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# **The meaning of teacher competence in contexts of change**

**In search of missing elements of a knowledge base for  
teacher education – moral purposes and change  
agency**

**Nataša Pantić**

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# **The meaning of teacher competence in contexts of change**

**In search of missing elements of a knowledge base for teacher education – moral purposes and change agency**

De betekenis van docentcompetentie in een context van verandering

Op zoek naar ontbrekende elementen in een kennisbasis voor de lerarenopleiding: morele doelstellingen en omgaan met veranderingen.  
(met een samenvatting in het Nederlands)

Proefschrift

ter verkrijging van de graad van doctor aan de Universiteit Utrecht op gezag van de rector magnificus, prof.dr. G.J. van der Zwaan, ingevolge het besluit van het college voor promoties in het openbaar te verdedigen op maandag 5 december 2011 des middags te 2.30 uur

door

Nataša Pantić

geboren op 20 september 1977  
te Zvornik, Bosnië and Herzegovina

Promotor: Prof. dr. Th. Wubbels

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# Chapter 1: Introduction

*Is it asking too much of preparatory programs to prepare their students for the 'real world' which they must understand and seek to change if as persons and professionals they are to grow, not only to survive?*

The Case for Change:  
Rethinking the Preparation of Educators  
S. B. Sarason, 1993.

## **The thesis' aim and field of study**

This thesis addresses issues relevant for teacher education, an area of educational research described as 'the worst problem and best solution in education' (Fullan, 1993b, p.5) – a reputation gained by the poorly defined knowledge base parallel to the high hopes staked in teachers as change agents. Fullan (1993b) argued that the absence of a strong publicly stated knowledge base for teacher education allowed a continuing misconception that any smart person can teach. Such misconception is a disservice to building a strong teaching profession, especially in times when teachers are more and more judged by the public and expected to take on more responsibilities.

Contemporary conceptions of teacher professionalism (e.g. Darling-Hammond, 2006; Day, 2002; Fullan, 1993b; Wubbels, 1995) invariably point to some of the essential elements of professions: a common clearly formulated knowledge base; moral and ethical commitment to clients, and continuous development of knowledge by members of professions connecting profession-wide knowledge to their unique contexts. Similar elements can be recognised in the definitions of competences that have been commended as appropriate basis for restructuring higher education programmes in Europe, including teacher education (Gonzales & Wagenaar, 2005). They define competence as 'a dynamic combination of cognitive and metacognitive skills, knowledge and understanding, interpersonal, intellectual and practical skills, and ethical values' (Gonzales & Wagenaar, 2005 p. 9). With a view to contributing to an articulation of the knowledge base for teacher education adequate for building the teaching profession, this thesis identifies the gaps in knowledge needed for the changing contexts of the teaching profession, and develops instruments that could be

used in teacher education and development, and for further exploration of this knowledge gap.

Attempts to define the knowledge base for teachers have provided important insights into areas of teacher knowledge such as subject-matter and pedagogical content knowledge, curricular knowledge (Shulman, 1986; 1987), and teachers' practical and personal knowledge (Beattie, 1995; Elbaz, 1983; Verloop et al., 2001) that have informed and continue to inform innovation in teacher education and development programmes. Other aspects of teacher knowledge and understanding seem to remain insufficiently addressed in teacher education, and in research, despite repeated emphasis of their importance. For example, teachers are increasingly considered to need an understanding of how their values and teaching contexts affect their practice (Stockberry et al. 2009), an awareness of their moral impact (Beyer 1997; Hansen, 2001); to be able to manage change (Fullan, 1993b) or even act as 'brokers of contradictory interests' vested in education by its various stakeholders (Fang, 1996, p. 54). Yet, researchers internationally reported that teacher education seems to be slow in adapting its preparatory and development programmes to systematically address such demands upon teachers (Chang, 1994; Goodlad, 1991; Penn, 1990; Sanger, 2008; Willemse et al. 2005; Zgaga, 2006). A dearth of empirical studies that could help articulate an extended knowledge base for teachers and inform the design of relevant components in teacher education has also been reported (Cummings et al., 2007, Willemse, et al., 2008).

The overarching aim of this thesis is to contribute to an articulation of a fuller, more comprehensive knowledge base for teacher education considering the changing contexts of education. For this purpose we explore the popular concept of teacher competence as basis for teacher education curricula seeking to identify and contribute to the understanding of its missing elements for building the teaching profession. In particular we look at the aspects of competence teachers' need in order to be prepared for their roles in relation to moral values and change agency. The thesis also develops tools for further exploration of the manifestation of these elements in teaching practice.

## **Rationale for the study**

Educational change is ubiquitous. Its effectiveness, successes or failures, largely depend on teachers' beliefs and senses of mission (Goodson, 2001; Korthagen, 2004), resilience (Gu & Day, 2007), sustained motivation and commitment to implement the reforms taking into account the contexts in which they work (Day & Smethem, 2009; Goodson, 2001). Teachers' values and moral purposes are found to strongly underpin their commitment and sense of professionalism (Hargreaves, 1997; 2003), and are reflected in some of the frequently reported reasons for entering the teaching profession, such as a desire 'to make a difference in the lives

of students' (Fullan, 1993b). At the same time teachers have been found to be wary of moral issues that can arise in their classes because they have difficulties in dealing with moral dilemmas or conducting moral discussions with their students and colleagues or with parents (Klaassen, 2002). When Hargreaves (1997, p. 13) invited teachers to 'reinvent their sense of professionalism', he suggested this might be achieved *inter alia* by using professional experience and knowledge to influence and direct change, not just comply with it. Yet, even decades after calls have been made for a 'complete redesign' of teacher education in order to connect it to the role of schools and teachers as change agents in the larger society (Goodlad, 1991), it seems to be very difficult to establish such important components of teachers' expertise and identity as integral parts of, not an addition to, the teacher preparation in subject disciplines and pedagogical skills.

The studies conducted as part of this thesis are motivated by a realisation that this absence of critically important elements of teacher preparation is partly due to the lack of conceptual clarity and scant research evidence about the moral and change agency components of the knowledge base for teaching, although there is no doubt that the effort of building the teaching profession is not up to the research alone. Political, economic and social contexts, policy decisions and the way schools and education systems are governed and organised all play a role in shaping teachers' working contexts and either fostering change or maintaining the status quo. Nevertheless, this thesis pursues a suggestion that one of the ways out of this quandary is to be sought by way of educational research and inquiry into the broader conceptions of teacher professionalism which integrate moral purposes and change agency (Hargreaves & Fullan, 1992; Fullan, 1993b). The findings of the thesis' research could inform the development of teacher education programmes towards a more comprehensive preparation of teaching professionals in times of change, as will be discussed in the last chapter.

Below we outline the literature and theoretical perspectives in it that this thesis builds on and contributes to, the research questions, the overall methodology and the foci and methods of the individual studies included in the thesis.

## **Perspectives from the literature**

In line with its multifaceted scope of interest, this thesis combines a variety of perspectives found in the literature that we deem relevant for the studies of the knowledge base for teacher education, including preparation for moral purposes and change agency. At least three streams of the underlying perspectives can be identified, each with its own sub-components:

- 1) perspectives related to the notion of teacher competence in a broad sense (including issues of relation between theory and practice, values in

education and teachers' roles, and reflectivity as essential part of teacher competence),

- 2) perspectives of educational change and teachers' roles in relation to it, needed for an exploration of the meaning of change agency (including the meaning of change in contexts of decentralisation and transition, and comparative perspectives)
- 3) perspectives about teachers' beliefs (including their relevance for articulation of the teacher knowledge base, teaching practice, and the need to make those beliefs explicit in teacher education and development)

Below we elaborate on each of these perspectives and their different components. At the end of this section we illustrate how the thesis combines some of these perspectives in accordance with the respective prevailing themes of its studies outlined later in this chapter.

### *Competence as knowledge base for teachers*

In three out of five studies that make this thesis we use the concept of teacher competence for articulating an extended knowledge base for teacher education. We draw extensively on the critique of narrow, technical or instrumental views of competence as basis for teacher education programmes (Barnett, 1994; Carr, 1993a; Ginsburg, & Spatig, 1988; Harris, 1997), and contrast these views with the more recent attempts to acknowledge the importance of values, attitudes, and personal orientations, alongside knowledge and skills for effective teaching in various contexts (Koster et al., 2005; Stoof, et al., 2002; Tigelaar et al., 2004). In line with these and other authors looking for more holistic approaches to teacher preparation (van Huizen, et al., 2005; Korthagen, 2004) we consider the notion of teacher competence in the light of its potential to contribute to meeting some of the perennial challenges inherent in teacher education theories, such as issues of the relation between theory and practice (Korthagen, 2001; Verloop, et al., 2001) and the links between teachers' subject-matter and pedagogical expertise and their moral purposes (Carr, 1999, Darling-Hammond 2006, Day, 2002).

It has already been mentioned that teacher education has learned significantly in the domains of teachers' subject-matter and pedagogical content knowledge (Shulman, 1987; 2000) and about the interrelationships between teachers' theoretical and practical knowledge (Darling-Hammond, 2006, Korthagen, 2001). While these domains and related theories are considered in this thesis as they make an integral part of the broad concept of teacher competence, a considerably bigger part of the thesis is dedicated to the consideration of those elements of competence that have been identified as missing in the current teacher preparation. For example, the last

two studies focus on conceptualisation and operationalisations of teachers' beliefs about their moral roles.

For considering the moral purposes as part of teacher competence we build on the work of authors who argued that teaching is essentially a normative, moral activity (Campbell, 2004; Carr, 1993b; 2003; Combs et al., 1974; Colnerud, 2006; Elbaz, 1992; Hansen, 2001; Oser, 1986). In an attempt to conceptualise and operationalise teachers' moral values we combine the philosophical perspectives, such as the paternalist and liberal perspectives of teachers' moral roles discussed by David Carr (1993b) and others (e.g. Halstead, 1996b; Halstead & Taylor, 1996), with the work of researches who attempted to investigate empirically how moral values reflect in teachers' sensitivity and judgments (e.g. Husu & Tirri, 2003; Klaassen, 2002), or in the moral messages they convey in classrooms (Jackson et al., 1993). We argue that for building the moral aspects of teacher competence as essential part of teacher preparation these research efforts need to be taken further to show whether and how teachers' moral values are associated with those aspects of teacher competence that have already been proven beneficial for learners. For example, to this end the thesis explores the relationships between the perspectives on moral values such as care and empathy which have been strongly defended as basic elements in teachers' professional morality that define teachers' activity (Cooper, 2010; Enrich et al., 2010; O'Connor, 2008; Noddings, 1984) with the interpersonal perspectives applied to teaching and effective student-teacher relationships (Brekelmans et al., 2000; den Brok, et al. 2004; Wubbels, Créton & Hooymayers, 1985; Wubbels et al., 2006). In doing so we seek to justify the need to establish moral values as integral part of teacher competence, and thus a need to set them more firmly as an essential part of a comprehensive teacher preparation.

Another aspect of teacher competence discussed throughout the thesis is the notion of teachers' reflectivity and its meaning for the preparation of teachers. For this we use extensively the work of authors like Schön (1983) and Zeichner and colleagues (Zeichner, 2006; Liston & Zeichner, 1990; Zeichner & Tabachnick, 1991). These authors contend that teaching is a reflective, rather than a routine practice because it involves linking teaching and education with their wider purposes in contexts, not a straightforward application of theories to defined problems. Teachers' reflections might involve examining the aims and values of distinct educational traditions, teachers' own social and cultural beliefs, understanding of schools as institutions and surrounding communities (Liston & Zeichner, 1990). When discussing the implications for teacher education and development we occasionally point to the relevance of socio-cultural theories (Lasky, 2005; Triandis, 1994; Vygotsky, 1978) emphasizing the interaction of political, social and cultural influences on teachers' sense of identity and purpose, agency, and development. The thesis itself does not study how the broader competences are to be developed in teachers, but rather could inform such future studies.

## *Educational change and teachers*

The perspectives on change in education and in contexts of education and teacher education are pervasive in both topics and contexts of the studies that make this thesis. The very rationale for the exploration of the meaning of competence as the basis for teacher education comes from the claims that teacher preparation needs to change radically to meet the changing demands on teachers in changing contexts of education (Darling-Hammond, 2006; Fullan, 1993b; Hargreaves & Fullan, 1992; Goodlad, 1991). In this regard central to this thesis (also in the order of studies) is a study that examines explicitly the meaning of competence-driven change in teacher education programmes. This study is inspired by the influential theories of change developed by Micheal Fullan (1993a; 2001) and colleagues (Anchan, et al. 2003) suggesting that in order to understand the meaning and implications of change we need to identify the consensual and/or competing forces in the change process. According to Anchan et al. (2003) changing systems are characterised by the coexistence of an old and new 'state of things'. The emergent new state may have common elements with the old one, and the wider apart the two states are, the more difficult the transition process may be. Thus, for the purpose of our study, in order to explore the meaning and implications of the concept of competence for teacher education we sought to identify common or competing elements in the existing and the 'new' or desired ways of preparing teachers allegedly driven by the competences they need for changing education practices. For this we use a theoretical framework distinguishing between the culture of *Didaktik* in which curricular aims are defined as open-ended general directions, and the Curriculum culture in which the goals are pre-defined considering what a student should be able to do or know, with an attempt at a rational evaluation of the degree to which goals have been reached (Westbury 1998, 2000).

At the same time the data for the thesis has mostly been collected in the South-east European countries – the contexts of significant changes in education and society. These contexts are characterised as transition processes, implying market liberalisation, decentralisation of education and other systems, diversification of values, and multiple other transitions that affect education described in the first two studies. In order to contextualise the consideration of change we use the literature situated in these specific contexts where it exists, for example when discussing the implications of transition for educational change and teachers (Anchan et al., 2003; Leclercq, 1996; Radó, 2001; 2010), or changing settings of teacher education (Zgaga, 2003a; 2003b; 2006).

Perspectives on change are also considered in terms of their implication for changing teachers' roles and competence. Fullan's (1993b) call for linking teachers' moral purposes to their change agency implies that the teachers' knowledge base needs to include competence for changing the conditions that affect teaching. This means teachers would need to be prepared not only for implementing scientifically

grounded pedagogies but also for reflecting on socio-cultural purposes of education and schooling, analyzing and changing particular arrangements and working conditions, especially those that might obstruct the implementation of their moral purposes (Fullan, 1993b; Lauglo 1995; Liston & Zeichner 1990). In order to explore to what extent teacher development policies can have an effect on changing perceptions of teachers' roles in educational change we draw on the perspectives of decentralisation in education (Bray, 2003; Lauglo, 1995; Radó, 2010; Slegers & Wesselingh, 1995) and employ cross-country comparisons (Archer, 1989; Crossley, 2002; Kohn, 1989).

### *Teachers' beliefs*

Perspectives about teachers' beliefs make an important part of the overall theoretical framework and the design of the thesis. Reviews in the 90's of the then emerging, albeit small, body of research on teacher beliefs pointed to an important shift in focus of research on teachers from studies on teacher behaviour to an investigation of teachers' beliefs and thought processes (Fang, 1996; Pajares, 1992). Pajares (1992) argued that teachers' beliefs should become an important focus of educational research as they can provide important information for educational practice, but also pointed to some of the difficulties in studying teachers' beliefs, including the meaning researchers give to beliefs. The research on teacher beliefs has expanded recently and provided some very important insights into the ways teaching and learning can be effected by teachers' beliefs, for example about knowledge acquisition, ability, and teacher identity (Beijaard, et al., 2000; Fang, 1996; Fives & Buehl, 2008) which shape their pedagogies and expectations of their students and of themselves. Teachers' beliefs about moral values have been less studied than those about knowledge and ability, although there is some research of implicit theories of morality that has not specifically been applied to teachers (see e.g. Chiu et al., 1997). In the complexities of school and classroom environments teachers' espoused beliefs can differ from the practiced ones (Argyris & Schön, 1978; Ormell, 1993; Fang, 1996). Nevertheless, for the topic of this thesis, the research on teachers' beliefs is important as it breaks the misconception that any bright person can teach as long as they master the subject-matter (Fang, 1996). For example, Taubman's (1992) research depicted how teachers are perplexed regarding 'achieving the right distance' in teacher-student interactions. Yet, unlike for other professionals, learning about appropriate relationships with their 'clients' is not a systematic part of teacher preparation. If certain teachers' beliefs can be shown to be more beneficial for learners than others, then there is no reason why teachers should be left to proceed on impulse and intuition, relying on personal experience rather than on a professional reflection for which they can be prepared in teacher education and development programmes.

The assumptions about the importance of teachers' beliefs are also built in the way the studies of the thesis have been designed to make those beliefs prevalent in



answering the research questions (see the sections on research questions and methodology below).

The rationale for combining these different theoretical perspectives for the purpose of this thesis lies in their potential to complement each other in contributing to the effort of reconceptualising the knowledge base for teachers in line with contemporary demands of the teaching profession. For example, we combine the perspectives of the concept of competence with those about the demands upon teachers brought by the changing contexts of education with the view to identifying the gaps in knowledge and new and emerging issues worthy of investigation and explanation. We combine the perspectives about teachers' beliefs with those of moral values and of educational change in order to study the meaning of these missing elements of competence for the teacher education knowledge base. In addition to that, we explore associations between teachers' beliefs about moral values with interpersonal perspectives of effective student-teacher relationships (Brekelmans et al., 2000; den Brok, et al. 2004; Cornelius-White, 2007; Hattie, 2003) and culturally responsive teaching (Gay, 2002; Villegas & Lucas, 2002). The aim of these explorations is to show whether and how teachers' moral values are associated with those aspects of teacher competence that have already been proven beneficial for learners, for example, with the notions of control and affiliation as the dimensions of student-teacher relationships found to be positively associated with students cognitive and affective outcomes (Brekelmans et al., 2000; den Brok et al., 2004; den Brok & Levy, 2005; Wubbels et al., 2006). To this end the thesis develops new instruments for investigation of the identified missing elements of the knowledge base for teachers and starts to apply them in contemporary settings with the view to informing future research.

## **Research questions**

The overarching aim of this thesis is to explore the meaning of teacher competence in contexts of change with the view of identifying and contributing to an understanding of its missing moral and change agency elements for a more comprehensive teacher education. For this purpose, the thesis' five studies address the following research questions:

- 1) What are teachers' and teacher educators' perceptions of the structure of teacher competence and of the importance of its different aspects?
- 2) How do these perceptions differ across countries with similar educational and societal contexts, but different decentralisation arrangements?

- 3) What are teachers' and teacher educators' perceptions of the substance of competence-driven changes in teacher education curricula? Can they be interpreted using a framework distinguishing between the *Didaktik* and Curriculum cultures?
- 4) How are teachers' beliefs about moral values and their roles in inculcating them reflected in teachers' reasoning about ethical dilemmas that arise in school lives? Can these reflections be used to fully operationalise different conceptions of moral roles?
- 5) Do teachers' beliefs about their moral roles manifest in teacher practices and if so how? What is their association with teacher-student relationships and cultural competence?

## Methodology

In the overall thesis we employ a mixed methods approach (a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods) to answer the above questions. For example, to study teachers' perceptions of competence we use quantitative methods in the first two studies and then seek to explore those perceptions in more depth by means of qualitative enquiry in the third study. In contrast, for the questions about teachers' beliefs about moral values we first engage in an exploratory qualitative enquiry in the fourth study whose data we then use to develop items of an instrument used in the quantitative method employed in the fifth study. Quantitative methods enabled us to identify the prevalent perceptions of larger numbers of teachers, while the use of qualitative methods offered deeper insights into the beliefs underlying those perceptions. The rationale for combining qualitative and quantitative methods was that this enabled us to build such underlying beliefs into the design of the instruments for qualitative explorations, as well as to deepen our understanding of the findings of such explorations.

With the view of contributing to an articulation of a fuller knowledge base we greatly relied on teachers' own perceptions following the belief in the need for building the teaching profession from inside and the arguments put forward by Fullan (1993b) and Hargreaves (1997) that in order to thrive, change efforts need to consider teachers' own beliefs. In all studies we investigate teachers' perceptions. Alongside these, in the first three studies we investigate also the perceptions of other relevant practitioners such as teacher educators and student teachers. The last study compares teachers' perceptions with those of their students.

The specific methods and approaches of each study are outlined below.

## **Outline of the thesis and its studies**

The thesis is made of this introductory chapter followed by five chapters reporting five studies and a concluding chapter discussing the overall findings of the thesis. Although the five studies broadly aim at answering one of the five research questions each, they are also interrelated and complementary since they build on one another and sometimes shed additional light on the issues discussed in another study. Below we present the aims, foci and methods of each study as well as the connections between them.

The first study reported in Chapter 2 examines teachers' perceptions of the importance of a number of teacher competence statements with the aim of identifying areas of expertise that make up a competent teacher and testing an instrument for the exploration of teachers' beliefs about these areas of expertise. This pilot study has been conducted on a sample of 370 teachers and teacher educators in Serbia who responded to a questionnaire developed on the basis of the statements of teacher competence promoted in the European context, such as statements used in the European Tuning Project (Gonzales & Wagenaar, 2003; 2005) to describe the aims and outcomes of teachers education curricula, and similar lists of statements developed in the Netherlands and Scotland. We identified four components underlying teachers' perceptions of competences relating to (1) values and child rearing; (2) understanding of the system of education and contribution to its development; (3) subject knowledge, pedagogy, and curriculum; and (4) self-evaluation and professional development. The teachers in the pilot study rated all but the 'system understanding and development' area of competence as very important, with the competence in the area of 'self-evaluation and professional development' rated as of the highest importance. This preliminary findings to some extent informed the cross-country design of the second study with the view to approximating to what extent these findings were dependant on the policy context of Serbia or generalisable to other countries in similar circumstances.

In the second study presented in Chapter 3 we applied the instrument developed in the first study to a larger cross-national sample with a view of further exploring the practitioners' perceptions of the structure and importance of teacher competences and comparing them across countries with similar transition contexts, yet with different decentralisation arrangements. In the second study 2,354 teachers, teacher educators, and student teachers from Bosnia & Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia, Montenegro, and Serbia responded to the questionnaire developed in the first study. The four components of competence identified in the first study were also found in the second study. We compared the responses about the importance of these four components across the five countries and discussed the findings with regard to their implications for reforms in teacher education policies and programs in contexts of decentralising education systems. More specifically, we investigated whether the varying approaches to decentralisation and varying levels at which

education systems are governed in these countries had an effect on teacher's perceptions of the importance of different aspects of teacher competence. In both the first and the second study we outline the contexts in which competence-based changes to teacher education are considered, including the global drives for accountability, structural changes in higher education in Europe, and the transition contexts common to the countries compared. We also consider the differences between these countries in size, levels of location of educational decision-making, and continuity of reforms. The theoretical frameworks of the concept of competence are presented in the first two studies and to some extent in the third study.

The third study presented in Chapter 4 explores the perceptions of the substance of competence-driven changes in teacher education curricula by testing the possibility of using a framework distinguishing between the *Didaktik* and Curriculum cultures to interpret the perceptions of the substance of these changes. The pedagogical culture of *Didaktik* originating from Germany is assumed to be inherent in continental European teacher preparation, while the Curriculum culture is supposedly spread in the Anglo-Saxon world. In this study qualitative data about the perceptions of competence-driven changes in teacher education curricula has been collected in 30 in-depth interviews with teacher educators, student teachers and their school mentors in Serbia, as we wanted to explore in more depth what each of the aspects of competence meant for these participants in contexts of changing teacher education. The data was coded into five groups of categories relating to the perceptions of the four aspects of competence identified in the first two studies, and of the changes in teacher education curricula related to these four aspects. The perceptions in each group of utterances were interpreted in terms of their alliance with *Didaktik* or Curriculum cultures. In this Chapter we discuss whether the framework could be used as a continuum i.e. to what extent the utterances aligned with the two cultures coexist in the individual responses.

The fourth study reported in Chapter 5 further explores teachers' perceptions of their roles in dealing with values and moral issues as part of competence that teachers evaluated as very important in the first three studies. The third study showed that despite general agreement about the importance of values and moral roles there was a great deal of uncertainty among teachers, teacher educators and student teachers about justifying and promoting certain values as more worthwhile than others. The fourth study explores different conceptions of teachers' moral roles aiming to develop an instrument for assessing teacher beliefs about those roles that could be used in further research and in teacher development. Paternalist, liberal and social-relativist conceptions of teachers' moral roles were operationalised using data collected in three focus group interviews with teachers from Bosnia & Herzegovina and Serbia discussing cases of school practices involving value-laden issues. Initial items for construction of a questionnaire for teachers were generated from teachers' utterances to ensure ecological validity.

In the fifth study reported in Chapter 6 we use the items generated in the fourth study to develop a questionnaire for investigating teachers' beliefs about their moral roles. Using the data collected on a sample of 93 teachers from Bosnia & Herzegovina, Croatia, Serbia and the Netherlands, reliable scales could be constructed for two out of the three conceptions considered in the fourth study – paternalist and liberal. We discuss in Chapter 7 possible reasons why it was not possible to construct a reliable scale measuring social-relativist perceptions of teachers' moral roles. In the fifth study we used the paternalist and liberal scales to explore whether teachers could be grouped according to their beliefs about their moral roles and how such beliefs reflect in their practice. With the view to the thesis' aim of contributing to the understanding of the values and moral purposes as essential elements of teacher competence, we sought to link teachers' beliefs about these elements to the teaching practices known to be beneficial for learners. For this purpose we investigated the associations of teachers' beliefs about their moral roles with the dimensions of student-teacher relationships (i.e. levels of control and affiliation in teachers' and students' perceptions of relationships), and with the components of teachers' cultural competence (i.e. metacognitive, cognitive, motivational, and behavioural cultural competence). We also explore associations between the dimensions of relationships and the cultural competence. In both the fourth and fifth studies we discuss the implications of the findings about teachers' beliefs about moral values for teacher education and development and future research.

Finally, in the concluding Chapter 7 we summarise the findings of the individual studies and the overall findings of the thesis in response to the research questions above. We discuss the meaning of these findings in relation to research and policies of teacher education and development, and point to the directions and methodological remarks for future research.

## **Chapter 2: Teacher competence as a basis for teacher education – Views of Serbian teachers and teacher educators<sup>1</sup>**

Around the world reforms in teacher education have been oriented towards making the preparation of teachers more functional for development of competencies they need in practice. At the same time, much criticism has been voiced about such reforms jeopardising the fundamental humanist traditions in teaching, based on beliefs about non-instrumental values of education. In this study we examine teachers' perceptions of importance of competencies and explore their implications for teacher education. The study has been designed to ensure that voices of teachers and teacher educators are heard in identification of areas of expertise that make up a competent teacher. We conducted a principal component analysis of the response of 370 teachers and teacher educators in Serbia to a questionnaire about the importance of a number of aspects of teacher competence. We identified four components underlying teachers' perceptions of competencies relating to 1) values and child-rearing; 2) understanding of the education system and contribution to its development; 3) subject knowledge, pedagogy and curriculum; and 4) self-evaluation and professional development. Teachers perceived all but the second area of competence as very important, with the fourth scale perceived as of the highest importance. Implications of each area of competence for teacher education are discussed and conclusions are drawn for the development of teacher education curricula.

### **Introduction**

The initial preparation of teachers in Serbia and other Western Balkan countries has been critiqued in two recent studies conducted in this region (Rajović & Radulović, 2007; Zgaga, 2006). Two major inadequacies have been identified: a) teacher preparation is predominantly, if not exclusively, focused on knowledge in a

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subject area, and b) even there, education lacks an emphasis on ‘practical experiences in relation to theoretical contents, topics and competencies’ (Zgaga, 2006, p. 27). The latter study reported that most respondents from teacher education institutions believed it was time for a comprehensive reform of their curricula, with a view toward enhancing the national education systems and improving their compatibility with European and international trends (p. 12).

Internationally, reforms in teacher education face the challenges of the decentralisation and ‘marketisation’ of education systems, as well as issues of quality and accountability that relate to these processes (Gilroy, 2005; Zuzovsky & Libman 2006; Moon, 2007). Many of the concerns expressed in the region’s studies about the adequacy of current teacher preparation are, in fact, shared by many countries that have been implementing similar reforms of teacher education during the last twenty years. These concerns include issues of balance between the theoretical and practical knowledge necessary for teachers. According to Moon (2007), they also include the tension between concern for the status of teachers or the academic status of teacher education on the one hand, and pressures to integrate training into classroom practices on the other. The latter comes from the ministries, schools and sometimes parents, whereas teacher educators are concerned about the status of teacher education given the ‘very different expectations of the academic world’, namely that teachers be strong in research and have a solid theoretical basis for their work (p.9). However, despite the ongoing debates about the balance between theory and practice in curriculum design, the integration of practical training does not have to be at odds with the professional status, as this is not the case with other professions such as medicine and law (*Ibid.*). In both previously-mentioned studies from the region, it has been suggested that a solution may lie in orientating teacher education towards the development of key competencies in subject and educational matters with provisions made for practical experiences (Rajović & Radulović, 2007, p. 431-432; Zgaga, 2006, p. 27). Similar changes have been implemented elsewhere and have proven to be highly problematic. However, different governments have adopted different approaches to tackling the adjustment. In some countries (for example, Canada and England), new regulatory frameworks were introduced with minimal consultation with practitioners, while in others (such as the Netherlands) a consensus-building approach was adopted rather than a regulatory one (Moon, 2007). Taking into account Serbia’s aspiration for European integration and the prospects of teacher education convergence in Europe (Sayer, 2006), the experiences of other countries represent a source for learning about the advantages and disadvantages of this proposed line of change. Later, we will describe how we used the lists of competencies adopted in Scotland and the Netherlands as the basis for the development of the instrument for this study, as we believe in the essential importance of teachers’ involvement in the process of competence definition.

In this paper we first explore the factors that prompted actors in teacher education to consider competencies as bases for teacher education in the given context, which are to be taken into account when change is considered (Fullan, 1993a). Next, we discuss the much-debated concept of teaching as a set of competencies, and adopt a broad definition of a competence as inclusive of knowledge and understanding, skills and abilities, and beliefs and values. We then present the procedure and findings of the empirical study conducted with 370 teachers and teacher educators in Serbia. The study informs us about their views regarding the areas of expertise necessary for teaching professionals, as well as those regarding the competencies each of the areas should contain.

## **Background**

As in many other places, the question of competencies as a basis for teacher education in Serbia has been prompted by questions about teacher quality in light of new student demands, the changed nature of the knowledge needed by teachers, and the balance between accountability and professional autonomy (Wubbels, 1995; Cowen, 2002; Day, 2002). We outline below some of the issues involved with each of the questions, which are also shared by teachers, teacher educators and education policy makers elsewhere (Moon, 2007).

### *Growing demands, lower status*

Across the world, community expectations for teacher quality appear to be rising at the same time as the status of teachers is falling (Moon, 2007). This seems to be the case for the teachers in Serbia as well.

According to Kovács-Cerović (1999), in the former Yugoslavia after World War II, quality public education was an important social goal of the new state. Teaching was regarded as a profession with strong normative and even authoritarian connotations (Closs, 1995) and teachers enjoyed reputable status and awards for the services they rendered. There existed a general sense of trust in teachers and an image of the education system as successful. However, this image was a result of the outstanding individuals operating within the system, and none of these features were ever institutionalised (Kovács-Cerović, 1999).

