instrumentalist approach towards EI, three aspects will be discussed below.

- Students' affiliation with Europe
- Students' evaluation of EI and Slovakia's EU membership
- Students' support of, or resistance to, a supranational transformation of Europe

As with the examination of teachers' views, I was not exploring students' factual knowledge on issues of European integration or European Union. Nevertheless, it was apparent that students of all ages included in my research have awareness and opinions of current affairs. Many were able to provide clearly articulated arguments during our discussion and readily expressed their views. A number of the youngest group (age 12) displayed familiarity with the process of EI.

While some students actively participated in discussions and voiced their opinions freely, others were less articulate. Across all age groups, some students appeared to have difficulties in expressing their views on socio-political issues such as EI. Taking part in research with an unknown person for the first time may go some way to help explain this. On the other hand, a number of students demonstrated a distinct lack of either experience or interest in discussions on socio-political matters.

As of national identity, the students' reactions demonstrated that socio-political issues are, understandably, not matters which overly preoccupy them. While these occurrences might not be particularly surprising given their age, some students admitted their ambivalence and indifference quite frankly towards current affairs. As some of these students argued:

Question: And now, I would like to discuss with you issues concerning European integration and the European Union. I assume you already heard about it perhaps in school or in the media?

LGI-14, age 14

Pavol: EU? I do not know, I do not care, I am not interested.

Zuzana: Politics is very boring, I am not interested. I do not want to learn about it.

Such indifference was generally met with approval by some peers within the large groups I interviewed. Students expressed their agreement through affirmative gestures, supportive smiles or grins. Equally, positive evaluations of European integration were also occasionally met with laughter, or even loud disagreement. Both the positive and negative attitudes towards socio-political issues that I could observe might be aligned to a wider, cross-national piece of research on the political and civic engagement of the younger generation. As some studies highlighted, there is a significant, cross-country trend indicating a declining interest among young adults in issues of political participation and civic engagement (Macháček 2002; Spannring *et al.* 2004; Zápotočná and Lukšík 2010).

On the other hand, other scholars have arrived at the opposite conclusion. Pointing towards membership in youth organisations or the engagement of young people in volunteering and diverse local campaigns, they portray a more positive picture in this context (Spannring *et al.* 2004). As demonstrated below, the attitudes students conveyed in our conversations during my empirical research defy a clear-cut, one-dimensional evaluation in this context.

The findings are introduced thematically in this chapter. I begin with a discussion of students' affiliation with Europe, their evaluation of European integration and Slovakia's EU membership. As with the previous description of teachers' views (chapter 3.2.2), the first question served as a bridge between the previous topic of students' conceptualisation of nations. Together with the second issue on the advantages and disadvantages of EI, it provided a broader context for the central topic explored in this thesis. Consequently, the last part of this chapter focuses on the question of students' opinions in regard to a potential transformation of Europe beyond the nation-state structure. The chapter concludes with the identification of their prevalent inclinations towards EI.

Students' affiliation with Europe

Public acceptance of a given political system or form (state) is seen in political science and related areas as the fundamental element upon which its very existence and legitimacy is built. (Risse 2004: 270). Therefore, it is not surprising that questions about European identity have attracted considerable academic attention that has extended into investigations of children's and young peoples' perception in this area. As has been argued, childhood and adolescence are critical periods in which European identity is formed (Agirdag *et al.* 2012). Children as young as 11 years of age seem perfectly capable of demonstrating European consciousness (Ross 1999).

The young students I met during my empirical research were born in the period of 1996-2001. The process of formal schooling and socialisation for the oldest group commenced at the age of six, in 2002. As this was only two years before Slovakia's EU entry, all students I interviewed are very unlikely to have a substantial recollection of the pre-accession period in Slovakia. Therefore, it is the parallel mode of socio-political, and also cultural, belonging to Slovakia and the EU which frames their formative experiences, views and sense of belonging to a particular form of political organisation.

As with teachers, the examination of students' attitudes towards European integration followed the debate on their understanding of nations. The relevant chapter (3.3.1) of this dissertation revealed that they seemed to have a clear sense of national affiliation and the majority displayed an awareness of belonging to a particular and distinctive group of people, the Slovak nation. In this way, many drew an implicit and also explicit dividing line between national minorities within Slovakia and also between nations in Europe. Hence, some indications in relation to European integration and the issues I attempted to explore could be derived from their views on national identity. The comparisons made by the majority of students between European nations were instructive in relation to their conceptualisation of Europe. This was indirectly conceived of as a geographical or cultural space composed of diverse and distinctive nations and nation-states.

Schuman's Declaration of 9 May 1950 referred to the 'coming together of the nations of Europe' (Schuman 1950) through the process of integration. The 'ever closer union among the peoples of Europe,' as defined its actual purpose, was later highlighted in the preamble of The Treaty of Rome signed in March 1957.¹⁶³ Therefore, I was also interested to explore how students in Slovakia conceptualise this process of rapprochement between the nations of Europe. With the aid of the first question which explored students' European identity, I tried to establish the basis on which they would be able to identify with Europe and its wider population beyond the borders of Slovakia. With references to our previous discussions on national consciousness, I encouraged students to reflect on their European identity. By reminding them of their acknowledgement of holding a particular, mostly Slovak nationality, I asked them whether they would also describe themselves as Europeans and why.

Like teachers, the affiliation of students with Europe varied across all age groups with the strength of their European consciousness ranging from totally non-existent to complete affirmation. Students justified their sense of European belonging by referring to

¹⁶³ This reference appeared in the Treaty Establishing European Economic Community. See also the footnote No.2 on p.13 in this dissertation.

an array of characteristics which they identified as commonly shared by the wider population of Europe.

Question: Would you say that you also feel European and why?

LGI-20, age 12

Martinka: We have a common currency now, we have Euro.

LGI-17, age 13

Patrick: Yes, we have the Euro now.

LGI-14, age 14

Dominika: As a matter of fact we adopted the Euro and therefore yes.

SIG-4, age 15

Eva: Yes, I think Europe is more advanced in economics as compared to Africa.

As the above quotation showed, economic aspects were utilised by students to illustrate their sense of European identity. In particular, the common currency as a signifier of European identity predominated in their answers to my question. Different levels of economic progress on a global scale were also used in students' comparisons with other continents or countries which are not currently in the EU as the explanation for their understanding of European identity.

As the analysis of the most recent curriculum (2008) and textbooks (published 2009-2012) revealed, the economic dimension appears to shape the interpretation of EI to a greater extent, despite further arguments which aim to foster the development of European identity, particularly in civics and geography. On the other hand, it is questionable whether the actual number of relevant lessons or textbook chapters dedicated specifically to EI issues is, in reality, able to impact profoundly on students' opinions.¹⁶⁴ There are, of course, other information sources that students potentially drew upon in relation to their sense of European belonging and views on the actual process of EI.

A recent study examining attitudes towards active citizenship conducted in Slovakia revealed that students aged 14 evaluate the formative influence of formal schooling as barely relevant. Following the findings of a simultaneously completed examination which involved respondents in the age group 15-79, the media ranked in third place as a potential influence, with family and friends in first and second place respectively. In contrast, the oldest group of respondents (age group 60-79), ascribed a crucial significance to elementary school (ages 6-15) in relation to the development of attitudes

¹⁶⁴As already highlighted in the chapter 3.1.1, the precise number of lessons dedicated at the lower secondary level in Slovakia to the specific topic of EI process cannot be set. Nevertheless, based on textbook analysis, the process of EI is explicitly addressed in three chapters in history (grade nine) and civics (grade six) and in two chapters in geography (grade eight).

towards active citizenship (Zápotočná and Lukšík 2010). The importance of mass media as a source of information on European integration has been also confirmed by participants of the ICCS study (2009) which examined the relevant perceptions of 14-year-old teenagers (Macháček 2012). Therefore, the regular references made by students to the common currency as the marker of their European identity could potentially be linked to the rather recent adoption of the Euro in Slovakia in January 2009. It seems that this event, as a recurring theme of public debate, was not an unfamiliar subject matter to students. On the other hand, as Lášticová and Bianchi highlighted, a decade ago, media discourse on European integration in Slovakia was dominated by economic instrumentalism. A value-based line of debate is hardly perceptible (Lášticová and Bianchi 2003).

A spatial association, which was a fairly frequent occurrence in relation to students' views on nationality in the sense of a bond to a geographical location, was applied less regularly in the context of European identity. Statements of 'we live in Europe' as an explanation of European identity were presented to a moderate extent. Physical features, 'white race' or 'skin colour', were also occasionally mentioned as distinctive characteristics of Europeans. Moreover, students appeared to employ culture and history less often as a marker of their European identity. However, although cultural and historical identification with Europe were not entirely absent in students' answers, they were very likely to refer to economic aspects (common currency) first and foremost. The cultural characteristics of European identity (history or religion) usually appeared in responses to the slightly different interview question of 'Is there something else Europeans have in common?'

SGI-4, age 15

Rachel: History, Europe had a rather stormy history, maybe the most stormy in the whole world.

David, Eva: Religion.

In addition to references to history, students also highlighted elements of contemporary popular culture which they considered common for Europeans. While encouraged to search for commonalities between European nations, they also referred to football or ice hockey as signifiers of European identity. In addition, current political processes were also mentioned as relevant markers of their affiliation with Europe and other nationals beyond the borders of Slovakia. Membership of the European Union and Slovakia's inclusion in the Schengen area (2007), together with aspects related to the economy of Slovakia and affinity in the judicial and educational systems, were also provided as examples. Accordingly, on the basis of mutual trade within Europe and similar laws, students justified their notion of belonging to Europe.

Given the relatively high number of students interviewed, a lack of or ambivalence towards European identity was clearly pronounced in their answers. In this context, space was implicitly stated as a factor shaping their perception of an absence of affiliation with Europe. Geographical distance between countries in Europe or references to Slovakia as their place of origin could be inferred from their views to explain the absence of a bond with Europe. Equally, students' understanding of Slovak nationality as a self-evident quality also emerged in their arguments as an obstacle to European identity.

Question: Would you say that you also feel European and why?

LGI-18, age 12

Stanko, Dominik, Peter, Majka, Katka: No, I am Slovak only.

LGI-17, age 13

Danka: No, not really, it is too far [Europe].

LGI-26, age 14

Nina: No, not at all. I do not know, perhaps I am not used to it.

SGI-4, age 15

Janka: I don't know. I have rather the feeling that I am Slovak, I don't know. Perhaps because since I was little, that I was born here before we joined [the EU], therefore I do not have such a feeling, since I was little I feel more like Slovak.

Taking into account the analytical framework applied in this dissertation in relation to European integration (intergovernmentalism and supranationalism), it might be argued that a number of students displayed a mixed understanding of Europe and their socio-cultural and political belonging. Through the earlier discussion on students' conceptualisation of nations, it was established that they see Europe as a geographical location shared between distinct nations and nation-states. Although this line of argument could be also detected during the discussion on their European identity, many students could establish links to Europe and other Europeans in addition to their Slovak national identity. The most frequent explanation was associated with the economic dimension of EI, principally the adoption of the common currency in Slovakia (2009).

In addition to students who seemed to demonstrate a European consciousness on the basis of commonly shared attributes, a notable section of participants acknowledged the complete absence of such a self-perception. By making references to Slovakia as their place of birth and actual physical existence, they emphasised the primacy of their national affiliation. Slovakia, although located in Europe, remained the singular determinant of their sense of belonging.

