

Amina Isanović Hadžiomerović

IN SEARCH OF IDENTITY: ADULT EDUCATION IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA BETWEEN THE SOCIALIST LEGACY AND NEOLIBERAL TENDENCIES

ABSTRACT

The paper presents an analysis of the key processes in the field of adult education in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) referring to its socialist past and current tendencies dominantly motivated by the country's aspiration towards accession to the European Union (EU). Any effort to offer a systematic overview of the history of adult education in BiH faces ambiguity and a lack of systematic data. Unlike other parts of the education system where historical accounts are to a certain extent preserved and subject to scholarly studies and investigations, adult education in BiH seems to be a field without a documented past. Based on critical discourse analysis, the paper intends to unravel the intricate socio-political texture that has shaped the key themes in adult education both in the country's socialist past and its democratic present. The results of the analysis indicate several quite clear patterns: (a) the ambiguous treatment of the socialist past, from romanticising to annihilating its achievements and arrangements; (b) the rise of private institutions in adult education in the post-socialist period and the diversification of the education on offer; and (c) tensions between aspirations towards global and European trends on the one hand and insistence on localisation in terms of shaping adult education policy on the other.

Keywords: *adult education, Bosnia and Herzegovina, critical discourse analysis, European Union, socialism*

V ISKANJU IDENTITETE: IZOBRAŽEVANJE ODRASLIH V BOSNI IN HERCEGOVINI MED SOCIALISTIČNO ZAPUŠČINO IN NEOLIBERALNIMI NAGNENJI – POVZETEK

Članek predstavlja analizo ključnih procesov na področju izobraževanja odraslih v Bosni in Hercegovini (BiH), ki se nanašajo na njeno socialistično preteklost in sodobna nagnjenja, ki izhajajo predvsem iz prizadevanja države za vstop v Evropsko unijo (EU). Vsak poskus sistematičnega pregleda zgodovine izobraževanja odraslih v BiH se sooča z nejasnostmi in pomanjkanjem podatkov. V nasprotju z drugimi deli izobraževalnega sistema, kjer so zgodovinski opisi v določenem obsegu ohranjeni ter so predmet

strokovnih študij in raziskav, se zdi, da je izobraževanje odraslih v BiH področje brez dokumentirane zgodovine. Cilj članka je na podlagi kritične diskurzivne analize razplesti kompleksno družbenopolitično strukturo, ki je oblikovala ključne teme izobraževanja odraslih tako v socialistični preteklosti kot demokratični sedanjosti države. Rezultati analize kažejo na več dokaj jasnih vzorcev: (a) različno obravnavanje socialistične preteklosti, od romantiziranja do izničenja njenih dosežkov in ureditev; (b) vzpon zasebnih ustanov za izobraževanje odraslih v posocialističnem obdobju in raznovrstnost ponudbe; (c) napetosti med prizadevanji v smeri globalnih in evropskih trendov na eni strani ter vztrajanjem na lokalizaciji pri oblikovanju politike izobraževanja odraslih na drugi strani.

Ključne besede: izobraževanje odraslih, Bosna in Hercegovina, kritična diskurzivna analiza, Evropska unija, socializem

“...we are led to look for a reconstruction of social science which is both adequate to its own historical development and relevant to the problems which confront us in the contemporary social world.” (Schriever, 2009, p. xv)

INTRODUCTION

Adult education in Bosnia and Herzegovina is by no means a novel phenomenon. Its existence, in more or less organised form, can even be traced back to pre-modern times when education in the country was confessional and when the most important learning sites were religious centres. In the 20th century, especially in the aftermath of World War II, adult education, as in other former Yugoslavian countries, notes significant development in infrastructure and provision backed by strong support from the government. Despite this, in contemporary discourse, it seems that adult education is still searching for its place in the Bosnian social and educational context, as if nothing had previously been developed and nurtured.¹ This ‘identity confusion’ might resemble self-denial or ignorance of its own past, but it is evident that adult education in BiH is a field without a documented past and therefore without a critical consciousness of accumulated experience, not to mention a resulting gap in theory and conceptualisation. The reasons for this can be sought in two circumstances. First, a certain number of adult education institutions that were established in post-WWII times were closed down in the early 1980s due to education reform and a restructuring of secondary education, leaving no legal heir (e.g. Centre for the Vocational Education of Workers in Industry², a certain number of workers’ universities and their affiliates, etc.). Their tradition was thus revoked, facilities were

1 It is worth mentioning that documents from the period of the legal formation of adult education in BiH (2009–2017) do not contain a single reference to its previous tradition in this country. Instead, they emphasise their rootedness in “international and European principles and standards of adult education” (Council of Ministers of Bosnia and Herzegovina, 2014, p. 120).