The situation changed drastically over the course of the 1990s with a decline in the quality of education, and, in many places, lowered criteria for entry into the profession due to teacher shortages. Some indication of the decreased social and material status of teachers is evident in the drop in the proportion of the gross national product allocated for teachers' salaries, as well as brain drain and negative selection for the profession (Ministry of Education and Sports of the Republic of Serbia, 2001). Leclercq (1996) found that the general perception of under-



performance in the education system, linked to the teaching profession's loss of prestige, has had an even bigger effect (than salaries) on teachers' morale and motivation—and has ultimately lowered the quality of teachers' performance.

Most parents no longer unequivocally trust governments, schools or teachers. For teachers as professionals, a distinction is increasingly made between the concept of rendering service to the government (their main employers) and that of rendering service to students and parents ('the real clients' of the education system) (Wubbels, 1995). It is not uncommon for teachers to face competing challenges as they strive to meet the expectations of these two kinds of clients (p. 245).

In the post-Yugoslav context, governments tend to see education primarily as an arena for building and preserving national identities. While many parents endorse this idea as well, they are also naturally concerned about their children's preparation for adulthood and the world of work. Trust in teachers' ability to deliver around these two essential goals of education has been seriously undermined. The changing world of work entails the need to impart 'new' knowledge and skills, as well as the values and attitudes that the majority of the practicing teaching force has never had a chance to acquire (Closs, 1995). To a large extent, this is due to the fact that teacher education has traditionally been unduly disconnected from the lower-level educational institutions that comprise its labour market. Gilroy (2005) foresees that schools as the marketplace for teachers will have more and more say in the recruitment and training of teachers. Studies of teacher education in the region invariably suggest that it is deficient in its capacity to prepare future teachers for the practice of teaching (Closs, 1995; Rajović & Radulović, 2007; Zgaga, 2006; Vizek Vidović, 2005).

### *Knowledge base for teachers*

Teachers need to possess a body of knowledge and be able to apply that knowledge to a variety of situations within their professional setting. This body of knowledge involves knowledge of subject matter and pedagogy, including pedagogical content knowledge (Shulman, 1987), as well as a philosophical, historical and sociological framework for educational ideas (Cowen, 2002). The assumption that teachers need a strong knowledge base has always been and today remains present in the region, as in many other places (see for example Van Horebeek, 1992; Wubbels, 1992). Since the 1970s, higher schools for teacher preparation have been undergoing the process of 'upgrading' to the university sector, which is seen as more adequate for the lengthy education in academic disciplines that underpins the teaching profession.

As a rule, the education of classroom teachers in Serbia (who teach 6-11 year olds in lower grades of primary school) presently includes: academic knowledge in a subject area, pedagogical content knowledge for individual subjects, pedagogy, developmental psychology, the sociology of education, and general subjects such as

philosophy, economy and sociology. The preparation of subject teachers (teaching 11-17 year olds in upper primary and secondary school) varies significantly across faculties. At some faculties teaching sciences that are school subjects, students can choose from the outset a department of teacher education, while at others students have the possibility of selecting a teacher education track—or a set of compulsory or optional teacher-track courses—later in the course of their study. Both subject-specific and pedagogical content are approached from their internal academic disciplines rather than with an emphasis on their educational value. Many of the institutions that educate subject teachers do not require teaching practice, and when they do, the practice is based on informal arrangements with volunteer schools without a clear curriculum or organised mentoring (Kovács-Cerović, 2006, p. 505-507).

This sort of teacher preparation has mainly been criticised for its view of professional practice as applied formal knowledge, which fails to recognise the formative influence of practice in the use and creation of knowledge (Harris, 1997). Many studies of teachers reveal that their professional activity involves encountering specific situations that do not occur as defined problems (Schön, 1983). Defining the problem is, in fact, one of the most difficult tasks of professional activity and, therefore, is not a matter of the straightforward application of theoretical knowledge (Verloop, Driel & Meijer, 2001). We now know that teachers' knowledge is inseparable from their beliefs, personal values and attitudes (Day, 2002; Fives & Buehl, 2008), despite the fact that it is difficult to grasp the workings of such intuitive elements of teacher cognition and decision-making. Today, many authors contend that teacher education should provide some kind of exchange between theory and professional expertise (Verloop *et al.*, 2001). Moreover, recent theories argue that 'realistic' teacher education starts with student-teachers' experiences rather than with the theories to be found in literature (Korthagen, 2001). The concept of the teacher as a sole source of knowledge and information is apparently outdated. Although subject and pedagogical knowledge about themes and problems, also referred to as academic knowledge (Rajović & Radulović, 2007), continues to represent an important part of a teacher's professional portfolio, it is by no means sufficient for good teaching. The missing element of teacher education in the region is the knowledge of how to identify and deal with problems in a concrete setting—a combination of cognitive and practical knowledge, skills, experiences and strategies, and also emotions, values, motivation and attitudes, referred to as competencies (p. 419).

### ***Accountability and autonomy***

In socialist Yugoslavia, education, like all other social and economic activity, was governed by so-called 'self-management'—a specific mechanism of self-regulation that allowed for a large degree of professional autonomy and made workers responsible for determining the policy of an institution (Georgeoff, 1982). It

also meant that professional accountability was to be achieved by means of self-regulation and, in Harris' words, 'that only fellow professionals could make judgments upon others' (1997). In practice, however, it meant the self-regulation of individuals rather than regulation by professional groups. Teachers were seen as autonomous professionals whose performance was primarily tied to classroom tasks. Yet individual autonomy was significantly constrained by centrally prescribed curricula and by the use of *the* textbook. In practice, teachers by and large applied the same 'chalk and talk' style routines (Closs, 1995).

Increasingly, the work of teachers everywhere is observed critically by the public (Zuzovsky & Libman, 2006). In many countries, reforms are directed at the decentralisation of decision-making and at an increase in schools' accountability. Questions have been raised about the possible role of governments in quality control, suggesting almost universal practices of setting 'standards' or 'benchmarks', including determining what characteristics quality teachers should possess (Cowen, 2002; Harris, 1997; Zuzovsky & Libman 2006; Storey 2006). Education professionals in the Western Balkans share the view that teaching should be a 'regulated profession' (Zgaga, 2003b, p 10). The question is who should be in control of such regulation. It is not uncommon for governments to be substantially involved in control over entry into the profession, through procedures of licensure or the accreditation of teacher education institutions. In Serbia, a commission charged with the development of teacher standards has recently been formed by a state agency for the development of education (the Ministry of Education and Sports of the Republic of Serbia, 2008). At the same time, higher education institutions in the country, including those for educating teachers, are in the process of implementing the changes brought about by the Bologna process, so that traditionally content-driven curricula are now to be based on student learning outcomes and competencies to be defined in consultation with future employers. In the case of teacher education programmes, employers are to be found primarily in schools.

In many countries, government-set 'standards', conceived of as 'what teachers should know and be able to do' (Zuzovsky & Libman 2006, p 37) have largely affected state-mandated programmes of teacher preparation, leading them to focus on the 'competencies' teachers need in practice. However, the way governments have attempted to 'regulate' the issue of teacher quality has provoked a good deal of controversy in many places (Day, 2002; Elbaz, 1992; Zuzovsky & Libman 2006; Lasky, 2005; O'Connor, 2008). Campaigns for more governmental control over curricula, assessments and teacher standards have been criticised for bringing about the practice of 'teaching to the test', and for jeopardising teachers' professional autonomy and opportunities to exercise discretionary judgment, as well as for endangering the moral and social values essential to teachers' identities (Day, 2002, p.683). To avoid these sorts of pitfalls of external standard-setting, it is paramount that professional groups set the requirements for group membership and be the primary source of the standards defined as professional competencies (Wubbels,

1995). This is especially true given the number of studies that conclude that reforms incongruent with teachers' perceptions of their professional identity are likely to fail (Beijaard, Verloop & Vermunt 2000; Day, 2002; Lasky, 2005; Verloop *et al.*, 2001).

In conclusion, the idea of competence as a basis for teacher education curricula—in Serbia and elsewhere—has been prompted by the challenge of meeting the new demands of students as education clients, by the insufficiency of academic knowledge alone as a knowledge base for teachers, and by moves to increase teacher accountability. The suggestion that competencies should form the basis for the standards of the teaching profession and those of teacher preparation (Rajović & Radulović, 2007, Zgaga 2006) is conveniently in time and in tune with Bologna-led curricular reforms at teacher education institutions and the establishment of the national commission for teacher standards in Serbia. The international debate about the competence and standards movement seems to suggest that consultation with the teaching profession is critical to a meaningful definition of teacher competencies (Beijaard *et al.*, 2000; Day, 2002; Lasky, 2005). This is why, in the present study, we involved teachers and teacher educators in an examination of perceptions of teacher competencies.

Even those who criticise the development of standards support the value of a frame of reference for the improvement of teacher education and professional development practices (Koster *et al.*, 2005; Zuzovsky & Libman, 2006). For example, Zuzovsky and Libman (2006) explain that they question the value of standards, not as guidelines, but as controlling devices (p. 48). Koster *et al.* (2005) make it clear that their 'professional profile' is meant to support teacher and institute development, rather than being directed towards the creation of an assessment system (p. 160). Similarly, the present study was designed to serve as a frame of reference for setting the aims of teacher education curricula. At the same time, it can serve as a system for orienting teachers towards commonly-set standards that reflect the values of their cultural and political setting, while still allowing them personal choice under these standards (van Huizen *et al.*, 2005).

## **The concept of competence**

In order to identify an appropriate direction of change in teacher education, one must start by considering what makes up teacher expertise and what is the nature of good teaching. These are seemingly simple and universal questions. Yet, it has proven to be intensely challenging to formulate satisfactory answers to guide teacher preparation policies and programmes. Hargreaves and Fullan (1992) suggest that answers to these questions should be sought in the practices of educational research and inquiry. Extensive research on the problem has offered a variety of views and theories. Here, we will consider more closely one possibility suggested in the given

context—the concept of teaching competence and its implications for teacher preparation. We use the term ‘competence’ as more general than ‘competency’ except when we refer to the particular competencies comprise teacher competence.

The understanding of the concept of a competence in the literature has undergone significant changes since its introduction into discussions of teaching ‘expertise’. Originating from behavioural psychology, the concept of teaching competencies as a set of ‘discrete’, ‘theory-free’, practical skills spread within many countries beginning in the late 1960s. The idea was that observable events in teachers’ performance in practice could serve as a basis for defining them as ‘competent’ teachers. Accordingly, adequate teacher preparation had to be effective in shaping future teachers’ performance in their daily teaching (described in van Huizen *et al.*, 2005). The belief underlying this paradigm was that teaching expertise could best be mastered by applying a range of methods or class management techniques learned from experienced teachers. In some countries, this brought the concept of teacher *education* closer to that of *training* focused on the development of skills relevant for teaching. This paradigm of competence-based teacher education weakened the university influence on teacher education and encouraged the establishment of partnerships with schools as important providers of such ‘practical’ teacher preparation. In England, for example, as much as 80% of teacher training is based in schools (Stephens *et al.*, 2004).

It has been much debated whether this idea of competence can form a valid basis for curriculum development in higher education in general (Barnett, 1994) and teacher education in particular (Korthagen, 2004). Barnett argued that competencies conceived as observable behaviours in professional contexts are inadequate guidelines for curriculum-building for two main reasons. In his opinion, higher education is not only (or at all) a matter of developing competencies for a particular occupation; in addition, the idea of competencies as predictable behaviours presupposes predictable situations in the world of work, if their development is to be a valid object of higher education.

The first argument perhaps has less pertinence to teacher education, which universally exists for the purpose of educating teachers for their particular occupation. Moreover, in most countries, teacher preparation aims to educate for teaching in a particular national education system. What other than the requirements of the teaching occupation could guide the education of teachers? Admittedly, competencies identified by practitioners should not be the only determinant of what is worthwhile in teacher education. This is why, in our study, teacher educators (alongside teachers) represent another important source for validating our frame of reference for teacher education. Yet, teaching practice is the core element of such education. This view is shared by most teacher educators in the Western Balkans, according to Zgaga (2003b): 49,3% find the employability of their graduates ‘important’ and 36,2% find it ‘very important’. Only 14,5% think it is not important. However, only a quarter of the institutions reported that they have

cooperated with teachers' professional associations or other stakeholders in the process of restructuring their curricula (p. 19).

Barnett's second argument is much more pertinent to the question of the development of competencies as a valid change in direction for teacher education: 'Today's competencies are not tomorrow's' he says (Barnett, 1994, p 73). Competent professionals will be able to form a view of their own profession and its changing relationship with society's demands. This means teacher education must equip future professionals with much more than an ability to use particular teaching techniques. It requires more knowledge and a deeper understanding of the historical, political and economic context for a particular education system—comprehension that might not necessarily manifest itself in an observable, immediately assessable way. Many have rightly criticised the focus on teacher competencies understood as behaviours for privileging those instrumental aspects of teaching that can be subjected to tests of immediate use and applicability (Cowen, 2002). This focus has thus underestimated the aims and values underlying teaching, leaving little room for one to personally interpret one's role as a teacher or the specific demands and conditions of a given situation (van Huizen *et al.*, 2005). In stronger attacks, competence-based teacher education has been criticized as 'technicist' and as ultimately leading to teachers' deprofessionalisation and deskilling (Harris, 1997). As we share the view that to attain theoretical and contextual knowledge continues to be an essential skill and activity within the teaching profession, in our instrument, we formulated many of our statements about competence as 'knowledge' and 'understanding' items. We understand 'knowledge' to include both formal theories and teachers' practical knowledge, as well as the way in which these two components interact with each other and are interpreted and developed with the help of the other (see also Verloop *et al.*, 2001).

Moreover, we adhere to a humanist view of teaching as an ethical, normative profession presupposing that something of value is to be taught and concerned with improving people (Arthur *et al.*, 2005; Carr, 1993b, Day, 2002; Elbaz, 1992; O'Connor, 2008). As such, the profession is bound to encounter problems that are not and cannot be resolved in value-neutral, technical terms. Carr argues that 'moral conclusions are only contestable in ethical terms and as such they involve profound reflection on those diverse and competing conceptions of what is worthwhile that have been entertained by human beings' (Carr, 1993a, p. 20-21). He suggests that we need to explore the relationship between the practical or technical and the ethical or moral as we think about the nature of professional knowledge and conduct. Day (2002) purports that this humanist tradition of viewing education as being of intrinsic value and having 'core moral purposes' is central to teachers' motivation, commitment and effectiveness. He argues that this tradition, which is fundamental to teacher identity, is being challenged by the new results-driven technical culture of teaching focused on classroom management, subject knowledge and pupil test results (p. 682- 684). The results of an empirical study conducted with teachers

suggest that an erosion of teachers' ethical sensibilities is occurring in Europe (Klaassen, 2002). While teachers by and large see child-rearing and morals-focused tasks as an important part of their job, they are wary of moral issues that can arise in their classes because they have difficulty dealing with moral dilemmas or conducting moral discussions with their students and colleagues or with parents (Klaassen, 2002, p. 155-156). This is why we included a great number of items dealing with moral issues and commitment to values.

Critics of competencies have also argued that a good teacher cannot be described in terms of isolated abilities, since such fragmentation disregards aspects of teachers' personality that play a crucial part in effective teaching—such as teachers' professional identity and their beliefs about the mission of teaching (Combs, Blume, Newman & Wass, 1974; Korthagen 2004). For example, Combs *et al.* suggest that 'teachers who feel their profession has dignity and integrity can behave with dignity and integrity themselves' (Combs *et al.*, 1974, p 25). Moreover, teachers' knowledge and personal beliefs are seen as inseparable (Day, 2002; Fives & Buehl, 2008), although beliefs refer to personal values, attitudes, and ideologies (Verloop *et al.*, 2001). Like Fives and Buehl (2008), we take the term 'belief' to refer to an 'individual's judgement of the truth or falsity of a proposition' (p. 2). A number of items in the instrument refer to precisely these aspects of teachers' identities.

In conclusion, we adopted a broad view of the competent teacher and a concept of competence as inclusive of knowledge and understanding, skills and abilities, and teachers' beliefs and moral values. A similarly broad understanding of teacher competence is visible in a few other recent competence frameworks (Koster *et al.*, 2005; Tigelaar *et al.*, 2005). They adopt a concept of competence as 'an integrated set of personal characteristics, knowledge, skills and attitudes that are needed for effective performance in various teaching contexts' (Stoof, Martens & van Merriënboer, 2002; Tigelaar *et al.*, 2005). Defined in this way, competencies represent a potential for behaviour, and not the behaviour itself (Korthagen, 2004; Koster *et al.*, 2005). Our instrument includes few statements about personal qualities. We share the belief in the importance of personal qualities in any attempt to formulate a complete image of a good teacher. However, in contrast with competencies, qualities 'come from the inside' and correspond with deeper levels of change (Korthagen, 2004, p. 86). Therefore, they are commonly discussed in light of their relevance to selection procedures, rather than to curricula aim-setting and design (Combs *et al.*, 1974; Stoof *et al.*, 2002). Moreover, personal qualities are implied by teachers' knowledge, skills, values and beliefs. For example, an 'ability to establish and maintain positive human relations with pupils, parents and colleagues' requires, besides familiarity with strategies of effective communication, an eagerness to involve oneself with others and a respect and desire for positive human relations. A teacher who is successful in this way will have the interpersonal skills necessary for such an endeavor and will believe that they are worthwhile to

develop in their pupils as well. This is why we adopted the definition of competence that incorporates the notion of an ‘integrated set’ or ‘combination’ of knowledge, skills, values and beliefs.

## Method

This study followed the methodology of the European *Tuning* project (Gonzales, & Wagenaar, 2005), in which competencies were evaluated by staff and students at post-secondary institutions and employers. In the area of teacher education, this means that competencies are to be defined in consultation with teacher educators, student-teachers and school practitioners (primarily teachers and head teachers). In this way, the main actors are given an opportunity to assist in shaping a frame of reference for professional competency and are therefore more likely to make use of it (Koster *et al.*, 2005; Fives & Buehl, 2008; Zgaga, 2006, p 39). As mentioned the study, its findings could be used to inform teacher education curriculum development and as a self-orientation tool for teachers.

### *Instrument*

Data were gathered via an anonymous questionnaire. In an introductory section, participants were acquainted with the aims of the study and asked to participate by filling out the questionnaire. The introductory question was formulated as follows: ‘*After initial teacher education a teacher should demonstrate:*’ and this was followed by a list of statements about different aspects of teacher competence (see Appendix A).

Originally, a list of 51 statements about aspects of competence was adapted from the list used in the European *Tuning* project and similar lists from Scotland and the Netherlands. The *Tuning* questionnaire for academics lists 15 subject-specific competencies in education studies and 15 subject-specific competencies in teacher education. Based on the theoretical notions of the teaching profession that were presented in the theoretical framework for this paper, these include the knowledge, abilities and attitudes relevant for dealing with values and contexts in education, as well as for subject teaching and learning (Gonzales & Wagenaar, 2003, p. 285-286). In the European *Tuning* project, subject-related competencies had been identified following discussions about the state of the profession, conducted in particular fields of study by teams of experts in the related areas who came from different European countries. Such broadly-defined competencies commonly agreed upon at the European level were used as the starting point for the development of the instrument. In addition, examples of lists of teacher competencies in individual countries were considered with a view toward making the items more concrete and clearer to practitioners.



In the Netherlands, an effort has been made to involve teachers to a substantial extent in the standard-setting exercise based on a set of competencies relevant for interpersonal communication, social and moral values, teaching subjects and methods, and organisational abilities. This framework also distinguishes between four different contexts in which teachers play these roles: with students, with colleagues, within their environment and with themselves (Storey, 2006). The Scottish framework of competencies proved particularly relevant, as it addresses the same themes that were identified as problematic in the context of education in the Western Balkans (Zgaga, 2006, p. 17). 48 competencies from the Scottish list pertain to four areas of competence: subject matter and content of teaching; classroom competencies (organisation, teaching, learning and assessment); school and the education system; and values and attributes related to professionalism (The Scottish Office, 1998).

Our using the different lists covering similar areas of competence permitted us to consider a variety of formulations in an attempt to compile the selection of items that would best reflect the local context at play. The final list of competence statements represents a combination of formulations from these sources. Special care has been taken to strike the right balance between making the wording concrete enough to avoid ambiguity and yet keeping the formulations broad enough to avoid making the list too detailed and too prescriptive (Korthagen, 2001). For example, the original suggestion of an item formulated as ‘Understanding and implementation of principles of decentralisation’ was deemed too general; it was reformulated first to ‘Readiness to participate in school development planning using self-evaluation instruments’, and then to ‘Readiness to participate in school development planning’ without specifying how this is to be pursued.

The respondents were able to give their opinions on the importance of each statement by indicating on a four-point scale how important they found it (1-not important, 4-very important). They also had the option of adding competencies that they found important which were not offered. At the end of the questionnaire, participants were asked to provide some general data about themselves (type of position, location and level of the institution they teach at, sex, age, experience and participation in professional development programmes). Verloop *et al.* (2001) suggest that certain common perceptions of competence are shared by all teachers, while some may be shared by large groups of teachers—for instance, all those teaching at a particular level (with pupils of a particular age group). We also wanted to explore possible differences in the perceptions of younger and less experienced teachers, since they graduated recently from presumably updated teacher education programmes (Zgaga, 2006). Since the feminisation of the teaching profession is said to affect its status (Basten, 1997), we also wanted to explore any aspects of competence that might be evaluated differently by women than by men.

Sets of questionnaires were sent to all the institutions along with an accompanying letter addressed to the head teacher or department head which asked

for the questionnaire to be distributed among staff members. Responses were usually sent from the institutions in the stamped envelopes that had been provided. Some teachers returned questionnaires directly to the researchers by post or email.

### Participants

1250 copies of the questionnaire were sent to kindergartens, primary and secondary schools and post-secondary institutions at which teachers are educated in Serbia. In selecting the institutions, we took care to cover all of the 26 administrative regions in Serbia and to proportionally include participants from different levels of education, parts of the country (Vojvodina and Central Serbia), urban and rural settings, classroom and subject teachers in primary schools, and vocational and academic-subject teachers in secondary schools.

In total, we received 370 responses: 74 from kindergartens, 112 from primary schools, 131 from secondary schools and 53 from higher education institutions. The response rate was roughly 30% of the total sample. A chi-square goodness-of-fit test indicated that the number of responses received from different levels of educational institutions differed significantly from the representation of teachers at these levels in the actual population of Serbia<sup>2</sup>,  $\chi^2(3, n=332) = 73, p=.00$ . Notably, teachers from primary schools were underrepresented in the sample, while pre-primary and secondary teachers were somewhat overrepresented (see Table 2.1). The results were analysed separately for different levels of education.

Table 2.1. Number of respondents (n) compared to population (N) by level of institution and by sex

Level of institution			% of women	
	n	N <sup>a</sup>	n	N
preprimary	74	9 306	100%	
primary	112	46 900	90.1%	70.2%
secondary	131	27 298	76.2%	62.0%
tertiary	53	10 987	51.1%	
Total	370	94 491	81.6%	

<sup>a</sup>National statistics from 2006.

Among the participants from primary schools, 42 (38%) were classroom teachers and 46 (41%) were subject teachers. Fifty-one (39%) secondary school respondents taught in schools with an academic curriculum (*gimnazije*) and 64 (49%) in schools with a vocational curriculum. Other respondents were school head teachers (9), pedagogues (17) and psychologists (14). The participants from post-

<sup>2</sup> According to the 2005 statistics of the National Statistical Bureau of the Republic of Serbia

secondary education institutions included 23 (43%) professors and 21 (40%) assistants, 6 students only and 3 respondents who did not specify their positions.

A total of 271 (81.6%) respondents were women. The percentage of women amounts to 100% of the participants from kindergartens, 90.1% of those from primary schools and 76.2% of those from secondary schools. Among the respondents from post-secondary institutions, women comprised 51.1%. Compared to the actual proportion of women teachers within the different levels of education, their representation in the sample from primary and secondary education institutions is significantly different:  $\chi^2 (1, n = 223) = 27, p = .00$ , with women being overrepresented.

The questionnaires came from all parts of the country, with a somewhat higher rate of response from the northern autonomous province of Vojvodina (which made up 33% of the sample), but without a significant difference between this proportion and the region's representation in Serbia's overall teacher population:  $\chi^2 (1, n = 362) = 3.8, p = .05$ .

The average age of the respondents was 41 years ( $SD = 9.7$ ), with the youngest being 23 and the oldest 64 years old. The respondents had, on average, 15 years of teaching experience ( $SD = 9.9$ ), with a range from less than 1 to 40 years. Although the country's teaching population is known to be aging, it is not possible to say how representative the sample is in this regard, as data about teachers' age and experience is not included in the national statistics.

### *Analyses*

The data were processed using the statistical programme SPSS, version 14. We ran factor analysis to establish the principal components underlying the competencies. A multivariate analysis of covariance was used to explore how participants' sex, the grade level they teach, and their years of experience relate to the way they evaluate the different aspects of competence.

The data were established to be fit for principal component analyses after we ran the initial correlation matrix (with a few coefficients of .3 and above) and tests of sampling adequacy (the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin value was .915) and sphericity (Bartlett's Test revealed a significance of .000). The data were first subjected to exploratory factor analysis with a view toward determining the number of factors to be extracted. Because the Kaiser-Guttman criterion of extracting factors with eigenvalues greater than one revealed more factors than we deemed conceptually meaningful, we also inspected the screen plot to determine the number of factors to be retained. Having decided to extract four factors, we conducted a principal component analysis for the four-factor solution, followed by an oblimin rotation in order to aid in the interpretation of factors. We chose non-orthogonal rotation under the assumption that factors were likely to be related.

Forty out of 51 items had pattern coefficients above  $\pm 0.40$ . In three cases, items loaded above  $\pm 0.40$  on more than one factor. Fourteen items were removed on the bases of factor loads above  $\pm 0.40$  and no loads on more than one factor. Items related to the four components were then used as a basis for constructing four scales. Thus, four scales resulted in a total of 37 items. The reliability coefficients of the four scales and correlations between the scales were computed, as well as the mean scores for the four scales and individual items. The reliability coefficients proved satisfactory (Cronbach's Alpha  $> 0.70$ ) for all four scales (see Table 2.2). The correlations between scales ranged from 0.45 to 0.57. A paired samples t-test was used to evaluate the significance of the differences between the scale means.

In interpreting responses about the scales and individual statements, we characterized those that received an average value equal to or higher than 3.5 points as *very important*, between 3 and 3.5 points as *important*, and less than 3 points as *of less importance*.

The data were analysed using a multivariate analysis of covariance to examine the relationships between scale scores and respondents' sex, the level at which they teach, and their years of experience. Preliminary checks were conducted to ensure that there was no violation of the assumptions about sample size, normality, linearity, outliers, homogeneity of variances, homogeneity of regression slopes and reliable measurement of the covariate, or multicollinearity. Because of the strong positive correlation between age and experience ( $r=0.88$ ), only experience was used as a covariate in the analyses. As no significant interaction effects were found between the variables, we could safely interpret the main effects of each of the three variables (different levels of education, sex, and experience) on the scores on the four scales used as dependent variables. Where significant differences between groups were identified on the combined dependent variables (Wilks' Lambda  $< .05$ ), results for dependent variables were considered separately using a Bonferroni adjusted alpha level of .013. Where a particular fixed variable or covariate had a significant effect on a separate dependant variable, post hoc tests were conducted to establish where the differences were.

## Findings and discussion

The response rate of around 30% can be considered satisfactory given that practitioners in Serbia are not accustomed to being asked to participate in such research. Many of the respondents expressed satisfaction about the opportunity to assist in formulating teacher competencies, finding this effort important and useful. A vast majority of the participants in this study seemed to favour the assumption that teacher education should be based on competencies teachers need in practice (some explicitly stated so in the space provided for comments). For some participants, the very experience of filling out the questionnaire seems to have represented an

important opportunity for professional reflection. Here are some of the comments: ‘This was an opportunity to conjure up some of the competencies I have not thought about and have not been developing’; ‘The list includes all important competencies and it is imperative that those being prepared for this profession acquire them through education’; ‘Reform is much needed and I hope this research will help’; and the like. However, these findings should be interpreted with caution. It is possible that those of the opposing opinion did not fill out the questionnaire at all. It is not unusual that those educators willing to participate in research are the ‘reform-minded’ ones. Some indication of this factor can, perhaps, be found in the proportion of the sample that has participated in professional development programmes: 74% of all respondents have participated in at least one programme, and many have participated in as many as twenty or more.

As a result of the analyses of the principal components underlying the items, the following four factors have been established as distinct areas of teacher expertise: 1) values and child-rearing, 2) an understanding of the system of education and contributions to its development, 3) subject knowledge, pedagogy and curriculum, and 4) self-evaluation and professional development. Four scales have been constructed, each containing the items relevant to it. In Table 2.2, the mean scores for the four scales are presented in total and sorted by the levels of education at which the respondents work. The table also shows the reliability of each scale expressed in Cronbach’s alpha, the number of items, and a sample item that loaded highly on that scale.

The first striking finding about the means for the four scales is that the respondents evaluated the competencies concerning one’s understanding of the education system and contribution to its development as lower in importance (at the threshold between *important* and *less important*) than the other three areas of expertise, which have all been evaluated as *very important* (see Table 2.2). There are statistical differences between all pairs of scale means except between the first and the third scale. The eta-squared statistics show an effect size ranging from -0.09 for scale 3 (M=3.57, SD =0.32) compared to scale 4 (M=3.63, SD =0.34) to - 0.58 for scale 2 (M=3.04, SD =0.48) compared to scale 4 (M=3.63, SD =0.34).

Table 2.2. Scales, reliabilities, number of items, sample items and mean scale scores by level of institution

Scale	Cronbach's Alpha	Number of items	Sample item	Mean scores				
				pre-primary	primary	secondary	higher	Total average
1 values and child rearing	0.88	13	Commitment to racial equality by means of personal example, through curricular and other activities	3.61	3.65	3.55	3.35	3.56
2 contribution to education system development	0.85	9	Readiness to participate in public debates on educational topics by following and participating in the work of relevant bodies	3.04	3.13	3	2.89	3.04
3 subject knowledge, pedagogy and curriculum	0.77	10	Ability to develop linguistic and numeric literacy of pupils	3.48	3.66	3.57	3.5	3.57
4 self-evaluation and professional development	0.72	5	Ability to critically reflect on and evaluate one's own educational impact	3.58	3.7	3.62	3.6	3.63

The multivariate analysis of covariance showed that experience, level of education and sex all have significant effects on the participants' evaluation of the four scales (see Table 2.3). The results sorted by the level of education at which the participants work can be seen in Table 2. Statistical significance has been reached for the first scale. All the respondents from pre-primary institutions are women, but the effect of sex is that women at all other levels rated all four scales higher than men, the difference being significant for the fourth scale. The effect of experience is significant for the third scale, which more experienced teachers rated higher than did less experienced ones, but the differences are small. To illustrate, the mean score for this scale by teachers with more than 28 years of experience is 3.70, while for those

with less than 2 years of experience, it is 3.43. Below, we discuss the results for each of the four scales not only in terms of the mean scale scores, but also referring to individual items that make up the scales.