Evaluation of EI and Slovakia's EU membership

The appraisal of European integration and Slovakia's EU membership was the second question I examined during my empirical research with students. I asked them to evaluate the process of European integration by considering its advantages and disadvantages. Positive opinions on European integration were articulated by them in humanist and pragmatic terms and students referred to a wide array of benefits. Peace maintenance and the enhancement of creativity and innovative thinking were highlighted by students. Free travel, or liberal values such as freedom of thought also featured in their opinions.

In addition, students frequently argued from an instrumentalist or a utilitarian perspective while talking about advantages of European integration. This was seen as a means of gaining benefits on a personal and also a national, state level. Opportunities for studying or working within European Union and EU funding, were also mentioned by students as benefits of integration. One girl also highlighted the positive impact of European integration and institutions in relation to corruption in Slovakia.

Question: What do you think of European integration? What is good about it?

LGI-20, age 12

Danka: The common currency, Euro.

Question: And why is that good?

Danka: If we go to another country we do not need to exchange money.

LGI-17, age 13

Pavol: We do not have wars between us.

LGI-26, age 14

Boris: I see it as good that we are Euro-Citizens. It is good that cultures get mixed. Perhaps new ideas develop in this way.

SGL-4, age 15

Peter: There are advantages, common currency, states cooperate. There is one place where they [states] come together. We have an easier access to other states.

LGI-16, age 15

Igor: EU funding. That is all. I do not see anything else in it.

In discussing the advantages of European integration, students approached the evaluation of EI through a variety of perspectives. They argued from an instrumentalist position and combined benefits at the nation-state level as well as personal gains from integration. The issues of EU funding or explicitly mentioned state co-operation and peace maintenance could be classified as an intergovernmentalist understanding of EI. By highlighting these aspects, students implicitly presented the process of EI as a tool of

economic and security co-operation applied by nation-states. Moreover, due to some frank utilitarian references to EU funding, Slovakia's membership was conceived of as a convenient route to increased financial resources. On the other hand, students also conceptualised EI in a practical sense as an instrument with the potential to enhance quality of life. This could be derived from their emphasis on easier travel due to a common currency, free movement in the Schengen area, and also opportunities to study and work in different European regions (states) of their choice.

On some occasions students also moved away from the consideration of the nation-state and personal benefits and argued implicitly from a European perspective in the context of advantages of EI. As well as Pavol and Boris (cited above), 12-year-old Dominik argued from a fairly supranationalist viewpoint. In his opinion EI leads to the transformation of national cultures which he evaluated positively as a precondition to the enhancement and simplification of understanding and communication between different nations.

Question: What do you think of European integration? What is good about it?

LGI-20, age 12

Dominik: Cultures will mix, nations get mixed.

Question: And do you think it is good that nations get mixed?

Dominik: Yes, they will, eh, communicate better.

In addition to the benefits which students associated with the process of EI, they also highlighted its drawbacks. The most recurrent theme in this context was the current economic situation within the EU. The situation in debt-plagued Greece was a frequent topic which emerged during my empirical research with students during both research cycles. Across all age groups, obligations of mutual financial aid within the EU were seen as a significantly negative aspect of integration. A number of students expressed strong views in this context and displayed a low degree of solidarity with Greece. Ordinary Greeks were sweepingly described as lazy and held responsible for their troubled economy. The decision taken by the Slovak government in August 2010 not to contribute to the loan for Greece (chapter 2.1) was met with a positive appraisal.

Question: Do you think that it is good that Slovakia joined the EU?

LGI-18, age 12

Martin: No, we must constantly send money.

Question: Where would you see disadvantages in European integration?

LGI-14, age 14

Peter: Greeks.

LGI-14, age 14

Ivanka: States that are close to bankruptcy must be helped and the money will never get returned. For example Greece, it is pointless to help them. Luckily, we did not do it.

Question: Do you think it is good that Slovakia joined the EU?

SGL-4, age 15 and 14

Janka: In my opinion it is not good [that Slovakia is an EU member]. Every state should manage its own country. Actually, in the EU it is as if the states help each other but some are exploiting it like Greece now. All are giving them [financial support] but will never get it back because in my opinion this is about mentality, they have such a mentality that they will keep it.

Silvia: I like it that all are helping each other but as Janka said, some are exploiting it. I think this should not happen and it [loans] should also be paid back. There should be help but [the loans, debts should also be] paid back. And the Euro, I do not want it here.

Lubka: And also the European Parliament, they [members of EP] are dealing there with issues of these countries [EU member states] and decide for them. The countries could solve it [problems] better than them [EU institutions, EP]. They [EP] do it for us.

Question: Which other states would you accept as future EU members?

LGI-26, age 14

Marek: I would be in favour of such member states like for example Switzerland, more rich countries so they could pay for the debts. A small state like us, who has much weaker financial means ... For example Greece, because they have thousand euro pensions there, and we, we have here three hundreds euro [pensions]. Why should we contribute to them? Actually, this is not logical.

On the other hand, a few students critically considered the likelihood of Slovakia finding itself in a similar situation. In this context, they displayed trust towards the EU which was implicitly portrayed as a community based on solidarity and a safeguard against a potential economic crisis or financial problems in the future.

Question: What do you think of European integration? What is good about it?

SGL-3, age 14

Filip: When we get into a crisis like Greece, the EU will support us.

SGL-4, age 15

Monika: Countries hold together and if we were in situation like Greece, they will help us.

These opinions clearly showed the significance of influences beyond educational settings on students' views. While a few displayed positive attitudes towards solidarity within the EU, the negative impact of the contemporary economic developments on their positioning was evident overall. Even the initial negotiations of a Greek loan within the EU (2010) caused considerable political controversy in Slovakia (Pravda 2010a, Pravda 2010b). Moreover, the protracted financial crisis in the eurozone also contributed to an early Slovakian election resulting in a change of government in March 2012 (Pravda

2011). Consequently, it has become a recurring and significant matter of public debate in Slovakia. The relevant discussion in the mass media, including references to high pensions in Greece, evidently resonated in students' views.

Although the consequences of contemporary economic and financial problems and the obligation of mutual financial assistance within the EU were identified by students as the major disadvantage of integration, they also pointed towards some additional aspects. One girl (LGI-14, age 14) highlighted 'cultural uniformity' as a negative consequence of EI, which in her view, leads to the reduction in differences in national traditions within EU member states. Another boy from the same group saw the harmonisation of laws within the EU as a disadvantage. While arguing from a fairly supranationalist perspective, a fifteen-year-old girl described the cultural and linguistic diversity within Europe as the quintessential hurdle to the eventual completion of integration.

Question: What do you think of European integration? What is good or bad about it?

SGI-4, age 15

Rachel: People have bigger chances to look for a job and get a better career and qualifications. They have opportunities to study abroad but then [there are also] the negatives. Europe will never really unite because of the big differences here in culture and also in languages. [Therefore] it [completion of integration] will probably never be accomplished.

Economic developments have been identified in the scholarship examining public support for EI as a correlation variable. Following this utilitarian thesis, declining economic performance reduces public endorsement of EI (Gabel 1998: 336-338). The above discussion of students' opinion related to the topic of advantages and disadvantages of EI seem to validate such considerations. A number of them clearly demonstrated their dissatisfaction with the integration process in this context. Drawing on the analytical approach applied in this dissertation, students obviously argued from an intergovernmentalist position in relation to the financial support package agreed for Greece. Based on their arguments, mutual financial obligations were predominantly seen as a significant inconvenience for Slovakia.

On the other hand, although arguing frequently from a nation-state perspective, students also presented their positive associations with EI. Embedded in the values of peace maintenance and solidarity, EI was approved by students as a tool of interstate co-operation in the areas of socio-economic and defence policies. Although the institutions of the EU were sporadically portrayed as a supranational political authority overriding the function of nation-states, their activities were not viewed by some interviewees as the optimal approach or as a guarantee of protecting the national interests of member

states. Some additional, fairly supranationalist patterns of argument could also be derived on other occasions from students' arguments. In these instances, their replies conveyed the impression of EI being a vehicle of cultural and political changeover in Europe.

Support or resistance to a supranational organisation of Europe

As highlighted in earlier chapters (1.2, 1.3 and 2.2.2), the concept of genuine political union remains a recurring theme in academic and, increasingly, in public discussion within Europe. Moreover, it continues to motivate political actions. Therefore, the last topic I discussed with students in relation to EI was the issue of a potential reconfiguration of political organisation within Europe beyond nation-state sovereignty.

As with teachers, I asked students whether they could imagine the establishment of one European government or a single European state. As mentioned in chapter 2.3, this question was explored during the second cycle of my empirical research which was conducted in the Trenčín district of mid-west Slovakia in the period of May 2012-October 2012. The data presented on this particular aspect is derived from a total number of 40 research participants. As in the classroom interviews during the first period of my empirical investigation, not all students within the two large groups (35 students in total) engaged in an equally active manner in discussions. On the other hand, the combination of research methods (one-to-one interview, small and large group interviewing) proved to be fruitful in gaining more accurate insights into students' opinions through the multiple and varied data I was able to collect in this way.

In order to make this particular point more comprehensible to student, I referred to the current 27 states (at the time of empirical research), including Slovakia, as the members of the EU. Then I asked students whether they could imagine that, one day, these states would cease to exist and there would be only one European Republic instead of Slovakia and the other states. It seemed that students across all age groups (12, 14, 15) were able to understand the task and articulate opinions in this context. The most striking feature of students' replies, as compared to the more diversified views of teachers, was their absolute rejection of the future creation of a European state. Students across all age groups who responded disagreed categorically with this potential option for the future of EI.

Question: Could you imagine that one day there would be only one, European Republic? Would you like that?

LGI-18, age 12

Matej: Never! [a loud call] No!

OOI, age 14

Jakub: No.

SGI-4, age 15

Janka: Not at all, certainly not.

As the answers provided to this particular question were monosyllabic or very brief, I had to probe more deeply into students' opinions to understand the reasoning behind their position. While the initial reactions did not differ as all the students resisted this idea, the arguments that they employed disclosed a broader variety of explanations. Students identified multiple issues which they applied as justifications for their opposition. A few emotional arguments clearly displayed the significance some students attached to their national identity and the existence of Slovakia as an independent state. One girl highlighted the linguistic diversity within Europe and argued that the creation of a genuine European state would impose on Slovaks the obligation of learning foreign languages which she considered to be an inconvenience.

Question: And why don't you like this idea?

LGI-18, age 12

Matej: Slovakia is Slovakia!

Samko: How would we then support our Ice Hockey team?

Katka: We are such a small, independent state and it is better so.

Question: And where do you see the advantages, Katka?

Katka: We are all speaking in our language and then, if there was one state [European], we would have to learn other languages.

As in the conversations on national identity, awareness of historical conflicts also influenced students' views in relation to European integration. The past injustice of Magyarisation politics emerged again in their arguments in the context of our discussions on support or resistance towards the potential establishment of a European state. One boy within the youngest group (age 12) regarded the continuous existence of the Slovak Republic as the safeguard for Slovaks against the elimination plans of Magyars. Another student in the ninth grade (age 15) saw the Slovak-Magyar historical experiences as a source of potential conflicts within one, European state.

Question: Could you imagine that one day there would be only one, European Republic? Would you like that?