2 *Centar za stručno obrazovanje kadrova u privredi*. The Centre in Sarajevo operated between 1960 and 1983. It had three sections: The School of Economics for Adults, The School of Trade and Commerce for Adults, and The Ecological School with the School for Firemen (Education, Science and Culture Collection, Sarajevo Historical Archives).

repurposed, and documentation was not consigned to archives and institutes in all cases. Second, a significant number of archives of individual institutions was destroyed during the 1992–1995 war (Pejić, 2014, p. 131).

However, it is evident that there were not many serious attempts to investigate those testimonials and documents from the past that somehow did survive. This peculiarity is noted by Mavrak (2004, p. 65), stating that it is interesting how historical accounts of preschool, elementary, secondary or university education have been preserved to date, while adult education has remained scattered in individual and fragmented efforts to report on certain current initiatives, lacking systematically collected historical sources and thus serious attempts of a comprehensive and reflexive gaze into its past. In addition, adult education in this country as a university discipline has never achieved differentiation from the dominant pedagogical tradition, making its existence even today limited to introductory courses in Andragogy or Adult Education³. Implications of this are evident in the underdevelopment of discursive knowledge in the domain of adult education, i.e. the low production of research papers and studies.

The main objective of this paper is to provide an analysis of the key processes in the field of adult education in BiH referring to its socialist past and current tendencies dominantly motivated by the country's aspirations for accession to the EU. In the context of the present overall reforms and efforts to integrate into the EU educational arena and espouse global trends, it is essential to analyse local legacies and particularities related to adult education in this country. The paper attempts to answer the key questions: *What is the identity matrix of adult education in BiH, its roots and future goals?*

The focus of our inquiry is on the goals, organisational models and key actors in adult education in the period from 1945 until the present time. Given the lack of systematically ordered scientific knowledge, it seems more appropriate to utilise the *critical discourse analysis* approach than the *history-of-science approach* in the attempt to study adult education in the given context. In addition, critical discourse analysis is “a useful approach for educational researchers who explore connections between educational practices and social contexts” (Mullet, 2018, p. 117). As the object of analysis, we use archives and literature accounts concerning wider social and educational history, from where issues relevant for adult education are extracted, as well as documents on educational policy in more recent times. Methodological limitations stem from ambiguity and a lack of systematically collected data, as well as from the underdevelopment of educational historiography, particularly a low degree of differentiation of knowledge related to adult education.

³ See, for instance, the Curriculum of Pedagogy at the Faculty of Philosophy in Sarajevo: <http://ff.unsa.ba/files/trajno/odsjeci/pedagogija/CurriculumFFSAPedagogijaIciklusEnglish.pdf>.

CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS (CDA) AS THE RESEARCH APPROACH

The concept of discourse in analysing societal structures and processes was introduced in the late 1990s as an alternative to the *history-of-science perspective* (Schriever, 2009, p. xiv), which favours the view of social science development as a progressive accumulation of knowledge and institutionalisation (Giddens, 1991). Instead, as Giddens suggests, development in social systems is something emerging from discursive practices, reflections and actions by key actors in crisis situations in society at large. This new view of the formation of modern social science meant “that much more emphasis than before is placed upon variety and differentiation [...] and the institutionalization of social science is not a simple one-way process, but one which is discontinuous and in which there are sometimes marked reversals” (Schriever, 2009, p. xiv). This perspective, conversely, supports the investigation of adult education not as a scientific discipline, but as a process of structuring knowledge, practices and policies.

For our further discussion, it is essential to define the way in which the term ‘discourse’ will be used throughout the paper. In his seminal works on discourse analysis, Norman Fairclough presents various meanings and contexts in which this term can be used. In the socio-theoretical sense, following the work of Michel Foucault, Fairclough explains that discourse refers to “different ways of structuring areas of knowledge and social practice” (Fairclough, 1992, p. 3). In Foucauldian understanding, discourse stands for historically variable ways of defining knowledge and truths, in which knowledge is socially construed, produced by power effects and equalised with the truth. Discourse is not only description of phenomena that are naturally taking place, nor is it only the way we speak; it actually represents a socio-political arena (Holzman, Newman and Strong, 2004). In this sense it becomes a way of representing various aspects of the world and the processes taking place within it, based on the structure of material, mental and social texts. Critical discourse analysis thus “involves the use of discourse analytic techniques, combined with a critical perspective, to interrogate social phenomena” (Ainsworth and Hardy, 2004, p. 236).