Table 2.3. Results of multivariate analysis of covariance: sex, level of education and experience

source	F	df	sig.	partial eta squared
experience	3.82	4	0.005	0.05
level	2.83	12	0.001	0.04
sex	4.16	4	0.003	0.05
level*sex	1.07	8	0.386	0.01

### *Values and child rearing*

The statements pertaining to the values and child-rearing scale received an average rating of *very important*, with small differences in ratings by respondents from different levels of education. Nevertheless, the difference between the responses by higher education affiliates and all other respondents is statistically significant. Unsurprisingly, the ‘upbringing’ aspects of education, and competencies that relate to children’s well-being, are rated higher at the lower levels of education.

On the one hand, this can be seen as confirmation of the disconnect between practitioners’ sense of ‘real’ needs in school practices and teacher educators’ academic approach to the questions that matter in education. However, it is also possible that respondents misinterpreted the question of competencies a teacher needs to acquire after their initial study, construing it as the question of the competencies someone teaching at their level needs to have.

In this scale, the statements referring to the teacher’s role as a moral agent received the highest score; they also received the second highest rating on the whole list after the competence referring to subject knowledge. Their rating was particularly high among respondents from primary and secondary schools. Clearly, these respondents adhere to the view of teaching as a normative profession. This confirms our assumption about the necessity of integrating social and moral purposes in the definition of competence, and it suggests that teacher formation needs to raise awareness about the profession’s normative connotations and prepare one to deal with the value-driven aspect of the job. The high evaluation of teachers’ moral role also indicates that the narrow view of competence as technical performance is likely to face opposition in Serbia, as it did elsewhere (Carr, 1993a, Day, 2002). Rajović and Radulović (2007) have reported that teachers in Serbia did not have sufficient ethical education as part of their initial preparation (p. 16). Zgaga (2006) and Vizek Vidović (2005) have suggested that new teacher education

programmes need a greater emphasis on knowledge about and skills in child-rearing. The large number and high rating of items in the ‘values and child-rearing’ scale of the instrument developed in this study reinforce this need.

Other statements in the first scale that refer to teachers’ commitment to racial and gender equality, environment and health protection were judged as *very important* by all respondents but those from higher education institutions. Teachers’ ability and readiness to build pupils’ awareness of their rights and obligations as participants in a democracy were deemed *very important* only at the primary level (the score being at the threshold). The importance of the competencies referring to special educational needs (e.g. ‘an ability to recognise and adequately respond to pupils with learning difficulties’) was judged inversely proportionally to the level of education, with a lower rating among higher-level respondents.

### *Contribution to education system development*

The elements of competencies in the second scale concern teachers’ understanding of the national framework for the development of the education system, as well as their capacity and readiness to participate in its improvement, and their cooperation with the local community and the like. The low rating of statements in this scale was often followed by comments on the present state of the national framework as lacking a meaningful strategic direction of development. Many participants expressed their dissatisfaction with the lack of continuity in education reforms and the general marginalisation of education as a policy area in need of greater attention.

A common explanation for this finding would be that ‘old habits die hard’. Used to their role as classroom professionals operating between children and subjects, teachers do not immediately recognise their role in contributing to systemic developments. Although much dissatisfaction has been expressed about the present state of the nation’s education system, the responsibility for ‘fixing’ it is seen as being in the hands of an external authority—notably the government—instead of being an integral part of the teaching profession. This is not surprising given that there are few opportunities to study education policy at higher education institutions (Kovács-Cerović, 2006). No faculty of educational sciences exists in Serbia, and there is practically no way to gain a specialisation or a masters or doctoral degree in such fields as education policy, education economics, comparative education, etc. Yet, there seems to exist among educators an interest in pursuing masters and doctoral degrees in such areas, or in conducting research in cooperation with university staff (p 517). Any substantial change in the direction of the proclaimed decentralisation of decision-making processes in education critically depends on building teachers’ awareness and competence in precisely this domain (Fullan, 1993a).



### *Subject knowledge, pedagogy and curriculum*

As could be expected, amongst the competencies in the third scale, the participants assigned high importance to the knowledge and practical skills involved with subject matter and pedagogy. In this scale, the competencies evaluated by respondents at all levels as *very important* include as highest-rating: ‘sound knowledge in a subject or a group of subjects’; ‘an ability to design, prepare and implement lessons in a way that provides continuity and progression in learning’; ‘grasp of practical aspects/skills involved with a subject or a group of subjects’ and the like.

Among the statements related to the curriculum, those concerning its implementation were rated higher (*very important* in kindergartens and primary schools) than those referring to its evaluation and adaptation. For obvious reasons, competencies pertaining to knowledge and curriculum are less important to respondents from pre-primary institutions that are primarily concerned with care.

Experience also had a statistically significant effect on this scale. An inspection of the scale means for different levels of experience showed that teachers with more experience found this scale’s items more important. At the same time, these are older teachers who were educated in a tradition that highly valued subject disciplines and pedagogy (Kovács-Cerović, 2006).

Generally speaking, the long-standing valuation of subject knowledge and pedagogic skills involved with teaching remains dominant in the responses in this scale. This could be interpreted as underlining participants’ commitment to the view of adequate teacher preparation as *education* rather than *training*, implying that future teachers should continue to receive solid scholarly ‘foundations’. At the same time, it is noteworthy that respondents opted for a few formulations of competencies that involve practical skills and abilities which involve behavioural as well as cognitive skills. Similar perceptions were reinforced by the competencies that respondents added to the offered list as being of particular importance. They include founding one’s work on contemporary theories of teaching and learning, the diversification of teaching methods, and yet also ‘ability and readiness to fight the false pedagogic modernism’.

Arguably, the existing programme of teacher preparation only partly accommodates the development of competencies related to knowledge and skills for particular subject matter. Subject instruction is dominant in the education of both classroom and subject teachers (Kovács-Cerović, 2006). Considerable time is also dedicated to pedagogical content knowledge in most programmes. However, it is strictly tied to the specific teaching subject rather than invoked as part of education science, leaving little room for cooperation among teachers of different subjects in contributing to general educational aims (p. 517). The statements that received the lowest rating in this scale refer to precisely those areas that are not covered or are

insufficiently covered by the present pre-service preparation of teachers, such as use of information technologies in teaching and learning (*Ibid.*, p. 507)

One way of interpreting the rating of competencies in this scale is that the respondents themselves were educated in the tradition based on the German concept of 'Didaktik' as a body of theories that teachers use to implement the school programme, as opposed to the notion of 'curriculum' in the Anglo-Saxon tradition (Westbury, 1998). The latter entails a notion of curriculum based on statements of educational aims and content, and often also emphasizes methods by which teachers are to achieve those aims. It also implies the existence of an authoritative agency that sets the aims and ensures their implementation. In the case of 'Didaktik', the state's programme-making consists of an authoritative selection of traditions that must be embedded in teachers' work and thinking (p. 47-48). The neo-humanist concept of education as 'building' or 'upbringing' and the related concept of 'Didaktik', which assumes a high degree of professional autonomy for teachers are inherent in the teacher education system in Serbia. At the same time, many of the education reform movements put forth an interest in building accountability into the system and setting standards of 'professionalism'. In this context, the distinction between the concepts of 'Didaktik' and 'curriculum' and the potential tensions or complementary points between them merit closer consideration in research on teacher education.

### *Self-evaluation and professional development*

The statements in the fourth scale were evaluated as the most important ones at all levels. They include teachers' ability to critically reflect upon their educational impact and value system, as well as a readiness to take the initiative and take responsibility for their professional development. They also encompass statements referring to building positive human relationships and to dedication to the profession and children. The perceived importance of statements referring to the evaluation of one's educational impact increased with the respondents' level—which is again, perhaps, indicative of the degree to which educators at higher levels value academic achievement above the 'upbringing' dimensions of education process. The only statistically significant difference in this scale was between men and women, with the latter rating it higher.

Most of the items added by the respondents suggest aspects of teacher competence which could be added to this scale. They include qualities such as 'an ability of empathy', 'healthy personality', 'an ability to fight for the esteem of the teaching profession', 'awareness of the profession's importance and responsibility' and other similar suggestions. The list includes only some aspects of personality pertinent to self-criticism and professional identity, on the assumption that people can be helped to develop these over the course of teacher preparation. Korthagen also mentions the importance of personal qualities such as creativity, trust and

courage (Korthagen, 2004). An attempt to create a comprehensive account of a 'good' teacher would undoubtedly need to include these and other personal qualities. The importance of personal attributes for teaching merits further investigation, especially with regard to its implications for the development of teacher education.

## **Conclusions**

The objective of this study was to examine teachers' perceptions of the importance of teacher competencies as a basis for teacher education in Serbia, where competence-based reforms are being considered. For this purpose, we used a questionnaire consisting of 51 statements that examined teachers' perceptions about the importance of competencies. The responses of 370 teachers and teacher educators from Serbia were collected. A principle component analysis of the responses revealed four underlying factors related to the following areas of teachers' work: 1) values and child rearing; 2) understanding of the education system and contribution to its development; 3) subject knowledge, pedagogy and curriculum; and 4) self-evaluation and professional development. The first product of the study therefore was an instrument that reliably measured teachers' perceptions in each of the four domains.

At the same time, the findings inform us about the views of teachers and teacher educators in Serbia regarding the importance of a number of aspects of teacher competence related to these four areas of teacher expertise. Generally speaking, the respondents welcome the competence base for teacher education and an opportunity to participate in the definition of teacher competencies. However, bias is possible in that more conservative educators might have not responded to the study. In addition, some caution is needed in the interpretation of our results about the differences between levels of education, because our sample is not completely representative of the Serbian population of teachers and teacher educators.

The lowest-rated scale relates to teacher participation in the development of the national system of education, involving aspects of competence that cover precisely the areas that are not included in the present education of teachers. The perceived low importance of such competencies has been linked to the problematic state of present national strategies and the marginalisation of education as a policy area, but also to the inherent low level of participation in system improvement. Building teachers' competencies in this domain is of critical importance for re-establishing the high status of teaching profession.

The highest-rated scale is the one concerned with teacher identities and professional development. With regard to the further study of teacher education, this dimension deserves particular attention in light of the question raised earlier—in which aspects of teacher selves, and in what ways, can people realistically be helped to develop over the course of teacher preparation?

Judging by the overall rating of the individual statements, those valued highest concerned: teachers' expertise in the subject (knowledge and practical skills), their ability to serve as a role model to students, their commitment to the profession and children, their capacity to maintain positive relationships with all actors concerned, and their responsibility for their own professional development.

Respondents from the higher levels of education seemed to value academic achievement above the 'upbringing' dimensions of the education process, such as children's personal and social development. We have interpreted this as the product of the long-established disconnect between schools and teacher education programmes predominantly based on subject disciplines. For future research, the idea of building partnerships with schools and teacher education providers should be further considered as a way of diminishing this gap, as well as a way of helping student-teachers develop practical skills.

In our study, we understood the concept of 'competence' as inclusive of teachers' knowledge base, skills, values and beliefs. However, just a glance at present teacher preparation standards reveals that the existing programmes seem to satisfy only this first element of competence—and that only partly. Some of the respondents specified that the knowledge base for teacher education should be grounded in modern theories of teaching and learning. The results of our study send a clear message regarding the development of teacher education curricula in Serbia: it needs to build in elements that will be conducive to teacher competence in increasing their contributions to system improvement and better preparing them to deal with ethical issues. It also needs to seek to integrate educational and practical aspects of subject knowledge, and develop personal attributes relevant for teachers.

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## Chapter 3: Teacher Competence as a Basis for Teacher Education: Comparing Views of Teachers and Teacher Educators in Five Western Balkan Countries<sup>3</sup>

Orientation of teacher preparation toward the development of competence has recently been suggested as a worthwhile direction of change in teacher education in the Western Balkan countries. In this study, 2,354 teachers, teacher educators, and student teachers from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia, Montenegro, and Serbia responded to a questionnaire about the importance of four groups of teacher competencies: (1) self-evaluation and professional development; (2) subject knowledge, pedagogy, and curriculum; (3) understanding of the system of education and contribution to its development; and (4) values and child rearing. We compare the responses about the importance of these four groups across the five countries. The results are discussed with regard to their implications for reforms in teacher education policies and programs in contexts of decentralizing education systems.

### Introduction

Researchers examining teacher education in the Western Balkan countries (i.e., Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia, Montenegro, and Serbia) have argued for the development of alternatives to the overly theoretical and discipline-focused preparation of teachers (Vizek Vidović 2005; Zgaga 2006; Rajović & Radulović 2007). However, moves to reform teacher education toward competence development have proved problematic in many places. For instance, in the European context (e.g., Denmark, England, Netherlands, Portugal, and Scotland) some scholars have raised concerns that the focus on competence undermines the traditional keystones of teachers' professionalism, such as their moral and social purposes and discretionary decision making (Day et al. 2007). The situation is further complicated because in teacher education the "evidential" knowledge that is useful for practice is seen to be derived from scientific disciplines (Carr 1999),

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though educators' decisions are value-laden and linked to wider social purposes, economy, human development, and well-being (Carr 1999).

At the same time, the Western Balkan countries are engaged to various degrees in decentralizing their education systems (Radó 2010). Certain forms of decentralization increase the autonomy of schools,<sup>4</sup> which in turn may lead to increased professional decision-making authority for teachers, both at the subject-specific and more general levels of educational design (Slegers & Wesselingh 1995). In such contexts decentralization implies the need for an extended competence base for teaching professionals, as teachers are not only entrusted to implement a scientifically grounded pedagogy, but also to reflect on socio-cultural purposes of education and schooling (Lauglo 1995; Carr 1999). Moreover, such reflection need not focus only on implicit social and cultural frameworks. Rather, it should involve analyzing and changing particular institutional arrangements and working conditions, especially those that might obstruct the implementation of their aims (Liston & Zeichner 1990).

Based on observations of their counterparts' experiences in other countries, teachers seek to avoid the undermining of their professional status (Beijaard et al. 2000; Day 2002) by participating in the determination of the competencies that will guide teacher education. We can learn more about this process from comparative analyses of Western Balkan countries, given their commonly inherited traditions and similar reform moves in teacher education tied to European integration and the Bologna processes<sup>5</sup>. Relevant here is a study of teacher perspectives on competence conducted in Serbia (Pantić & Wubbels 2010). The authors found that teachers' perceptions of the importance of competence in "system understanding and development" was significantly lower than their perception of the importance of other sets of competencies identified: (1) "self-evaluation and professional development"; (2) "subject knowledge, pedagogy and curriculum"; and (3) "values and child rearing." The competence in "system understanding and development"

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4 The literature on decentralization (e.g., Bray 2003) distinguishes different types of decentralization that allow varying degrees of autonomy to schools and teachers. One important initial distinction is between functional and territorial decentralization. The former refers to the dispersal of control over particular activities, such as when a ministry of education delegates some of its functions to parallel bodies (for instance, to operate examination system). The latter refers to a downward distribution of control among the geographic tiers of government and is commonly understood to include three forms:

- (1) Deconcentration is the process through which a central authority establishes field units staffing them with its own officers.
- (2) Delegation implies a stronger degree of decision making at the local level, but powers basically still rest with central authority which has chosen to "lend" them to the local one.
- (3) Devolution is the most extreme form of decentralization in which powers are formally held by local bodies, which do not need to seek higher-level approval for their actions.

5 The Bologna Process is a European initiative based on cooperation between ministries and higher education institutions in 46 countries. It seeks to create the European Higher Education Area, which will enhance comparability of degrees and quality assurance processes, as well as mobility of students and staff. All countries in this study are signatories of the Bologna Declaration (1999).

involved broader understanding of the context and system of education and teachers' willingness to engage in educational development beyond their subjects and classroom pedagogies. For example, this area of competence included items such as "readiness to participate in public debates on educational topics," "ability to participate in projects in field of education," and "understanding national priorities in education" (see complete list of items in Appendix A).

Serbian teachers explained that their lower perception of the importance of competence in system understanding and development stemmed from the problematic state of national education strategies and marginalization of education as a policy area.<sup>6</sup> However, one might question this explanation given that competence in system understanding and development has traditionally been neglected in teacher education in the region, and that the level of participation of teachers in system improvement in centralized education systems historically has been low (Archer 1989; Lauglo 1995). Building awareness and competence to make contributions to education system development seems essential for teachers to become genuine agents of change (Fullan 1993b). The question remains whether under different circumstances teachers from Serbia would perceive having competence in the area of "system understanding and development" to be more important.

Péter Radó (2001) describes the educational transition in Central-Eastern Europe in the context of political, ideological, and cultural "alignments" of new elites in the post-communist period. According to Radó, some of the most important aspects of the transition involve processes of democratization, market-oriented economic changes, re-stratification of societies, redefinition of role of the state, and increased diversity of values. He argues that due to the complex nature of educational transition in the region decentralization should not be regarded in a narrow, technical sense—as a mere change of "location" of decision making—but rather as the "extent to which central governmental responsibility is shared with other actors at lower levels" (Radó 2001, 64).

International literature on decentralization in education points to difficulties with imprecise use of the term "decentralization," which can mean different things in different institutional, political, and cultural contexts (e.g., see Bray 2003; Mukundan & Bray 2004). For example, Slavko Gaber (2000) suggested that discussions on decentralization cannot be productive if conducted in the same manner in small and big countries, or in countries with fragmented education systems like Bosnia and Herzegovina.

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<sup>6</sup> Indeed, comprehensive reforms of the education system that were launched after the fall of the regime in October 2000 came to a halt with the change of government in 2004 (Fund for an Open Society – Serbia 2006).

### *Similarities and differences in national contexts in the Western Balkans*

Our study examines perceptions of teachers, teacher educators, and student teachers from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia, Montenegro, and Serbia. One reason for choosing these countries for a cross-national study was the linguistic similarities among them. We assumed that this similarity would contribute to linguistic and conceptual equivalence in the statements of competence, which would make a common interpretation of the questions by all participants more probable (Kohn 1989; Wubbels 1993). Another reason is that in each of these countries government officials—as well as teachers and teacher educators—stress the importance of reforming teacher education (Zgaga 2006) and have indicated an interest in evidence about teachers' perception of competence (Council of Europe 2010).

Moreover, these countries share many similarities in their political past and inherited centralized systems of education, as well as similar reform efforts to decentralize their systems of education and implement the Bologna process at their higher education institutions. The countries studied here inherited systems of education from Yugoslavia, which had different subsystems covering different levels of education. Non-compulsory pre-primary education used to serve mainly as a nursing and care provision for pre-school children. Primary education was obligatory for children from age six and a half or seven to sixteen. It used to be implemented through two educational cycles: grades 1 to 4 (organized around classes in which all subject areas were taught by the same teacher) and grades 5 to 8 (organized around subjects taught by different subject teachers). Secondary education was provided through four-year general secondary education in *gymnasias* (secondary schools teaching general academic curricula and enabling entry into university education), four-year vocational schools (with vocational curricula, but in the university track), and three-year vocational schools (in the employment track). Higher education was carried out in two types of higher education institutions: universities (organized around faculties) and colleges providing vocational higher education.

Teachers for these various levels and types of education were prepared at different institutions. Pre-school teachers attended vocational colleges for pre-school teachers. Primary school teachers (teaching grades 1-4) completed higher education at special colleges for classroom teachers. Primary school subject teachers (teaching grades 5-8) and secondary teachers were taught at university faculties or vocational colleges in disciplines that are equivalent to school subjects.

In socialist Yugoslavia, education was planned and governed within the federal republics, which became the countries studied here. Each republic's government was responsible for general organization of the education system (maintenance of the network of schools, content of the curricula, textbooks, teachers' recruitment, payment, training, etc.). Teachers were seen as autonomous professionals whose



performance was primarily tied to classroom tasks. Individual autonomy was significantly constrained, however, by centrally prescribed curricula and by the use of centrally approved and produced textbooks. In practice, teachers by and large applied the same “chalk and talk” style routines (Closs 1995). Teacher preparation, including the training of subject teachers, was very similar across higher education institutions. Furthermore, teachers were strongly attached to their academic discipline and pedagogic mission rather than to schools, parents, or communities (Georgeoff 1982). This orientation was probably due to the pre-service teacher education that focused heavily on disciplinary knowledge, rather than on building teachers’ skills and competences.

In recent years, the country-successors of the former Yugoslav republics have changed their systems of education in similar ways: expanding compulsory education to 9 years, reforming primary and secondary curricula, modernizing teaching and learning, liberalizing the textbook market, and so on (OECD, 2003). The reforms of higher education are linked to the Bologna process that is being implemented in European higher education institutions, including those preparing teachers. Such reforms imply a changed relationship between higher education and the labor market. Competence-based curricula came to be propagated as a way of ensuring better preparation of graduates (including teachers) for employment. However, more attention has been focused on how to structure curricula for accreditation by education authorities rather than on changing the goals and content of teaching and learning processes. In addition, teacher education has been left on the margins of the reform discussions (Zgaga 2003a). The preparation of primary class teachers (teaching grades 1-4) and school subject teachers (teaching grades 5-8 and in secondary schools) is still separated from each other in all countries under study; only the colleges for class teachers have been transformed into university faculties.

Despite these similarities and common problems in relation to reforms, the countries vary in size, demography, and cultural and religious homogeneity (see OECD 2003) as well as in more recent educational reform experiences. For example, not all countries were equally affected by the conflicts of the 1990s, some have moved more quickly in economic transition and European integration, and some have had more continuity in implementing reforms in education, including decentralization.

In post-conflict Bosnia and Herzegovina (B&H) the context for decentralization was set by the Peace Accords,<sup>7</sup> establishing two entities with separate systems of education with different degrees of decentralization. In one, the Federation of B&H, the authority over educational policy and legislation and content has been

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7 The present constitution of the country has as its origin in Annex IV of the Dayton Agreement, which ended the war in B&H (see OHR 1996).

decentralized to the level of canton (10 administrative units between the central entity and the municipalities), while in the other, Republika Srpska, such power is centralized within the entity government (UNESCO 1996, 1997).<sup>8</sup>

In Croatia the central Ministry of Science, Education, and Sport retains overall responsibility for all levels of education. It serves as the main policymaking body with financial responsibilities for all education, but local governments have taken responsibility for part of the material costs for schools (Batarelo et al. 2009).

In Macedonia the decentralization process gained real momentum with the new structures of financing put in place following the Ohrid Agreement,<sup>9</sup> representing “a unique attempt to defuse ethnic tension through a far-reaching decentralization of all major social functions” (Herczyński et al. 2009, 105). In education this attempt includes delegation of some powers, including oversight of the budget for teacher salaries, from central government to the local governments (Herczyński et al. 2009).

Montenegro has retained a highly centralized structure, which has different implications since Montenegro is a small country (OECD 2003). Most responsibilities are concentrated at the level of the central authority of its Ministry of Education, with the strongest focus of decentralization effort given to administrative reform.

In Serbia, the decentralization process was tied to an attempt to empower school development planning and to transform inspectorates into advisory units located in 26 offices around the country (OECD 2003). However, apart from the maintenance of pre-primary and primary schools, most responsibilities remain in the hands of the central authorities, with some control over pre-school education and teacher development delegated to the education authorities of the autonomous province of Vojvodina.

Despite the apparent variety in the levels of power concentration at different points in the educational administration hierarchy, it could be argued that the successor systems remain centralized in relation to the degree of authority the local governments exercise. Attempts to increase local participation in decision making in education involve transfer of responsibilities to the level of schools (i.e., principals, teachers, and community members) rather than to the municipalities. Nevertheless,

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8 In the mentioned regional project, the data were collected and analyzed for the sub-national units of B&H (RS and Federation B&H) and no significant differences were found. The participants in the project from all parts of B&H expressed the wish to present the data for the whole B&H, as is the case for the other countries.

9 Macedonia escaped the armed conflict that destroyed many other former Yugoslav republics, but it experienced its own ethnic strife and limited civil war in 2001, which ended with the signing of the Ohrid Agreement (Framework Agreement 2001).

substantial control of curriculum and evaluation remains with a central authority, regardless of whether it is located at the national level or in more local units of government. The most substantial changes in the scope of school authorities have involved the liberalization of textbook markets in the region and the increased involvement of parents and community members in selecting school boards and principals.

However, school staff may not have the necessary capacities to function effectively, even in the current context of relatively limited authority, to select textbooks, adapt instructional strategies, participate in self-evaluation and institutional development, and cooperate with parents and communities (e.g., see Mukundan & Bray 2004). Moreover, as noted above, at least for Serbia, it seems that the previous system did not encourage teachers to perceive those competencies (associated with “system understanding and development”) as important for the profession of teaching (Pantić & Wubbels 2010). Comparing teachers’ own perceptions of the importance of competencies across the countries can show us to what extent decentralization—defined here as the “extent to which central governmental responsibility is shared with other actors at lower levels” (Radó 2001, 64)—corresponds to the extent to which central governments relocated authority in education to the local governments. Such evidence can provide important information for the policy makers in the region. International research on similar reforms and their impact on teachers around the world points to the central importance of incentives and support for teachers to change attitudes and habits and develop competencies that could help them use the emerging opportunities to participate in determining the direction of schooling (e.g., see Mukundan & Bray 2004).

### *Conceptualizing teacher competence*

Competence is one of the most contested concepts in the literature on teachers and teacher education, having provoked much debate since it first appeared in the late 1960s (Zuzovsky & Libman 2006). Here we use the term “competence” in a more general way than “competency,” except when we refer to the particular competencies that comprise teacher competence.

Drawing on behavioral psychology, the concept of competence was first conceived as a set of “discrete,” “theory free,” practical skills (Harris 1997). Thus, a “competent” teacher could be identified based on observable events in the teachers’ performance, and teacher preparation would need to focus on novice teachers’ learning competences such as classroom management and teaching methods (see van Huizen et al. 2005). While the idea of teachers acquiring practical skills has been widely embraced (e.g., see Valli & Rennert-Ariev 2002), some have criticized this approach for reducing teachers to “technicians” and ultimately “deprofessionalizing” and “deskilling” them (e.g., Ginsburg & Spatig 1988; Harris

1997). Critics argued that behaviorist, competence-based notions of teaching and teacher education neglected other important aspects of teacher expertise, namely knowledge and understanding, values and moral sensibilities, and professional identity.

***Knowledge and understanding:*** Barnett (1994) suggests that competencies, defined as predictable behaviors, imply predictable situations in practice and are inappropriate for the teaching profession. Professionals should be able to form a perspective of their profession and its changing relations with society's demands. Thus, teacher competence should incorporate knowledge and understanding, which extend beyond teachers' being skilled in the use particular techniques. Understood in this way, competence does not imply less, but even more knowledge and deeper understanding of historical, political, and economic matters of a particular education system, understandings that might not necessarily be manifested in an observable, immediately assessable way.

***Values and moral sensibilities:*** Some have criticized a focus on teacher behavioral competencies for underestimating the aims and values that underlie teaching and leaving little room for individual interpretation of the teacher's role (Elbaz 1992; Day 2002; O'Connor 2008). From this perspective, teaching is an ethical, normative profession focused on developing valued knowledge, skills, etc., with the goal of improving people's lives (Carr 1993b; Arthur et al. 2005). As such, teachers are bound to encounter problems that are not susceptible to resolution in value-neutral, technical terms. For instance, Carr (1993a, 20-21) argues that "moral conclusions are only contestable in ethical terms and as such they involve profound reflection on those diverse and competing conceptions of what is worthwhile." He suggests that there is a need to explore the relationship between the practical or technical and the ethical or moral in our thinking about the nature of teachers' professional knowledge and conduct.

***Beliefs and professional identity:*** Critics of the behaviorist competence approach to teaching and teacher education have also argued that a good teacher cannot be described in terms of isolated abilities, because such fragmentation disregards integrative aspects that play a crucial part in effective teaching, such as professional identity and beliefs about the mission of teaching (Korthagen 2004). For example, Combs et al. (1974, 25) suggest that "teachers who feel their profession entails dignity and integrity [may] behave with dignity and integrity themselves." Moreover, teachers' knowledge and personal beliefs are seen as inseparable (Day 2002; Fives and Buehl 2008), although beliefs refer to personal values, attitudes, and ideologies (Verloop et al. 2001).

Thus, we conceptualize teacher competence as including knowledge and understanding, a sense of how to deal with values and moral issues, beliefs and identity, and behavioral skills. That is, teacher competence is defined as "an

integrated set of personal characteristics, knowledge, skills and attitudes that are needed for effective performance in various teaching contexts” (Tigelaar et al. 2005, 255). In contrast to a behaviorist approach, our conceptualization of teacher competence focuses on the potential for behavior, and not the behavior itself (see also Korthagen 2004; Koster et al. 2005).

## Method

The study uses data collected in a regional project, *Tuning Teacher Education in the Western Balkans* (Pantić 2008). The *Tuning* project (Gonzales & Wagenaar 2005) was developed to advise practitioners, employers, and higher education instructors about the competencies needed—that is, viewed to be important—by students for their future employment as teachers, with the goal of integrating these competencies into the aims of higher education. The participants from five teacher education institutions in the five countries sought to evaluate their teacher education programs against the perceptions of teachers about the competencies needed for effective professional practice.

### *Instrument*

To examine perspectives on teacher competencies we used a questionnaire developed in a pilot study of 370 teachers and teacher educators in Serbia (Pantić & Wubbels 2010). The questionnaire included a total of 39 statements, which—using factor analysis—had been found to comprise four sets of teacher competencies: (1) self-evaluation and professional development; (2) subject knowledge, pedagogy, and curriculum; (3) values and child-rearing; and (4) understanding of the system of education and contribution to its development. The pilot study instrument, in turn, was based on the questionnaire from the European Tuning Project (Gonzales & Wagenaar 2003), and similar lists from Scotland (The Scottish Office 1998) and the Netherlands (Storey 2006). The items were then adapted to the Western Balkan context, with input from the regional group of education specialists participating in the (Western Balkans) *Tuning* Project (Pantić 2008).

The items consist of statements of competence, including the aspects of knowledge, skills, values, and personal dispositions (for example, “Commitment to racial equality by means of personal example, through curricular and other activities”; “Ability to use a spectrum of teaching strategies in accordance with subject, theme and individual pupils” (for a complete list of items, see Appendix A). Respondents were asked to indicate how important they perceived it to be for teachers to possess the competence referenced in each item, using a five-point scale (1 equals not important at all, 5 equals extremely important).<sup>10</sup> Furthermore,

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<sup>10</sup> The respondents could also add competencies that they viewed as important but that were not covered in the questionnaire.

respondents were asked to provide the following data about themselves: country of heritage, location and level of institution at which they teach, current position, gender, age, years of experience, level of formal education, and the perceived relevance of their formal education to their work as teachers.