LGI-17, age 15

Monika: No, because some nations like with Magyars, we do not like each other much, so if we were linked, it would probably not end well if we had one territory [state].

In addition to the emotional reasons, personal dislikes and historical consciousness that seemed to influence students' opinions, rational and objectively relevant arguments featured in responses even within the youngest group of participants. Practical concerns related to the linguistic diversity within EU, alongside broader concerns relating to a loss of national sovereignty were highlighted by students across all age groups. Another interviewee, a 15-year-old boy, also referred to linguistic diversity within the contemporary EU as the obstacle to the creation of a genuine European government. On this occasion, however, this was not linked to his personal unwillingness to learn foreign languages. Drawing on his own, year-long experience of living in the United States, he argued rationally and from an overwhelmingly practical perspective. As he emphasised, unlike Europe, a single official language of communication is in use in the US.

LGI-17, age 15

Question: Juraj, you mentioned that you spent one year in the US, what do you think about the possibility of Europe becoming something similar, the United States of Europe?

Juraj: I think it would not be good because Americans speak one language and we [in Europe], each nation has a specific language. I do not know, perhaps we will not be able to agree but, I do not know.

A number of students related their opposition to this potential future scenario for EI to contemporary times and highlighted the socio-economic discrepancies between the current member states of the EU. They argued that, particularly for the populations of the economically more advanced countries, the potential transformation of the current EU would be viewed disadvantageous. The variety of cultural or political traditions within member states was also taken into consideration by students. Although students reflected briefly on potential benefits, such as improvements in corruption at the political level in Slovakia or in relation to environmental policies, they generally remained opposed to the ultimate establishment of a genuine European government.

Question: Could you imagine that one day there would be only one, European Republic? Would you like that?

SGI-4, age 15 and 14

Janka: Not at all, certainly not. Everything is differently organised within each state, everyone is used to how things are in their own state, their own government. Well, I cannot imagine that it [Europe or the European State] would be managed by one government. Everybody [national governments, administration] is already

used to managing it differently and suddenly, they should do it together? Even here [in Slovakia], there are many of them there [politicians, members of Slovak parliament] and they are unable to agree. Well, on the other hand, perhaps because there would be fewer members of parliament they would not take [be paid/earn] so much money.

L'ubka: No, I cannot imagine that. It would be so chaotic because of the differences between salaries, we would be pleased but for example Austrians, their salaries would decline and not to mention pensions, that would be chaotic.

Nina: Perhaps on one hand it would be good, for example the protection of nature, but things like financial issues, I think that no.

In addition to the socio-economic disparities, the differences in environmental policies and the attitudes of citizens within the EU were also emphasised in this context. One of my interviewees also considered a potential danger of political domination emanating from inequalities in terms of population size within European states. Although shaped by the impact of nationalism, concerns for political freedom, accountability and democracy could be also derived from his views.

Question: Could you imagine that one day there would be only one, European Republic? Would you like that?

OOI, age 14

Jakub: No.

IQ: Where do you see the negatives?

Jakub: Because some states are better off than us and so their people would probably not like that. We [with parents frequently] visit Austria. They [Austrians] appreciate more their country and products. They protect their nature. They do not have nuclear power stations and have wind turbines everywhere. It [the European Republic] would be a very big state.

Question: What are, in your view, the disadvantages of a big state?

Jakub: Because there could be either too many politicians or too few from every nationality and that would not be democracy any longer but a dictatorship.

Summary

This chapter discussed students' opinions related to their understanding and attitudes towards European integration. Three questions were examined along the conceptual lines explained earlier in order to establish their preferences in relation to the nature of the integration process. The EI dimension of the double-structured analytical model applied for the empirical examination was useful in identifying a number of elements in students' conceptualisation of EI. However, as in the textbooks and teacher's views, students' answers also contained components which seemed to defy a straightforward categorisation along the lines of supranationalism and intergovernmentalism.

As reflected in the previous chapter on students' conceptualisation of the nature of nations, they appear to have a clear sense of their national belonging and identify themselves, for the most part, as Slovaks. This impression was maintained during the

investigation into their European affiliation. Students were able to establish links to Europe and its wider population within the current membership on the basis of a broad array of characteristics that they perceived as commonly shared. The central role in this regard was assigned to the common currency and supplemented by additional aspects: contemporary political reality (Slovakia's EU membership and participation in the Schengen area), cultural elements (history, religion, sport, education systems) or geographical location.

The actual process of European integration invariably seemed to be conceptualised by students from an intergovernmentalist perspective. This could be inferred to some extent by their views on European identity and, to a greater degree, from their responses to evaluation of EI and Slovakia's EU membership. An instrumentalist or even utilitarian notion was evident in students' views. The process of EI appeared in their opinions as an instrument of interstate co-operation in the areas of socio-economic and security and defence policies. At the same time, the EI assessment and Slovakia's EU membership was not only approached from the basis of purely rationalist calculations of personal and national gains for Slovakia.

Some interviewees also argued from the stance of values-based pragmatism. This could be derived from student references to the benefits of peace maintenance, solidarity, or socio-cultural and economic progress on the grounds of innovative thinking. In addition, this perspective could be also linked to the emphasis students placed on aspects enhancing quality of life resulting from wider choices related to personal and professional development. With regard to their understanding of the EU, this appeared to be conceived of by students mostly as an association of nation-states or a platform of interstate co-operation.

Supranationalist patterns allowing for an evaluation of EI as an instrument for the post-national transformation of Europe appeared less frequently in students' understanding. While on a few occasions EI was seen positively, the actual role of the EU as a supranational political authority was not evaluated in an affirmative manner. Moreover, potential creation of a genuine European government was not endorsed by the students. The impulsive and fairly emotional replies to the last question conveyed the impression that students are rooted in their national and state belonging. On the other hand, their explanations disclosed a broader range of reasons through which they attempted to rationalise their initial reactions.

As some of the conversations cited show, students argued at times from a national perspective. Equally, they also acted very rationally and highlighted a number of

concrete obstacles which, in their opinion, would hinder the creation of a genuine European state. In this context they pointed towards a number of issues which, in their eyes, would require viable resolution before this concept could gain public endorsement for its practical implementation. Although implicitly linked to broader political and cultural nation-state traditions (e.g. diverse methods of public administration or the environmental policies and attitudes of Austrians), these positions were not articulated solely along the lines of nationalism. However, regardless of a limited number of potential advantages of such a development (environmental issues and improvements in corruption levels in Slovakia), students were clearly inclined to display strong resistance to such a future development of EI.

Studies examining views of young Slovaks towards European integration conducted before or at the verge of the most recent economic and financial crisis tended to confirm their fairly positive views in this respect. Contrary to this, the findings of the above empirical research seem to indicate a more diversified range of attitudes. On the other hand, the opinions of students interviewed during my fieldwork on a potential transformation of the contemporary European Union into a European Republic seem to display consistency with the ICCS 2009 study. Based on its findings, there is minimal support for a genuine political union among the younger generation of member states of the contemporary European Union including 14-year-old teenagers in Slovakia. The majority of Slovak participants, 90.6%, believe that nation-states should decide solely on internal affairs. The idea of the potential abolition of national governments was opposed by 72.1% while 33.6% agreed with the replacement of national parliaments. Similarly, only 30% of participants approved the idea of an eventual replacement of heads of national governments with a single, European one. The loss of national identity (as a country) following the establishment of political union was feared by 69.4% (Macháček 2012: 127-128).

Although national identification appeared to be the underlying cause of the absence of European identity among a section of students I met during my empirical research, for many, this did not seem to impede their affiliation with Europe and other nations within its boundaries. Equally, national consciousness did not create the impression of being particularly relevant as a factor preventing the endorsement of the EI process. On the other hand, the impact and salience of belonging to a nation-state which, in turn, is based on the primordialist notion of given and distinct nations, was evident in students' views, particularly in the context of the drawbacks of EI. Although not the only factor, primordialism also appeared to shape students' scepticism and resistance towards an eventual post-national transformation of Europe.

The above chapter on students' conceptualisation of EI concludes the empirical analysis presented in this thesis. So far, I have attempted to identify and analyse the understanding of both the nature of nations and European integration in the curricula and textbooks for history education, geography and civics as well as in teachers' and students' opinions. This was guided and achieved with the help of a double-structured analytical instrument which predefined a number of central aspects in relation to both phenomena. Having established the respective conceptual lines, I will now turn to the last part of my thesis and answer the defined research questions: To what extent the lower secondary education in Slovakia promotes the idea of a post-national Europe or does it, by contrast, reinforce a nationalist approach and therefore takes an instrumental outlook on European integration? In addition, I will also discuss potential avenues for further research and implications for educational policies and practices within and beyond the borders of Slovakia.

PART IV: CONCLUSIONS

Introduction

The final section of my dissertation is divided into two chapters. The first (4.1) starts by restating the research objectives and the approach adopted. This is then followed by a summary of the main findings and an evaluation of these with respect to the research questions. The second chapter (4.2) begins by emphasising the original contribution of this investigation. It then proceeds to discuss the implications of the findings for further research, educational policy and practice within the Slovakian context and beyond.

4.1 Research questions and research findings

This thesis sought to explore to what extent lower secondary education in Slovakia promotes the idea of a post-national Europe or whether, by contrast, it reinforces a nationalist approach and therefore takes an instrumental outlook on the European integration. The examination was conceptually shaped by Grillparzer's view on the destructive potential of education rooted in ethnocentrism and Renan's emphasis on the transient nature of nations, from which he derived the legitimacy of a post-national political organisation within Europe. The background to the research questions emanated then from the coming together of two discussions of the multidisciplinary field of European studies: national identity as a source of public resistance towards an increasing deepening of EI and the role of education or, more precisely, the European dimension in education, in the integration process.

While many of the issues are contentious, they are of pronounced importance given past and contemporary academic, political and public debates on EI and its eventual outcome. In relation to Slovakia, the European dimension in education raises an intriguing and specific set of questions. As with a number of other former communist countries in Central and East Europe, Slovakia, which became a member of the EU recently (2004) shortly after the partition of the former Czechoslovakia in January 1993, is a young nation-state with a rather complex national history. Moreover, in its case, the route towards EU membership was far from straightforward and the attitudes of the Slovak public towards the process of EI remain somewhat problematic.

In order to achieve its objectives, this thesis was designed as an explorative case study. It therefore relied on qualitative research methodology for its flexible and open-ended approach. Through an empirical examination, it strove to identify and analyse

conceptual tendencies within the lower secondary education levels in Slovakia in relation to the interpretation of the nature of nations and European integration. As both topics are discussed most extensively within the school subjects of history, geography and civics, relevant curricula and textbooks were selected as primary sources for the analysis. In addition, the examination also focused on the views of teachers of the respective subjects and students (age 12-15), for both groups constitute the most critical and indispensable components of education.

Anchored in the conceptual influences of Grillparzer and Renan, a double-structured analytical model was developed to guide the empirical exploration. This combined insights from the scholarship of nationalism, as summarised under the umbrella terms of primordialism, ethno-symbolism and constructivism. In relation to the EI dimension, the contribution of academic, and to some extent also political, debates were captured in this context under the concepts of supranationalism and intergovernmentalism. Although the research was exploratory, it relied on certain preliminary assumptions related to the potential impact of education on the interaction between a particular understanding of national identity and attitudes towards the EI process.