The term ‘critical’ has many meanings, spanning from a common-sense understanding to definitions stemming from the Critical Theory tradition dating back to the Frankfurt School of Sociology. In this paper, ‘critical’ is embedded in the awareness that “politics and education intersect continually, thus making a neutral, objective educational practice impossible” (Rexhepi and Torres, 2011, p. 692). In the methodological sense, such a stance requires self-reflexivity of the inquirer and questioning the ideological background of the given presumptions. Moreover, ‘critical’ in our study bears certain emancipatory aspirations related to the fact that adult education in BiH has been under-represented and under-differentiated from broader social and educational issues, in a way suppressed without the right to claim its own status and visibility. Thus, freeing the voice of adult education from the superior pedagogical and schooling tradition becomes one of the implicit research intentions of this paper.

The general model of CDA, as defined by Mullet (2018, pp. 123–125), includes the seven stages: select the discourse, locate and prepare data sources, explore the background of the texts, identify overarching themes, analyse external relations in the texts (interdiscursivity), analyse the internal relations in the texts, interpret the data.

Given the fact that this paper is among the pioneering attempts in BiH to investigate the links between the past and the present of adult education practiced in this country, and that conveying CDA itself is a demanding process, our analysis gives only generative accounts. More detailed investigations of individual eras, institutions, documents are certainly needed in further studies. In the remainder of the text, we will present the undertaken analytic process through its stages, together with an analytic matrix describing the crucial elements of each stage in the process.

THE ANALYTIC PROCESS

In this paper we are dealing with discourse on adult education in BiH (from 1945 onwards). Our analysis revolves around the attempt to question *what its identity matrix is*. Data sources are archives found in relevant institutes and libraries, documents on education policy, as well as literature concerning broader social and educational issues. The criteria for choosing the sources were the relevance of its content for understanding the position of adult education in BiH and the socio-political conditions surrounding it, and the innovative effect of the given documents – each of them reflected a certain paradigmatic change compared to the previous state. As mentioned earlier, not many original documents have been preserved to date and it was rather challenging to discern which sources should be included. In addition, education as a whole during the socialist period has not been the subject of comprehensive scholarly studies and evaluations, thus remaining somewhere between romanticism and annihilation. In the latter sense, Petrović (2012) notes that as post-Yugoslavian societies undergo the Euro-integration process, their socialist past is treated as a burden that should be resolutely dismissed, without bringing in historical reflexivity, and individual or collective narrations of the past.

In order to reduce subjectivity in selection, we consulted a plethora of additional literature to gain a clearer image of the key events in the social and educational domain, trying to map the main streams and crucial breakpoints. We assume that the selected texts can be illustrative (CDA rejects representativity as a legitimising method) of the process of discourse formation in adult education in the context of BiH. In the next stage we extracted the social and historical conditions that produced the selected texts and concepts (socialist Yugoslavia, education reforms, war destruction, democratisation, neoliberalism, EU accession). The selection and preparation of data sources is presented in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Selected data sources

NAME OF THE SOURCE	RELEVANCE	BACKGROUND
Sarajevo Historical Archives, Education, Science and Culture Collection	The collection contains archives of 2 vocational schools, 16 adult education institutions, such as workers' universities, seminars and evening schools, and 15 cultural, sports or professional unions. All archives are labelled as "incomplete". The collection mainly includes legal and administrative documents, transcripts of meetings, enrolment and completion statistics.	The selected documents cover the entire socialist period, between 1948 and 1989; they are valuable testimonials of establishing and closing educational and cultural institutions and associations.
<i>Program of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia</i> ⁴ (1948)	The document dates from the first years of the socialist regime, when emphasis was on "revolutionary, democratic and socialist transformation [<i>preobražaj</i>]" as opposed to the capitalist order which deprives the working class of goods and assets. The section on education and culture predominantly concerns the education (<i>prosvjećenje</i>) of the masses – the abolition of illiteracy and raising the overall cultural level of the popular masses.	The document represents the first period of the socialist regime, defines its aspirations and goals.
<i>Program of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia</i> ⁵ (1958)	The document represents the "theoretical structuring of the key experiences of the Communist Party" (p. 7), aiming to "open up the widest perspectives of further socialist construction to the workers" (p. 8). It is more detailed and more elaborate than its predecessor in all aspects.	The document elaborates on the new Yugoslavian socialism, after the official split from the Soviet form of socialism in 1952. The school reform of 1958.
Šuvar, S. (1982). <i>Vizija i stvarnost u socijalističkom preobražaju obrazovanja</i>	The book describes the main characteristics of education under the socialist regime and elaborates on the need for overall reform. The author points to the "increasing failure of the school to offer holistic education and to fulfil complex needs in education" (p. 9). The book explains in detail one of the largest education reforms in socialist Yugoslavia, which had a negative effect on the adult education sector.	The failure of economic reform, the search for a new educational model and a response to changing social circumstances. Linking school and factory; a socialist vision of permanent education.