### *Sampling and data collection procedures*

We sent 3,770 questionnaires to kindergartens, primary schools, secondary schools, and tertiary institutions (at which teachers are educated) in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia, Montenegro, and Serbia. In selecting institutions, we were careful to cover—and have a proportional representation of participants—from different levels of education, units, different levels of government (e.g., county in Croatia, entity in Bosnia and Herzegovina, autonomous province in Serbia), and urban and rural settings. Data from national statistics of the respective countries were used to calculate the number of copies to be sent to institutions at different levels of education, so that the samples constituted 1.5% of the population at each educational level in each country. Letters accompanying the questionnaires were addressed to heads of institutions asking them and their staff to fill out the questionnaires. At the tertiary level, heads of relevant departments were asked to distribute the questionnaires to teacher educators and to student teachers who were in the final year of their studies and, therefore, more likely to have experienced some teaching practice.

### *Participants*

Of the 3,770 questionnaires distributed, we received 2,354 responses, making the overall response rate 62%. The response rates by countries range from 37% in Serbia to 100% in Macedonia and Montenegro, where networks of school contact persons were used to distribute the questionnaire and get back each and every response. A chi-square goodness-of-fit test indicated that the number of responses received from the different levels of educational institutions differed significantly from the representation of teachers from these levels in the actual population in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, and Serbia, while proportions were retained in Macedonia and Montenegro. The discrepancies in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia are due to higher response rates from pre-primary level and a lower response from secondary and higher educational level institutions. In Serbia the response was higher from secondary and lower from the tertiary level institutions (see Table 3.1).

Table 3.1: Number of respondents per country by level of institution

Country	Level of Institution				Df	$\chi^2$	sig.	Student Teachers	Total Sample
	pre-primary	primary	secondary	higher					
Bosnia & Herzegovina	25	306	114	53	3, n=498	13.21	p=.004	81	579
% within country									
population	4.1	54.9	26.3	14.6					
sample	4.3	52.8	19.7	9.2				14	
Croatia	160	286	135	24	3, n=605	140.49	p=.000	24	629
% within country									
population	12.2	46.6	37.5	3.8					
sample	25.4	45.5	21.5	3.8				3.8	
Macedonia	32	210	87	34	3, n=363	1.12	p=.773	55	418
% within country									
population	8.6	56	23.9	11.5					
sample	7.7	50.2	20.8	8.1				13.2	
Montenegro	17	70	39	12	3, n=138	0.78	p=.855	0	138
% within country									
population	10.6	54.4	25.9	9.1					
sample	12.3	50.7	28.3	8.7				0	
Serbia	36	185	135	16	3, n= 372	22,04	p=.000	206	578
% within country									
population	9.9	49.6	28.9	11.6					
sample	6.2	32.0	23.4	2.8				35.6	
Total	270	1057	510	139	3, n=1976	110.96	p=.000	366	2,342
% in total sample									
population	9.08	52.3	28.5	10.1					
sample	11.5	45.1	21.8	5.9				15.6	

Among the participants from primary schools, 268 (25%) were class teachers (teaching 7- to 11-year-old pupils in the first four years of primary education), and

678 (64%) were subject teachers (teaching 11- to 15-year-old pupils in the last four years of primary education). Among secondary school respondents, 140 (27%) taught in schools with an academic curriculum (*gymnasia*) and 331 (65%) taught in secondary schools with vocational curriculum. Some respondents had other responsibilities in addition to teaching; 27 were head teachers, and 87 performed specialized functions such as being a school psychologist. Of the tertiary-level teacher educators responding, 72 (51%) were professors and 69 (49%) were teaching assistants. We also obtained responses from 366 student teachers, representing more than 15% of the total sample, but did not include them in the analyses presented here because of missing data on many of the background variables. This and other information about the respondents (sex, age, length of teaching experience, previous formal education, and the perceptions of the usefulness of their education to the work as a teacher) is presented in Table 3.2.

Table 3.2: Characteristics of respondents by country (sex, age, experience, previous formal education, satisfaction with previous education)

Country	Sex (% of men)	Average age (SD)	Average years of experience (SD)	Previous formal education (% of non-university)	Satisfaction with previous education (% of useful)
BiH	28.2	39.27 (11.27)	13.96 (11.44)	38.9	69.4
Croatia	11.6	41.45 (10.23)	16.25 (10.54)	43.2	66.9
Macedonia	24.3	40.41 (9.72)	14.17 (9.96)	22.4	75.4
Montenegro	22.1	41.08 (9.7)	15.49 (10.05)	27.5	80.09
Serbia	24.3	41.90 (9.87)	15.39 (10.35)	22.4	75.4

### *Data analysis*

A principal component analysis was conducted for the four-factor solution. By and large, the four scales identified in the pilot study in Serbia were confirmed. Reliability coefficients of the four scales and correlations between scales were computed for each country and for the combined sample, as well as the scales' mean scores. All reliability coefficients were satisfactory (see Table 3.3) with most Cronbach's alphas being higher than .80 and similar patterns across the four scales in all countries. The same is true for the inter-scale correlation coefficients.



Table 3.3: Reliabilities, number of items, sample items and mean scale scores by level of institution and country

Scale	Cronbach's Alpha	# of Items	Sample Item	Mean Scores				
				pre-primary	primary	secondary	higher	Total average
1 Self-evaluation and professional development	0.89	12	Ability to critically reflect on and evaluate one's own educational impact	4.52	4.55	4.51	4.48	4.53
Bosnia	0.91			4.52	4.55	4.47	4.47	4.52
Croatia	0.87			4.51	4.53	4.42	4.52	4.50
Macedonia	0.89			4.62	4.64	4.62	4.45	4.61
Montenegro	0.85			4.40	4.55	4.37	4.62	4.48
Serbia	0.87			4.55	4.49	4.61	4.43	4.54
2 Subject knowledge, pedagogy and curriculum	0.82	10	Ability to develop linguistic and numeric literacy of pupils	4.42	4.60	4.53	4.54	4.55
Bosnia	0.85			4.42	4.57	4.48	4.51	4.54
Croatia	0.80			4.36	4.61	4.49	4.54	4.51
Macedonia	0.84			4.65	4.64	4.62	4.51	4.63
Montenegro	0.81			4.30	4.57	4.44	4.68	4.51
Serbia	0.77			4.55	4.59	4.59	4.63	4.59
3 Contribution to education system development	0.89	11	Readiness to participate in public debates on educational topics by following and participating in the work of relevant bodies	4.03	4.08	4.04	3.90	4.05
Bosnia	0.91			4.11	4.16	4.00	3.90	4.09
Croatia	0.87			4.01	4.04	3.95	3.96	4.01
Macedonia	0.88			4.31	4.26	4.23	3.87	4.22
Montenegro	0.87			3.94	3.88	4.01	4.14	3.95
Serbia	0.87			3.87	3.91	4.03	3.67	3.94
4 Values and child rearing	0.76	6	Commitment to racial equality by means of personal example, through curricular and other activities	4.63	4.59	4.51	4.42	4.56
Bosnia	0.81			4.76	4.63	4.46	4.53	4.59
Croatia	0.77			4.62	4.61	4.46	4.33	4.57
Macedonia	0.75			4.63	4.58	4.58	4.31	4.56
Montenegro	0.65			4.41	4.58	4.50	4.32	4.51
Serbia	0.74			4.66	4.51	4.55	4.48	4.54

The data were analyzed using multivariate analysis of covariance to examine relationships of (transformed) scale scores<sup>11</sup> with respondents' country and level of the education system at which they teach, while controlling for respondents' gender, years of experience,<sup>12</sup> and level of satisfaction with (i.e., perceived relevance of) their initial teacher education. Additional post-hoc tests (i.e., Sheffe) were performed to establish what the differences were.

## Results

The findings presented in Table 3.4 show that, despite a significant effect of country, teachers' and teacher educators' perceptions of competencies were generally similar across the five Western Balkan countries. Although all differences were small (partial eta squared < .029), significant differences that were found are discussed below.

There were significant main effects of the level of educational institution and of the country variable, as well as a significant interaction effect between these two variables. When the results for the four groups of competencies were considered separately (univariate panel in Table 3.4), the differences between the levels of institution reached statistical significance only for the second group of competencies (subject knowledge, pedagogy, and curriculum). The differences between countries reached statistical significance for the first (self-evaluation and professional development), the second (subject knowledge, pedagogy, and curriculum), and the third (contribution to education system development) groups of competencies. The interaction effect between the level of education and country variables reached statistical significance for the competencies relating to self-evaluation and professional development (the first group) and the competencies relating to contribution to education system development (the third group).

For three sets of competencies ("self evaluation and professional development," "subject knowledge, pedagogy, and curriculum," and "values and child rearing") the mean scores of perceived importance were approximately 4.5 (on a scale of 1 equals "not important at all" and 5 equals "extremely important"), while the means for "contribution of to education system development" were a little lower (approximately 4.0). Although all groups of respondents in the five countries rated

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11 Because of skewed distributions, scale means of the four factors were transformed (as recommended by Tabachnick and Fidell 2007), such that the new factor score equals  $1/(K - \text{factor score})$ , where K represents a constant (in this case 6) from which each score is subtracted so that the smallest score is 1.

12 Because of the strong positive correlation between age and experience (.88), only the variable "years of teaching experience" was used in the analyses as a covariate.

the four sets of competencies as relatively important, the third set of competencies (“contribution to the education system development”) was consistently evaluated as being at a somewhat lower level. Moreover, a univariate analysis of variance showed that the mean scores of this scale were also significantly smaller than those of the other scales for all countries ( $F=456.1$ ,  $p<.01$ ; also see means in Table 3.3).

The competencies in this group include, for example, items relating to understanding of the national priorities, laws, and authorities in education; conducting research in education; and participation in school development planning (see Appendix A). The most lowly evaluated items within this group across the levels of education and across the countries were “readiness to participate in public debates on educational topics by following and participating in the work of relevant bodies,” “readiness for cooperation with the local community in organising curricular activities,” and “readiness to contribute to building pupils’ awareness of the need of participation in a democracy.” These items seem to have a common trait of not being as directly concerned with the teachers’ daily routines. It is interesting that the item referring to the preparation of pupils for participation in a democracy is also perceived as belonging to the domain of contribution to the system development rather than, for instance, as an essential feature of values and child-rearing aspect of teacher expertise. This perspective can probably be attributed to the fact that this competence is “new” in a repertoire of in-service teacher education programs and has not yet been integrated into the goals of initial teacher education. Democracy building underlies major directions of reform strategies that are yet to be internalized by teachers as inextricable parts of their professional expertise. It is also possible that in the region democracy is still seen as imposed from outside rather than an authentic development. Moreover, at least for some subject specialist teachers, this may be something viewed as a part of social studies content only.

Years of experience in education had no effect on teachers’ perceptions of the competence in any of the countries, although novice teachers had graduated from the programs which had been changed by the Bologna process toward being “competence-driven” (Zgaga 2006). The finding that the perceptions of novice teachers are no different from those of their more experienced colleagues, who had been educated in a tradition that highly valued discipline-based theoretical knowledge, corroborates the earlier mentioned view that the recent changes of study programs are relatively superficial (Zgaga 2003a).

Table 3.4: Analyses of covariance for four aspects of teacher competence

Variable	Multivariate		Univariate							
	F	Eta <sup>2</sup>	Self-evaluation and professional development		Subject knowledge, pedagogy and curriculum		Contribution to education system development		Values and child rearing	
	F	Eta <sup>2</sup>	F	Eta <sup>2</sup>	F	Eta <sup>2</sup>	F	Eta <sup>2</sup>	F	Eta <sup>2</sup>
Country <sup>a</sup>	4.49**	0.013	3.46**	0.01	4.30**	0.012	6.07**	0.017	1.85	0.005
Level of institution <sup>b</sup>	4.36**	0.012	0.78	0.002	7.07**	0.015	0.35	0.001	2.57	0.006
C×LoI <sup>c</sup>	2.03**	0.017	2.70**	0.023	1.42	0.012	3.45**	0.029	1.79	0.015
Covariate <sup>d</sup>										
Sex	11.40**	0.032	19.78**	0.014	20.46**	0.015	0.05	0	11.85**	0.008
Experience	0.46	0.001	0.47	0	1	0.001	0.01	0	0.02	0
Satisfaction	4.42**	0.013	10.52**	0.008	12.44**	0.009	3.32	0.002	12.48**	0.001
Non-university vs. University	0.51	0.001	0.07	0	0.02	0	0.02	0	0.74	0.001

Note. <sup>a</sup> Multivariate  $df = 16, 4219$  ; univariate  $df = 4, 1348$ . <sup>b</sup> Multivariate  $df = 12, 3654$ ; univariate  $df = 3, 1348$ . <sup>c</sup> Multivariate  $df = 48, 5322$ ; univariate  $df = 12, 1348$ . <sup>d</sup> Multivariate  $df = 4, 1381$ ; univariate  $df = 1, 1348$ .

\*\* $p < .01$

### *Cross-national similarities and differences*

Based on the multivariate analysis of covariance, we can observe some cross-national and cross-group similarities and differences. Post-hoc analyses show that scores for Macedonia differ significantly from the other countries for all three factors. For example, the system understanding and development factor is evaluated more highly by respondents from Macedonia. In addition, significant interaction effects found between country and level of education suggest that the differences in perceptions of participants from different levels of education are not the same in all countries. However, the differences are small. For example, the biggest difference between Macedonians, who on average valued the importance of the items of the third scale as higher than the respondents from all other countries, was found at the level of pre-primary education. Here inter-country differences ranged from 0.46 (Macedonia-Croatia) to 0.83 (Macedonia-Serbia) on the 5-point scale. However, we

must be cautious regarding the interpretation of differences between levels of education and countries because the subsamples of respondents from the different levels in the different countries are not equally representative.

Nevertheless, it is worth noting that the participants from Macedonia in other studies (Zgaga 2006) expressed a higher level of satisfaction with both their in-service and initial education than the participants from all other countries participating in this study. Moreover, the highest percentage of teachers from Macedonia who had attended more than ten in-service training events in the course of the preceding year (Zgaga 2006) could possibly be interpreted as Macedonian teachers' being more sensitized to various issues related to teachers' competence, perhaps resulting in their perceiving these competencies as being of higher importance than did teachers in other countries. The high participation rate of Macedonians in this study also is in line with this interpretation.

## Conclusion

The findings indicate that a set of competencies related to “system understanding and development” is perceived by teachers across the region as less important compared to other aspects of teacher competence. According to Melvin Kohn (1989), where cross-national similarities are established, we should look for “structural constants” that can explain the similarities.<sup>13</sup> The lower importance of competencies relevant for system development in all countries likely stems from the common inheritance from the former Yugoslavia of centralized systems, in which teachers' professional autonomy was limited to classroom-level decisions.<sup>14</sup> However, it seems that even teachers' autonomy related to classroom practices was limited by centrally prescribed curricula and textbooks (Closs 1995).

That Macedonian teachers accorded somewhat greater importance to this set of competencies, compared to the other countries in the region, may result from the more extensive educational decentralization and related teacher development activity in this country. According to Jan Hercziński and colleagues (2009, 143), Macedonia's education decentralization reform should be seen as “a major success”

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13 Kohn (1989) argued that cross-national research is valuable and even indispensable for establishing generality of findings and the validity of interpretations derived from single-nation studies. His hypothesis is that where similarities in cross-national studies are found, “structural constants”—identities in the economic and social structures of schooling—should be identified that enable generalization at the policy level. Where differences are found, those aspects of structural, social, and cultural contexts should be identified that can explain these differences (see also Poppleton 1992).

14 Future inquiries in countries with long-term historically decentralized and centralized systems of education (e.g., see Cole and John 2001) or in those that have only recently moved to decentralization (e.g., see Mukundan & Bray 2004) should assess whether this perception can be generalized even beyond the region, perhaps forming part of an internationally common perception of a “competent” teacher.

and “one of the most advanced countries in South Eastern Europe.” The municipalities have asserted their power in the education sector, for example, by changing their administrative structure, establishing special units responsible for education, or adopting local education strategies, including long-term visions of their school systems (Hercziński et al. 2009). Macedonia engaged in two phases of implementation, each involving the production of guidebooks, organization of training programs, and provision of technical support to local governments. In the second phase responsibilities for teacher salaries are to be decentralized (Hercziński et al. 2009).

However, identifying “structural constants” without consideration of the underlying motives and context could be misleading. If we take a historical perspective on the structural features of the system of education in post-war Yugoslavia, the picture becomes less clear-cut. In 1950, the Yugoslav National Assembly passed a bill on “workers’ self-management,” which was (particularly after 1953) translated into a push for educational decentralization and increased autonomy for both the federation’s six republics and the educational authorities in districts and towns within these entities (Sobe 2007). On the face of it, the central authority was retained only for “passing basic legislation” (Roucek 1957), while the republics were responsible for most education policies including those relating to teachers, curricula, and textbooks. At the time comparative research in the United States erroneously regarded this push for decentralization in Yugoslavia as pragmatic moves of “modernization” in the U.S.-style Western democracy (Sobe 2007). Decentralization in Yugoslavia was labeled a “truer” form of communism than that of the Soviet Union, where strong political centralism “had strayed from Marx’s call for the withering away of the state,” and was seen to have achieved “not only internal unity but greater efficiency to centralized government” (Sobe 2007, 48-49). However, with the advantage of hindsight, we understand the inaccuracies of this historic account of Yugoslavia’s education decentralization, which likely occurred because scholars did not fully consider the history of political struggle and ideological motivation behind processes of decentralization (see Archer 1989; Slegers and Wesselingh 1995; Crossley 2002).

Radó (2001) rightly remarks that it would be misleading in the context of complexity of educational transition in the region to focus on the narrow, technical meaning of decentralization as relocation of authority to lower levels. Our findings show that teachers’ perceptions of their roles in contribution to system developments are not greatly different (relative to other aspects of competence) in different countries in the Western Balkans, despite the differences at which authorities are concentrated. This corroborates Radó’s distinction between the view of decentralization as “extent to which central governmental responsibility is shared with other actors at lower levels” and the question at which level the responsibilities are formally located. For example, the legal responsibility over school development planning—which has in Serbia, for example, been relocated to schools—does not

seem to be reflected in the teachers' perceived importance of this competence, and we can assume that it is not reflected in teachers' actual practice, either. This gap between decentralized responsibility and actual involvement of actors at lower levels probably has two major sources.

First, educational decentralization in the Western Balkan countries can be characterized as fragmented (Radó 2010). Different educational reforms happen as part of structural transformations in other sectors rather than as components of a coherent reform strategy developed within the education sector. For example, decentralization of the governance of education is connected to overall changes in public administration, transformation of the textbook publishing system is driven by the liberalization of the entire publishing business, the new systems of financing education are part of treasury reforms, etc. As a result, some decisions (in most countries, maintenance of schools and in-service teacher training) are transferred to regional or local levels, while others (in most countries, curriculum and teacher salaries) are kept at the central level.

A usual problem with such fragmented decentralization is the discrepancy between the location of financial and that of other decisions. In the countries studied here, for example, in-service teacher training was usually transferred to the local authorities, yet without the resources and the authority to allocate funds for teacher training activities. The lack of control over financial resources can empty the real authority of certain levels and re-route the decision-making to informal channels (Radó 2001). In addition, because of limited social cohesion and heightened ethnic tensions, different levels of government are unable to govern effectively, which makes a decentralization politically risky (Radó 2001, 68).

Secondly, capacity building of relevant actors may be less extensive and integrated due to such fragmentation. For instance, as is the case internationally (Lauglo 1995; Slegers & Wesselingh 1995; Radó 2001; Zeichner 2006), decentralization reforms in the Western Balkans' imply increased authority—and, thus, a greater need for capacity—for teachers (Zgaga 2003a). However, teachers have not received extensive capacity building for their new roles in the selection of textbooks, participation in school or curriculum development, or cooperation with parents and the community. Pre-service teacher preparation remains primarily, if not exclusively, concerned with subject matter content and, to varying degrees, with pedagogy and psychology, approached from disciplinary “foundations” rather than in terms of educational value. International and regional experiences with introducing teacher competencies as basis of teacher education can provide valuable lessons for curriculum designers in the Western Balkans. The efforts to articulate a “knowledge base” for teaching are ongoing, and “teacher competence” is not the only vision of how the teacher education programmes could be strengthened (Zeichner 2006). International research has begun to identify the characteristics of effective teacher education programs such as clear and consistent visions of teaching and learning that guide the program, strong integration between instruction about

teaching and practice, building professional development partnerships with schools, and cooperation with practitioners to constantly revise curriculum and instruction (Schulman 2000; Zeichner 2006).

The experience of countries in the region that underwent similar transition processes points to an even bigger role of in-service teacher training in the periods of thorough change (Radó 2001). In-service professional development programs in the countries concerned have not been organized to help teachers build the capacities (and commitments) they need to take on their new or extended roles under education decentralization. In-service professional development programs often deal with the subject matter, or they promote the “new” topics of interactive teaching and learning, inclusive approaches in education, education for citizenship, and the like. The problem is that these programs are usually designed as one-off seminars left for individual teachers to pursue based on their interest, and in accordance with their perceived roles. Innovation is thus left to chance and individual enthusiasm rather than systematically encouraged and supported. Suggestions from similar studies point to the critical importance of taking decentralization and teacher education seriously, coming from the region (e.g., see Zgaga 2003a), other countries in transition (e.g., see Radó 2001) and internationally (e.g., see Zeichner 2006). In other words, building teacher competencies requires investment of society as a whole if one is serious about increasing teachers’ roles in decentralized educational design.

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## Chapter 4: Competence-based teacher education: a change from *Didaktik* to Curriculum culture?<sup>15</sup>

This paper explores the substance of competence-driven changes in teacher education curricula by testing the possibility of using a framework distinguishing between the German pedagogical culture of *Didaktik* and the Anglo-Saxon Curriculum culture to describe the substance of these changes. Data about the perceptions of competence-driven changes in teacher education curricula has been collected in 30 in-depth interviews with teacher educators, student teachers and their school mentors in Serbia, and analysed with help of qualitative data processing software. The coding procedures involved classification of utterances into five groups relating to the perceptions of 1) teacher evaluation; 2) teacher competence in subject matter, pedagogy and curriculum; 3) understanding of the education system and contribution to its development; 4) teacher competences in dealing with values and child-rearing; and 5) changes in teacher education curricula related to these groups of competence. The perceptions in each group of utterances were interpreted in terms of their alliance with *Didaktik* or Curriculum cultures. The findings indicate that the framework cannot be used as a continuum since the utterances aligned with the two cultures coexist in the individual responses, but could be useful as a reflection tool in teacher education curricula.

### Introduction

In many countries teacher education institutions restructure their programmes setting competences as the aims of the new curricula. Ostinelli (2009: 293-301) lists examples of teacher competences from Italy, Germany, England, Sweden and Finland, and discusses a variety in their contextual underpinnings. Examples from South East Europe include countries such as Slovenia (Zgaga 2003a) and Serbia (Pantić & Wubbels 2010). Such restructuring reforms are often accompanied by discussions about the duration of programmes, accreditation (e.g. within the European Credit Transfer System) and assessment. There is less discussion about the implications of such reforms for the substance of curricular goals and content, and

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learning experiences within ‘the black box’ of the programmes (Darling-Hammond 2006).

If we want to understand the substance of change in teacher education brought about by competence-based curricula we need to consider the differences it involves compared to ‘old ways’ of educating teachers. Such consideration of the differences between the existing and the desired models of teacher education can help us identify the consensual and/or competing forces in the change process (Fullan 1993a). Typically, changing systems are characterised by the coexistence of an old and new ‘state of things’. The emergent new state may have common elements with the old one, and the wider apart the two states are, the more difficult the transition process may be (Anchan *et al.* 2003). Thus, understanding the substance of competence-driven changes compared to the ‘old ways’ can provide insights into the nature of, and range of implications for, teacher education reforms and the challenges they present.

A critical consideration of competence-based teacher education needs a framework for evaluation of its contribution to the enduring challenges for teacher education curricula planners and implementers, such as building a link between theory and professional practice that enables practising theory and theorising practice (Darling-Hammond 2006, Korthagen 2001, Verloop *et al.* 2001). The way research evidence informs practice is not a matter of straightforward application of knowledge. Education professionals’ decisions are value-laden and linked to the consideration of the meanings of knowledge for wider social purposes, economy, human development and well-being (Carr 1999, Day 2002). Another perennial challenge for teacher education is the preparation of teachers to deal with the complexity of moral issues that arise daily in increasingly multifaceted education environments (Carr 1999, Darling-Hammond 2006, Klaassen 2002).

We start this paper with a description of changes in teacher education in Serbia. The main novelty compared to the existing teacher education design seems to be in the approach that seeks to pre-define the outcomes of learning as teacher competences. Pre-defining the outcomes of learning is also one of the major distinctions between the culture of *Didaktik* inherent in teacher education in continental Europe, and the Curriculum culture predominant in the English-speaking world. In *Didaktik* curricular aims are defined as general directions that address what curricular content could signify to a student in an open-ended encounter (Westbury 1998, 2000). In the Curriculum culture the goals are pre-defined considering what a student should be able to do or know, with an attempt at a rational evaluation of the degree to which goals have been reached. The Curriculum theory is based on the work of Tyler (1949) which remains the foundation of curriculum making to the present day, despite significant subsequent criticism in curriculum research (Pinar *et al.* 1995). For example, Wise (1979: 65) warned that excessive prescription of outcomes can lead to a phenomenon of ‘hyperrationalization’ when compliance with bureaucratic norms and procedures takes precedence over educational process.

We describe the distinction between the curriculum and *Didaktik* approach in some detail and then start the exploration of competence-driven changes in teacher education by looking at what the scope of teacher competence is. For this we start with a study of perceptions of teacher competence in Serbia (Pantić & Wubbels, 2010), which found that teachers and teacher educators understand teacher competence to involve four domains of competence: 1) self-evaluation and professional development, 2) subject matter, pedagogy and curriculum, 3) understanding of the education system and contribution to its development, and 4) values and child rearing.

Next, we describe the methods employed in the empirical part of this paper to gather data about practitioners' perceptions of the four groups of competence, and of their perceptions of the changes related to setting those competences as the basis for teacher education curricula. In the *Results and discussion* section we explore the usefulness of the *Didaktik* / Curriculum framework for describing the competence-driven change. We consider whether the perceptions of change related to setting competences as the aims of teacher education curricula might be interpreted as a shift from *Didaktik* towards the Curriculum culture.

### *Change of teacher education in Serbia*

Serbia, like other countries in the region, is affected by global influences and in particular by European processes. Globally, teachers' roles are changing under the influences of access to information and use of communication technologies, drives for accountability parallel to decentralisation of education systems, and increasing diversity of student populations. Implications of these influences for change in teacher preparation are internationally discussed with a view to establishing the competences teachers need in order to meet the challenges related to the cultural, social and value implications of teaching (Garm & Karlsen 2004, Ostinelli 2009, van Tartwijk *et al.* 2009).

The reforms of teacher education link to the changes at primary and secondary levels of education including decentralisation, becoming open to local communities and the diversification of values (Radó 2010). The last of these involves much complexity relating to the lack of consensus and clarity about the values (Radó 2001). It is sometimes suggested that changes in teacher education are slow to follow those taking place in schools (Zgaga 2003a).

Reforms of teacher education in Serbia, as elsewhere in Europe, are also tied to the Bologna process<sup>16</sup> involving a great deal of debate on how best to structure the new curricula to be accredited by the education authorities, and setting competences as the outcomes of student learning (Garm & Karlsen 2004, Zgaga 2003a). Although

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<sup>16</sup> European reform process based on cooperation between ministries and higher education institutions from 46 countries with the view towards enhancing comparability of degrees and quality assurance processes, mobility of students and staff.

the structures of teacher education programs vary greatly across Europe, many common features have been identified in discourses on teacher education in different European countries (Garm & Karlsen 2004, Ostinelli 2009, Sayer 2006). Some of the common dilemmas include questions about the appropriate ratio of time allocation between subject disciplines, pedagogical and psychological subjects; when and how much practice student teachers need; and, recently, about intercultural competence, and the place of research in teacher preparation (Garm & Karlsen 2004, Ostinelli 2009, Price 2001).

Comparing teacher education in Italy, Germany, England, Sweden and Finland, Ostinelli (2009) established significant differences between teacher education in the decentralised English education system, and those of continental Europe, with the English teacher *training* putting emphasis on the 'executive character of the teaching profession', 'binding objectives' and 'measurable standards' (Ostinelli 2009: 304). On the other hand, education systems in continental Europe 'tend to pass from a kind of Napoleonic, top-down set-up to more decentralised situations where schools and teachers tend, at least on paper, to become more autonomous' (Ostinelli 2009: 297). The same author found that teacher education systems in continental European countries share a vision of 'developing extensively the professionalism of the teacher within a rigorous but flexible framework' (Ostinelli 2009: 304). This resonates strongly with the German *Didaktik* culture presented below, but it should also be noted that there is a variety of schools of *Didaktik* in continental Europe (Hopmann 2007) just as there is variety in the English culture of curriculum making which, according to Reid (1997), is largely based on pragmatism rather than on principle.

Changes in teacher education are part of changes in higher education which, according to some authors (see e.g. Arthur 2006) represent a departure from the Humboldtian values of academic freedom to teach and learn 'without being spoon-fed or constantly tested' towards an Anglo-Saxon model of predefined outcomes (Arthur 2006: 241). In order to explore whether such a change in the case of teacher education represents a move from *Didaktik* towards the Anglo-Saxon Curriculum culture we will first look at the major distinctions between the two cultures.

### *Didaktik and/or Curriculum*

A way of thinking about the substance of change involved in the introduction of competence-based curricula is offered by distinguishing between the classical German culture of *Didaktik* and the Anglo-Saxon Curriculum culture (Hopmann 2007; Westbury 2000). The two cultures differ fundamentally in their approaches to a) the aims of classroom teaching which are, in turn, rooted in the different traditions and historical contexts, b) the functions of curricula within the institutional systems, and c) the roles individual teachers are given in relation to these different aims and curricular functions of the two cultures. Below, we briefly outline Curriculum and

*Didaktik* approaches to each of these three aspects before moving to a fuller discussion of the differences between the two cultures in relation to teacher competence and teacher education.

The primary aim of classroom teaching in the Curriculum culture is to help students master the contents and skills defined as the desired outcomes of the various stages of education. According to Hopmann (2007:115) the purpose of teaching and schooling in this culture is to 'transport knowledge from society to a learner'. Thus, a measure of effective teaching is the level to which students 'know something' or 'are able to do it'. In the *Didaktik* culture the essential aim of teaching is 'Bildung' – unfolding by learning a process of the formation of the student self and linking it to the world. An important distinction is embedded in the concept of *Bildung* between 'matter' and 'meaning' (Hopmann 2007:114). Any subject matter or content of learning is only a tool in enabling the development of the learner's individuality. Thus, teaching deals with the content as an 'educational substance', but its real meaning(s) emerge within the learning process itself, in the meeting of a unique individual with the particular subject matter. In this culture it would not be possible to foresee the multitudes of future meanings that could emerge from teaching and learning nor to pre-specify them as outcomes of education (Hopmann 2007:120).

The function of curriculum in the American institutional contexts of the Curriculum culture has been by and large *organisational*, historically focused on building school systems with a well-articulated, rational managerial framework for planning, objectives writing, instruction, test development and curriculum evaluation. Schools have a 'curriculum-as-manual' with 'templates for coverage and methods' to guide and control their daily work, developed by each school system in the light of its circumstances (Westbury 2000:16-19). In the German context the function of the curriculum was separated from the management of education in schools when it was first developed in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century (Westbury 2000:22). The state curriculum, the *Lehrplan*, lays out the content (subject matter and topics) to be taught - an authoritative selection from German cultural traditions that becomes educative only when interpreted by teachers who are directed in their work by the aim of *Bildung* (Westbury 2000:17).