Hence, in the context of the nature of nations, the empirical analysis sought to establish whether this is seen as given, unique and immutable (primordialism), socially constructed and fairly modern (constructivism), or instrumentalist and continuous (ethno-symbolism). The second dimension of this exploration focused on the understanding of EI. It was asked whether, in Slovakia's lower secondary education, this is conceived of as an instrument of the post-national transformation of Europe (supranationalism) or, instead, as a vehicle of interstate co-operation (intergovernmentalism). This leads to the ultimate question: what concluding observations might be derived from the research findings with regard to the conceptual patterns of NI and EI discernible in curricula, textbooks and teachers' and student's views?

There is one straightforward observation which can be formulated in respect of national identity as interpreted within the lower level of secondary education in Slovakia. This concerns the clarity of its theoretical foundation. The picture which emerged from the findings defies a straightforward categorisation and it cannot be associated with conceptual purity. Instead, the understanding of the nature of nations might best be evaluated as conceptually unsettled, with prevalent primordialist inclinations. Further characteristics, which permeate the presentation of national identity and its development, can be seen in the notable inconsistencies and contradictions. In addition, a degree of variation between the primary sources examined here is also visible.

With the exception of views expressed by students, which generally appeared to reflect a primordialist, one-dimensional impact, a double perspective of fluctuating intensity runs through each of the remaining three primary sources. Hence, a frame of reference relying on a combination of primordialist and ethno-symbolist patterns may be traced in curricula, textbooks and teachers' opinions. A primordialist disposition may be derived from the presentation of nations in a self-evident fashion as unique and immutable subgroups of humanity. This tendency is most notable within the curriculum of civics and is also evident, to a lesser extent, in the case of geography. The history curriculum can be said to reflect a twofold perspective to a greater extent at times.

A greater degree of binary conceptualisation of the nature of nations is also maintained in history textbooks. As with the curriculum, this oscillates between the approaches of primordialism and ethno-symbolism and is most visible within the volumes for grades six and seven (ages 12 and 13 respectively). The combined perspective is less evident within civics and geography, albeit not entirely absent. A primordialist line might be associated with the strong emphasis on the historical distinctiveness and cultural homogeneity of the Slovak nation and is consistent with Herder's concept of the nation. This is illustrated unambiguously by the recurring accentuation of language, the authenticity of Slovak traditions traced back to an indeterminate past, and territorial rootedness, as the central components which define the distinctiveness of the Slovak nation.

Moreover, Herder's idealisation and victimisation of Slavs as peace-loving, oppressed people is easily traceable in history textbooks as is his emphasis on the link between language and national character in geography (grade eight). All the textbooks examined seem to follow a comparable mode of interpretation. In spite of being described as a result of an historical process stretching over centuries, once eventually formed (it is not clear when, but well before 1789), the Slovak nation is presented as an immutable, self-evident fact and its preservation outlined as an imperative.

While a clear-cut analytical line is difficult to establish between primordialism and ethno-symbolism in relation to the antiquity of nations, ethno-symbolist patterns in the interpretation of their nature could be associated with the process of nation formation and may be found across all textbooks in all subjects examined in this thesis. Although addressed in a very succinct fashion in the textbook for civics (grade seven), ethnic groups are explicitly presented on one occasion as the actual precursors of nations. A similar approach is visible in the history textbooks (grade six and seven) and in geography (grade seven). Unlike civics, however, ethnic groups are applied

interchangeably as synonyms for nations or nationality (in history) and references to Slavic tribes are also used in this context.

On the other hand, a fairly constructivist conceptualisation of nations emerged briefly on two occasions in the history textbooks (grades eight and nine). However, these cases did not convey the impression of being conceived of as a deliberate counter-argument to primordialism. Instead, the constructivist evidence was diluted amid the traditional narrative of national historiography. A critical, conceptual elaboration of the nature of nations or the process of their formation is entirely absent within all the textbooks analysed. The presentation of these issues appears to be largely insulated from the advances in recent decades of relevant and substantial discussions within academia. Ideas of constructivism, the main conceptual foundation of contemporary scholarship, are not articulated explicitly and remain barely visible in the lower level of secondary education in Slovakia. This statement might be applied to all dimensions of its structure: curricula, textbooks and also teachers' and students' views.

There was one occasion when a teacher presented her views on the nature of nations in a constructivist fashion without being aware of the relevant academic discussion. In another case, a history teacher seemed to articulate his understanding in accordance with ethno-symbolism. As the discussions with teachers about their pre-service and in-service training revealed, a critical, conceptual discussion on nationalism does not appear to constitute an integral part of their education. Therefore, the rare occurrences of constructivist and ethno-symbolist perceptions of nations among teachers cannot be seen as profoundly or systematically significant. Instead, primordialism seems to dominate the interpretative line around which teachers constituted their understanding of national identity. With one exception, the existence of nations and their characteristics were taken for granted by the participants. Similar to curricula (history) and textbooks, an ethno-symbolist understanding was discernible in teachers' views with regard to the antiquity of the Slovak nation, which was dated long before the French Revolution (1789).

The empirical research involving students revealed almost identical patterns. In spite of occasional evidence of critical thinking in relation to the existence of national character and its aspects, students' views also displayed a notable impact of the primordialist ideas to which they are exposed both inside and outside of their educational settings. Some of them also demonstrated strong and prejudiced opinions towards national minorities in Slovakia. Moreover, unlike the case of teachers, students appeared to be inclined to associate the Slavic pre-history of contemporary Slovakia with the existence of a fully formed and self-aware Slovak nation.

Hence, how does the tendentially primordialist narrative of education impact on the understanding of the process of EI? Is it conceived of as an instrument of interstate co-operation within clearly defined policies areas (intergovernmentalism)? Or is it seen as a tool of post-national transformation of Europe (supranationalism)? How is the curricular demand for the preservation of the distinct Slovak nation reconciled with the ongoing integration process?

Despite the visible primordialist patterns within the educational structure of the lower level of secondary education, this simultaneously displays the seemingly effortless accommodation of multiple concepts of EU educational policies. This may be easily illustrated through the analysis of curricula for all three subjects examined here. Moreover, in addition to the traditional focus of Slovakia's education on a broader, European context within history or geography, the actual process of EI is notably present and addressed explicitly within both curricula and textbooks.

As in the case of the understanding of national identity, an unequivocal observation might be drawn in relation to the clarity of the theoretical foundation of EI interpretation. This resists a forthright, one-dimensional identification with a particular approach of supranationalism or intergovernmentalism as outlined in this thesis. Besides elements which might be classified along the lines of the analytical model developed here, a further perspective was also evident across all the analysed sources. The additional concept was described as values-based pragmatism. Embedded in a three-dimensional rationale (historical, contemporary-geopolitical, and universal values), EI was portrayed as a given and open-ended process without any specific indication of future objectives. It is this particular approach which also appears to eventually reconcile the seemingly contradictory demands of lower secondary education in relation to the preservation of Slovak nation and its national interests within the integration process.

Consequently, the understanding of EI is marked by conceptual variety and a shifting prevalence among its constitutive parts. While the curricula display a tendency towards intergovernmentalism, values-based pragmatism seems to underlie the presentation of EI in textbooks. This perspective also shapes, to a considerable extent, particularly teachers' views. At the same time, indicators remain which might be associated simultaneously with all lines of interpretation and are found across the whole set of primary sources examined here.

In curricula and textbooks, Europe is presented as a cultural and geographical unity melded together predominantly by shared historical experiences. Simultaneously, it is also depicted as a geopolitical and cultural area of distinctive nations and nation-states.

European identity is also described in an intertwined fashion. It evokes a primordialist understanding of nations as it emphatically emphasises its complementary character and stresses the need for the safeguarding of the unique national cultures within Europe, implicitly portrayed as given and fixed. A mixed conceptualisation also occurs in the context of the interpretation of the actual process of EI.

The account of the origins and rationale for EI is marked by an incoherent approach in the textbooks. The history textbook (grade nine) overtly stresses the humanistic concept of EI and interprets it as a vehicle of national reconciliation and peace maintenance in Europe. Pronounced attention to the economic dimension is manifest in the textbooks for civics (grade six) and geography (grade eight). However, this is also combined (both subjects) with geopolitical consideration, contemporary socio-economic challenges and universal values. Therefore, in spite of differences in emphasis, all three textbooks could be linked in this context to the perspective of values-based pragmatism. Simultaneously, although to a lesser degree, EI also occurs as a tool for the potential transformation of the political structure within Europe. The relevant indications emerge in the form of implicit assumptions across all subjects. While in the case of history and civics, this process appears to be subordinated to the authority of national governments, a degree of control is attributed to the (Slovak) public in the case of geography (grade nine).

Despite some illustrations of a supranationalist conceptualisation of EI, the relationship between nation-state sovereignty and ongoing integration is not addressed explicitly or substantially within the textbooks. With the exception of one exercise question in geography (grade eight) and history (grade nine), the issue of EI finality is not openly raised. Instead, integration is presented from an intertwined perspective of values-based pragmatism and intergovernmentalism. In other words, it is portrayed as an open-ended process and simultaneously as a tool of economic and political co-operation without an overt and clear discussion about its ultimate objective and potential form. Equally, the presentation of the EU allows for a double classification in the sense of intergovernmentalism and values-based pragmatism as this is expressly described as an association of cooperating nation-states which currently consists of 27 members.¹⁶⁵ On the other hand, the description of the EU institutional structure in geography could be linked to both values-based pragmatism and supranationalism.

Teachers' views displayed some resemblance to the curriculum and textbooks. Equally, their attitudes to EI were overwhelmingly positive. Instrumentalist attitudes appeared to be less significant. Furthermore, a supranationalist perspective overlapped with values-based pragmatism. However, this particular combination shifted on the issue of EI

¹⁶⁵ All textbooks were published before Croatia joined the EU in July 2013.

finality. An equal proportion of teachers argued from the positions of supranationalism and intergovernmentalism in favour of an eventual transformation of nation-state sovereignty within Europe as well as demonstrating opposition in this respect. In the first case, however, participants displayed a high degree of scepticism in terms of the practical implementation of such a scenario. Nevertheless, this did not appear to demonstrate any links to teachers' primordialist conceptualisation of nations. Instead, concerns for democratic control and the resistance of powerful nation-states or economic interest groups were identified as the principal obstacles to a post-national transformation of Europe. On the other hand, teachers' resistance towards this particular option as an eventual outcome of EI appeared to illustrate the significance of primordialism in the sense of the self-evident and immutable uniqueness of the Slovak nation.

In spite of some similarities with the views expressed by teacher, students' views on EI were marked by a stronger polarisation, which was notably shaped by contemporary economic developments within the EU. The issue of financial support for Greece convincingly illustrated this and simultaneously exposed their intergovernmentalist predispositions. Although students demonstrated positive attitudes, their arguments in interviews clearly revealed the shortcomings of an overemphasis on economic instrumentalism as the rationale for EI in the public domain. An additional, obvious difference emerged in students' opinions.

While the transcendence of the nation-state structure within Europe did find support among some teachers, none of the students were likely to welcome such a scenario as the ultimate goal of integration. Despite some evidence derived from their views suggest a primordialist understanding of nations and an intergovernmentalist approach towards EI, students' attempts to rationalise their initial, frequently impulsive reactions, also pointed towards an array of relevant and objective hurdles. In this way, students, like their teachers, identified a number of issues which would require acceptable resolutions in order to enhance public support for an eventual reconfiguration of the nation-state structure of Europe.