4 Hereafter abbreviated PCPY.

5 Hereafter abbreviated PLCY.

NAME OF THE SOURCE	RELEVANCE	BACKGROUND
Pašalić Kreso, A. (2008). <i>The War and Post-War Impact on the Educational System of BiH</i>	The text represents one of the most comprehensive analyses of destruction during the war in BiH and the politicisation that followed. It is illustrative for its lack of reference to adult education, which was in that time neglected due to much larger problems at lower levels of education.	Attempts of structuring the Bosnian war experience in scholarly discourse. The country had already ratified a number of EU and international documents (the Lisbon Convention, the Bologna Declaration, etc.); lifelong learning is no longer an unknown phenomenon.
The journal <i>Adult Education</i> (2001–2009)	The journal was established on the initiative of the Stability Pact for South-Eastern Europe in a meeting held in Sarajevo in 1999 with EU support. Since its inception, it was financially supported by the German Institute for International Cooperation of the German Adult Education Association (DVV). The journal is still the only medium of scholarly communication in adult education in BiH today.	The period between 2001 and 2010 was an important time for building an education system and saw numerous reforms on all levels. Adult education was marginalised, but some first attempts towards its legal positioning were made.
Legal documents on adult education (2009–2017)	These documents are legal acts passed at various levels of governance (state level, entity and cantons) and they all express the attempt of structuring and systemic regulation of adult education in the country.	BiH is determined on its way to EU accession, and legal regulations in adult education are part of the reform process. All documents declaratively follow the LLL paradigm.

The selected sources reflect that the discourse on adult education in BiH, as seen in this paper, contains four periods crucial to its formation. These periods by no means represent linear and progressive development. Moreover, they sometimes testify to a structural degradation and almost complete absence of any significant activities related to it (e.g. the war and post-war period). Yet from the critical perspective, void and absence are neither released from meaning.

For the purpose of clarity, the further discussion in the text will be based on the four general periods in which it is possible to see the development of discourse on adult education in BiH:

- the era of social construction (post-WWII until the 1970s and the reform of secondary education);
- the reform of secondary education and the educational crisis (early 1970s until 1990 and the official collapse of the socialist regime);
- the war and post-war reconstruction of the education system, the political and social transition (1990–2000);
- the period from the first attempts towards the systematisation of adult education to the laws, strategies and accompanying legal acts (from 2000 until today).

We continue our analysis by identifying the crucial internal features of the texts seminal for the interpretation process. The next step included the extraction of the key concepts of the analysis, the main objectives, key actors and organisational models in adult education during the period in question. These are presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Main objectives, models and key actors