The role of individual teachers differs substantially in the two cultures. According to Westbury (2000), in the Curriculum culture a teacher starts by asking what a student should be able to do or know as set in the curricular objectives. Considering the tradition of the public control of schools, this means that once the curriculum is developed for a school system a teacher is expected to 'implement' the system's or district's curriculum decisions. In *Didaktik* a teacher starts by looking at the object of learning and asking what it could or should signify to the learner. Working within the 'text' provided by the state curriculum, teachers have 'pedagogical freedom' to construct their lessons autonomously and to select their

teaching approaches with a view to possible meaning(s) for their students (Hopmann 2007:117; Westbury 2000:26-27).

Next we discuss some of the most dramatic differences in the implications of the *Didaktik* and Curriculum cultures for teacher preparation (Hopmann 2007, Hudson 2007, Westbury 1998; 2000). However, the two cultures also have some common concerns to which we will point in relation to the four domains of teacher competence.

### *Teacher competence and change in teacher education curricula*

The concept of competence has been contested in the literature since it first emerged in the late 1960s, drawing on behavioural psychology and conceiving teacher competences as observable events in teachers' performance (Harris 1997; Zuzovsky & Libman 2006; Valli & Rennert-Ariev 2002). Accordingly, adequate teacher preparation had to be effective in shaping future teachers' performance in their daily teaching by applying a range of methods or class management techniques learned from experienced teachers (described in van Huizen *et al.* 2005). This idea, that competences conceived as observable behaviours in professional contexts can form a valid basis for curriculum development, has been much debated (Barnett 1994; Day 2002; Korthagen 2004). Critics argued that the focus on classroom management, subject content and pupil test results underestimated the aims and values fundamental to teacher identity, motivation and commitment, such as 'core moral purposes' (Day 2002: 682–684) or room for teachers to personally interpret their role or respond to specific demands and conditions of a given situation (van Huizen *et al.* 2005). Barnett (1994) argued that competent professionals must be able to form a view of their own profession and its changing relationship with society's demands. This means teacher education must equip future teachers with much more than an ability to use particular teaching techniques. It requires more knowledge and a deeper understanding of the historical, political and economic context for a particular education system—comprehension that might not necessarily manifest itself in an observable, immediately assessable way.

We share the view that the attainment of theoretical and contextual knowledge continues to be essential for teachers, and we adopt a broad concept of competence as inclusive of knowledge and understanding, skills and abilities, as well as of teachers' beliefs and moral values. A similarly broad understanding of teacher competence is evident in other recent competence frameworks (Koster *et al.* 2005; Tigelaar *et al.* 2004; Stoof *et al.* 2002). They adopt the following concept of competence: 'an integrated set of personal characteristics, knowledge, skills and attitudes that are needed for effective performance in various teaching contexts' (Tigelaar *et al.* 2004: 255). Defined in this way, competences represent a potential for behaviour and not the behaviour itself (Korthagen 2004).

In the following subsections we seek to identify elements of *Didaktik* and Curriculum cultures (see Table 4.1) in the four groups of teacher competence identified earlier (Pantić & Wubbels 2010) and in the changes related to setting those competences as the basis for teacher education curricula.

The four groups of competence include:

1) *Self-evaluation and professional development* involve competences that relate to teachers' reflection on their educational impact and development. In this paper this aspect of competence has been renamed *Teacher evaluation* since *Didaktik* and Curriculum theory have their distinct approaches to teacher evaluation, while teachers' professional development based on this evaluation is outside the remit of this paper.

2) *Subject matter, pedagogy and curriculum* relate to competences in a teacher's subject field and methods of instruction, and competences in implementing, adapting or developing the school curriculum.

3) *Understanding of the education system and contribution to its development* involves wider understanding of the context of schooling in which they teach, such as the institutional setting.

4) *Values and child rearing* domain refers to competences in dealing with values and moral issues that arise in teaching practice.

In addition to exploring in more depth these four groups of teacher competence, we seek to understand the substance of change involved in introducing competence-based curricula in teacher education, which makes the fifth aspect of distinction between the two cultures. Below, we look at how the elements of the distinction between *Didaktik* and Curriculum cultures are relevant for these five aspects of distinction.

### *Teacher evaluation*

In the Curriculum culture teachers are the 'agents of the system' trained and certificated to teach the curriculum. They are animated and directed by the system, and not the source of animation for the system (Westbury 2000: 21). In other words, their job is to make sure students reach the externally defined outcomes for certain levels of education in a given system, and not to define their own teaching goals. In this culture, evaluation and feedback about the quality and appropriateness of teachers' work are provided primarily through student assessment (Hopmann 2003, Westbury 2000).

In the *Didaktik* culture professional licensing authorises autonomous practice within the state's legal and administrative frameworks. As reflective professionals, teachers work within the framework provided by the state curriculum, but are not controlled by it (Westbury 2000). Their professional decisions and their impact are not evaluated by their clients or employers, but either through formal or informal

self-evaluation and/or by their peers. Such evaluation focuses on education process and on people with little external control over the outcomes of schooling (Hopmann 2003).

### *Subject matter, pedagogy and curriculum*

In the Curriculum culture subject matter is described as a repository of information, skills and objective understandings or ways of knowing that stand apart from the learner and the teacher, and can be taught using appropriate methods, and rationally evaluated (Westbury 2000). The curriculum framework is developed at the level of the school system where the objectives for learning and evaluation are set, while teachers are primarily concerned with curriculum *implementation*. Thus, the construction of the content for classroom use is at the school or district level rather than being chosen by an individual teacher. What happens in classrooms as curriculum is transformed into teaching is not seen as a major problem. It is assumed that 'teachers can, and should, faithfully implement the curriculum if it is well developed and teachers are appropriately prepared to use it' (Westbury 2000: 20). Teachers' tasks are understood primarily as the question of *how* the encounter between the children and the object of learning is to be engendered in practice. Teachers are mostly concerned with the method, while the questions of *what* and *why* are the responsibilities of the school system managers. Such a role, the teacher as the implementer of the curriculum, has been much criticised in the later reconceptualisations of the Curriculum theory (Pinar et al. 1995), most notably by Shulman (1987: 15) who endorsed the need for a teacher's pedagogical knowledge 'to transform the content knowledge he or she possesses into forms that are pedagogically powerful and yet adaptive to the variations in ability and background presented by the students'. In the critique of the traditional Curriculum theory calls have been made that teaching should be acknowledged as 'an interpretative process' and that, in order to teach effectively teachers, must be 'reflective' – similar to the Didaktik's image of teachers as reflective practitioners (Westbury 2000: 36).

*Didaktik* is essentially a body of theories and frameworks which can assist *the planning of teaching* by teachers themselves (Westbury 2000). Teachers work with the 'text' provided by the state curriculum, searching for ways of offering students experiences that can assist their development towards 'a comprehensive worldview' (Westbury 2000: 27). He/she thus interprets the contents in the contexts of values they represent (see the section *Values and child rearing* below). In *Didaktik*, a teacher must re-enact the pedagogical decisions made by the curriculum designers, embedded in the curriculum content, and explore their deeper educational potential. Subject matter should be seen through a pedagogical lens with specific students in mind, although some interpretations (Klafki 2000: 148) suggest that content *per se*, independent of the persons who assimilate it, can contribute specific substance or value to education. Lesson planning in this culture starts by asking the larger questions about: *what* the content matter comprises; what wider sense or attitude can



be exemplified by this content; what knowledge, skills, and experiences do the students already have in relation to this content; can the activities come alive and be effective outside the school walls; what significance could it bear for the future of those to be educated. Only then does a teacher ask the questions of *how* the content is structured; how are individual elements related to each other; what tasks and ways of teaching are appropriate for enabling a productive encounter between the learners and the content. In Klafki's words:

'Good preparation for a lesson...is always a new small-scale, and provisional construction as well as a synthesis of prior experience..., while at the same time recognizing that, in the end, each and every lesson holds in store a myriad unforeseeable possibilities and that the openness of teachers' minds to new situations, impulses, and the difficulties arising from the moment is a criterion for their pedagogical competence.'

(Klafki 2000: 143).

### *Understanding of the education system and contribution to its development*

In the Curriculum culture, in line with its search for a 'rational', scientific basis for effective institutions, the curricular framework is developed at the level of school and the school system. Thus, the intersection between schooling, culture and society is at the school or district level (Westbury 2000). Innovation in curriculum development is based on empirical evidence, although some reconceptualists in Curriculum theory preferred criticism of the wider culture to practical problems of curriculum development (Wraga, 1999). In this culture, however, curricular changes seek to accommodate client needs and market trends.

*Didaktik* has traditionally been more philosophical than empirical as a field (Künzli 2000). Paradigm shifts are based on theoretical critique that is distanced from, and pre-eminent over school practices. Innovation in school, or rather classroom, practices happens mainly as a result of individual teachers following scientific advances in their subject field or equivalent academic discipline, educational sciences, technology, etc., and integrating these advances into their teaching. Yet, throughout its history, *Didaktik* has also faced attempts by states to limit teachers' curricular choices (e.g. by prescribing methods) which met with teachers' enduring criticism of national curriculum guidelines as being out of touch with classroom reality, and claims that *Didaktik* alone should decide on what to teach whom (Hopmann 2007:114).

### *Values and child rearing*

In line with its rationality the Anglo-Saxon Curriculum culture has traditionally attempted value neutrality, with curriculum makers seeking to optimize the combination of educational and social goals in a school system that institutionally transmits ‘appropriate understandings of content seen unproblematically as this or that view of an authoritative selection from a larger, objectively valid subject matter’ (Westbury 2000: 31). Such views have been denounced as sexist and classist with the reconceptualised Curriculum theory (Pinar *et al.* 1995) becoming more engaged with the political and philosophical implications of the curriculum. The reconceptualists’ call for understanding rather than developing the curriculum led to a number of political, ideological, racial, gender and other investigations of curricular representations, showing the improbability of curricular neutrality, and sometimes arguing for spelling out the values promoted through education and schooling. For example, Noddings (1984) argued in her ethic of caring that moral education should begin with care for other human beings rather than with rationality. Dewey’s and progressive movements’ calls for child-centered pedagogies also shared some of Didaktik’s concerns (Hopmann 2007:114).

Didaktik is essentially concerned with the educative potential of the content. The idea is that students could be led to a comprehensive worldview that is inherent in, say, the sciences, mathematics or Greek and Latin literature. Everything that claims to be content of education must have significance for the future of those to be educated. Any specific content must contain general substance:

‘...opening up the young people to systems of order (legal, social, moral, etc.), responsibilities (such as human welfare or politics), necessities (such as the mastery of cultural skills, a minimum of vital knowledge, etc.) human opportunities (e.g., to enjoy and be active in leisure time, e.g. in the arts, in the choice of profession, etc.)’

(Klafki 2000: 150).

Teachers decide what must be done in a particular setting with particular material with particular students in light of the values associated with *Bildung* as the formation through which a person will become a ‘personality’ (Klafki 2000: 147). Blömeke (2006) describes *Bildung* as both process and the product of human development, guided by reason, and comprising self-determination, participation in society, and solidarity. Teachers have the freedom to decide which content and methods are relevant to reach these goals combining the broad curriculum guidelines and their own ideas. Meaning-making by teachers and pupils is central for *Didaktik*’s concept of teaching as a moral and reflective activity (Hopmann 2007, Westbury 1998).

### *Teacher education curricula*

The two cultures have different implications for teacher education, one of the central questions being that of whether the outcomes of learning should be pre-set or open-ended. In the Curriculum culture, the main purpose of teacher preparation is mastery of practical skills useful for teaching a given curriculum. According to Wraga (1999) such preparation as a rule includes the integration of professional and liberal arts education, connections between the classroom and the real world, and responsiveness to local realities.

In the *Didaktik* culture, a distinction is made in teacher education curricula, between general *Didaktik* as a theory of teaching and learning, and their formative power, and subject *Didaktik*, also called *Methodik* (Klafki 2000), as theories of teaching specific subject fields applying *Didaktik* methods and analysis. A knowledge base for teachers involves general and subject *Didaktik*, various sciences and social sciences that are the foundations for school subjects; pedagogy, developmental and child psychology.

Some authors (e.g. Wraga 1999) observed that, by joining universities, teacher education institutions came to identify closely with the academic orientation of sciences and social sciences departments adopting a notion that ‘pure academic’ knowledge is somehow more worthy than ‘applied’ knowledge, and that practitioners’ work will be enhanced by exposing them to large amounts of theory that can guide their work.

Teacher education curricula based on competences seem closer to the Curriculum culture in which teachers account for pupils’ learning and development with reference to predefined goals (Hudson 2002, Singer-Gabella & Tiedemann 2008). In the empirical part of this paper we explore whether the perceptions of changes in teacher education curricula can be interpreted using the continuum between *Didaktik* and Curriculum cultures. The main research question is: What elements of *Didaktik* and Curriculum cultures can be identified in practitioners’ perceptions of changes in teacher education?

## **Methodology**

### *Approach and data collection*

Qualitative enquiry has been chosen for a research study about a change, depending on beliefs and involving organisational and social change (Merriam 1998). Research suggests that the success of reforms critically depends on the extent to which they are compatible with teachers’ beliefs about what is worthwhile in education (Beijaard *et al.* 2000, Day 2002, Day *et al.* 2007, Fives & Buehl 2008, Grossman *et al.* 2007). This is why in this study we explore professionals’

perspectives on teacher competences and the integration of these competences into existing teacher education curricula. The data was collected through 30 semi-structured, in-depth interviews with teacher educators, student teachers and their school mentors.

In order to get rich data that can be used to see if the framework distinguishing between the cultures of *Didaktik* and Curriculum is useful for the interpretation of the perceptions of change in teacher education, we designed the interview scheme as an open-ended enquiry. The scheme comprised three parts, asking the participants to discuss: a) what the essential elements of an ideal teacher education program are; b) in what way the program at their institution has and/or should be changing; c) how they understand the notion of competence as a basis for teacher education curricula.

### *Participants*

The interviewees came from four higher education institutions in Serbia (three universities and one higher education school for pre-primary teachers). The faculties and departments within the institutions were selected with the aim of having different types of teacher preparation for different levels of education represented in the sample. At two institutions, educating pre-primary and lower primary teachers, educating teachers is the institution's primary activity with the vast majority of graduates going on to teaching jobs. At the other two institutions, departments preparing subject teachers have been selected. Only a small proportion of these institutions' students opt for teacher courses in addition to the courses associated with their respective scientific discipline. The selected departments prepare mathematics and chemistry teachers. All institutions from which the participants came have started to reform their curricula.

The participants within the institutions were selected by means of so called 'snowball' sampling, i.e. every interviewee was asked to identify another, targeting individuals who participated in curriculum development at their institution, and would thus be able to provide information about the curricular changes. The participants included fifteen teacher educators, ten student teachers and five teachers who act as mentors for students during their school practice. All members of the management and staff expressed both willingness to participate in the study and positive views about the need to reform teacher education. It is possible that those with contrary opinions were not selected.

All teacher educators participated in curriculum design of their course, and five were at the same time managers: two deans, two vice deans and one head of department. Three taught future pre-primary teachers, two taught both pre-primary and primary teachers, five prepared lower primary teachers, and five prepared subject teachers (three at the departments for mathematics, two at the departments for chemistry). All pre-primary teacher educators taught developmental and child psychology, while among the teacher educators preparing primary teachers, there

were those teaching so called *Methodik* (i.e. subject *Didaktik*) of Serbian language and literature, one taught *Methodik* of arts education, one history, and two taught developmental psychology and social pedagogy. Among the five teacher educators preparing subject teachers, three taught subject content (or the equivalent academic field), two taught subject *Methodik*, and one child psychology. Five participants were men and ten were women, mostly in their 40s, with a couple of participants in their 50s and three in their late-30s. Participants' years of experience as teacher educators ranged from five to over thirty years. Four out of five mentor teachers were experienced, female, primary teachers. One was a male mathematics teacher. The age of mentor teachers ranged from 33 to 61 years. Among the ten student teachers there were five primary and five secondary teachers of chemistry and geography. All (student) teachers were either close to graduating or had already graduated, four having recently started working in primary and secondary schools. Four were men and six were women, mostly in their mid-20s.

### *Analyses*

The data collected in the interviews was transcribed and analysed qualitatively to provide thick descriptions (Geertz 1973) of issues involved in the change of teacher education curricula. In the analysis we sought utterances addressing one of the five aspects of distinction between the *Didaktik* and Curriculum cultures: 1) teacher evaluation; 2) subject matter, pedagogy and curriculum; 3) understanding of the education system and contribution to its development; 4) values and child rearing, and 5) utterances about the change of teacher education curricula. In each group of utterances we interpreted the interviewees' perceptions in terms of whether they are closer to *Didaktik* or Curriculum cultures by seeking to identify elements of either (see Table 4.1) in the responses. At the same time some categories emerged from the data that could not be interpreted as falling in line with one of the two cultures, which were coded as 'other' categories. In total, 14 categories have been arrived at by means of constant comparison of the transcripts with the help of software for qualitative data processing. About 10 % of the data has been analysed by two raters reaching Kappa measure of inter-rater agreement of .88 after several rounds of training.

## **Findings and discussion**

Table 4.1 presents the elements of *Didaktik* and Curriculum cultures that cover the content of utterances in each category, and numbers of respondents and utterances coded in each category.

Table 4.1. Overview of categories with number of responders and examples of utterances in each category.

	<i>Didaktik</i>	Curriculum	Number of respondents with utterances in both cultures	Other categories
<b>teacher evaluation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>based on peer-evaluation, and</li> <li>self-reflection</li> </ul> 21 (28)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>based on student achievement</li> </ul> 15 (21)	9	
<b>subject knowledge, pedagogy and curriculum</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>what and why</li> <li>goal as direction</li> <li>curriculum as frame of reference</li> <li>theory as initiation</li> </ul> 14 (30)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>how</li> <li>practical tasks</li> <li>curriculum implementation</li> <li>subject matter first</li> </ul> 27 (47)	13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>motivation</li> </ul> 5 (6)
<b>understanding education system and contribution to its development</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>innovation and contextual adjustment by individual teachers</li> <li>change based on theoretical critique</li> </ul> 17 (24)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>innovation and contextual adjustment within institution</li> <li>change following the market trends</li> </ul> 11 (22)	8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>institutional and wider societal context of education</li> </ul> 9 (18)
<b>values and child rearing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>exemplification on</li> <li><i>Bildung</i> first</li> </ul> 24 (57)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>value neutrality</li> </ul> 4 (7)	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>child rights</li> </ul> 4 (5)
<b>change of teacher education curricula</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>competences as broader goals</li> <li>teacher educators' freedom</li> <li>broader theories and disciplinary knowledge</li> </ul> 24 (51)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>competences as pre-defined outcomes</li> <li>students in the center</li> <li>preparation for practice</li> </ul> 30 (88)	23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>changes as Potemkin's villages</li> </ul> 6 (6)

Below we present some of the responses that were interpreted as illustrative of elements of *Didaktik* and Curriculum cultures in the perceptions related to the four groups of competences. We also discuss the perceptions of change in teacher education and some of the implications of these findings for teacher education curricula.

### *Teacher evaluation*

The dominant perception (21 respondents) of appropriate evaluation of successful teaching seems to be in tune with the view inherent in the *Didaktik* culture, as based on self-reflection:

‘Who can judge someone’s work?...I do not know how I would judge someone’s work. You can look at whether they use new learning tools, whether they use new literature, but that is not a measure of their work...A measure of a teacher’s work, if he is good, is his own sense (feeling). I am aware that I do not always carry out lessons the way I would like to them to be...and that it could have been done much better.’

Some of these participants also endorsed the view that teacher evaluation could be based on peer-assessment: ‘The state has to trust its teachers, has to trust its academic institutions...because the state does not know what pedagogy or *Didaktik* is, teachers themselves should evaluate the program and their work, and with other teachers of the same subject’. A few participants shared this view, that only the colleagues teaching the same subject can give a legitimate evaluation of a teachers’ work.

15 respondents advocated teacher evaluation based on the teaching’s effect on students, closer to the Curriculum culture of appropriate evaluation of successful teaching. For example, one teacher educator contended:

‘We need to be able to check the results of a teacher’s work. Today, the results are not measured...what is the result of a teacher’s work? The fact that a student lived two blocks from the school, so he had to attend and finish that school, and was looking forward to finishing with it, is that a result of [teachers’] work? That means you are nothing!’

Nine of these voices come from the same respondents who see self- and/or peer evaluation as appropriate ways to evaluate teachers. Also in those utterances the call for product-oriented teacher evaluation, was only once perceived to be appropriately based on school achievement only. When the importance of evaluating teacher’s work against student attainments was raised, responses reflected a belief in the importance of broader outcomes for student lives, than of attainments alone:

‘Students provide evaluation of their teacher, of their school. Who did what? Who entered which faculty? Why did they not enter? What happened to that child? Why did the child fail when it had an IQ of 130...and all of a sudden became very dumb? What happened to that child? Who is to blame?’

In summary, the views on teacher evaluation seem to be dominated by the views of *Didaktik*’s self- and peer evaluation processes as more appropriate, with little mention of possibilities for justification of teacher evaluation by non-professionals, such as external authorities, parents or communities. Nevertheless, 15 participants expressed a need to base teacher evaluation on the effect on their students of teaching, views closer to the teacher evaluation approaches inherent in the Curriculum culture.

### *Subject matter, pedagogy and curriculum*

The perceptions of subject matter and its relations to teaching and pedagogy seem to reflect a mixture of elements of both Curriculum and *Didaktik* cultures. For example, we interpreted a view of the knowledge of subject matter as the primary and most important source of teacher expertise, as aligned to the Curriculum culture: ‘...all education of teachers needs to be primarily based on the expert field...i.e. mastering the knowledge in the expert field itself ...you cannot do without that...the way you teach someone the Serbian language cannot be more important than your actual knowing Serbian orthography, grammar, literature, right?’

The participants (14) whose utterances were interpreted as in line with the *Didaktik* culture offered views about the need for teachers to have a much wider perspective on the subject matter than they actually need for teaching it. For example, one educator of future mathematics teachers elaborated:

‘When someone tells me: ‘Why, at the fourth year of the faculty you were telling us things that I will never use in a primary school?’ That is horrible! This is not a hairdresser’s course, so you learn only the things you will use on the job...You need to know at least five times more than you will tell in front of the [black] board tomorrow’. I was in a situation of knowing...only as much as I was telling. It’s a very bad feeling...You must not allow yourself to know about functions only what you will tell *gymnasium* students.’

Others thought that teachers should know the essence of a subject, but still more than they need to teach pupils. For example, mathematics teacher educators saw the need for ‘more elementary mathematics, such as theory of numbers, geometry, and teaching methods, social components and awareness of their role’. One participant said that she ‘would base all first grade mathematics on measuring and money’. Another one suggested: ‘You would teach them [student teachers] higher mathematics but constantly bearing in mind how they will transmit it, that is you



would give them the basis that *methodicians* can then use to teach them how they would explain the notion of number to children'. Teacher educators of primary teachers particularly viewed an ideal teacher as a kind of researcher looking into the suitability of the curriculum and textbooks for their students, for example:

‘A teacher needs to be constantly checking the programme... looking at what the children did not understand and what they did understand? Is the textbook good or not? Was that lesson good? Should it be shorter? Is it harmonized with other subjects? Do we achieve the general educational goal through it or not...’

These utterances resonate with the *Didaktik*'s view of curriculum as a frame of reference within which teachers can exercise their autonomy and pedagogical expertise. However, the same participant went on to explain that such expertise has been underestimated in the existing teacher education: ‘Methods as skills in transferring knowledge is...only slowly gaining a status today with the external influences... so far [subject] didakticians...were seen as those who could not do better [in their academic discipline]...some kind of lower beings’. A colleague teaching the subject content confirmed the existence of such attitudes towards teacher educators teaching *Methodik*:

‘People who teach *Methodik* at different faculties, with a few exceptions, are people who did not manage to get affirmed in their [subject] field of expertise, so they found a shelter in this, how this subject is to be taught to others. In my opinion...one learns how to transmit disciplinary knowledge if one is interested, one learns that in one long established subject called *Didaktika*.’

Opinions about what is essential for teachers varied according to what the teacher educator being questioned actually taught: subjects content, psychology and pedagogy, or subject *Methodik*.

At the same time, there seems to exist a dominant view (27 respondents) that ‘teachers need to be prepared for the job of teaching’ better than in the existing preparation. We interpreted these utterances as resonating with the Curriculum culture since the participants elaborated that they saw current teacher preparation as inadequate for teachers’ practical daily activities such as administrative tasks, filling in the register, dealing with discipline, communicating with parents, classroom management, and so on. The concerns expressed by participants about teachers not acquiring the necessary knowledge and skills essential for their future job was particularly present in the comments about the current preparation of subject teachers. They are educated in a particular discipline that is the equivalent of the school subject, and not specifically for teaching practice. This concern is illustrated in the utterances below:

‘[Our] teacher knows a lot about her subject, but little about her job...she leaves the school [teacher education faculty] completely insensitive to the nature of her job, because the faculty has not prepared her for what she will do, she is prepared to be a good expert for literature...’

‘Ideally, an educational institution should set a kind of vision for itself: whom do we educate, what do we educate them for, where do we send them, and what do we need to do to make sure they, and we who educate them, achieve that vision...It is necessary to constantly keep in mind that vision, and the objective...does she need the mathematics to build bridges or to help children think logically and solve problems?’

This kind of approval of goal-setting, characteristic of the Curriculum culture, was one of the most common points in this group of utterances, alongside the stressing of the need for more practice which should also start earlier in teacher training programmes and have clearly defined goals.

The perceptions of competence related to curriculum design, adaptation and implementation were interpreted as aligned to the Curriculum culture when participants suggested that the purpose and curricular aims and themes should be selected by an external authority, and that teachers’ expertise is about ensuring that those aims and content are mastered by students in the most effective way (e.g., ‘they [teachers] need to be competent implementers of the recommended programme.’). Such perceptions are all in line with the Curriculum culture’s core question of *how* to enact the curricular tasks, and a view of curriculum plan as a course of action covering the pre-selected content.

Utterances about the curriculum were interpreted as aligned to *Didaktik* when participants saw teaching as a job that involves more breadth and depth than a mere implementation of an external plan. For example, the views that ‘the most important thing about teaching any particular unit is to know why it is taught’, or ‘what it could mean for a particular child’ resonate with *Didaktik*’s core questions of *what* and *why*.

The topic of motivation was brought up by five participants as an important issue in changing teacher roles and in their critique of the present preparation of teachers. Some participants suggested that a particular version of *Didaktik* is adopted in existing teacher preparation that assumes a direct link between the subject matter and its educational value. The specific subject *Didaktik* is narrowly linked to individual subjects neglecting the broader meanings or general principles to be conveyed by means of specific content examples, thus issues related to motivation that are at the core of lesson planning in *Didaktik* analysis seem to be skewed in the present preparation of teachers. One teacher educator remarked:

‘They learn in their *Methodik* that a lesson is carried out in nine stages. In those nine stages there is practically nothing about how one could motivate children by giving them tasks to solve. Or, if there is, they are not able to say why they should do it. Instead, it is a stage, and that is it...they relentlessly write those lesson plans which mainly consist of what they will tell the children. And if the children appear at all in those plans then they invent a child’s response...incredible waste of time and energy...they literally invent what a child would say.’

These utterances were coded as ‘other’ since they seem to criticise the mechanistic practices of implemented *Didaktik* as unsatisfactory in adequately addressing the issue of motivation, but without aligning themselves with Curriculum either.

### *Understanding of the education system and contribution to its development*

In this group we coded the utterances about the institutional and wider contexts of education and schooling, about links between teachers’ competence and the social contexts in which they engage, and about educational change. Utterances were coded as close to *Didaktik* culture when respondents saw the institutional and wider contexts of schooling either as something that individual teachers need to integrate into their teaching or to take into account as obstacles to it. Utterances were coded as close to Curriculum culture when the participants saw school as an institution of central importance in answering to the community and environment in which it operates.

17 respondents whose utterances have been interpreted as aligned to the *Didaktik* saw initiation of change in a local school and community as a particularly challenging aspect of teacher competence, as, for example, did this respondent:

‘...when they [teachers] go to the school they do not go to a context that enables them to implement what they learned here in the best way. They go back to an inert environment, where after two years they...adapt. Only the strongest ones have the courage to stand up for their beliefs, the others conform...and all the effort here was in vain.’

It seems that a teacher’s room for ‘standing up for their beliefs’ is confined to their own classroom in which they can exercise autonomy to innovate within their subject. Gudmundsdottir et al. (2000) rightly observed that in *Didaktik* culture teachers of the same subject are more alike than teachers of the same school, which can create subcultures within schools aligned with school subjects (Grossman & Stodolsky 1995).

Some among these participants linked the need for teachers to consider the context in which they work to the diversity of students in today’s schools, like this

respondent: 'Classrooms are more and more heterogeneous in their ethnic makeup, there are more and more Roma children [in schools], so the methods of teaching to read and write cannot be the same as they were 20-30 years ago when the classrooms were much more homogenous than today, or so it was supposed'. This is again resonating with the *Didaktik*'s call to accommodate the characteristics of pupils.

11 participants emphasised the importance of responding to societal needs beyond the school walls, a perception evocative of the importance of the local context in the Curriculum culture: '...if we know that we have so many illiterate people, so many poor, so many refugees, we need to, maybe through electives, maybe as part of the regular curriculum, strengthen those subjects... We introduced multicultural education to raise students' awareness of the reality for which they are being prepared'. A few of these participants brought up the topic of the importance of school as an institution in a community and environment in which teachers operate. One pre-primary teacher educator explained:

'They [teachers] have to realise that a kindergarten is not isolated, it is a social institution painted with all the colours of the society...and in itself a socio-cultural system. Each kindergarten has its culture, ethos...so they have to be ready for what will be expected of them...including that we count on them to change [institutions]...I know many good teachers, but we need to look at the institutions. What is the sense of an institution that makes us behave in this or that way...even though sometimes we ourselves are not happy to behave that way?'

The utterance above resonates with the focus of Curriculum theory on the institutional level as 'defining the connection between schooling and both a culture and a society' (Westbury 2000: 34). It also recalls the argument that teachers are no longer only entrusted with operating a scientifically grounded pedagogy, but also with assuming a wider evaluative reflection on the socio-cultural purpose of education and schooling (Carr 1999; Lauglo 1995). Liston and Zeichner (1990) argued that such reflection should not focus only on implicit social and cultural frameworks. Rather, it should include an examination of the institutional features of schooling. Teaching professionals, they argue, must be able to analyse and change particular institutional arrangements and working conditions, especially those that might obstruct the implementation of their aims (Liston & Zeichner 1990). It should be noted that our participants viewed the contribution to school development as being a call of duty for teachers rather than for administrators.