Accordingly, what are the findings, implications and significance in relation to the research questions? Drawing on the separate analyses of all the primary sources, to what extent does lower secondary education in Slovakia promote a post-national Europe? Or does it rather encourage a traditional national narrative which shapes an instrumental perspective on EI?

The evidence suggests that the conceptual foundation of the lower secondary education differs markedly from Renan's position. Contrary to his view on the transience of nations, from which he derived the legitimacy of a post-national political organisation within Europe, the understanding of national identity in the primary sources analysed is notably shaped by the opposite, and academically most controversial, assumptions of its given, essentialist and fixed character. And it is this notion which underlies the multifaceted foundation upon which the interpretation of EI is based in the lower secondary education in Slovakia.

While the traditional, national narrative predetermines, almost inevitably, an intergovernmentalist perspective on EI, it does not completely exclude the other dimensions of its nature. As has been shown, in addition to instrumentalist components, the conceptualisation of EI also incorporates humanistic and universal ideas within the framework of values-based pragmatism. Moreover, it also accommodates, to some degree, the possibility (written in textbooks) and partial endorsement (views expressed by teachers during empirical research) for a gradual transformation of the contemporary political structure of Europe. However, there are some inherent limits to such a combined approach.

The first critical weakness lies in its theoretical shortcomings as it relies significantly on primordialism, the academically most disputed perspective of national identity. In addition, this is intertwined with ethno-symbolism which, according to its critics, contains notable theoretical and empirical deficiencies. While a constructivist approach is not accepted unanimously by scholars, it offers insights that even ethno-symbolists do not dismiss entirely. The second main drawback of the mixed conceptual account of EI applies to its potential consequences within the political domain. Building on the premise of nations as given, essentially distinctive and immutable, the legitimacy of nation-state sovereignty remains unquestioned.

Hence, the lower secondary education in Slovakia implicitly portrays the nation-state as the optimal form of political organisation. In this way it encourages unrealistic assumptions by not elaborating adequately on the political reality of the twenty-first century which is transforming the role and functions of states. Consequently, it promotes the cultivation of national attitudes which may easily be exploited, particularly in times of socio-economic constraints. This has been illustrated convincingly by the contemporary and protracted economic problems within the EU which also clearly stimulated negative attitudes towards the EI among a vocal number of students.

While an overwhelmingly factual and dispassionate presentation of issues related to national identity prevails, the lower secondary education of Slovakia remains firmly rooted in a national narrative notably shaped by primordialism. As has been shown, this does not lead inevitably to an instrumentalist outlook on EI. Nor does it necessarily impose an obstacle to the endorsement and formation of positive attitudes towards EI. However, the evidence suggests that primordialism remains relevant as a source of resistance towards an eventual transformation of the nation-state structure. Therefore, it is questionable whether the traditional understanding of the nature of nations provides a solid and reliable foundation for enhancing the continuous support for EI.

In conclusion, I would argue that the conceptual foundation of national identity and European integration identified in this thesis cannot be associated with the promotion of a post-national agenda. Genuine support for post-national organisation in Europe, in my opinion, needs to be anchored in the rejection of the nature of nations as self-evident, essentially distinctive and immutable. It can be seen that such an understanding is entirely missing in the lower secondary education in Slovakia. Instead, it endorses a peaceful mode of international coexistence and co-operation between nations and nation-states within Europe. To paraphrase Grillparzer's and Renan's views, some distance remains to be covered on the path back to humanity which could provide the optimal legitimacy for a post-national future within or beyond the boundaries of Europe. It would appear that Slovakia's lower secondary education still has not reached its final destination.

4.2 Implications

Drawing on the innovative application of the insights of scholarship of nationalism and European integration, this thesis constitutes an original contribution to knowledge in the area of academic discussion on the European dimension in education. The research findings provide insights into the contemporary conceptualisation of the nature of national identity and the process of European integration in the lower secondary education in Slovakia. On the basis of a country-specific focus and attention to two closely interrelated themes, the thesis broadens understanding of the current implementation of the European dimension in education within the EU.

While answers to the research questions were obtained in the course of the empirical examination, a number of additional, complementary issues emerged in the process. These point towards further potential research directions and also indicate the practical value of the conclusions for education policy. I will begin by considering these in the

Slovakian context and then turn to broader implications beyond the country-specific limits.

The nature of this empirical examination was exploratory in its attempt to identify contemporary tendencies in relation to the understanding of national identity and European integration. Therefore, it relied on a qualitative research methodology which was applied to a case study of a country and a particular level of education. As previously highlighted there are advantages associated with this research design. However, there are also some inherent limitations in such an approach (discussed in chapters 1.3, 1.4 and 2.3). Given the imminent constraints of doctoral research, these could not be addressed meaningfully in the course of the present investigation. Nevertheless, they might be counterbalanced by subsequent studies. Hence, the findings could benefit from a wider research focus. The inclusion of the pre-primary, primary and upper level of secondary education would provide an holistic picture of pre-tertiary schooling in Slovakia in relation to the questions explored in this dissertation. The research conclusions could be substantiated further with the help of a quantitative research methodology. In this way the significance of views, particularly in relation to teachers and students, could be assessed more precisely. The representativeness of the findings derived from both groups could also be further enhanced through the addition of a greater number of research participants from national minorities which constitute, according to the officially recorded statistics, about 12 % of Slovakia's citizens in total (SODB 2012).

Furthermore, as the findings indicate, a considerable discrepancy exists between the academic discussion of nationalism and its presentation within the levels below tertiary education in Slovakia. Hence, they draw attention to a number of potential research avenues and areas for their practical application. One of them is teachers' pre-service and in-service training. The data on this particular aspect suggest that there are notable shortcomings in the education of teachers. At the same time, the evidence also helps to identify areas for improvements in this respect. To enhance their effectiveness, gaining more accurate insights into the scope, interdisciplinary reach and utilisation of the advances in the academic discussion of nationalism in Slovakia might be beneficial. Consequently, a more substantial investigation of academic positions within Slovakia's historiography and other related disciplines of social sciences on the topic of the nature and formation of the Slovak nation could provide some indications in this regard. This could also extend to the analysis of training programmes for teachers provided by the relevant institutions.

The second interrelated research theme which emerged during meetings with teachers was the question of optimal pedagogic strategies and practices in relation to the treatment of contested issues such as nationalism. The interviews showed that teachers are inclined to adopt a wider variety of approaches for numerous reasons. While a number of them wanted to avoid challenging discussions with students, others do not evade problematic topics. However, it also became clear that the selection of particular strategies might be affected by insufficient attention to such themes in teachers' pre-service or in-service training.

Although the salience of such issues was already highlighted in discussions and interviews with teachers, their country and nationally specific dimension were unambiguously revealed during the empirical research with students. Some opinions demonstrated the continuous significance and conflict potential of experiences and events from the past. Views reflecting the historically anchored, precarious relationship between Slovaks and national minorities in Slovakia, in particular Magyars and Roma, demonstrated a clear need to develop adequate pedagogic strategies and teaching materials in this respect. Therefore, a further research agenda could focus specifically on didactics for the transmission of critical conceptual discussions on nationalism in pre-university education in Slovakia.

Some closely interrelated and intriguing research options could be also derived from the backdrop of the primordialist inclinations of lower secondary education and the politicised relationship between the majoritarian Slovaks and Slovakia's national minorities. One project might examine how the Magyar minority is affected by the definitions of nationality through the Slovak education system on the one hand and from across the border in Hungary on the other. Equally, a deeper investigation of the impact of political populism disseminated through the media on the formation of, and differences in, the quality of the mutual relationships would have a particular significance. For example, this could compare the more politicized Slovak-Magyar and Slovak-Roma relationships with those between the majority and Ruthenians or Ukrainians. An additional and relevant question in this context would also be the way in which the minority populations view the distinction between nationality and citizenship.

Further research suggestions might be made in relation to the topic of EI. While teachers graduating after 2000 in the subjects of civics and geography acknowledged the availability of relevant courses during their university studies, history graduates emphasised the absence of a specific EI focus within their field of specialisation. Moreover, research participants thought that the quality and availability of relevant in-

service training programmes was inadequate and limited to the immediate pre-accession period of Slovakia before 2004.

One factor that may have affected the results was that, the research was undertaken during a challenging phase of European integration. Unlike the period before 2008, this led to a higher degree of politicisation within Slovakia, as in other countries (discussed in chapters 1.3 and 2.1). The impact of this was clearly illustrated particularly by the negative evaluation of Slovakia's EU membership by student interviewees and their strong resistance toward the deepening of EI. Hence, these findings do not fully support some rather optimistic conclusions in certain studies examining students' EI attitudes which were completed in Slovakia before the outbreak of the economic and financial crisis in 2008 (discussed in chapter 2.1). It would therefore be worthwhile for a future research project to carry out an equivalent exploration focusing on students' views in a less turbulent time if there is a stabilisation of the situation within the EU and eurozone. In this way the evidence base for comparative research on the development of public views and attitudes towards the EU in Slovakia could be extended.

As already argued in this chapter, the research findings also have a bearing on education policy. In relation to the implementation of European dimension in education, particularly in textbooks, there are areas which could benefit from future improvements. In spite of constituting a single educational area, this research revealed topical overlaps and inconsistencies across the subjects of history, geography and civics. This applies primarily to the conceptualisation of the rationale for EI, European identity and aspects related to the functioning of the EU (institutional structure). Therefore, closer coordination between the designers of respective curricula and textbook authors could prove beneficial for the impact of the EDE on students' views.

A further related theme worthy of the attention of curricula designers and educational policy makers is the effectiveness of education in the context of the profound and negative impact of the media on students' views. Despite constituting an ideal ground for the enhancement of their critical thinking, the latest curricular changes, resulting in a significant reduction of lessons, impose stringent limitations on the potential of all three subjects examined here. This was clearly confirmed by teachers' evaluations and the strongly prejudiced opinions of a notable section of the students who were interviewed. As these suggest, it is debatable whether the predefined objectives of the educational area of 'People and Society' (for example respect of cultural and national diversity or understanding and support for EI) are realistically attainable. It seems more likely that, under such conditions, these goals risk remaining merely normative prescriptions with no substantial practical impact.

The conclusions of this case study investigation remain limited and are not suitable for wider generalisation. Nevertheless, they point towards a significance which transcends its country specific focus. Given the politicisation of EI and public resistance to its deepening within the EU as a whole, the set of questions raised in the Slovakian context has broader implications for the European dimension in education. Consequently, the issues examined in this dissertation could usefully be applied beyond Slovakia's frontiers. The double-structured analytical model which employed, in an innovative fashion, insights of academic discussion on nationalism and European integration, is well suited for cross-national research studies. This could also be extended by the values-based pragmatism component, which was identified as an additional explanatory framework of EI in Slovakia's lower secondary education.

The approach and findings presented here also point towards further, conceptual considerations related to European dimension in education which are not limited to the scholarship and education policy of one member state within the EU. Above all, they draw attention to the thematic focus of EDE in relation to the fundamental aspects of European integration: rationale, nature, legitimacy and the future. These are obviously complex questions which might result in various country-specific answers. Nevertheless, I would argue that Grillparzer's and Renan's views provide a suitable departure point for this discussion and a road map which might be of use beyond the borders of a single country.