PERIOD	MAIN OBJECTIVES OF ADULT EDUCATION	ORGANISATION MODELS	KEY ACTORS
Era of construction (1945-1970)	<p>The overall objective was the creation of the <i>new man</i> for the new social order. The new man should be liberated from the deviations of capitalism and committed to the common good.</p> <p>The system of adult education as the necessary "addition and extension of a regular school system with the aim of enabling a permanent extension of education and professional training of workers" (PLCY, 1958, p. 222).</p> <p>The ideal of a system of general education accessible to all.</p> <p>Commitment to extending the network of institutions dedicated to cultural instruction.</p>	<p>In the first period people's universities were the dominant forms; gradually, workers' universities started to take over. Institutions and associations dedicated to the cultural instruction of the people were an important medium for educating the masses (press, publishing, radio, television, theatre, libraries, cinemas, houses of culture, people's and workers' universities, cultural educational associations), seminars and evening schools. All education was publicly funded.</p>	<p>Socialist government, Communist Party,</p> <p>institutions of adult education</p>
Reform of secondary education, educational crisis (1970s-1990)	<p>The ideal was all working individuals taking part in the education process throughout their career, and that education and training should be obligatory for all (Šuvar, 1985, p. 47).</p> <p>Attempts to integrate adult education into the regular schooling system, instead of treating it as "catching up with a handicap" (ibid., p. 48).</p>	<p>More emphasis is put on work-based training and learning; companies and factories are recognised as legitimate providers and supporters of adult education; companies participate in financing adult education programmes for their employees.</p> <p>University courses in adult education are introduced at the Faculty of Philosophy in Sarajevo.</p>	<p>Socialist government, Communist Party,</p> <p>institutions of adult education together with schools,</p> <p>industry</p>

PERIOD	MAIN OBJECTIVES OF ADULT EDUCATION	ORGANISATION MODELS	KEY ACTORS
War and post-war reconstruction, political and social transition (1990–2000)	Adult education is marginalised; the infrastructure has been destroyed, ideological links with the previous system have been broken; the schooling of children is a priority in the attempt to recuperate society and education. Adult education activities are sporadic and aimed towards personal development and empowerment.	Individual courses dominantly in foreign languages or IT were organised mainly by local associations supported by international charity missions. Adult education is conducted through informal learning channels.	civil initiatives, local and international NGOs, international community via grants and support
Attempts towards the legal formation of adult education (2000–)	“The goal is the creation of a flexible and democratic education system that will be open and accessible to all, regardless of age, and through which adults will be granted larger and more diverse opportunities for learning and acquiring knowledge for all areas of life and work” (Council of Ministers of Bosnia and Herzegovina, 2014, pp. 119–120). The focus is on participation in learning society, knowledge society and knowledge economy (ibid.).	Formal, non-formal and informal learning takes place; the importance of informal or self-directed learning is strengthened and there is a proliferation in educational offers and providers.	DVV office in Sarajevo, Ministries, NGOs and internationally funded organisations, various private adult education providers, industry

Source: author’s own analysis.

THE ERA OF POST-WWII SOCIETY CONSTRUCTION (From 1945 until the 1970s and the reform of secondary education)

The period following WWII is a time of determined effort in constructing a new society, which leads to modernisation, industrialisation, infrastructural revival and massive structural and political movements in the educational domain marked by new educational institutions.⁶ Establishing a new socialist society as the cornerstone of Communism after WWII in BiH turned out to be a large objective, as well as a challenge. The transformation (*preobražaj*) of people’s minds and, consequently, society as a whole, was the uttermost goal of the socialist government declared in its main programmatic documents.

As stated in the *Program of the Communist Party*, “building socialism is attached to the holistic cultural and scientific development and the overall cultural uprising of the

⁶ The University of Sarajevo was established in 1949, people’s and workers’ universities were operating in every larger populated centre, vocational and technical education gained more prominence than in the earlier period, and the first special education institutions were established.

popular masses” (*CPY*, 1948, p. 25). One of the main instruments of disseminating socialist ideals was the “abolishment of the ideological leftovers of capitalism in the consciousness of wider popular masses and their training in the spirit of socialism” (*ibid.*). It is interesting, however, that the *PCPY* dating from the first socialist period explicitly addresses only the popular masses, or adults, as the final recipients of education and cultural initiatives, while no such determined reference is made to the education of children. Given the context of the analysed document, it is fair to conclude that the dominant goal of the educational strategy in the first decade of the socialist period was precisely adult education. The reason for this might be the fact that at that time education in its various forms was seen as the instrument for creating the *new man* as the *perpetuum mobile* for the *new society* based on the socialist ideals of egalitarianism and workers’ self-governing. The creation of the *new man*, as the main agent of the *new society*, had its ideological connotations, since for the Party, as the chief interpreter and representative of socialism, it was easier to rule a society of *new people*, who were prepared to make various sacrifices for the sake of socialism (Nametak, 2014, p. 437).

In such a context, the government controlled the general provision of adult education, which was to serve ideological goals. Educational needs, as the central issue in adult education, were not the concern of the subjective perceptions of individuals. Instead, they were defined by the society as a whole, by workers’ organisations, unions and other structures of the socialist regime, thus enabling the conservation of the ideological basis that adult education was meant to serve.