There were also nine respondents who raised issues about the institutional and wider contexts without relating them to teachers or institutions. These responses were coded as 'other'.

## *Values and child rearing*

The vast majority of responses (24) in to this group of competences were related to the *Didaktik*'s question about a wider sense or attitude that can be exemplified by the content in the education process conceived as *Bildung*, as in the following examples: 'Every subject has its upbringing value...we should not forget that we are not just educating, but also nurturing young people. Unfortunately, lately, it is questionable whether we even educate them'. Or:

'One needs to prepare a lesson well to select interesting problems from ordinary life, so to say, as far as possible, those are usually the nicest problems in mathematics...one of the most important things that you need to learn in school is to be accurate and neat! Yes, one needs to be neat and not fuzzy – that is what mathematics teaches you: you have to stand behind your result.'

14 of these participants maintained that some degree of agreement about values should be attempted, as this teacher educator argued:

'In my time...there was no dilemma about values. We did not think about whether it was worth being educated...whether being a good pupil was important...whether listening to folk or rock music made a difference...whether reading or non-reading of books made a difference. There was no dilemma about these things...Promotion of values has to be some kind of a social consensus. At least we should agree about some elementary values that are simply part of human archetype...like work, order, honesty, sincerity, etc... We promote an authoritarian society, through an authoritarian school, through an authoritarian teacher... If we consider the broader social context, we talk about democracy, about individual freedom for each person, as values. A teacher must promote these values through interpersonal rapport with those she educates... and in order to be able to do that she has to pass through this teacher faculty having the right to come to me and say: I do not agree with that...'

Four participants reluctantly endorsed the possibility of dealing with values in education and teacher preparation, which we coded as alignment with the Curriculum's effort to be value-neutral. Such reluctance was usually associated with a fear of indoctrination from the past: '[Our] Pedagogy as a science used to be very "ideologised", and served everyday societal goals of bringing up children in the spirit of becoming good communist citizens.' Or:

'Of course, we all subscribe to some values whether we are aware of it or not. The experience from previous years made us loathe any kind of imposed system...it does not mean that there is no ideology today, but it is hidden. If it

was public, regulated, I do not know, set by the state, I think it is better to keep it like this for now’.

In four responses coded as ‘other’ the participants advocated putting the child’s rights at the center of education and perceived this as missing in the existing preparation of teachers, as one respondent put it:

‘...the rights of children as equal beings are very important regardless of how naughty or impudent they are...one has to be patient...to learn how to respect them...we are very weak there. A child is often, mostly without guilt, humiliated, punished in this or that way, I do not think children are gangsters...or tough guys, or such. Our curriculum as it is now absolutely does not recognise things like that.’

There seems to exist a great deal of agreement among the participants that teachers’ moral roles are very important. Yet, not everybody agrees that values should be an explicit focus of teacher preparation, recalling the Curriculum culture’s claim of rationality and value neutrality. However, the vast majority of opinions given in this study seem closer to the *Didaktik* culture’s signifier of importance, moral formation as in *Bildung*. What precisely is moral about teaching remains to be explored, bearing in mind the different, sometimes competing, bases for teachers’ moral roles, but this is beyond the scope of this paper.

### *Change of teacher education*

All 30 participants in the study recognised a need for change in teacher education, and characterized the inherited institutional and curricular structures as inadequate in the changing context of education. When respondents called for change they gave arguments aligned with the Curriculum culture, such as a need for greater accountability of teacher education institutions, establishing a common vision and quality assurance, as expressed by this teacher educator: ‘We have little guidance with a clear notion of what is needed and what we want within which we could then find a freedom...instead our freedom is a total freedom’.

Participants saw the biggest advantage of the new approaches was that they could now ‘follow a student better and make them active’, or as one respondent put it: ‘Now we have to adjust our requirements to the student workload...for the first time we think about students, not only about us lecturers’.

At the same time six teacher educators criticised the present state of reforms at their institutions. One respondent described those changes as ‘Potemkin’s villages’:

‘The programme has not changed essentially. Some cosmetic changes have been made. I call them Potemkin’s villages. In fact, the same programme has been disguised in a new form required by the Bologna [arrangements]. Now

we talk about *credits*, not about *hours*, and so on, but the hours and the literature in many cases, remain the same or very similar.’

The answers about the place for competence in teacher education revealed an interesting mismatch between the proclaimed preference for competence and the underlying understanding of it.

All but one respondent supported the idea that curricula should have predefined goals, some explicitly suggesting the form of competences: ‘We need to rethink well the structure and the content of the curricula and syllabi, think carefully about what are the outcomes and expected competences of students when they finish certain levels of study, that has not been done at all.’ The one teacher educator who rejected such an idea explained:

‘I know implicitly what my goal is. No one has ever required me to say what my goals are. For my subject, no one has ever required me to put that down...For me those are empty phrases...I don’t know “my goal is to develop in them...whatever”. I cannot say that in a way that a non-mathematician could understand...’

However, 24 participants whose utterances about change in teacher education were coded as aligned to *Didaktik* culture, seem to understand a notion of ‘competence’ very broadly, as does this teacher educator:

‘Competence is responsibility for what I teach them, and how I do it and what I give them as aims in life through what they hear from me. I am for competence and it should be very broadly set and agreed within a community. How am I supposed to develop them if I dissent?’

Some of these participants discussed what makes a ‘competent teacher’, suggesting that this has always been the goal of teacher education and that only the word ‘competence’ itself is new. However, one teacher educator explained what this actually meant:

‘Before, the focus was on what they [student teachers] needed to know in the Serbian language and to lead a lesson implementing certain *Methodik* – that above all was a competence...to be able to tell you something, for example, about Dositej Obradović, and to be able to tell you the stages of a lesson dealing with Dositej Obradović – that was considered as competences. Everything else about teacher - student relations, student - student relations, motivation...did not exist.’

The participants in this group expressed some scepticism towards the notion of competence on the grounds that it involved too much prescription, suggesting that it is important to strike the right balance between the preparation for practical tasks

and for the underlying theories. The disagreement was mainly about the question of the order in which students should be exposed to theory and practice. Seven teacher educators considered that theory must come first, as this teacher of developmental psychology proposed:

‘When I teach theory I present research findings and why they are important...Once they know that, once they get a map of a child’s mind...then lesson planning, selection of contents and methods will be a logical thing for them. They will put things in a logical context. Because if you start lesson planning without knowing anything about those you plan it for, you do not do anything.’

Other teacher educators and all student teachers thought that practice should come either before, or in parallel with the theory, and that student teachers should have more opportunity to teach in actual schools.

## Conclusions

In summary, the responses about different groups of competence vary in their alignment with *Didaktik* and Curriculum cultures. For example, perceptions of appropriate teacher evaluation and place of values in teacher education are closer to *Didaktik*, while the majority of responses about subject, pedagogy and school curriculum are closer to the Curriculum culture. However, often both approaches can be traced in the different utterances of the same individuals (see the fourth column of Table 4.1), with some respondents being critical of different elements in both cultures, and only two student teacher individual responses featuring a whole set of views in line with one (Curriculum) culture. This indicates that a framework regarding *Didaktik* and Curriculum cultures as two poles of a continuum cannot be used to fully capture and describe the change. Rather, most respondents’ perceptions of different aspects of change vary reflecting one or the other culture on different issues, confirming the coexistence of the ‘old’ and ‘new’ ways in the transition period (Anchan *et al.* 2003; Fullan 1993a).

Existing teacher education seems to be based on a belief in a systematic subject-based preparation, and is slow in responding to the call for better connection with the reality of teaching in real contexts, as has been found in other European countries too (Garm & Karlsen 2004, Ostinelli 2009). Even when the accountability-driven changes set desirable outcomes concerned with teacher performance in real life, as in the case of Norway, ‘the problem is that the system tends to measure teacher competence in a more narrow sense as subject knowledge’ (Garm & Karlsen 2004: 739). This situation is probably due, at least to some extent, to the divisions between teacher educators themselves that are entrenched along the lines of their own subjects.



Again as in Norway (Garm & Karlsen 2004), in our study the student teachers call for more preparation for the actual practice of teaching – their future work. The historical tension between academic knowledge and the need for more practice seems to persist, while the need to build more coherent links between theory and practice seem as great as ever in the context of school students' diverse life-experiences, pre-existing knowledge, cultural habits, learning styles, and so on. The challenge in Serbia seems to be similar to that pointed to by teacher educators in other countries using *Didaktik* analyses as a framework for the preparation of teachers. The analysis tends to remain incomplete as students, and teacher educators, seem to relate to subject matter as a structure of knowledge, at the expense of subject matter as used in everyday life, in connection to other subjects, or in the frame of schooling (Hopmann 2000: 198). In practice the focus on the breath of subject matter itself seems to have constrained teacher reflection on the educational potential of the content intended by the open-ended framework for *Didaktik* analysis.

The changing contexts of education and schooling seem to need more empirically based findings of what works in the practice of teaching in real contexts. This should perhaps be closer to Shulman's concept of pedagogical content knowledge, concerned with how the educational potential of the content can be transformed into representations appropriate for a given group of students (Shulman 1987), than to Klafki's focus on the educational potential of content based on the interpretation of curricular texts (Gudmundsdottir *et al.* 2000).

On the other hand, as Garm and Karlsen (2004) rightly remark, focus on outcomes and teacher performance threaten to move teacher education away from broader cultural, social and value-oriented understanding of the teaching profession. Teachers are more and more judged by the public and expected to take on more responsibilities (Hopmann & Künzli 1997). In this context the cultural and social orientation becomes even more important if teachers are to develop into reflective, flexible and innovative professionals, assuming greater roles in curriculum design and consideration of the broader social purposes and competing values in public education.

Teacher educators, students and mentors by and large perceive existing teacher education as inefficient in preparation for practice, and approve orienting the curricula towards goals defined by the future job of teaching and the concrete tasks it involves. On the face of it, such perceptions are in line with the views of adequate teacher preparation in the Curriculum culture. However, the participants seem to view preparation for practical tasks as involving broad understandings of the theoretical and moral implications of teaching. Particularly, preparation for motivating students requires more in-depth insights into creating meaningful encounters between learners and content, closer to the *Didaktik* culture. This ambivalence of views clearly suggests that an effective change towards a

competence-based model of teacher education would need to operate within a broadly conceived notion of teacher competence.

The *Didaktik* / Curriculum framework can be useful as a tool for stimulating reflection about change and giving teacher educators and student teachers feedback that could help them organise their thinking about changing teachers' roles and relations between content, students and contexts of education and schooling.

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## **Chapter 5: The role of teachers in inculcating moral values: operationalisation of concepts<sup>17</sup>**

Dealing with values and moral issues is recognised as integral part of teachers' roles. Especially in culturally heterogeneous societies teachers face multiple values that students and their families may hold. The study reported in this paper explores different conceptions of teachers' moral roles aiming to develop an instrument for assessing teacher beliefs about those roles that could be used in teacher development. Paternalist, liberal and social-relativist conceptions of teachers' moral roles were operationalised using data collected in three focus groups with teachers from Bosnia & Herzegovina and Serbia discussing cases of school practices involving value-laden issues. Initial items for construction of a questionnaire for teachers were generated from teachers' utterances to ensure ecological validity. Implications for teacher development and future research are discussed.

### **Introduction and aims**

A number of authors (Arthur, Davison & Lewis, 2005; Carr, 1993b; Hansen, 2001; Sanger, 2008; Bergem, 1990) claim that education is essentially an ethical, normative activity. It presupposes that something of value is to be taught and it is concerned with improving people (Arthur et al., 2005). As such, education, and teaching, is bound to encounter problems that are not susceptible to resolution in value-neutral, technical terms. Hansen (2001) argues that moral values described as 'notions of good & bad, better & worst' (p. 828) can be expressed in any action a teacher undertakes, for example in what curricular content they focus on, who they pay attention to, where they stand while talking with students, and so on (p. 826), with or without teachers being aware of such expressions.

The view of teaching as an ethical and value-laden activity seems to be widespread among the policy makers, teacher educators and teachers themselves. The development of professional ethical standards for teachers has lately received an increasing attention internationally, for example in Scandinavian countries (Bergem, 1990), the Netherlands and UK (Willemse et al. 2008) to name but a few. Veugelers

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and Vedder (2003) attribute this revived attention to a shift from a technical-instrumental focus on education in the 1980s and early 1990s towards a much more 'moral' focus in the years since. However, they argue that the change concerned more the discourse itself than the actual practices of teachers, perhaps not the least due to the lack of a clear theoretical framework and sparse empirical evidence about the 'moral' part of teachers' roles and competences (Cummings et al., 2007; Willemse et al., 2008).

The absence of a substantial focus in teacher education on moral values and teachers' roles in inculcating them, has been reported internationally. An in-depth study at a teacher education institute in the Netherlands (Willemse et al. 2005) for example revealed hardly any evidence that curricula designers used any systematic, critical analysis of relationships between goals, objectives, content and methods of the programme and its specific moral aspects. Cross-country studies from Southeast European countries (Pantić, 2008; Zgaga, 2006) showed that values and dealing with ethical issues are almost never explicitly addressed in teacher preparation programmes despite teachers and teacher educators strongly adhering to the view of teaching as a normative profession (Pantić, 2008). Husu and Tirri (2003) investigated cases of Finnish teachers' moral dilemmas through different ethical perspectives, and advocated bringing together philosophical and empirical modes of inquiry to gain a better understanding of teachers' moral reasoning and decision-making. In the USA Sanger (2008) argued for a deep, well-developed study of the moral aspects of teaching in relation to practice that would help student teachers develop 'a clear and systematic understanding of what is moral about teaching' (p. 170).

In this paper we pursue the aim of clarifying the possible grounds for teachers' roles in inculcating moral value by outlining David Carr's theoretical distinction between paternalist and liberal conceptions of teachers' moral roles, and introducing a possibility of a third social-relativist conception. We then report on an empirical study in which we aim to operationalise these conceptions and generate items for an ecologically valid instrument for the assessment of teachers' beliefs about them. We interpret the data collected in focus group discussions with teachers as manifestations in schools and educational practices of the paternalist, liberal and social relativist conceptions of teachers' roles in inculcating moral values. We use this data to generate initial pools of questionnaire items for each of the conceptions.

The rationale for studying teachers' own beliefs can be found in abundant literature about the nature of teacher knowledge, teacher identity and professionalism, suggesting that teacher practices and the success of attempts to change those practices critically depend on the extent to which they are congruent with teachers' own beliefs about what is worthwhile in education, and that teachers themselves should be the main source of information for defining their roles and competences (Beijaard et al., 2000; Day, 2002; Day et al., 2007; Fives & Buehl, 2008). Teacher competence is often defined as a dynamic combination of

knowledge, abilities and values (Gonzales & Wagenaar, 2003; Pantić & Wubbels, 2010). While various frameworks have been developed for examining teachers' beliefs about teaching knowledge and teaching ability (see e.g., Fives and Buehl, 2008) values are by and large left out of such frameworks despite the strong consensus in the educational literature that they are integral to teaching as a moral activity (Sanger, 2008).

The data for the study reported in this paper has been collected in Bosnia & Herzegovina and Serbia. Cultural, political and recent historical, as well as educational contexts of these countries represent a very complex setting for public education (Closs, 1995; Džihic & Wieser, 2008; Glanzer, 2008; Morgan, 2005) and bring in a great deal of confusion about the underlying values that parents, and teachers, may hold (Radó, 2001; 2010) while teachers remain unprepared for dealing with the diversity of values involved with public schooling in ethically, religiously and otherwise diverse environments (Pantić, Closs & Ivošević, 2011). A study of teacher educators' perceptions of desired change in teacher education in Serbia (Pantić & Wubbels, forthcoming) showed that views about appropriate approaches to dealing with values in teacher preparation vary from the prevailing views aligned with a *Didaktik* culture placing values and up-bringing in the centre of education process, to those inherent a Curriculum culture that tries to take a more neutral stand towards values in education (Westbury, Hopmann & Riquarts, 2000).

Considering the normative nature of teaching, evidence that policy-makers, teacher educators and teachers themselves assign high importance to their moral roles, and arguments that the present preparation of teachers to deal with moral values is inadequate, the findings of the study presented in this paper could be useful in teacher education and development programmes for helping teachers understand various, possibly competing conceptions of their moral roles.

## **Theoretical framework**

One of the most influential contemporary social theorists Alasdair MacIntyre called teachers 'the forlorn hope of the culture of western modernity', but also observed that 'the mission with which...[they] are entrusted is both essential and impossible' (MacIntyre & Dunne, 2002). It has long been taken for granted that part of teachers' authority is to positively influence learners by imparting knowledge and virtues and acting as a role model. Liberal-progressive theories brought this common perception under suspicion for fear of an authoritarianism of the past. The role of a teacher as a positive model was downgraded in the name of an individual's basic right to liberty of thought and action without too coercive influences (Carr, 2003). Indeed, there seems to exist a paradox in the position of teachers in the contexts of growing diversity of values in many societies in which education has come to be

seen as initiation of the young into certain forms of thinking and behaviour, yet without undue coercion into any particular modes of *good* thinking and behaviour.

The question of values in education and teachers' roles in inculcating them is a highly contested one in contemporary education with a number of perspectives on the justifiability and appropriate approaches to teaching values (Campbell, 2004; Halstead & Taylor, 1996; Oser, 1986). Willemse *et al.* (2005) identify in the literature three different strands that concern the questions of whether teachers have a moral role at all; how to define their moral task; and how moral education should be carried out. The study reported in this paper focused on the teachers' beliefs about the first question of the justifiability of teachers' moral roles.

David Carr (2003, p. 221) outlines three major epistemological stances about the nature of moral claims and judgments from which we departed in an attempt to make clear the links between these distinctive grounds for normative involvement in education and teaching, and the related implications they have for the roles of teachers in inculcating moral values:

- 1.) Moral claims and judgements are (in principle) absolutely and/or objectively true or false, right or wrong - or, at any rate, they are not merely products of individual *choice* or local social *consensus*. There are at least two importantly different versions of this view:
- 2.) Moral claims and judgements are essentially humanly constructed *social codes* or conventions: as such they are largely a function of local social consensus, and to that extent have only local or *relative* authority.
- 3.) Moral claims and judgements are little more than non-rational expressions of personal predilection, preference or taste: as such they are *subjective*, and have therefore at best *personal* or private authority.

Other sources (see for example Halstead & Taylor, 1996) suggest a similar continuum between an objectivist view of values as absolute and universal at one extreme, and a subjectivist view of values as merely expressions of personal opinion at the other, with somewhere in between a view of values as socially constructed and relative to social agreements that vary over time and across groups or societies. These different perspectives imply different, sometimes rivalling, conceptions of teachers' roles in inculcating moral and other values. According to Carr (1993b) there are at least two such conceptions: paternalism and liberalism. Below we discuss the differences between these two conceptions of teachers' roles in relation to the issues such as right to free choice in matters of values in education, and the question of a need for teachers to personally exemplify values. We also consider a possibility of a distinctive third social-relativist conception to be envisioned somewhere on the middle of the continuum and aligned with Carr's second stance.

## *Paternalism*

According to Carr (1993b) paternalism is generally understood as a view that it is the right or responsibility of some, in virtue of their superior, insight, wisdom or knowledge, to decide what is good for others, in their alleged best interest. Since in this view values are seen as objectively true or false, education is primarily a matter of transmitting the *true, right, or good* values. Moral development of children and the young is one of the main aims of education, and teachers may be justified in opposing the values of parents or of local social consensus in the name of some *higher* moral authority (Carr, 2003).

Carr suggests that a paternalist conception of teachers' moral roles is inherent in traditional approaches to education in which teachers are regarded as authoritative custodians of that higher wisdom, virtues and appropriate values, and that this conception tends to be characteristic of more traditional or culturally homogenous societies or communities (Carr, 1993b).

Since values are inherent in character and conduct, appropriate values can be transmitted effectively only by those who possess and exemplify them (Carr, 1993b). Thus, Carr argues that in this conception of teachers' moral roles professional values cannot be separated from their personal conduct, forms of expression and attitudes, and even appearance.

## *Liberalism*

There are number of important differences between various conceptions of liberalism, for example between those adopting Mill's (1972) utilitarianism and that of egalitarians like John Rawls (1999). For the purpose of this paper we adopt Carr's (1993b) broad definition of liberalism as the view that individuals have an inalienable moral right, short of unacceptable intrusion in the affairs of others, to freely choose their conduct, attitudes and values. According to Carr, liberal-progressive educators would be suspicious towards the role of teachers as moral custodians and their engagement in moral betterment of their pupils.

Liberalism makes an important distinction between the private and public domains (Hampshire, 1978). In this conception values are a matter of personal choice and teachers, as everyone else, are entitled to privately hold whatever views they prefer as long as they do not violate basic standards of professional ethics. Teachers could not claim significant moral authority over the values of parents and pupils since their individual values cannot carry much greater weight than those of any other person (Carr, 2003). Thus, inculcation of moral values is primarily the responsibility of the home, while teachers should be primarily concerned with children's literacy and numeracy or achievements in the subject areas they teach.

A liberal conception of teachers' role has been associated with the moves towards a highly regulated, value-neutral and impersonal quality of teaching,

attempting to define educational professionalism minimally as a code of practice and ethics that acknowledge the rights of others. It is, therefore important to distinguish between the moral values and judgments in terms of what a teacher sees as *right* or *appropriate*, and the ethical judgment in terms of discussing principles or codes of professional conduct concerned with how values are upheld in the practical functioning of public schools (Carr, 1993b, Colnerud, 2006; Hansen, 2001). Yet, Halstead (1996b) importantly reminds that such ethical debate is based on the fundamental liberal values such as equality, respect of difference, parallel concerns for individual liberties and social justice, and consistent rationality. Thus, in the contexts of culturally pluralist societies, teachers with a liberal view of their role in values inculcation would be concerned with equipping the young with the qualities of rational autonomy and chart a reasonably impartial route through a variety of different competing values (Carr, 2003).

### *Social relativism*

If we try to associate the paternalist and liberal views about teachers' roles in inculcating values with the above outlined epistemological stances about the nature of moral values and judgements, at first glance it would appear that paternalism is aligned with the objectivism, and liberalism with the subjectivism, leaving the question of whether a distinctive relativist conception of teachers' moral roles could be articulated? Theoretically, such a conception would adopt the perspective of the basis for moral authority as relative to social agreements and recognise vital contribution of culture and tradition in matters of values. Teachers would be morally accountable mainly to the socially agreed values of the relevant local community (Carr, 2003).

However, Carr himself (1993b) and others (e.g. Campbell, 2004) point out that the views of teachers' moral roles might not straightforwardly link with the epistemological question of the objectivism or subjectivism of the nature of moral values. For example, while it would be hard to imagine a teacher who would try to justify a paternalist view on the subjectivist ground, it is perfectly possible to imagine that a teacher who believes moral values are relative to social or professional agreements could hold a paternalist view that regardless of their source such moral values should be inculcated in the next generations. Halstead (1996a) contends that in monocultural societies children would be introduced to the values and practices of their own society as objective reality.

It is also possible to imagine that a teacher with the same relativist belief about the nature of moral values could take a more liberal 'live and let-live' view allowing communities traditions and cultures to pursue their own vision of good as they choose, either inside or outside of the common school (Halstead, 1996b). Such a teacher could also be imagined to hold views aligned to the critiques of liberal views offered from a communitarian perspective (MacIntyre, 1981) in which values are to



be appraised in terms of the ways in which they contribute to the personal, moral and social improvement of the human condition in practical terms, which can also change over time and across social and cultural contexts (Carr, 1993b).

## **Methodology**

### *Objectives and design*

The objective of the study reported in this paper was to elicit teachers' judgments about concrete cases of school and classroom practices which could be used to generate questionnaire items for the above presented conceptions of teachers' moral roles. In this way we sought to make teachers' voices prevalent in the development of an ecologically valid instrument for exploration of their beliefs.

With this objective in mind we conducted focus groups with teachers to discuss five cases involving values to which school and classroom practices may give rise. The case have been designed by selecting and adapting contents from similar studies conducted in other contexts (Carr & Landon, 1998) and the articles from newspapers in the region reporting actual instances of teachers' conduct laden with moral issues. These cases are reproduced in full here:

CASE 1: A young teacher is inclined to come to school casually dressed, carries a nose piercing, and uses informal forms of speech. The teacher is popular with pupils and they begin to imitate her.

CASE 2: A teacher whose pupils achieve good results, including at competitions, is given to the use of sarcasm and ridicule towards pupils. The pupils show fear and humiliation in the presence of this teacher.

CASE 3: A headteacher of a school (regarded as a good school) does not believe much in democratic decision-making. She manages the school autocratically and disregards opinions of teachers, parents or pupils.

CASE 4: In a school that set the aim of promoting pupils' critical thinking as its priority, it has been noticed that a teacher is promoting the teaching of his own faith in a way that does not help the children think for themselves. However, this teacher meets the approval and sympathy from the parents belonging to the same religious community.

CASE 5: A teacher widely respected among colleagues, parents and pupils, is locally known to be given to drinking and company of younger men in her private life. When in school, she acts decently and professionally. However, a gossip starts to circulate amongst pupils and school staff about the private life of this teacher.

### *Participants*

28 teachers from three different public schools in Bosnia & Herzegovina and Serbia participated in the focus group discussions. First, the schools varied with respect to the type and level; two schools were primary schools, and one was a mixed secondary school (*gimnazija* and vocational curricula). Secondly, the schools differed in size (from 600 to 1200 pupils). Thirdly, the schools showed variety with respect to social class and ethnic diversity; one school was conspicuously multi-ethnic with the majority of students from lower socio-economic backgrounds, the other one as well had the majority of its intake from the lower socio-economic status, but was ethnically homogeneous, as was the third one with the mixture of students' socio-economic backgrounds. Finally, one school was an inner city school in Sarajevo (Bosnia & Herzegovina), one was a school in a small town in north-eastern Bosnia & Herzegovina on the border with Serbia, and the third school was located on the outskirts of Belgrade (Serbia).

The teachers were predominantly female (23), 18 were younger than 40 years, 7 were class teachers and 21 were the teachers of different subjects (mother tongue and foreign language, geography, biology, physics, chemistry, music, psychology, arts, religious education, technical education, information technologies and economics). 20 teachers described themselves as religious (4 affiliated to Islam and 16 to Orthodox Christianity), 6 non-religious and 2 undeclared.

### *Procedures and analysis*

In each school around 10 teachers discussed the above cases of value-laden situations in their school context. For each case, a strip of paper describing the case was distributed to each teacher followed by an invitation to the group to identify what they would take to be ethically problematic issues and possible strategies for their resolution. In the end of each focus group teachers were also asked to identify any ethically problematic issues that arose in their own school and/or classrooms.

The focus group discussions have been recorded and the data was analysed with the view of identifying content for questionnaire items illustrative of the paternalist, liberal and social-relativist conceptions of teachers' moral roles. The frame for interpretation and classification of contents (Berg, 2007) combined the levels of concepts clustered around paternalistic, liberal and social-relativist conceptions of

teachers' moral roles, and of the themes discussed in relation to these concepts, such as: teachers' personal exemplification of values, school achievement and values in education, authority and openness to parents' requests, religion in public schools and allegiance to professional standards. In the process of item formulation we tried to mirror the language used by the teachers participating in the focus groups in order to make sure teachers' voices were prevalent in the development of the questionnaire.

## Findings and interpretation

It is not possible to do full justice to the range and detail of the focus group discussions here, neither is it a purpose of this paper to discuss the prevailing teacher beliefs about their roles in inculcating moral values. Rather, our aim here was to generate questionnaire items from the discussions of ethical issues by teachers themselves in order to ensure ecological validity of the questionnaire. Thus, in the presentation of results we focus on the most significant issues emerging from the discussions illustrating how we interpreted teachers' utterances and used them to develop the questionnaire items for each for each of the three conceptions.

### *Paternalism*

In the discussions about the cases involving teachers' personal dress, expression and conduct, we interpreted teachers' attitudes as paternalist when they suggested that moral personification should be required to reach into teachers' private lives. The participants who expressed such views took the position that teachers should wear decent dress and use standard forms of expressions, and exemplify *proper* models of behaviour at all times. Here is how one teacher put it:

'Since our profession is a public profession, we are in any case constantly under the eyes of environment, parents, and our pupils...what we do, how we dress...I think we need to take care also in private life and always bear in mind that we are a moral model'.

Next, we interpreted teachers' attitudes as paternalist when they expressed opinions suggesting that moral values should be regarded as important as, if not more important than school achievement, for example in the discussions that ensued around the case involving a teacher whose pupils achieve good results, who, however, is given to the use of sarcasm and ridicule towards pupils.

With regard to issues of authority and openness to parents' requests, we identified paternalist stances in claims that some parental views can just simply be wrong on a given issue and should therefore be overridden in the best interest of a child, suggesting that teachers should take parents' requests into account only when they are *legitimate*.

The issue of allegiance to professional standards was discussed in relation to the case of a teacher privately given to drinking, but behaving professionally in school. The views regarding such behaviour as principally morally flawed were characterised as paternalist. For example, one teacher pointing to the problem of hypocrisy of the teacher described in the case in question:

‘What is problematic here is the personality of this teacher. She is pretending...how can she be good if she is given to drinking. Even if students do not see this it is problematic’.

Examples of items selected for the paternalist scale are:

1. Teachers should exemplify proper models of behaviour at all times.
2. Teachers should wear decent dress.

### *Liberalism*

Liberal attitudes were noted when participants expressed views about the ethical danger of viewing the potentially conservative majority of a given society as the chief custodians of moral order and rectitude. As one teacher pronounced:

‘The children will live in a different world, the generations ahead will have different perspectives... we need to consider that fact...and adjust to the new times.’

Participants were regarded as holding the liberal position when they expressed sympathy for allowing teachers the freedom of choosing their dress, way of expression and conduct. For example, one teacher questioned a requirement for teachers to wear certain dress on the ground that this would deny their basic human rights. Some participants felt that, perhaps, art teachers should be given more freedom than others in this regard, as this teacher:

‘I know a music teacher who also plays in a popular rock band and carries an earring, but when he enters a classroom, his attitude, the way he communicates and leads the lesson, what he can play, has nothing to do with his outlook...he captivates attention with his attitude and what he has to offer as a musician.’

In the discussions on the authority liberal attitudes were mainly noted when teachers expressed support for a kind of ethics of professional consent. Such positions were often argued on the basis of pragmatic considerations for effective institutional functioning. For example, some teachers expressed a view that the case of the good autocratic head teacher was implausible:

‘How can a school be good if everyone feels bad in it? People work under pressure, in a blind obedience, they burst out, and the authority is lost’.

or:

‘Give me one example where autocratic behaviour gave results anywhere. Staff cannot be successful in a school unless everyone’s voice is considered when decisions are made’.

With regard to the question of openness to parents’ requests an example of a view interpreted as liberal is a view that parents should entrust their child’s upbringing to teachers in line with a professional consensus to be reached at school level about some basic rules of acceptable in-school conduct which would then apply equally for teaching staff and students.