ANNEXES

Annex 1

EU Member States¹⁶⁶

EU-15

Founding Members (1957)

| | |
|-----------------|----|
| Belgium | BE |
| France | FR |
| Germany | DE |
| Italy | IT |
| Luxembourg | LU |
| The Netherlands | NL |

First Enlargement (1973)

| | |
|--------------------|----|
| Denmark | DK |
| Ireland | IE |
| The United Kingdom | UK |

Second Enlargement (1981)

| | |
|--------|----|
| Greece | EL |
|--------|----|

Third Enlargement (1986)

| | |
|----------|----|
| Portugal | PT |
| Spain | ES |

Fourth Enlargement (1995)

| | |
|---------|----|
| Austria | AT |
| Finland | FI |
| Sweden | SE |

¹⁶⁶ As the thesis does not refer to Croatia (joined in July 2013) in any tables or graphs, it is not included in the list below.

NMS-10*Fifth Enlargement (2004)*

| | |
|----------------|----|
| Cyprus | CY |
| Czech Republic | CZ |
| Estonia | EE |
| Hungary | HU |
| Latvia | LV |
| Lithuania | LT |
| Malta | MT |
| Poland | PL |
| Slovakia | SK |
| Slovenia | SI |

NMS-12

NMS-10

Sixth Enlargement (2007)

| | |
|----------|----|
| Bulgaria | BG |
| Romania | RO |

EU-25 **EU-27**EU-15 **EU-15**NMS-10 **NMS-12****Eurozone Countries**

| | |
|---------|----|
| Austria | AT |
| Belgium | BE |
| Cyprus | CY |

| | |
|-----------------|----|
| Estonia | EE |
| Finland | FI |
| France | FR |
| Germany | DE |
| Greece | EL |
| Ireland | IE |
| Italy | IT |
| Luxembourg | LU |
| Malta | MT |
| Portugal | PT |
| Slovakia | SK |
| Slovenia | SI |
| Spain | ES |
| The Netherlands | NL |

Source: EU-History

Annex 2

Table 16: Educational Structure and Institutions in Slovakia

| Educational Level ¹⁶⁷ | Educational Institutions ¹⁶⁸ | Age Group |
|---|--|----------------------------|
| ISCED 0: Pre-primary Education | Kindergartens | 2/3- 6 years |
| ISCED 1: Primary Education | Elementary Schools ¹⁶⁹ Grades 1-4 | 6 – 10 years |
| ISCED 2: Lower Secondary Education | Elementary Schools Grades 5-9 | 11 – 15 years |
| | Eight Grades Gymnasia ¹⁷⁰ Grades 1-4 | 12-15 years |
| ISCED 3: Upper Secondary Education | Five Grades Gymnasia Grades 0-4 | 14 - 19 years |
| | Eight Grades Gymnasia Grades 5-8 | 15-19 years |
| | Four Grades Gymnasia Grades 1-4 | 15-19 years |
| | Conservatoires ¹⁷¹ | 15-23 years |
| | Secondary Professional Schools ¹⁷² | 15-19 years |
| ISCED 4: Post-secondary, non-tertiary education | Secondary Professional Schools | diverse ¹⁷³ |
| ISCED 5: First Stage of Tertiary Education | Universities | 18/19-23/24 ¹⁷⁴ |
| | Academies | 18/19-23/24 |
| ISCED 6: Second Stage of Tertiary Education | Universities Academies | 24/25-28/29 |

Source: Based on Eurydice 2009/2010 and SSSZ 2012/2013

¹⁶⁷ Following the latest education reform of 2008, the International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED) adopted by UNESCO in 1975 was introduced in Slovakia.

¹⁶⁸ In addition to the categories listed in the table, the educational systems also includes further (3) types of educational institutions. At the level of ISCED 0-ISCED 3, there are schools for children with special needs (mental or physical impairments). Parallel to the 'Elementary school', there is also the 'Elementary art school' which provides art education (music, creative art) as free time activity at the ISCED 1-ISCED 2 levels. The last category of educational institution included in the educational system in Slovakia is the 'Language school' which provides courses in foreign languages for both children and adults which might be completed by proficiency certificates at different levels (SSSZ 2012/2013).

¹⁶⁹ Elementary school in Slovakia refers to a school which provides both primary and lower secondary education. It is subdivided into two levels. The first covers four grades (1-4) and corresponds with primary education. The second level of primary schools covers the grades 5-9 and corresponds to lower secondary education.

¹⁷⁰ Currently, there are three categories of gymnasia in Slovakia which are designed to provide general education at the level of lower and upper secondary education for children with strong academic capabilities. The eight grade gymnasia are entered on the basis of an entry exam after completion of the fifth grade of elementary school. Five grade gymnasia are bilingual upper secondary schools which are commenced after the completion of eight grades of elementary school. The first grade focuses on an intense linguistic preparation of students as a part of their education is given in a foreign language of their choice (as a rule English, German, French or Spanish). The last category, four grade gymnasium, is entered after the completion of grade nine of elementary school (SSSZ 2012/2013).

¹⁷¹ Conservatoires prepare graduates for an artistic professional career or a pedagogic career in art. The education length is six (music and drama) and eight years (dance) (SSSZ 2012/2013).

¹⁷² Secondary Professional (vocational) Schools provide for a professional qualification for diverse segments of the labour market (chemistry, technology, health care). They differ by length of study, between 2-5 years, and level of qualification achieved (SSSZ 2012/2013).

¹⁷³ Post-secondary education, not being compulsory, may be entered at different age and life stage. However, as a rule, it is entered at a younger age.

¹⁷⁴ As in the case of post-secondary education, tertiary education ISCED 5 and ISCED 6 might be also entered at different ages.

Annex 3

Topic Guide-Teachers -National Identity and European Integration

I. National Identity

Nationality and nation

1. Please could you tell me what your nationality is?
2. Please could you explain what nationality is?
3. Please could you explain what is it, 'a nation'?
4. Do you think that a national (collective / typical) character exists? What are the typical traits of the Slovak nation?
5. How old is the Slovak nation?

Teachers' Familiarity with the scholarship of nationalism

1. Please could you tell me whether you came across the following concepts and names during your pre-service, in-service training, your own readings:
 - primordialism, ethno-symbolism, constructivism (modernism)
 - Ernest Gellner, Eric Hobsbawm, Benedict Anderson, Anthony Smith, Miroslav Hroch
2. How was the topic of nationalism addressed during your pre-service training, do you recall any specific courses offered by providers of in-service training?

II. European Integration

1. Would you say that in addition to your national identity you also feel as a European, and why?
2. How do you see the process of EI, what are the advantages and disadvantages?
3. Do you see EI as a threat to the sovereignty of Slovakia and Slovak national identity?
4. What do you think of a possible creation of a single European Government, pan-European political parties and a replacement of national parliaments by a single European one?
5. Do you recall any specific programmes addressing the issues of EI and EU during your pre-service and in-service training?

Annex 4

Topic Guide-National Identity and European Integration-Students

I. National Identity

1. Please could you tell me what your nationality is?
2. Please could you explain what nationality is?
3. Please could you explain what is it, 'a nation'?
4. Do you think that a national (collective / typical) character exists? ; What are the typical traits of the Slovak nation?
5. How old is the Slovak nation?

II. European Integration

1. Would you say that you also feel European and why?
2. What do you think of European integration, what is good or bad about it?
3. Could you imagine that one day there would be only one, European Republic? Would you like that?

Annex 5

Terminological Clarification

In order to avoid linguistic misunderstanding, the list below provides the meanings associated in the Slovak language with the fundamental concepts discussed in this thesis. The explanations are based on common understanding in Slovakia and not on precise quotations from any specific academic literature. Nevertheless, I compared the vocabulary introduced below with two lexica, one published in Slovakia in 1993 and one recently in 2008 (Beliana 1993; DFW 2008).

Nation (*národ*)

Nation is understood in Slovakia in the sense of a community of people sharing common attributes: a common origin, language, history, traditions, character, territory.

Nationality (*národnosť*)

Nationality is associated with multiple meanings in Slovakia. As defined in the last census (2011), it refers to membership to a nation or an ethnic group (SODB 2012: 6). In addition, it is also understood as a term referring to a national minority for example the Magyars within Slovakia. It is also frequently used as synonym for ethnic group.

Ethnic, ethnic group (*etnický, etnická skupina / etnikum*)

These terms have been traditionally understood in Slovakia as synonyms for national, nations and nationality.

State (*štát*)

State in Slovakia is associated with the meaning of the legal organisation of a given society within a particular territory.

Citizenship and citizen (*občianstvo, občan*)

In its very basic form, citizenship in Slovakia refers to a legal relationship between a person and state (rights and duties). In other words, it denotes state membership and is clearly distinguished from the concept of nation and nationality. Consequently, a citizen might be described succinctly as a member of a state. A citizen of the Slovak Republic is not automatically a member of the Slovak nation. As an example, a Magyar (ethnic Hungarian) born and living in Slovakia has Magyar nationality (*národnosť*) and at the same time state citizenship (*štátne občianstvo*) of the Slovak Republic. Personal identity cards (ID) and passports issued in Slovakia use the Slovak term 'state citizenship' (*štátne občianstvo*) as the administrative reference. This is translated into the English language (on both documents) with the term of 'nationality'. While both personal ID cards and passports do not refer to 'nation membership' (*nationality*), school certificates issued in Slovakia contain, for example, two separate administrative categories for recording the relevant information: nationality (*národnosť*) and state citizenship (*štátne občianstvo*).

Annex 6

Table 17: People and Society- Broad Thematic Areas by Grade

| Grade | History | Geography | Citizenship Education |
|--------------------------------|--|---|---|
| 5 th grade (age 11) | <p>Introduction to historiography Objectives and instruments</p> <p>People's role in historical processes Historical transformation of people's environment and activities</p> <p>People and Communication Means of communication World Religions Wars</p> | <p>Introduction to the planet Earth Earth in the planet system</p> <p>Insights of cartography Maps and globe</p> <p>Natural landmarks on Earth Activities of natural forces Glaciers, volcanos, rain forests</p> <p>Cultural landmarks on Earth Human settlements UNESCO heritage sites</p> | <p>Insights of social sciences Family life and values School life <i>Lifelong learning</i> European education system</p> |
| 6 th grade (age 12) | <p>Prehistory (c. 3 mil-3 500 BC) Anthropogenesis</p> <p>Antique (c.3 500 BC-476 AD) Civilisation of Antique (Near and Far East, Greece, Rome)</p> <p>Early Middle Ages (c. 5-10th ct.) Disintegration of Roman Empire Social, political and cultural life</p> | <p>Insights of physical geography Mountains, volcanos, types of landscape</p> <p>Continental presentation Australia, Oceania, Antarctic, America</p> | <p>Insights of social sciences Local community, region, Slovak Republic, EI and EU</p> <p>Insights of psychology and sociology Human psychology Social relations and communication</p> |
| 7 th grade (age 13) | <p>Middle Ages (476-1492) Origins of Slovak national history Developments within the Hungarian Kingdom</p> <p>Modern History (1492-1789) Humanism Renaissance Enlightenment Development of the Habsburg Monarchy</p> | <p>Insights of human geography Human settlements Demography</p> <p>Continental and states' presentation Africa, Asia</p> | <p>Insights of social sciences and humanities Development of human societies Social communication Multiculturalism Social and political conflicts Development and function of states Civic culture and values Active citizenship</p> |

| | | | |
|--------------------------------------|---|---|--|
| 8th grade (age 14) | Era of nationalism (19th ct.) French Revolution (1789) European and Slovak national movement (s) Art and Science in the 19 th century First World War (1914) | Introduction to Europe Physical and human geography EI Regional and state presentation Central Europe Western Europe Northern Europe Southern Europe South-eastern Europe Eastern Europe | Insights of social sciences Functions of state Rule of law Human Rights |
| 9th grade (age 15) | 20th century-present First World War (1914-1918) Interwar Europe (1918-1939) Czechoslovakia (1918-1939) Second World War (1939-1945) Division of Europe (1945-1989) Socialism in Czechoslovakia (1948-1989) Europe and Slovakia after 1989 | Slovakia Geographical location Nature Human geography Regions of Slovakia | Insights of economics Basic concepts of economy Insights into entrepreneurship forms Financial insights Consumer rights |

Source: Based on curricula and textbooks for the educational area 'People and Society'

Annex 7.1

History Textbooks-Contents-Grade Five

I. From the Near to the Remote

Space and time

1. Why are we learning history?
2. What is events' sequence?
3. What do we need to know for a walk through time?
4. Festive and commemorative days

Traces of the past around us

5. We are learning about material artefacts
6. What are image artefacts?
7. Written historical sources
8. Try to find out how a historian is working
9. What else do we take with us for a stroll through time?
10. Who takes care of historical artefacts?