In the second socialist decade, however, adult education was explicitly defined as “the necessary addition and extension of the regular schooling system with the aim of enabling the permanent extension of education and professional training of workers” (*PLCY*, 1958, p. 222). Here we encounter the ideal of a system of general education accessible to all as well as the dedication to extending the network of institutions for cultural education (press, publishing, radio, television, theatre, libraries, cinemas, houses of culture, people’s and worker’s universities, cultural educational associations) (*ibid.*, p. 24). However, the three main representative adult education institutions from this period in BiH are the centres for the vocational education of workers in industry, people’s and workers’ universities, and centres for professional training for operating in firms and companies (Hošo, 2007, p. 20). Writing on workers’ and people’s universities in the Soviet Union, the predecessors of Yugoslavian institutions, Despotović (1996) notes that their orientation was in the first place social-political and technical education, which was further differentiated according to the needs of the industry in a given area. Despotović sees their andragogical relevance in promoting some of the key andragogical ideas and principles: permanent education, work-related adult education, self-directed learning, non-formal education, etc.

With the education reform of 1958, elementary education for adults was put under the auspices of primary schools, while the system of general, vocational and cultural adult education was being more precisely elaborated (Šuvar, 1982, p. 28), and included a vast network of various institutions. It is estimated that between 1955 and 1990, there were

56 workers' and people's universities throughout BiH, while today there are only seven (Hošo, 2007, p. 20), operating in rather unfavourable financial circumstances. Presumably due to the proliferation of educational opportunities and the enthusiastic inclusion of the popular masses in various social and educational activities, in the memory of people participating in it, this period is cherished as the "golden age of andragogical work in Bosnia and Herzegovina" (Mavrak, 2004, p. 65). On the other hand, it is criticised for its rigid ideologization of adult education and the fact that it served the goals imposed by the totalitarian regime. Towards the beginning of the 1970s, new education reforms were underway, which resulted in a system of regular vocational and technical education that led to the gradual dissolution of workers' universities – either their transformation into VET schools of secondary education or their complete disappearance.

THE EDUCATIONAL CRISIS

(Early 1970s until 1990 and the official collapse of the socialist regime)

Failures in economic reform from the early 1960s in a certain way announced the need for restructuring the education system. Steps were being made towards a market economy, which was in complete opposition to socialist ideology. On the other hand, unemployment in the country was increasing, contributing to an overall social insurgency. One of the measures undertaken by the Yugoslavian government was massive education reform which led to substantial restructuring in the education system to better serve the new ideological goals. The essence of the new reform, designed by Stipe Šušar, was better linking the school and the factory. His educational vision encompassed permanent education in the sense of bringing the world of work into the education process, clearly distancing itself from the ideas of "Germans and Americans" (Šušar, 1985, p. 119), for "we need *our* permanent education. This means that the world of work is permanently present in education" (ibid.; emphasis ours).

Strong and ideologically defined attitudes such as this one resulted in the opposite effect of educational reform. Instead of bringing the whole system closer to the progressive trends in the global arena, it regressed several steps back. Klipa (2011) notes this, stating that "during the 1970s, when the world in general started to adopt the idea of lifelong learning, the opposite happened in the territory of the former Yugoslavia – the reform of the education system downgraded the system of adult education, which is only nowadays, forty years later, starting to recover" (ibid., p. 185). Eventually, the reform did not succeed in its intention to solve the problem of unemployment, the discrepancy between qualifications and the real needs of the labour market. VET education also did not achieve its desired status, while industry and economy were not capable to accompany the changes in education.

In contrast, it is in this period that adult education gains a new impetus inside the university arena. With the opening of three universities, in Sarajevo, Banja Luka (est. 1975) and Mostar (est. 1977), as well as their corresponding faculties, adult education as a university

discipline gained the initial prerequisites for its development. Officially, the course in Andragogy was introduced in the 1970s at the Department of Pedagogy and Psychology, Faculty of Philosophy, University of Sarajevo (Mavrak, 2004, p. 64). Contributions by Bosnian authors were presented at Andragogical Congresses across Yugoslavia. Yet, looking from the present perspective and in the context of the overall Yugoslavian production, Bosnian andragogical scholarly activity did not achieve larger theoretical and methodological relevance. It is also peculiar that not a single monograph in the field of andragogy was produced by authors from BiH, and the production of master's and PhD theses was also notably modest.