In the discussions of the case of a teacher promoting his own faith liberal attitudes were noted when the participants identified as problematic the uncritical approach to the teaching of a religion, and raised the question of diversity of pupils’ backgrounds. These teachers expressed sympathy for promotion of critical rationality emphasizing the importance of the way a religion is taught even by a teacher of religion who enjoys the support of all parents. A liberal stance was identified in the expressions to the effect that pupils should have enough information to be able to evaluate critically all religions, including their own, as well as a scientific perspective. For example, one teacher pronounced the following opinion:

‘Even if all the parents subscribe to the same faith, this does not mean that the children should follow the same faith. They need to be given enough material and information to be able think for themselves what is good and what is not’.

Teachers’ responses were also interpreted as liberal when they supported an idea that pupils should be introduced to a variety of religious traditions as well as when they recognised that this approach might not be favoured by parents from either religious community who prefer that their children be brought up in the spirit of their own faith. These teachers suggested absence of religion from the public schools as the best strategy for ensuring that the school is equally good for all children, under the justification that those parents who wish a particular religious education for their children should be able to seek it in specialised schools. As one teacher put it:

‘At least now we can choose where to enrol our children. Public schools should not deal in religions. There are schools based on religious foundations and those parents who would like their child to be brought up that way can enrol their children there’.

With regard to the allegiance to professional standards liberal views were noted when participants saw no moral issue with the teacher’s private conduct as long as it was hidden from the pupils, as the following view illustrates:

‘We cannot judge the teachers’ conduct unless it happens in school...until they do something that would not be good for the profession’.

Examples of items selected for the liberal scale include:

1. We can only evaluate teachers’ conduct based on the professional standards.
2. Values are a matter of personal choice.
3. Teachers should be free to choose their conduct.

### *Social relativism*

In relation to teachers’ personal exemplification of values, social-relativist views were noted when teachers raised questions about the relevance of *traditional values* in a given context. For example, some teachers questioned whether the case involving teacher's conduct in private life would provoke different reactions depending on whether the teacher in question was a male or a female teacher. We also interpreted as social-relativist suggestions that some kind of reconciliation between local and universal values should be aimed at, yet with the primacy of the sense of universal justice when local social customs do not uphold the principles of human equality as in the case of different treatment of male and female teachers. One teacher put forward the following view:

‘We live where we live and cannot change overnight...we should tell children: this [gender inequality] is present in our environment, but it is wrong’.

Similarly, social-relativist views in relation to the case of an autocratic headteacher were noted when the participants raised an issue of whether the headteacher in question was a male or a female suggesting that it would be perceived differently in the Balkans. In relation to the issues of authority and openness to parents’ requests, we also interpreted teachers’ utterances as social-relativist when the participants called for a need to apply discretionary judgment and a *sense of what is appropriate* by following the socially agreed norms:

‘We live in a society where norms are such and such and we should stick to them’.

In relation to the issue of religion in public schools we interpreted as social-relativist teachers’ utterances about moral values to be promoted by a public school when they referred to those as *traditional values* as opposed to *sects* that are to be condemned. For example, one teacher said:

‘The values of traditional religions be it Christianity, Judaism or Islam, are better and less painful than if children abandon the traditional values

completely...and come under influence of different sects. After all, they [traditional religions] promote basic moral values that are similar.’

With regard to the issue of allegiance to professional standards we marked utterances as reflecting social-relativist beliefs when teachers elaborated that a professional consensus needed to be based on the ideas about the *good* as just, child’s rights, social and legal agreements.

Examples of the items selected for the social-relativist scale are:

1. We should stick to the norms of a society we live in.
2. What is good for a child is a matter of social and legal agreements and professional consensus.

## **Conclusions and implications**

The aim of this study was to generate items for a questionnaire that could be used for an exploration of teachers’ beliefs about their roles in inculcating moral values. Although here we were not concerned with identifying the prevailing positions taken on the ethical dilemmas discussed in this study, it is nonetheless important to note that the expressed teachers’ attitudes as interpreted by the researchers did range from the more paternalist side of the spectrum extending to the liberal end, although it seemed that participants sought to avoid the extremes of authoritarianism or permissiveness of personal preferences. A social-relativist position has also been identified in the focus group discussions when participants related ethical dilemmas and strategies for their resolution to socially, culturally or otherwise embedded traditions and practices in a given context.

The studies presented in this paper have implications for teacher education and development and offers a tool for further research.

With regard to the implications for teacher education and development, a need for linking teachers’ moral judgments in practice with the complexities of moral inquiry is confirmed by a number of conceptual pitfalls that can be noticed when we compare teachers’ attitudes on different dilemmas. For example, there seems to exist among teachers a great deal of sympathy for promotion of critical rationality and independence of thought, yet hardly any dissent from the view that in school teachers should exemplify *good* conduct, despite the doubt about whether there exists much popular agreement about what this might mean. In this regard, the study offers concepts and contents that could help teachers link their beliefs about their moral roles to the epistemological questions about the nature of moral claims and judgments. An exploration of those links seems worthwhile both in pre-service and in-service teacher education and development considering what was said earlier about inadequate addressing of moral values in teacher education, parallel to

teachers' assigning high importance to those values. Considering the widespread calls for teachers' reflectivity and ability to consider moral dimensions, especially in culturally diverse societies, the absence of ethical discussions in teacher education programmes is striking (Cummings *et al.*, 2007). Intervention studies with students in various other programmes showed that directly taught logical and philosophical concepts applied to discussions of challenging cases and moral problem solving are among components critical to the development of principled moral reasoning (Cummings *et al.*, 2007). Some participants in this study as well suggested it was critical that teachers be familiarised with all the different perspectives underpinning their moral roles before they can adequately assume them.

With regard to future research, the study offers some indications of what variations in teachers beliefs about their moral roles could be sought by way of conventional social scientific research. The biggest variance in opinions expressed in the focus groups appeared on the issue of the extent of moral exemplification to the teachers' private life, between teachers from bigger cities who most often did not see this as a necessity, and those from a small town who expressed the opposite view. Also, larger within-group divergences of attitudes occurred between teachers from cities than among the teachers in the small town school. Further research could explore the relationships between teachers' beliefs about their roles in inculcating moral values and other elements of teacher competence which such beliefs could underpin, such as intercultural competence and/or interpersonal relationships with their pupils.

## **Acknowledgements**

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## **Chapter 6: Teachers' moral values and their interpersonal relationships with students and cultural competence<sup>18</sup>**

This study explored whether and how teachers' beliefs about moral values are reflected in the student-teacher relationships (i.e. levels of control and affiliation in teachers' and students' perceptions of this relationship), and in teachers' cultural competence. A positive association was found between teachers' paternalist beliefs and their own perceptions of control. A negative association was found between teachers' liberal beliefs and students' perceptions of affiliation. Positive associations were found between teachers' liberal beliefs and the metacognitive and motivational components of cultural competence. We discuss the implications for preparation of teachers to reflect on the manifestations of their beliefs in practice.

### **Introduction**

In recent years an increase in attention for the moral dimension of education and teaching has been noted internationally (Cooper, 2010; Hansen, 2001; Jackson, Boostrom, & Hansen, 1993; Veugelers & Vedder, 2003). In the European context a number of frameworks defining teacher competence emphasise that in addition to knowledge and skills, teacher competence profiles need to include attitudes and values (Gonzales & Wagenaar, 2003; Pantić & Wubbels, 2010; Willemse, Lunenberg, & Korthagen, 2008). Yet, in contrast to teacher beliefs about their knowledge and skills (Fives & Buehl, 2008) beliefs about values are often left out of the efforts to articulate teacher expertise because of conceptual ambiguity and the complex question of justifiability of inculcating certain values as educationally worthwhile (Carr, 1993b; 2003; Campbell, 2004; Halstead & Taylor, 1996; Oser, 1986; Veugelers & Vedder, 2003).

Veugelers and Vedder (2003) argue that all values are essentially moral values since they involve a notion of what is good and what is bad. However, they get a real meaning in contexts. Thus for example, political or cultural values can be seen as contextualised moral values. There is a strong consensus in the educational

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literature that values are inherent to teaching as a moral activity (Arthur, Davison & Lewis, 2005; Bergem, 1990; Carr, 1993b; Enrich et al., 2010; Hansen, 2001; Sanger, 2008). Teaching is described as essentially a moral undertaking because educational goals cannot be disentangled from wider considerations and ideals pertaining to personal moral development (Carr, 1993b). Moral values can be expressed in any action teachers undertake, for example by the way they address pupils and each other, the way they dress, the language they use, what curricular content they focus on, who they pay attention to, where they stand while talking with students, with or without teachers being aware of such expressions (Carr, 1993b; Colnerud, 2006; Hansen, 2001).

At the same time in many countries it has been reported that teachers are not adequately prepared for this aspect of their job (Chang, 1994; Pantić, 2008; Penn, 1990; Sanger, 2008; Willemse et al. 2005; Zgaga, 2006). Teachers are found to develop and hold implicit theories (Bergem, 1990; Fives and Buehl, 2008) but struggling to make their values explicit (Willemse et al., 2008). Researchers argued that teachers' lack of awareness of the implicit moral dimensions of teaching can be risky since modelling the values might be more important in shaping attitudes and behaviour than the content of their messages (Campbell, 2004; Veugelers & Vedder, 2003; Willemse et al., 2008). Campbell (2004) argued that if teachers are to model certain attitudes and behaviour in classrooms they need to live by the same principles that they want pupils to embrace.

Considering the increased attention for the central importance of moral values in teaching, empirical studies exploring relationships between teachers' moral values and other aspects of their competence are strikingly absent. Such studies could serve to justify certain values as more appropriate for teachers than others, and could inform the design of relevant components in teacher education (Cummings et al., 2007, Willemse, et al., 2008). The question of how values can be justified can be seen as a question for education philosophers or policy makers rather than for the practitioners, but the fruition of any values in teaching practices ultimately rests with teachers' capacity to reflect on and internalise such values in their practices (Veugelers & Vedder, 2003). Carr (1993a, p. 20-21) suggested a need to explore the relationship between the practical, and the ethical or moral in our thinking about the nature of teachers' professional knowledge and conduct. Colnerud (2006, p. 384-385) suggested that teachers' moral roles need to be investigated in relation to their responsibility for offering students' cognitive challenges that are of value to them.

Research is conclusive about the relevance of teacher-student interpersonal relationships for both cognitive and affective student outcomes (e.g. Cornelius-White, 2007, Brekelmans, 1989; den Brok et al., 2004; Hattie, 2003). Therefore it makes sense to explore whether and how teachers' moral values are associated with teacher-student interpersonal relationships. Den Brok et al. (2010) found that the teacher-student interpersonal relationship is even more important for student outcomes of students with minority ethnic backgrounds. For this reason it is also

worthwhile exploring the relationships between teachers' beliefs about moral values and interpersonal relationships with their cultural competence (Ang et al., 2007) described later. Thus, in this study we explore whether teachers' values manifest in a) their relationships with students and b) their cultural competence.

### *Values and relationships with students*

Some authors suggest that one of the most powerful ways teacher moral values manifest in their practices is through the ways in which they relate to their students, which might be of greater moral potency than the occasional explicit moral lessons that they might offer (Campbell, 2004; Enrich et al., 2010; Willemse et al., 2008). From the moral perspective we can look at whether a teacher shows respect for differing opinions (Wubbels et al., 2006) or for example how values such as care reflect in teacher-student interactions (Campbell, 2004). The moral stances of care, commitment and empathy are identified as basic elements in teachers' professional morality, and seen to dominate the teaching context in which interactions with students define the activity of teachers (Cooper, 2010; Enrich et al., 2010; Tirri & Husu, 2002). Building caring and empathic relationships is defended as integral part of teachers' moral roles as it is instrumental to learning and moral development of students (Cooper, 2010; Kohlberg, 1984; Noddings, 1984; Vygotsky, 1978). In the study presented in this paper we look at how teachers own' beliefs about their moral roles relate to their relationships with students.

Literature offers some indications that teachers' beliefs about moral values might be associated with their relationship strategies. Tirri & Husu (2002) showed that teachers' ethical dilemmas are very relational and deal with competing interpretations of 'the best interest of the child' and with 'taking the perspectives of the involved parties'. Similar notions of 'seeing the classroom through their students' eyes' as a link between teachers' moral roles and building empathic and caring relationships is stressed by Cooper (2010) who draws on the debates about moral values in education (e.g. Pring, 1997) and the research of effective teaching (e.g. Kyriacou, 1986). Cooper (2010, p. 86) outlines some of the characteristics of teacher practices conducive to building empathic relationships: showing non-judgmental, accepting and open attitudes; paying attention to students' feelings; listening carefully; showing signs of interest and attention; and sustaining positive communication. The most beneficial moral modelling is found to be associated with a form of 'profound empathy' developed overtime through frequent interaction, resulting in deeper understanding and closer relationships in which teachers demonstrate personal care and support emotional as well academic development, believing that they are related (Cooper, 2010, p. 87). Moran and Libman's (2011) preliminary research findings suggest a relation between teachers' beliefs or 'mindsets' and caring relationships. For example, a mindset of valuing students' wellbeing above their achievement is found to be positively related to personalized approaches to students and demonstration of educational and personal care. Other

researchers define building relationships as ‘valuing the voice of learner’ (Lynn & Berry, 2011) or describe related concepts that are operationalised to describe relationships. For example, cooperativeness referring to meeting others’ concerns and maintaining relationships is juxtaposed to assertiveness referring to the degree to which one seeks to satisfy own concerns (Mahon, 2009). In this study we explore association between teachers’ beliefs about their moral roles and a similar pair of dimensions of relationships – affiliation and control. In addition to investigating relationships by teachers’ self reports like most previous studies, we also use students’ perceptions of student-teacher relationships. Affiliation and control (Wubbels, et al. 2006) have been used in a number of studies to map student-teacher relationships. These two notions for example were used to study associations between student teacher relationships and student achievement and subject related attitudes, learning environment, including cultural aspects of learning classroom environments (den Brok et al., 2010; den Brok & Levy, 2005; Fisher, et al., 2005; Wubbels & Brekelmans, 2005). Teacher-student relationships that are appropriate for high outcomes are characterized by a rather high degree of teacher control and affiliation towards students (Wubbels & Brekelmans, 2005) described later.

### *Values and cultural competence*

Teachers’ ability to consider moral values and concern for relationships is found to be even more important for teachers working in schools that operate within culturally diverse societies (den Brok et al., 2010; Cummings et al., 2007; Fisher et al. 2005; Hofstede, 1986). Teachers’ awareness of their own values and of those of their students is identified as part of teachers’ dispositions for culturally responsive teaching (Gay, 2002; Stooksberry et al., 2009; Villegas & Lucas, 2002) which in turn can affect student achievement (Gay, 2002). Birmingham (2003) maps the relationship between moral values and culturally responsive teaching mediated through teacher reflection which she conceives as an essentially moral virtue in itself. For example, she suggests that a teacher who cultivates values of impartiality and tolerance would be more inclined to reflect about fairness and care for students from all cultural backgrounds. On the other hand, teachers’ concern for transmitting through education whatever is rooted in a tradition is likely to be associated with preferential treatment of students whose values are closest to theirs (Hofstede, 1986). These authors seem to suggest that teachers who recognize a possibility of multiple perspectives of reality and believe that moral values are culturally-bound are more likely to consider the diversity of their students’ backgrounds as opposed to assuming homogeneity. A similar suggestion is made by researchers who investigated implicit theories of morality (Chiu et al., 1997) and propose that individuals’ moral beliefs are linked to their implicit theories about the ‘malleability’ of social-moral reality. According to this theory, when individuals believe in a fixed reality (entity theory), they tend to hold moral beliefs in which duties are seen as fundamental within the given system. When individuals believe in a malleable

reality that can be shaped by individuals (incremental theory), they hold moral beliefs that focus on moral principles, such as human rights, around which that reality should be organised. Arguably, teachers with incremental implicit theories of morality would be more likely to consider the rights of students of different backgrounds, and thus more motivated to develop their cultural competence. Whether or not such motivation can also lead to the actual increase in cultural competence is less certain, since values are described as motivational, and only contingently behavioural (Carr, 1993b, p. 202) as will be discussed later.

In the present study we explore the relations between teachers' beliefs about moral values and different aspects of their cultural competence, as well as between teacher-student relationships and cultural competence. For the latter there are strong indications in the literature that higher levels of cooperativeness are a predictor of teachers' intercultural sensitivity demonstrated through high levels of trust and confidence and reduced intercultural bias resulting from increased contact with students of diverse backgrounds (Mahon, 2009), or through students' positive perceptions of cultural aspects of classroom environment (Fisher et al., 2005). Similarly, Triandis (1994) noted that a concern and ability for building relationship is necessary for individuals to be competent cross-culturally and he observed that cooperation was negatively associated with cultural prejudice. From the literature it is then reasonable to expect teacher-student affiliation to be positively associated with cultural competence.

## **Objectives**

The overall aim of the study reported in this paper was after developing an instrument for exploration of teachers' beliefs about moral values to explore the association of such beliefs with teacher-student interpersonal relationships and teachers' cultural competence. The study thus had the following objectives. Firstly, we set out to construct reliable scales assessing teachers' beliefs about their moral roles that could be used in teacher education and development or in social scientific research with larger numbers of teachers. Next, we used such scales to explore whether teachers' beliefs about their moral values and roles in inculcating them are associated with their interpersonal relationships and cultural competence, and if so, what the nature of this association is.

## **Concepts**

### *Beliefs about moral values: Paternalism and Liberalism*

One of the difficulties reported by researchers attempting to study teachers' moral values is the lack of a clear theoretical framework on teacher moral values

(Willemse, et al., 2008). There are a number of perspectives on the justifiability and appropriateness of approaches to teaching values (Halstead & Taylor, 1996; Campbell, 2004; Oser, 1986) and a number of different terms such as moral education, values education, character education, civic education and so on (Veugelers & Vedder, 2003; Willemse, et al., 2008). According to Willemse et al. (2005) a great deal of confusion about teachers' moral values in the literature is due to the intertwining in the discussion of different questions of whether teachers have a moral role at all; how to define their moral task; and how moral education should be carried out. For the purpose of this study we adopt David Carr's (1993b) broad definitions of two major philosophical strands on the question of justifiability of teachers' moral roles: paternalism and liberalism, which can also be related to some of the worldviews presented above.

According to Carr (1993b) paternalism is understood as a view that it is the right or responsibility of some, in virtue of their superior, insight, wisdom or knowledge, to decide what is good for others, in their alleged best interest. Since in this view values are seen as objectively true or false, education is primarily a matter of transmitting the true, right, or good values. Moral development of children and the young is one of the main aims of education, and teachers may be justified in opposing the values of parents or of local social consensus in the name of some higher moral authority (Carr, 2003). Since values are inherent in character and conduct, appropriate values can be transmitted effectively only by those who possess and exemplify them (Carr, 1993b). Paternalist beliefs about moral values described by Carr resonate with the entity theory of fixed social realities presented above (Chiu et al., 1997) and a tendency of inculcation of the given moral values as objective reality, with little recognition of cultural relativity of values (Halstead, 1996a; Hofstede, 1986).

Carr's (1993b) broad definition of liberalism is that it represents a view that individuals have an inalienable moral right, short of unacceptable intrusion in the affairs of others, to freely choose their conduct, attitudes and values. In this view inculcation of moral values would be seen as primarily the responsibility of home, while teachers should be primarily concerned with children's literacy and numeracy or achievements in the subject areas they teach. According to Carr, in this conception, teachers, as everyone else, are entitled to privately hold whatever views they prefer as long as they do not violate basic standards of professional ethics. Nevertheless, Carr himself (2003) and others (see e.g. Halstead, 1996a) importantly remind us that liberals as well subscribe to some fundamental liberal values such as equality, respect of difference, parallel concerns for individual liberties and social justice, and consistent rationality. The liberal beliefs about moral values can be related to the focus on principals in the incremental theory presented above (Chiu et al., 1997).

Carr's paternalist and liberal conceptions of teachers' moral roles have recently been operationalised using the data about ethical dilemmas in school practices

discussed in focus groups with teachers (Pantić & Wubbels, submitted). In this study we use the items generated from those discussions to construct paternalist and liberal scales of a questionnaire about teachers' beliefs about values (see *Instrument* section below).

### *Dimensions of interpersonal relationships: Control and Affiliation*

The perceptions of teacher-student interpersonal relationships in this study are conceptualised in terms of teachers' levels of control (i.e. authority and influence) and affiliation (e.g., warmth and care) (Wubbels et al, 2006). The terms control and affiliation are used as labels for the two dimensions underlying the Model for Interpersonal Teacher Behaviour based on Timothy Leary's research on the interpersonal diagnosis of personality (1957) applied to teaching (Wubbels, Créton & Hooymayers, 1985). Control and affiliation, are equivalent to previously used terms for Dominance-Submission (Influence) and Cooperation-Opposition (Proximity) (Wubbels et al., 2006) and represent the cross-culturally generalisable factors interpersonal theory assumes to be primary to all social interaction (Fiske, Cuddy, & Glick, 2007; Judd et al., 2005).

The two dimensions represented as two axes (Figure 1) are operationalised through eight types of teacher interpersonal relationships: steering, friendly, understanding, accommodating, uncertain, dissatisfied, reprimanding, and enforcing represented as eight sectors of the circle (Figure 1). For example, the sectors 'steering' and 'friendly' are both characterized by control and affiliation. In the 'steering' sector, control prevails over affiliation and includes perceptions of a teacher's enthusiasm, motivating strategies, and the like. The adjacent 'friendly' sector includes more affiliation and less control perceptions in which the teacher might be seen as helpful, friendly and considerate (den Brok et al. 2006; Wubbels et al, 2006).

Thus, teachers who are perceived to have high levels of control demonstrate strong leadership and seek attention and high standards, and those who are perceived to promote affiliation are described as listening to students, asking students what they want, encouraging students, being generally responsive, and showing personal interest (Mainhard et al., 2011) – practices similar to those characteristic of building caring and empathic relationships discussed above.

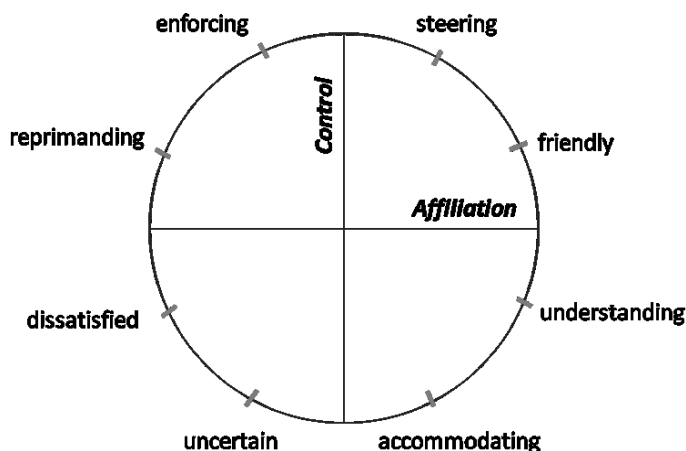


Figure 1. The Model of Interpersonal Teacher Behaviour (adapted from den Brok et al. 2006).

An important distinction is made between teachers' and students' perceptions of interpersonal relationships (Wubbels et al., 2006). Knowledge on teachers' perceptions of the student teacher relationship for example can be important for designing teacher development and counselling programmes, or to explain the differences in relationships across classes. Students' perceptions are taken to be more relevant for understanding pragmatic effects of relationships as students who perceive more teacher control and affiliation tend to show greater cognitive achievement, engagement and positive subject-related attitudes (Brekelmans et al., 2000; den Brok et al. 2006; Wubbels et al., 2006). Also, teachers' practices are closer to students than are their beliefs. A comparison of the measurement of different perspectives shows that students' and external observers' perspectives are more predictive of student outcomes than teachers' views of themselves (Cornelius-White, 2007; Ellis et al., 2007). In the part of our study exploring the association between relationships and moral values we looked both at how teachers' beliefs about their moral roles are related to teachers' and students' perceived student-teacher relationships.

Teachers' and students' perceptions of interpersonal relationships are studied using the Questionnaire on Teacher Interaction – QTI described in the *Instrument* section.

### *Cultural competence*

Earley and Ang (2003) conceptualised capabilities to grasp, reason and behave effectively in situations characterised by cultural diversity as a specific form of intelligence comprising metacognitive, cognitive, motivational and behavioural



dimensions with specific relevance to functioning in culturally diverse settings. Ang et al. (2007) describe each of the four dimensions of cultural intelligence as follows:

Metacognitive cultural intelligence reflects mental processes that individuals use to acquire and understand cultural knowledge, including knowledge of and control over individual thought processes (Flavell, 1979) relating to culture.

Cognitive cultural intelligence reflects knowledge of the norms, practices and conventions in different cultures acquired from education and personal experiences. This includes knowledge of the economic, legal and social systems of different cultures and subcultures (Triandis, 1994) and knowledge of basic frameworks of cultural values (e.g., Hofstede, 2001).

Motivational cultural intelligence reflects a person's capability to direct attention and energy toward learning about and functioning in situations characterised by cultural differences based on intrinsic interest (Deci & Ryan, 1985) and confidence in their cross-cultural effectiveness (Bandura, 2002).

Behavioural cultural intelligence reflects the capability to exhibit appropriate verbal and nonverbal actions when interacting with people from different cultures, such as exhibiting culturally appropriate words, tone, gestures and facial expressions (Gudykunst et al., 1988).

Metacognitive and cognitive intelligence have been found to be positively related to the effectiveness of cultural judgment and decision making. Motivational and behavioural intelligence appeared to be positively related to cultural adjustment and wellbeing, while metacognitive and behavioural intelligence predicted task performance (Ang et al., 2007). In our study we looked at whether and how teachers' beliefs about their moral roles affected each of these components of their cultural competence.

We use the four scales of cultural intelligence scale (CQS) developed by Ang et al (2007) to measure the metacognitive, cognitive, motivational and behavioural components of cultural competence described in the *Instrument* section.

## **Research questions and expectations**

### *Research questions*

The study reported in this paper addressed the following research questions:

- 1) Are the scales developed for assessing teachers' liberal and paternalist attitudes to their moral roles reliable?
- 2) Can different groups of teachers be distinguished on the basis of their beliefs about moral values and their roles in inculcating them? If so, do these groups differ in the levels of control and affiliation in teachers' interpersonal

- relationships as perceived by teachers and their students, and in their metacognitive, cognitive, motivational and behavioural components of teachers' cultural competence?
- 3) How are teachers' beliefs about their moral values associated with the levels of control and affiliation in teachers' interpersonal relationships as perceived by teachers and their students? Which aspects of students' and teachers' perceptions of student teacher relationships can be predicted by teachers' beliefs about their moral roles?
  - 4) How are teachers' beliefs about their moral values associated with metacognitive, cognitive, motivational and behavioural components of teachers' cultural competence? Which components of teachers' cultural competence can be predicted by teachers' beliefs about their moral roles?

### *Expectations: moral values and relationships*

Following the indications found in the literature, we expected to find some links between teachers' moral values and teacher-student relationships, and that the paternalism and liberalism would show different patterns of relations with control and affiliation.

We expected that the paternalist scale could show a positive relationship with control based on studies discussing concepts that are close to that of paternalism such as authoritative teacher behaviour described as 'well-structured' and 'task-oriented' (Wubbels et al., 2006). Also Bergem (1990) reported that student teachers' scoring high on a task-oriented traditionalist index were also supportive of the view that they should act as role models, reflected in the items of the paternalist scale. We did not expect liberalism to be associated with control.

As for the relationships with the affiliation dimension it was harder to formulate any clear-cut expectations. While one could speculate that in line with a belief in their up-bringing roles teachers with paternalist attitudes would also tend to demonstrate higher levels of affiliation in relationships with their students, some researchers reported that teachers with authoritarian attitudes (which could be regarded as an extreme end of the paternalist conception of teachers' moral roles) were also less open to 'emancipated teacher-student relationships' involving for example discussion with students in solving conflicts (Hachfeld et al., 2011).

Similarly, the literature offered grounds for conflicting expectations about an association of liberal attitudes with the affiliation dimension of teacher-student interpersonal relationships. On the one hand, liberalism was described as akin to the tendencies towards professional regulation inclined to value neutral teacher-pupil relationships (Carr, 2003). On the other hand, even some of the most radical liberal educationalists inclined to a position that moral values are personal matters, maintained at the same time that teachers should be seen as 'on the side of the child'

(Carr, 2003, p. 228). Some studies suggest that this may vary between the primary and secondary teachers (Bergem, 1990; Veugelers & Vedder, 2003).

### *Expectations: moral values and cultural competence*

Following suggestions in the literature that paternalism is characteristic of culturally homogenous, collectivist societies (Carr, 1993b; Hofstede, 1986) while liberalism would be more appropriate in the circumstances of cultural heterogeneity (Halstead, 1996a; Hofstede, 1986) we expected that this might be reflected in some components of teachers' cultural competence. We expected teachers' paternalist and liberal beliefs about their moral roles to show different patterns of relations with the components of cultural competence. Since paternalist beliefs may be grounded in an objectivist view of moral values, we expected paternalism to be negatively related to the metacognitive component of cultural competence. On the other hand, we expected that liberal attitudes based on values such as respect of difference and social justice would be positively associated at least with the motivational and metacognitive components, and possibly also with the cognitive component of cultural competence. We were less certain about the association of the liberal attitudes with the behavioural component of cultural competence since there are a number of influences that can codetermine behaviour, such as personal motivation and character (Rest, Thoma & Edwards 1997), or institutional structures and cultures, professional ethics, legal issues and policies (Cooper, 2010; Elm & Weber, 1994; Enrich et al., 2010; Veugelers & Vedder, 2003).

We also expected to find positive association between affiliation dimension of interpersonal relationships and cultural competence following the indications from the literature about the links between teachers' cooperativeness and cross-cultural effectiveness (see references to Fisher et al., 2005; Mahon, 2009; and Triandis, 1994 at the end of section *Values and cultural competence* above).

## **Methods**

### *Instrument*

The data for this study was collected through a questionnaire for teachers consisting of three parts about 1) teachers' beliefs about moral values, 2) perceptions of their relationships with students, and 3) cultural competence; and a questionnaire for students with items about perceptions of the teacher-student relationships as in the second part of the teachers' questionnaire, reformulated for students (see examples below). The questionnaire for teachers also collected socio-demographic data about the place and type of school, country, gender, age, education, teaching experience, religiosity, belonging to a minority, and living abroad.

### *Beliefs about moral values*

The part of the teachers' questionnaire assessing their beliefs about the moral values and their roles in inculcating those values included items grouped in two scales reflecting Carr's paternalist and liberal conceptions of teachers' moral roles. The two scales have been developed from the items generated using data collected in discussions with teachers to ensure ecological validity (Pantić & Wubbels, submitted). In the process of selecting the items to be included in the questionnaire we observed the criteria suggested by Babbie (1990, p. 123) first listing possible sub-dimensions of the concepts, such as free choice in matters of values in education, and the question of a need for teachers to personally exemplify values, then specifying the end points of such sub-dimensions that describe each of the conceptions, and excluding the items falling outside these end points.

Initially, 87 items were used to develop a pilot questionnaire asking teachers to express their agreement with each item from 1 to 5, as well as to comment on the clarity of any of the item formulations. As a first step a convenience sample of 37 teachers was drawn from schools in the Balkan region (mostly from Serbia (18) and Bosnia & Herzegovina (13)) and asked to fill out the pilot questionnaire in English.