Revision

II. People in Transformations of Time and Space

People of the past and people in the present time

1. How was it to live at the dawn of history?
2. Where did we live in the past and where do we live today?
3. How people established a family

The contemplative and Inventive people

1. How people were getting know the forces of nature
2. How people were making the world smaller
3. People on the move
4. Work-a punishment or a joy?
5. Child labour

Revision

III. People and Communication

The memory of humanity

1. A written thought was preserved
2. The first books
3. Media

The spiritual life of people

4. What is religion?

When communication fails

5. What are the causes of wars?

Revision

Annex 7.2

History Textbook-Grade Six- Contents

I. History and Prehistory

II. Pictures of Prehistoric Society

Life in the Stone Age-hunters and gatherers

The Stone Age-shepherds and farmers

III. Pictures of Antique Society

1. People are discovering copper and bronze

2. People are utilising iron

3. Civilisations of the ancient Orient

Ancient Greece

4. Greece of myths and tales

5. Classical Greece

6. Macedonia and the Hellenistic world

Ancient Rome

7. Royal period

8. Roman Republic

9. Roman Empire

10. Christianity in Roman Empire

What we learned

IV. Pictures of the Medieval World

1. Roots of the Middle Ages. The World and people behind the frontiers of Rome

2. People on the move. Migration of nations and the results

3. Three empires of the Early Middle Ages

4. Feudalism. Who lived in a medieval state

5. Christianity won over Europe

6. How was it to live in the Middle Ages

7. Rhythm of life

8. Culture, science and art in the Middle Ages

9. New powerful kingdoms of the Middle Ages

What we learned

Annex 7.3

History Textbook -Grade Seven- Contents

I. The Ancestors of Slovaks In the Carpathian Basin

1. Life of our ancestors
2. Principality of Nitra and Great Moravia
3. Missionaries Constantine and Methodius
4. Cultural contribution of Great Moravia

II. Slovaks in the Hungarian Kingdom

1. The Kingdom of Saint Stephan
2. The Duchy of Nitra
3. The accommodating monarch
4. The Invasion of Tatars
5. The Lord of Váh and Tatras
6. The golden mine of the Hungarian Kingdom
7. First emperor on the throne of the Hungarian Kingdom
8. King with the raven on his coat of arms

What we learned

III. Modern European Society Is Born

1. Italian city states
2. Europe of humanists –philosophers and scholars
3. Europe conquers the World
4. The Discoverers and the discovered
5. Reformation and the Catholic Reform
6. Global economy and the new organisation of states
7. The age of reason-Enlightenment

IV. Habsburg Monarchy in the Modern Era

1. The catastrophe of Mohács
2. On the frontiers with the Ottoman Empire
3. The diffusion of the Reformation in the Kingdom of Hungary
4. Bratislava-the capital of the Kingdom of Hungary
5. The enlightened Empress
6. The reformist on the throne
7. The epoch of enlightened scholars

What we learned

Annex 7.4

History Textbook- Grade Eight-Contents

I. On the Route Towards Modern Nations

1. French Revolution (1789-1799)
2. Napoleon Bonaparte and Napoleonic wars
3. Tsarist Russia
4. In the swirl of revolutions and nationalism (1830-1848/49)
5. The establishment of nation-states-Unification of Italy and Germany
6. The land of promise-America
7. Industrial Revolution and modernisation
8. Culture and Art

II. Modern Slovak Nation

1. Slovak national movement
 2. Anton Bernolák
 3. Slavic reciprocity
 4. Štúr's generation
 5. Slovaks and the revolutionary year 1848/49
 6. From Memorandum towards Slovak Matica
- What we learned

III. Austria-Hungary

1. Austria-Hungary Compromise and Slovaks
2. The defence activities of Slovaks
3. Slovak emigration

IV. First World War

1. On the eve of world war
 2. Life during First World War
 3. Slovak soldiers on the fronts
 4. Resistance movement of Slovaks and Czechs
 5. Milan Rastislav Štefánik and Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk
 6. On the route towards the common state of Slovaks and Czechs
- What we learned

Annex 7.5

History Textbook-Grade Nine-Contents

I. The First World War

1. The fatal shots of Sarajevo
2. The World stricken by war
3. The Great War and Slovaks
4. Slovak and Czech emigration and resistance
5. Milan Rastislav Štefánik (1880-1919)
6. Liberated Slovakia
7. How peace was born

Method: How to analyse a caricature

A glance back I

II. Inter-war Europe

1. New states
2. Slovakia enters the Czecho-Slovak state
3. Bratislava-the capital city of Slovakia
4. How Lenin gained power

Method: How to analyse a photograph

5. Mussolini and his Blackshirts
6. Hitler's dictatorship in Germany
7. Slovakia in search of its own path
8. Struggle for everyday bread
9. The unknown freedom
10. School-the foundation for life
11. Co-citizens or opponents?
12. Landmarks of science and technology
13. The golden nineteenth twenties?
14. New paths of arts and architecture
15. Cultural flourishing of Slovakia
16. Clouds over Czechoslovakia
17. Smashing of Czecho-Slovak Republic

A glance back II

III. Second World War

1. Europe - the victim of dictators
2. Life in occupied Europe
3. Foundation of new state
4. New state on the map of Europe
5. Life in the Slovak state
6. How was the Slovak State?

7. Great Powers against Hitler
8. Slovak National Uprising
9. The defeat of Germany and its allies

A glance back III

IV. The World after the Second World War

1. Division of Europe
2. Return of Slovakia into renewed Czechoslovakia
3. In Stalin's shadow
4. In the west of the "iron curtain"
5. In the east of the "iron curtain"
6. Sovietisation of Czechoslovakia
7. The end of colonialism
8. Balance of anxiety
9. Two faces of Communist totality in Slovakia
10. The unsuccessful reform attempt
11. The tranquilised society
12. The lights and shadows of civilisation
13. The art of salons and streets
14. Slovak culture in conditions of totalitarianism
15. The end of inertia

A glance back IV

V. Contemporary History

1. The epochal year of 1989
2. On the path towards European Union
3. On the path towards democracy and independence
4. Accession of Slovakia to EU and NATO

A glance back V

Annex 8.1

Geography Textbook-Grade Five-Contents

I. Exploration of our Planet

The shape of Earth, our planet in space

1. The shape of Earth
2. Our place in space
3. Moon-the natural satellite of Earth
4. The motions of Earth-why day and night is changing
5. The motions of Earth- why seasons are changing

The exploration of Earth and space

1. The outer surface of Earth
2. The voyages of discoverers into diverse parts of Earth
3. The exploration of space and the utilisation of astronautics

II. Map and the Globe

1. What can we see on the globe?
2. What can we see on a map?
3. Measuring on maps
4. Why are there different times on Earth?
5. A walk into the surroundings

III. We Are Travelling and Learning about our Earth

The most beautiful places on Earth created by nature

1. Voyage into the depths of Earth
2. Volcanos-windows into the depths of Earth
3. Fire places on Earth and earthquakes
4. Activities of water-the life of a river
5. Activities of a glacier
6. Activities of wind
7. The atmosphere – the airy mantel of Earth
8. How is the weather going to be?
9. Diverse landscapes of Earth
10. Rain forests
11. Arctic lands
12. The life in high mountains

The most beautiful places on Earth created by people

14. Cities and villages
15. UNESCO heritage

Project

Test yourself!

Annex 8.2

Geography Textbook-Grade Six-Contents

I. Planet Earth

1. The development of chains of mountains, volcanos' activities, earthquakes
2. The climate and climate zones
3. The types of landscapes on Earth-steppes and woods of temperate zones
4. The life of people in high mountains

II. Australia and Oceania –Pacific Ocean –Arctic Areas of Earth

Australia-location on Earth, exploration of the continent and basic information about it

1. Location and surface
2. Climate
3. Waters
4. Flora and fauna
5. Australia-continent of immigrants
6. Economy of Australia
7. The problems of the inhabitants of Australia
8. The Pacific Ocean-Oceania
9. The arctic areas of Earth

III. America

America- location on Earth, exploration of the continent and basic information about it

1. The nature of America-surface, rivers, lakes
 2. The nature of America –climate and types of landscapes
 3. Attractions of the nature of America
 4. The population of America, its diversity and variety of life
 5. The settlements of America-Problems of people's life in big cities
 6. What distinguishes America from the perspective of economic activities of people?
 7. What is special about Canada?
 8. What is special about the USA?
 9. What is special about Mexico and other states of Middle America and in the area of the Caribbean sea?
 10. What is special about Brazil?
 11. What is special about Argentina and the states of the Platine region?
 12. What is special about the Andes states?
 13. The central problems of America
- We are traveling to America-project**

Annex 8.3

Geography Textbook-Grade Seven-Contents

I. World

Settlements

Population

II. Africa

1. Location and coast

2. Surface

3. Climate

4. Waters

5. Flora and fauna

6. Population and settlements

7. Economy

8. Northern Africa

9. Middle Africa

10. Southern Africa

An overview table

Revision

III. Asia

1. Location and coast

2. Surface

3. Climate

4. Waters

5. Flora and fauna

6. Population and settlements

7. Economy

8. Southwest Asia

9. Southern Asia

10. Southeast Asia

11. Eastern Asia

12. Northern Asia

An overview table

Revision

Annex 8.4

Geography Textbook-Grade Eight-Contents

I. Basic Information about Europe

1. Introduction
2. Location and extent of Europe

II. Nature and Manmade Distinctiveness of Europe

1. Surface of Europe-lowlands and mountains
2. Climate of Europe
3. Waters of Europe
4. Types of landscape
5. The impact of people on landscape
6. Roots of European civilisation and culture
7. Population and settlements of Europe
8. Economy of Europe
9. Agriculture and industry
10. Transport
11. Tourist trade
12. Integration of Europe-European Union
13. Problems of Europe