THE WAR AND POST-WAR RECONSTRUCTION OF THE EDUCATION SYSTEM (1990–2000)

The breakup with socialism was turbulent; the collapse of Yugoslavia and the state's struggle for independence were followed by a four-year war which resulted in severe destruction and the politicisation of the education system (Pašalić Kreso, 2008). Activities in adult education going on during this period were most often not organised strictly as adult education activities, but more as charity or therapy work. They were mainly conducted by international charity organisations and were dominantly related to foreign languages, IT courses, or art workshops. A certain number of activities was organised as therapy work to help specific groups of people in facing war trauma. The beginnings of new forms of adult education in BiH can be traced to this period, such as the education of women, humanistic education or education for personal well-being. While the socialist period focused on education to serve society's goals, the post-socialist period aspired to education for individual needs. This was also a time of development in the civil sector, when many organisations also offered education and training. Their programmes were non-formal, meaning that no publicly valid certificate was issued. Instead, these programmes were not meant to serve instrumental goals, but rather the purposes of personal growth, upskilling and socialisation.

The post-war period witnessed a high level of fragmentation in the education system, where several organisational models were installed within a rather small geographical area. According to the Dayton Peace Agreement (1995), which was subsequently turned into the country's constitution, BiH consists of two main entities, the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (FBiH) and the Republic of Srpska (RS), as well as Brčko District. The Federation is further divided into ten independent administrative units called cantons. While education administration is centralised in the RS and is governed by the Ministry of Education of that entity, in FBiH each canton runs its own ministry and passes its own education laws. The Ministry of Education in FBiH only performs a coordinating role and is responsible for creating recommendations and framework laws inside the area under its jurisdiction. Educational matters at the state level have only nominally been managed by the Ministry of Civil Affairs since 2002. However, its role is limited to formulating

framework laws on the state level, ensuring minimum common standards and the prevention of discrimination.

Given such a complex educational administration and a large number of curricular issues in formal education, adult education was not on the policy makers' agenda for almost two post-war decades. Still, some activities were carried out, with NGOs and civil associations, employment institutes and some public institutions which organised education and training for their employees as the main providers (Mavrak, 2004, pp. 68–69). The country entered the process of democratisation in the 1990s instantly, without having previously analysed and evaluated its socialist legacy and the role of education therein.

This resulted in *ruptured memory*, where models from the socialist period were annihilated and disqualified as something incommensurate with the values and aspirations of the new society. In practice, however, this was partially true, for consciousness and competencies of the working generation had been shaped by socialist values, while the new market economy was imposing new demands and norms. Workers that had been educated according to the socialist educational ideal were not needed anymore in the competitive environment of private enterprise, yet the educational infrastructure was not sufficiently prepared to respond to the new demands for skills and competencies. New arrangements were yet to be developed, while previous ones were uncritically neglected and denied.

LEGAL POSITIONING OF ADULT EDUCATION (From 2000 until today)

BiH entered the second decade of the 21st century as a highly politicised, fragmented society, still perceiving itself as going through transition, healing war wounds and resolving conflicts. Education reform has gone hand in hand with overall state reforms, governed by the final goal—bringing the country closer to European integration. Events on the global scene (the Lisbon Process, *Memorandum on Lifelong Learning*, CONFINTEA and UNESCO reports, etc.) gave impetus for rethinking the modes and modalities with which the Bosnian educational scene might catch-up with advanced global and European trends. Adult education in this context was promoted as a novelty, as part of modernisation and Europeanisation processes. With no material traces, vivid memories and cherished legacies from the previous eras, it certainly appeared so. International organisations such as the German Institute for International Cooperation of the German Adult Education Association (DVV), OSCE and Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) initiated a number of processes such as establishing the journal *Adult Education* (2001), trainings in the basic principles of adult education⁷, policy-making processes, as well as lobbying activities at all levels of educational administration in the country.

7 To mention a few of these programmes: *Andragogical School* (initiated in the late 1990s as periodical seminars), *Andragogical Regional Academy*, *Education of Experts in Educational Work with Adults*, *Systemic Education of Adults* (organized by GIZ as a two-year course), *Profiles Pass*, *Subsequent Basic Adult Education*, *STARS*, etc.