III. Central Europe

1. Slovakia
2. Czech Republic
3. Poland
4. Hungary
5. Austria, Switzerland
6. Lichtenstein
7. Germany

IV. Western Europe

1. France
2. Monaco, Belgium
3. Luxembourg, Holland
4. United Kingdom
5. Ireland

V. Northern Europe

1. Denmark
2. Iceland
3. Norway
4. Sweden
5. Finland
6. Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia

VI. Southern Europe

1. Spain
2. Portugal
3. Andorra
4. Italy
5. Vatican
6. San Marino, Malta, Greece

VII. South-Eastern Europe

1. Slovenia
2. Croatia
3. Serbia, Montenegro
4. Bosnia and Herzegovina
5. Macedonia
6. Albania
7. Romania
8. Bulgaria

VIII. Eastern Europe

1. Ukraine
2. Belarus, Moldova
3. Russia

Overview of states of Europe

Annex 8.5

Geography Textbook-Grade Nine-Contents

I. Location of Slovakia

1. Location and extent
2. Work with map. Geographic co-ordinates, parallels, meridians
3. Project Slovakia and the local landscape

II. Nature of Slovakia

1. Surface-lowlands, basins, mountains
2. Climate
3. Waters
4. Flora, fauna and soils
5. The protection of nature. Calamities and natural threats

III. History, Population, Settlements and Economy

1. Historical events in Slovakia, the foundation of Slovakia
2. Historical territory and traditions
3. Population
4. Settlements
5. Economy and pollution of nature
6. Tourist trade and beauties of Slovakia

IV. Regions of Slovakia and the Possibilities of their Development

1. Bratislava District
 2. Trnava District
 3. Nitra District
 4. Trenčín District
 5. Žilina District
 6. Banská Bystrica District
 7. Košice District
 8. Prešov District
 10. The differences between the regions of Slovakia
- Review

Annex 9.1

Civics Textbook-Grade Five-Contents

I. My Family

1. What family means for Jakub Slovák
 2. What did Jakub find out about functioning of families?
 3. The rules in the Slovak's family Slovak's. Jakub knows that in addition to rights he also has obligations
 4. Jakub explores his origins, studies the history of his family
 5. Jakub investigates why it is important in families to communicate together
 6. Jakub searches for the answer to the question: What are the most serious crisis in families and why do they evolve?
 7. The Slovak's family is learning how to deal with their problems, the evolving demanding situations
 8. How the Slovak's family lives
 9. What did Jakub find out about a healthy life style?
 10. Jakub explores what values are important for a family
 11. The Slovak's are meeting their relatives, neighbours and friends
 12. Jakub and Danielka love their grandparents
 13. Jakub studies documents about children's rights and the law
- Self-testing double page with tasks of the thematic unit My Family

II. My School

1. Jakub is in the fifth grade
 2. Jakub is getting know his class-mates
 3. We in class 5. A
 4. Jakub finds out that all in the class are equals but not alike
 5. How students communicate in 5.A
 6. Jakub became the chairman of the class self-governance board
 7. Jakub represents his class in the school self-governance board
 8. The Slovak's parents support their son in extra-curricular and free-time activities
 9. Jakub thinks about how members of the school parliament could awake students' interest in happenings in school and take a pride in it
 10. Jakub finds out that teachers are also different
 11. In class 5. A. they wrote an essay about: "Who I would like to be"
 12. The self-governance board of the class organised an opinion poll on the topic 'Is education important?'
 13. People are learning throughout the whole life
 14. Jakub is exploring the school system in Slovakia
 15. Jakub is becoming acquainted with school systems in other European countries
 16. Jakub compares his school life with the life of Dan from Bobrovec and of Jean in France
 17. Jakub arrived in the future through the 'Time machine'
- Self-testing double page with tasks of the thematic unit My school

Annex 9.2

Civics Textbook-Grade Six-Contents

I. Local Community, Region, Country, European Union

1. The Slovak's family lives in Bratislava, in Dúbravka
 2. How people lived in Bratislava in the past and how they live today
 3. Jakub investigates the chronicle of Dúbravka, he studies symbols
 4. In Jakub's school a gallery of distinguished personalities of the local community is prepared
 5. Jakub takes a pride in the monuments and the beauties of nature in Bratislava and its surroundings
 6. Slovak's family is actively taking part in the life of their community
 7. Jakub's family is taking interest in who is managing public affairs in their community and how
 8. Inhabitants of Bratislava form its future together
 9. Jakub is getting acquainted with the regions of Slovakia .
 10. Slovak's family takes pride in their country
 12. Jakub is getting know the state symbols of his country and learns to take pride in them
 13. The little EU citizen Jakub explores how Europe is integrating
 14. Jakub thinks about the integration of nations in Europe
- Self-testing double page

II. The Internal and the External World of a Person

1. Jakub is learning about the foundations of the human psychic
 2. Jakub is learning what significance feelings, perceptions, fantasies have for his life
 3. Jakub is finding out how his memory and mind functions
 4. Why is a person susceptible to mood swings and what feelings does he/she experience?
 5. Every human being is a unique person
 6. Jakub is becoming aware of people's diversity on the basis of their capabilities
 7. How do insights of psychology help the Slovak's family in their everyday life?
 8. Jakub is investigating how to become successful in learning
 9. Jakub compares and searches for effective learning styles
 10. Jakub lives in the class with class mates, during his trainings with friends
 11. Jakub is becoming aware that he cannot live alone
 12. Jakub is building his relationships in class, in training and in his free time club
 13. Jakub is studying the problematic of social positions and roles in a group
 14. Jakub is learning about methods measuring social relationships within groups
 15. Jakub is learning how to communicate
 16. Jakub is learning how to co-operate
 17. Jakub is learning how to deal with conflicts
- Self-testing double page

Annex 9.3

Civics Textbook-Grade Seven-Contents

I. Social Relationships in Human Society

1. Jakub is studying the origin and development of human society
2. Jakub is exploring the structure of human society and the relationships within it
3. Jakub learned about the existence of large social groups and the stratification of human society
4. Jakub is searching for an answer to the question: Why is the organisation of human society changing?
5. Jakub is becoming acquainted with the diversity of population on our planet
6. Jakub is learning about the religious diversity of population on our planet
7. Jakub is establishing that migrations of population did not only happen in the past
8. Jakub is again coming across multiculturalism
9. Jakub is finding out why wars exist in the world

Self-testing tasks

Views of students of the seventh grade from a certain primary school

II. Civic Life as the Process of Democracy Formation

1. The origins of a state
2. The development and functions of a state
3. State symbols and symbols of the Slovak Republic
4. Forms of government and political regimes in a state
5. State, state citizenship
6. Historical perspective of citizenship and civic society
7. Fundamental human rights and freedoms
8. Further rights and liberties of citizens in democratic states
9. Local government as a component of civic participation
10. Participation in the life of school class, school self-governance
11. Participation of students in school life, students' school self-governance
12. The rules of life in class
13. The school regulations
14. Activity of local government
15. Start participating in the life of your community with your parents
16. Participation in a broader social environment-volunteering

Self-testing tasks

Annex 9.4

Civics Textbook-Grade Eight-Contents

I. State and Law - Compulsory Content

1. State and its fundamentals
2. State functions
3. Forms of government
4. Organs of state administration
5. Legislative Power
- Let us revise-What do we already know about state?
6. Legal norms
7. Relationship between state and law-legal conscience
8. Legal order (system) of Slovak Republic
9. Branches of law-public and private law
10. Civic law
11. Civic law-protection of consumer
12. Family law
13. Criminal law
14. Legal institutions of Slovak Republic
- Let us revise-The legal minimum

II. Human Rights and Liberties - Supplementary Content

1. There are no rights without obligations and responsibility
2. Fundamental documents of human rights
3. Fundamental rights of children on the basis of Charter of children's rights
4. Equal treatment of all children
5. Right to opinion and information
6. Right to life
7. Right to health
8. Right to education and play
9. Rights of minorities-minorities and their protection

Annex 9.5

Civics Textbook-Grade Nine-Contents

I. Economic Life in a Society-Compulsory Content

Basic concepts

1. Demands and goods
2. Production process
3. Economics and economy
4. Basic economic questions
5. Types of economies
6. Market mechanism

Self-testing tasks

Basic forms of business enterprises

7. Business firm and business activities
8. Management of business firm
9. Legal forms of business enterprises
10. How to become an entrepreneur
11. Consumption and consumer

Money and financial institutions in a market economy

12. Money and function of money
13. Banks and saving banks
14. Insurance companies

Self-testing tasks

II. Financial Proficiency-Supplementary Content

1. Products and bank services
2. Savings
3. Types of savings
4. Euro in Slovak Republic
5. Personal finances
6. Housekeeping in household
7. State budget
8. Taxes and tax system
9. Consumer rights
10. Impact of commercials on consumers
11. Consumer rights in the European Union

Test of financial proficiency

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- SGI-4 (2011) Small Group Interview with Four Students in Trenčín District, 10 May.

SGI-3 (2011) Small Group Interview with Three Students in Trnava District, 11 May.
SGI-4 (2011) Small Group Interview with Four Students in Trenčín District, 13 May.
SGI-4 (2011) Small Group Interview with Four Students in Prešov District, 3 June.
SGI-4 (2012) Small Group Interview with Four Students in Trenčín District, 24 August.

Teachers

FG-3 (2011) Focus Group Discussion with Three Teachers in Trenčín District, 10 May.
FG-5 (2011) Focus Group Discussion with Five Teachers in Trnava District, 11 May.
FG-2 (2011) Focus Group Discussion with Two Teachers in Trenčín District, 13 May.
FG-2 (2011) Focus Group Discussion with Two Teachers in Prešov District, 3 June.
FG-2 (2011) Focus Group Discussion with Two Teachers in Trenčín District, 15 June.
FG-3 (2012) Focus Group Discussion with Three Teachers in Trenčín District, 30 April.
FG-2 (2012) Focus Group Discussion with Two Teachers in Trenčín District, 9 May.
OOI (2011) One to One Interview (Pilot) with a Teacher in Trenčín District, 6 March.
OOI (2011) One to One Interview with a Teacher in Trenčín District, 9 May.
OOI (2011) One to One Interview with a Teacher in Trenčín District, 13 May.
OOI (2011) One to One Interview with a Teacher in Bratislava, 16 May.
OOI (2011) One to One Interview with a Teacher in Košice District, 2 June.
OOI (2011) One to One Interview with a Teacher in Bratislava, 28 June.
OOI (2012) One to One Interview with a Teacher in Trenčín District, 9 May.
OOI (2012) One to One Interview with a Teacher in Trenčín District, 15 May.
OOI (2012) One to One Interview with a Teacher in Trenčín District, 15 May.
OOI (2012) One to One Interview with a Teacher in Trenčín District, 15 May.
OOI (2012) One to One Interview with a Teacher in Trenčín District, 15 May.
OOI (2012) One to One Interview with a Teacher in Trenčín District, 18 May.

Re-contacted Participants from First Cycle of Data Gathering (2011)

OOI (2012) One to One Interview with a Teacher in Trenčín District, 23 August.
OOI (2012) One to One Interview with a Teacher in Trenčín District, 28 August.
OOI (2012) One to One Interview with a Teacher in Trenčín District, 26 October.
OOI (2012) One to One Interview with a Teacher in Trenčín District, 26 October.

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