The first resolute attempts for the legal positioning of adult education in BiH were made in 2006, when the document titled *Strategic Directions for the Development of Adult Education in BiH* was formulated. Its main purpose was to serve the specific context of BiH, “respecting the experiences of the countries that have a long tradition of institutionalised educational work with adults (Slovenia, Croatia, Serbia, Hungary, Germany, and Switzerland)” (OSCE, 2006, p. 52). Such a formulation in itself is peculiar and illustrative of the mindset that was not aware of the local tradition of institutionalised adult education (which was under Yugoslavia more or less common with Slovenia, Croatia and Serbia, of course, with certain variabilities). Moreover, it also reflects the tendency to copy models and solutions from policies in neighbouring countries. The document was presented as part of the education reform aiming to add the two important elements:

- a new type of educational perspective, which promotes lifelong learning in all contexts,
- the idea of the “knowledge society”, wherein knowledge is widely defined and represents “goods” that are to be displayed at the market (ibid.).

However, due to the complex political situation, the document did not manage to bring about a common adult education framework. On the other hand, in 2009, RS passed the *Law on Adult Education*, established the Institute for Adult Education in Banja Luka and revitalised the Workers’ University. Between 2014 and 2017, other administrative units (the state, FBiH, and nine out of the ten cantons⁸, together with Brčko District) passed their legal documents. Although all these documents are more or less similar in their regulations, they all over-emphasise the local context, the local economy or local infrastructure, even if it applies to a population of no more than 40.000.

Nominally, all documents accept lifelong learning as the main frame of reference,⁹ and are devoted to the concepts of a learning society and a knowledge-based economy, which confidently promise people better employability. To some extent, this is reminiscent of the promises of the socialist era, of achieving “linear national economic development and growth via rational planning and policy action of policymakers within central governments” (Griffiths and Millei, 2013, p. 5).

However, the promotion of these concepts has been seen as part of the modernisation process meant to lead the country towards European and global trends. Yet, just as the legacy from previous times has been unselectively neglected, new trends were being loudly promoted without taking into consideration the necessary changes in context. Laws have made it possible to open private adult education centres and offer adult education as an activity in centres and institutions from the industrial or public sphere. Although a system of accreditation for adult education organisers and providers was introduced, it has had modest results in practice due to the high standards prescribed, and lack of real human

⁸ To date, only the Posavina Canton, the smallest canton, located across the norther border of BiH, has not passed its law on adult education.

⁹ See, for instance, *Strategic Platform of Development of Adult Education in the Context of Lifelong Learning in Bosnia and Herzegovina for the Period 2014–2020*.

and infrastructural capacities for implementing it. In most cases basic adult education as well as gaining first qualification in secondary school are publicly financed, while other forms of learning and education are to be (co-)financed by the participant and the institution. With the proliferation of private adult education centres without the operating quality assurance system in terms of educating professionals, the evaluation of the results and standards in competence acquisition, adult education in BiH might be on its way towards further degradation due to the market race attracting participants ready to pay for certificates.

CONCLUSION

On the basis of the analysis undertaken, we can conclude that the development of the discourse on adult education in BiH was nonlinear, marked by discontinuity and a lack of possibilities for establishing a sense of historical sameness, which is essential for defining its own identity and effectively setting future goals. In the socialist period adult education was instrumentalised for ideological purposes, and institutions and programmes were designed so as to be approachable to a wider range of people. In subsequent times, adult education turns more towards the individual and his/her educational needs with an emphasised urge to establish the system of adult education, realised in legal documents passed on various administrative levels. The orientation towards lifelong learning as the main paradigm and the labour market as the main goal of the 'adult education revival' in the 2000s has certainly had its sometimes neglected side-effects. On the basis of the analysis of the documents of adult education policy, it is possible to identify the promises of adult education as a *panacea* to the many dysfunctionalities in the society, especially those related to existential human needs such as employment or social security. This also resembles the manifestation of 'identity confusion' mentioned earlier in the paper, where the bearers of activities are not in a position to see intricate connections between adult education and complex societal conditions in which the latter determines the effects of the former.

The relationship between adult education's past and present in Bosnia and Herzegovina is deeply polyvalent, which has, to some extent, resulted in an ambivalent view of the socialist past both as a legacy and as a burden. On the other hand, neo-liberal tendencies are urging adult education to be more open towards the market and to better respond to the needs for a highly skilled work force. In the context of an under-developed economy and various problems in political functioning, adult education still remains at the outset of Bosnian educational and political discourse.

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