Principal component analysis was run to check the homogeneity of the intended scales. In the final selection of items for scale construction we observed the criteria of factor loadings above  $\pm 0.30$ . Further, we inspected the patterns of correlations between the items to identify the items that contribute most to the internal consistency of each group of items expressed in Cronbach's Alpha coefficients. We also had two independent researchers allocate the items to the two conceptions. We compared the allocation between the two researchers and kept in the final selection of items used in the present study, only those items on which they agreed in allocating.

The reliabilities for each scale have been tested after the data has been collected on the sample of this study. Two reliable scales could be constructed consisting of the items reflecting paternalist and liberal conceptions. The paternalist scale (Cr. Alpha .70) included 7 items such as 'Teachers should exemplify proper models of behaviour at all times' or 'Teachers should wear decent dress'. The liberal scale (Cr. Alpha .71) included 12 items such as 'Values are a matter of personal choice', 'Teachers should be free to choose their conduct' (See the Appendix B for the full list of items). The items were answered on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 'Strongly disagree' to 'Strongly agree'. A correlation of medium strength ( $r=.36$ ,  $n=81$ ,  $p<.05$ ) was established between the two scales.

### *Perceptions of teacher student relationships*

The 64-item English language version of the Questionnaire on Teacher Interaction (QTI) (Wubbels & Levy, 1991) was used to measure the perceptions of

teachers and students of teacher-student relationships. To map student-teacher interpersonal relationships, the QTI was designed according to the two-dimensional model and the eight sectors described in section *Dimensions of interpersonal relationships: Control and Affiliation* (Wubbels et al., 1985; 2006). The items such as 'This teacher is strict' (in students' version) or 'I trust my pupils' (in teachers' version) were answered on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 'Never' to 'Always'. The scores for two uncorrelated dimensions of control and affiliation ( $r=.09$ ) were used to measure student-teacher interpersonal relationships. Control and affiliation scores are calculated by linearly transforming the eight scale scores from the QTI on the basis of their position on the interpersonal circle<sup>19</sup>.

Several studies have been conducted on the reliability and validity of the QTI including the Wubbels & Levy (1991) version and a cross-national validity study (den Brok et al., 2003) all yielding satisfying reliability and validity (Wubbels et al., 2006). The reliabilities check on the present sample yielded the following Cronbach's Alpha coefficients for the two dimensions based on students' perceptions (averaged over the class): control .86, affiliation .96, and based on teachers' perceptions: control .79, affiliation .80.

### *Cultural competence*

The part of teachers' questionnaire assessing their cultural competence used 20 items of the cultural intelligence scale (CQS) developed and cross-validated by Ang et al. (2007) providing strong support for the validity and reliability of the CQS across samples, time and countries. The items are grouped into metacognitive ('I am conscious of the cultural knowledge I apply to cross-cultural interactions'), cognitive ('I know the legal and economic systems of other cultures'), motivational (I enjoy interacting with people from different cultures') and behavioural (I change my non-verbal behavior when a cross-cultural situation requires it') scales. The reliabilities check on the present sample yielded the following Cronbach's Alpha coefficients for the four scales: metacognitive .72, cognitive .86, motivational .79 and behavioural .77.

### *Sample and procedures*

An invitation to teachers to participate in the research was sent through various networks of English teachers in the western Balkan countries and in the Netherlands. Teachers were asked to fill out the questionnaire for teachers and to administer the

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<sup>19</sup> To this end the eight scores are represented as vectors in a two-dimensional space, each dividing a section of the model of interpersonal behavior in two and with a length corresponding to the height of the scale score. We then compute the two coordinates of the resultant of these eight vectors. Dimension scores are computed as follows: Control =  $0.92DC + 0.38CD - 0.38CS - 0.92SC - 0.92SO - 0.38OS + 0.38OD + 0.92DO$ ; Affiliation =  $0.38DC + 0.92CD + 0.92CS + 0.38SC - 0.38SO - 0.92OS - 0.92OD - 0.38DO$ .

QTI questionnaire for students in a higher secondary class in which they have an average level of satisfaction with the classroom relationships.

93 teachers in total responded positively and send back the questionnaires mostly from Bosnia & Herzegovina (31), Croatia (19), Serbia (19) and the Netherlands (19). The majority of these teachers were secondary English teachers (86). The sample included 10 male teachers, 49 described themselves as religious, 41 as non-religious, and only 3 as belonging to an ethnic minority in the place where they worked. The age range was from 21 to 60 years with 1 to 35 years of teaching experience.

Not all of the teachers who have participated in the study have been included in all of the analysis. This is because some have not answered all the questions or have not provided all relevant data asked in the questionnaire. When presenting the results we give the number of teachers that were counted in each of the analysis.

### *Analysis*

Preliminary analysis was performed to check for any violation of the assumptions of normality, linearity, and homoscedasticity. The distribution of scores on the paternalist scale was found to violate the assumption of normality. Because of the negatively skewed distributions on this scale, the means were transformed as recommended by Tabachnick and Fidell (2007)<sup>20</sup> resulting in a normal distribution upon the new normality check.

Pearson correlations were used to initially explore associations between the paternalist and liberal attitudes and socio-demographic variables deemed potentially significant based on previous studies involving similar constructs, including type of school, place of work, teachers' education, religiosity and age (see e.g. Gibbs et al., 2007; Hachfeld et al., 2011; Mahon, 2009). Since a high positive correlation had been established between the age and years of teaching experience ( $r=.87$ ,  $n=92$ ,  $p<.05$ ) only age was included in the analysis. Since small positive but significant correlations were found for paternalism with age ( $r=.28$ ;  $n=84$ ;  $p<.05$ ); and religiosity ( $r=.29$ ;  $n=83$ ;  $p<.05$ ), partial correlation coefficients were used to explore the relationships between the paternalist and liberal attitudes with the dimensions of teacher-student relationship and cultural competence, with age and religiosity as control variables.

In order to explore whether teachers clustered into any particular groups according to their scores on paternalist and liberal scales (second research question) we ran a hierarchical cluster analysis. Using Ward method and squared Euclidean

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<sup>20</sup> Transformed scores on the paternalist scale equal  $1/(K - \text{score paternalist scale})$  where K represents a constant (in this case 6) from which each score is subtracted so that the smallest score is one.

distance measure, two groups of teachers could be identified. The two groups were then compared, first on their scores on the paternalist and liberal scales using independent-samples T-tests, and then using the multivariate and univariate analysis of covariance to explore how the two groups’ levels of control and affiliation and the components of cultural competence differ when age and religiosity are used as covariates.

To answer the third and forth research question partial correlations were calculated for the paternalist and liberal attitudes with the levels of control and affiliation perceived by teachers themselves and by their students, and with the four components of cultural competence (metacognitive, cognitive, motivational and behavioural), as well as between control and affiliation and the components of cultural competence. In order to establish the predictive power of the paternalist and liberal scales for the teacher-student relationships and cultural competence we conducted for every dependent variable one hierarchical multiple regression analysis controlling for the possible effect of age and religiosity. After the age and religiosity set of variables, the paternalist (transformed) and liberal variables were simultaneously entered into the model to test how much variance they explained in the dependent variables of control and of affiliation, as well as cultural variables where significant correlations had been found (metacognitive and motivational cultural scales). No violation of the assumptions of independence of residuals, and no multicollinearity or singularity were found.

### Results

Two groups of teachers could be identified by means of cluster analysis. Their most distinct difference was on the liberal scale: one group had lower (N= 42) and one much higher (N=39) scores on the liberal scale. The comparison of the two groups of teachers showed that the two groups differed significantly in their scores on both the paternalist and liberal scales (see Table 6.1). The mean score of the group with the lower scores on the liberal scale was 3.81 (SD 0.43) on the paternalist scale, and 3.14 (SD 0.27) on the liberal scale. The mean score of the group with the higher scores on the liberal scale was 4.18 (SD 0.47) on the paternalist scale, and 3.86 (SD 0.30) on the liberal scale.

Table 6.1. Comparison of two groups of teachers by T-tests (N1=low liberal; N2=high liberal)

	t	N1	N2	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	SE Difference	effect size
Paternalist	-3.66	42	39	79	.000	-0.36	0.10	0.15
Liberal	-11.24	42	39	79	.000	-0.71	0.10	0.62

When we compared the two groups' levels of control and affiliation and the components of cultural competence using age and religiosity as covariates in the multivariate analysis no significant interaction effects were found between the variables, while main effects were found of the cluster variable. We could thus safely interpret the effects of each of the three variables (cluster, age, and religiosity) on the scores on the control and affiliation and the four cultural scales used as dependent variables. The results of the univariate analysis of covariance showed that teachers belonging to one of the two clusters had significantly different scores on the metacognitive and motivational cultural scales (effects of moderate strength). Teachers scoring higher on the liberal scale also scored higher on the metacognitive and motivational cultural scales (see Table 6.2). No significant differences were found between the two groups' scoring on control and affiliation dimensions of student-teacher relationships.

Table 6.2. Results of analyses of covariance for two clusters of teachers on metacognitive and motivational cultural scales

	metacognitive cultural			motivational cultural		
Df	1			1		
F	5.78			4.56		
Sig.	0.02			0.00		
Partial Eta Squared	0.07			0.13		
	Mean	Std. Deviation	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
low liberal cluster	3.72	0.63	42	3.64	0.69	41
high liberal cluster	4.09	0.63	38	4.21	0.64	35

With regard to the third and fourth research questions, when controlling for age and religiosity, small negative partial correlations were found between teachers' perceived level of control and (transformed) scores on the paternalist scale ( $r = -.25$ ,  $n = 67$ ,  $p < .05$ ) and between students' perceived level of affiliation and the liberal scale ( $r = -.25$ ,  $n = 78$ ,  $p < .05$ ). Small positive partial correlations were also found for the liberal scale with the metacognitive ( $r = .25$ ,  $n = 84$ ,  $p < .05$ ) and motivational ( $r = .29$ ,  $n = 80$ ,  $p < .05$ ) cultural scales (see Table 6.3).



Table 6.3 Partial correlations for scores on the paternalist (transformed) and liberal scales with dimensions of relationships and cultural competence (when controlling for age and religiosity)

	control (teachers)	affiliation (teachers)	control (students)	affiliation (students)	metacogn. cultural	cogn. cultural	motiv. cultural	behav. cultural
Paternalist	-0.249*	-0.215	-0.029	0.023	-0.216	0.023	-0.134	-0.152
Liberal	-0.001	0.035	-0.166	-0.246*	0.242*	0.059	0.260*	0.077

According to Tabachnick and Fidell (2007) the scale transformations need to be considered in the interpretation of results for the transformed scales. Thus, the small negative correlation found between teachers' perceived level of control and paternalism needs to be interpreted as a small positive correlation since the reflected square root was used to transform the paternalist scale.

A positive correlation of medium strength was found between teachers' perceptions of affiliation and the metacognitive ( $r=.32$ ;  $n=74$ ;  $p<.05$ ) and motivational ( $r=.34$ ;  $n=70$ ;  $p<.05$ ) components and of smaller strength ( $r=.29$ ;  $n=71$ ;  $p<.05$ ) with the cognitive component of cultural competence. A small negative correlation was found between students' perceptions of affiliation and the motivational cultural scale ( $r=-.23$ ,  $n=84$ ,  $p<.05$ ).

The results of the regression analysis show that the model including the (transformed) paternalist and liberal scales could explain only a small percent of variance in the relationships dimensions and components of cultural competence after controlling for age and religiosity, which added only a negligent percent of the explained variance. The level of control in the teachers' perceptions was explained for 6.9% by the paternalist scale (Standardised Beta Coefficient  $-.30$  (SE 0.98),  $p<0.05$ ). The level of affiliation in the students' perceptions was explained for 6.3% by the liberal scale (St. Beta  $-.27$  (SE 0.45),  $p<0.05$ ). Metacognitive cultural competence was explained for 7.8% by the combined paternalist (St. Beta  $-.16$  (SE 0.49),  $p<0.05$ ) and liberal scales (St. Beta  $.19$  (SE 0.17),  $p<0.05$ ). Motivational cultural competence was explained for 6.5% by the liberal scale (St. Beta  $.23$  (SE 0.18),  $p<0.05$ ).

Although cross-cultural variability of teachers' beliefs about their moral roles was not a topic of this study, it is interesting to note a coincidental finding that there was no difference in the way the teachers from the three post-Yugoslav countries and the Netherlands clustered in the groups with lower and higher scores on the liberal scale.

## Discussion

### *Teachers' beliefs about values, interpersonal relationships and cultural competence*

The more teachers agreed with the paternalist views of their moral roles the more they perceived themselves to have higher levels of control in their classroom relationships. This finding is in line with our expectations, but it is important to note that this relationship is not found when looking at the perception of the students of these teachers. This difference related to teachers' and students' perceptions confirms the suggestion that espoused beliefs might be at odds with the theories that guide a person's actions (Argyris & Schön, 1978). Stated and practiced values differ since people and institutions can transmit messages that are different from those they articulate (Ormell, 1993).

In contrast, the more teachers tended to agree with the liberal views of their moral roles, the less affiliation students perceived in the teacher-student relationships. This small negative association is in line with other research that identified teachers' taking the moral stance of care in ethical dilemmas, but finding it more difficult to accomplish the responsible professional action (Tirri & Husu, 2002). This finding can also be related to the views of liberalism as linked to the tendencies towards professional regulation inclined to value neutral teacher-student relationships (Carr, 2003) with the teachers' role as that of a 'neutral chair' rather than someone who should engage in personal care (Bergem, 1990). Such views have been criticised on the grounds that they threaten to impose an inappropriate pattern of professional-client association on teacher-student relationship (Carr, 2003; Colnerud, 2006). Critics argued that the teaching profession cannot maintain the same social distance as other professions. A teacher must be able to get close to students in order to understand them and be able to help them learn and develop. Keeping the distance could prevent a teacher from having a supportive relationship with pupils (Colnerud, 2006). As discussed earlier, care for pupils has been strongly defended as integral to teachers' roles as it effects learning and self images (Enrich, et al., 2010; Noddings, 1984). The importance of affiliation and knowing the students is particularly stressed for teaching students of diverse backgrounds effectively (den Brok, et al., 2010; Villegas & Lucas, 2002).

As expected, small positive relationships were found between teachers' liberal beliefs about their moral roles with the metacognitive and motivational components of cultural competence suggesting that the more teachers have liberal attitudes the higher their levels of awareness of the cultural differences and motivation to respond to those differences. However, no relations were found between such liberal attitudes and cognitive and behavioural components of cultural competence conceived respectively as knowing the norms and practices of different cultures, and adjusting one's behaviour in cross-cultural interactions. This could again indicate a

difference in espoused and practiced beliefs, but further research would be needed to explore students' perceptions of teachers' cultural competence.

As expected a positive association of medium strength was found between teachers' perceptions of affiliation and metacognitive and motivational components and of smaller strength with the cognitive component of cultural competence. This corroborates the finding of previous research of a positive association between affiliation or cooperation defined as concern for relationships, and cultural competence or perceptions of cultural aspects of the learning environment (Fisher et al. 2005; Mahon, 2009; Triandis, 1994). Unexpectedly, students' perceptions of affiliation related negatively to the teachers' motivational component of cultural competence, the relation being a small one and with no probable explanation found in the literature or otherwise.

A difference between teachers' beliefs in the post-Yugoslav countries and the Netherlands might have been expected following the suggestion that paternalism is less plausible in the circumstances of cultural pluralism (Carr, 1993b), and different patterns of cultural values in these countries as defined by Hofstede (1986, 2001), with the higher levels of individualism in the Netherlands and higher levels of power distance and uncertainty avoidance in the former Yugoslavia. Carr (1993b, p. 206) hypothesised that there might exist 'a significant measure of common and cross-cultural agreement concerning the general qualities of mind and character in terms of which we access people as morally better or worse'. Kolbergh theorized that moral justifications and values define a distinct domain in any culture (Gibbs et al. 2007). Veugelers and Vedder (2003) observed that values such as care, respect, justice and solidarity are proclaimed educational goals in many systems. Future research about manifestation of moral values in teaching could explore whether teachers' espoused beliefs about moral values might have common elements across cultures. Of course, it might be one thing for those from different cultures to agree about the desirable values, for example of justice, but quite another to agree what justice actually means (Carr, 2003) or what it means for different students in different circumstances (Campbell, 2004). What seems important for teachers internationally is that they need to be able to articulate their values and try to adjust those they practice to those that they and the systems in which they work profess.

It is important to note that the study only includes secondary teachers of English. An English version of the questionnaire was administered to the teachers in the non-English speaking countries limiting the sample to the English language teachers who, however, may be stronger on cultural competence than other teachers (Bennett, 1989). For the same reason most teachers were higher secondary teachers with a view of ensuring their students could comprehend a questionnaire in English, but precluding comparison with primary teachers.

### *Conclusions and implications for teacher education*

This study offered some initial insights into the relation between teachers' beliefs about moral values and some of their manifestations in teacher practices that might be further explored. It showed that teachers' beliefs aligned to paternalist and liberal conceptions of their moral roles relate differently to teachers' perceived relationships with their students and the perceptions of their students that are taken as a more relevant indicator of the practiced student-teacher relationships.

Although two distinct groups of teachers could be identified, one with less, and one with more liberal views of their moral roles, it is not clear on the basis of this study that one or the others should be preferred on the basis of their relation to the interpersonal relationships and with the view to the small percents of variance that the beliefs about values could explain in both relationships and cultural competence. While this means that teachers from both groups could have good or poor relationships with students, there is an indication that those with more liberal attitudes also have higher levels of cultural consciousness and motivation, desired for culturally responsive teaching (Villegas & Lucas, 2002). Studies on bigger samples would be needed to further investigate these findings.

Some of the difficulties inherent in the attempts to conceptualise and measure beliefs about values relate to the issue of consistency with which individuals might have rated the items in the two value scales. The scale reliabilities of the Cronbach's alpha of .70 for paternalist and .71 for liberal scales are adequate, but not outstanding levels of the scales' internal consistency. On the other hand, some researchers argued that using the traditional methods of estimating reliabilities by the internal consistency might be misleading for this type of scales. For example Linds (1995) rejected consistency estimates as inappropriate measure of reliability for study of moral judgment, since the variability in the consistency with which individuals rate the sets of items for stages of moral development was precisely the thing he wanted to study. However, neither he nor other researchers who recognised an additional problem of distinguishing between the participants' real variability in consistency and random filling out of the questionnaire (Rest, Thoma & Edwards, 1997) offered any innovation for computing a more appropriate reliability estimate.

Nevertheless, the instrument developed in this study can be useful for helping teachers to articulate their own values and to understand their effect on students, or the lack of it, in order to defend their decisions and professional ethics (Enrich et al., 2010; Colnerud, 2006; Cummings et al., 2007; Stooksberry et al., 2009). This kind of enquiry seems appropriate for teacher education and development referenced earlier in this paper as lacking in systematic, planned focus on moral reasoning. Researchers agree that reflective teachers are more desirable than thoughtless teachers ruled by authority, tradition and circumstances (Birmingham, 2003; Schön, 1983; Villegas & Lucas 2002; Zeichner & Tabachnik; 1991). There is evidence that deliberate interventions to develop moral reasoning, such as direct instruction in

moral development theory and discussions of ethical dilemmas could give effect (Cummings et al 2007; Penn, 1990). There is also some evidence that teachers can be helped to develop more adequate relationships (Wubbels et al., 2006), as well as that values, worldviews and cultural sensitivity can develop and change (and even change radically over time) through formal or informal experiences and reflective learning in a cultural perspective (DeJaeghere & Cao, 2009). Further research could look into the various factors that effect such change and development in various contexts of teachers' preparation, work and development. Complementary qualitative methods will be necessary to further attempts to understand how teachers' beliefs about their moral roles effect and are effected by their practices in different contexts of education and schooling.

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## Chapter 7: Outcomes discussion and conclusions

In this final chapter we discuss the overall findings of the thesis and their relevance for future research and for teacher education policies and practices. We also reflect on the thesis' strengths and limitations.

### What has been learned?

The overall objective of this thesis was to contribute to an articulation of a fuller, more comprehensive knowledge base for teacher education considering the changing contexts of education. More specifically we explored the usefulness of the concept of teacher competence for this knowledge base considering teachers' understanding of it. Having depicted the scope of teacher competence in contexts of change, we turned to an attempt to contribute to the understanding of the missing elements of the knowledge base for teacher education we identified in dealing with moral values and change agency.

Bellow we first summarise the findings of the individual studies, and then discuss how the pieces of evidence they provide contribute to the overall aim of articulating a more appropriate knowledge base for teacher education. We will relate each of the studies to the research question (RQ) it most directly addresses, mentioning also pieces of evidence from other studies that contributed to answering those question(s).

*RQ 1: What are teachers' and teacher educators' perceptions of the structure of teacher competence and of the importance of its different aspects?*

The question of teachers' perceptions of competence has to a large extent been answered by the findings of the first study, although its primary aim was to develop and pilot an instrument for exploring teachers' perceptions of competence. The principal component analysis run on the data from the larger cross-country sample collected in the second study has confirmed these findings. Both studies found that teachers perceive competences to include: 1) dealing with values and child-rearing; 2) understanding of the education system and contribution to its development; 3) subject knowledge, pedagogy and curriculum; and 4) self-evaluation and professional development. Bellow we briefly present teachers' perceptions of the importance of each.

*Dealing with values and child-rearing* was evaluated as very important by teachers in the pilot study, and rated especially high by pre-primary and primary teachers. In the second cross-country study it was rated as the most important aspect of teacher competence. Within this group, the statements referring to the teacher's role as a

moral agent received the highest scores, and the second highest-rating on the whole list of items after the competence referring to subject knowledge. The study confirmed that teachers themselves perceive teaching as a moral activity and, thus, reinforced empirically our assumption about the necessity of integrating moral purposes in the definition of competence as basis for teacher education.

*Understanding of the education system and contribution to its development* was rated as the least important aspect of teacher competence by teachers in both the first and the second study. The statements in this group included among the lowest rated items relating to: understanding the national priorities in education, readiness to participate in public debates on educational topics by following and participating in the work of relevant bodies, readiness for cooperation with the local community in organising curricular activities, and similar items that are not directly concerned with the teachers' classroom routines. Below we will discuss possible reasons for teachers' perceptions of this aspect of competence as less important, and the meaning of such perceptions in relation to extending the teacher education knowledge base for change agency.

*Subject knowledge, pedagogy and curriculum* were consistently rated very important in both studies and across the countries and levels of education. It was interesting that the three rather different parts of the knowledge base relating to subject matter, pedagogical knowledge and skills, and curriculum, structured together in teachers' perceptions, perhaps as a well established 'core' of teaching expertise for which they have traditionally been prepared in teacher education. The third qualitative study shed some important additional light on the perceptions of the different components of this aspect of competence, with especially high importance assigned to the pedagogical content knowledge and practical skills, such as communicative and interpersonal skills.

*Self-evaluation and professional development* was evaluated as the most important aspect of teacher competence by the participants in the first study from all levels of education and its rating among the aspects of teacher competence of high importance was confirmed in the second study. The statements in this group included items such as teachers' ability to critically reflect upon their educational impact and values, and readiness to take initiative and responsibility for their professional development. High rating of this aspect of competence by teachers' themselves holds promise for the comprehensive teacher preparation promoted in the literature, as will be discussed later.

The first study discussed these findings in relation to the context of teacher education in Serbia where the pilot data has been collected. Sometimes the participants provided comments pointing to the country policy context, for example to explain the low rating of the importance of *understanding of the education system and contribution to its development* by the lack of continuity in the education

reforms in Serbia. In the second study we approximated the generalisability of the above findings across five countries.

RQ 2: *How do the perceptions of teacher competence differ across countries with similar educational and societal contexts, but different decentralisation arrangements?*

The findings of the second study showed that teachers' and teacher educators' perceptions of competencies were generally similar across the five South-east European countries (Bosnia & Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia, Montenegro, and Serbia), although some small, but significant differences have been found as well. In this study we explored to what extent these similarities and differences could be linked to the similarities (historical, educational, political, etc.) and differences in the country contexts (levels of (de)centralisation of decision-making power; continuity, intensity and coherence of reforms).

The similarities included a common perception of *understanding of the education system and contribution to its development* as of lower importance for teachers relative to the other three aspects of competence. A univariate analysis of variance showed that the mean scores on this scale were significantly smaller than those on the other scales for all countries. However, the cross-country findings showed that the perceptions of the teachers from Macedonia of the importance of *understanding of the education system and contribution to its development*, as well as of *subject knowledge, pedagogy and curriculum* and *self-evaluation and professional development* differed significantly from the perceptions in all other countries, with the teachers from Macedonia evaluating the importance of these aspect of competence higher.

We sought to explain these findings about the similarities and differences relating them to the country contexts, and in particular to the decentralisation policies. With regard to the lower rating of *understanding of the education system and contribution to its development* relative to the other three aspects of competence in all countries, we speculated that the reasons for this similarity were to be sought in the countries' common histories of centrally governed education systems in which system development was the responsibility of the higher level education authorities rather than that of the teachers. The differences in the levels at which education systems are governed resulting from different decentralisation arrangements in the countries do not seem to have had effect on this common perception. We argued that for this reason it is more appropriate to regard decentralisation in these contexts as an extent to which responsibility for system development is shared with actors at lower levels, than as the question at which level the responsibilities are formally located. With regard to the higher evaluation of the three aspects of competence by teachers from Macedonia we speculated that this may be due to the more extensive educational decentralisation (in the sense of shared responsibility by the local levels)



and the related higher levels of participation in in-service development programmes by teachers in this country.

In summary, the second study showed that teachers' perceptions of competence do to some extent differ across policy contexts, which has implications for policy development as will be discussed later in this chapter.

*RQ 3: What are teachers' and teacher educators' perceptions of the substance of competence-driven changes in teacher education curricula? Can they be interpreted using a framework distinguishing between the Didaktik and Curriculum cultures?*

The third study explored the perceptions of the substance of change involved with setting competences as the aims of teacher education curricula. For this purpose it complemented the above findings with the qualitative data that provided more in-depth insights into the teachers' and teacher educators' perceptions of the four aspects of competence and their meanings for changing teacher education curricula. In addition, this study explored a possibility of interpreting the perceptions of change using a framework that distinguishes between the German pedagogical culture of *Didaktik* inherent in continental European teacher preparation and the Anglo-Saxon Curriculum culture which seeks to pre-define the outcomes of learning.

The qualitative data analysis provided new pieces of evidence in relation to the perceptions of each of the four aspects of competence. With regard to *dealing with values and child-rearing* the study found that alongside the high importance assigned to this aspect, there is a great deal of reluctance among teachers, teacher educators and student teachers to endorse certain values as more worthwhile than others, often justified by a fear of indoctrination from the past. With regard to *understanding of the education system and contribution to its development* the respondents recognised a neglected importance of the level of educational institutions as defining the connection between schooling and larger society. With regard to *subject knowledge, pedagogy and curriculum* they largely approved of the need for a strong disciplinary knowledge base in subject matters and pedagogy, but also criticised the inadequate current preparation in pedagogical content knowledge and practical skills. The perceptions of appropriate basis for *teacher evaluation*<sup>21</sup> varied from those supporting teacher self- and peer-evaluation to those advocating a need to base teacher evaluation on students' outcomes.

The perceptions of each of the aspects of competence and of their meaning for competence-based change in teacher education were interpreted in view of their alignment to *Didaktik* or Curriculum cultures, as follows. The perceptions interpreted as close to *Didaktik* included: views of values inculcation and up-

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21 The Self-evaluation and professional development aspect of competence was modified for the purpose of the third study.

bringing as the primary educational aims; views that systemic change is to be built on theoretical rather than empirical considerations; views of the need for teachers to have a broad vision of *what* they teach to whom and *why*; views of teachers themselves and their peers as the best evaluators of the quality of teaching; and broad understandings of competence as basis for teacher education inclusive of all these elements. The perceptions interpreted as close to the Curriculum culture included: views supportive of the attempts of value neutrality in teaching; views that systemic change should be based on empirical evidence of ‘what works’; views of teachers as implementers of externally set curricula, primarily concerned with *how* its content is to be taught and mastered by all students; views of students’ outcomes as appropriate basis for teacher evaluation; and views of teacher competence as clearly pre-defined outcomes of teacher education that can be observed in practice.

A combination of views close to the *Didaktik* and Curriculum cultures was found in almost all individual responses reflecting one culture in the perceptions of some aspects of competence and change, and the other culture in other aspects. This led us to a conclusion that the framework cannot be used as a continuum, but is workable as a tool for reflection on educational change that could be useful in teacher education and development.

*RQ 4: How are teachers’ beliefs about moral values and their roles in inculcating them reflected in teachers’ reasoning about ethical dilemmas that arise in school lives? Can these reflections be used to fully operationalise different conceptions of moral roles?*

In the fourth study we sought to conceptualise and operationalise different teachers’ beliefs about moral values and their roles in inculcating them, using the qualitative data collected in focus group interviews with teachers discussing instances of ethical dilemmas in school practices. The study explored three possible conceptions of teachers’ moral roles: paternalist, liberal and social-relativist. We interpreted teachers’ reasoning about ethical dilemmas as reflective of each of these conceptions as follows:

Paternalist attitudes have been identified when teachers expressed beliefs that their moral roles can be justified by the need to promote the values that can be considered objectively true or good and therefore legitimately inculcated in education as one its primary aims. In this conception teachers were seen to have a duty to exemplify proper models of behaviour at all times, since moral values are most effectively inculcated by personal modelling.

Liberal attitudes have been identified when teachers expressed beliefs that values are largely a matter of personal choice, and therefore teachers could hardly be justified in promoting certain values as intrinsically more educationally worthwhile than others, especially because their own values might differ from those of students and parents. In this conception, teachers as everyone else were seen to have a right

to subscribe to any values they prefer as long they do not violate the basic standards of professional conduct. In line with fundamental liberal values such standards are to be based on concerns for human rights and social justice.

Social-relativist attitudes have been identified when teachers expressed beliefs that values are embedded in social and cultural traditions and practices in a given context. In this conception ethical dilemmas and strategies for their resolution are to be considered in the light of a consensus about values agreed at school or national levels, or conventions about the values promoted in a particular education system.

The fourth study resulted in pools of items generated from teachers' utterances and reflecting the three conceptions of moral values and teachers' roles in inculcating them. These items were used in the fifth study which tested a possibility of constructing reliable scales for assessing teachers' beliefs about the moral values in line with the three conceptions. This proved to be possible for the paternalist and liberal scales, while a distinctly social-relativist measurement scale has not been confirmed when we tried to construct a reliable scale.

Our interpretation of this is that the participants whose utterances underlie the items assumed to belong to this scale could believe that values are relative to social codes and at the same time align themselves either with the paternalist or liberal positions about values inculcation. For example, they could adhere to a paternalist view that teachers are called upon to inculcate such socially constructed values as they nevertheless represent the values that are good or right or appropriate. On the other hand, they could adhere to a liberal position that such socially relative values are not inherently right or wrong, but need to be considered and evaluated in the light of ethical debates and agreements in a given society. It is also possible that the low reliability of the social-relativist scale reflects a lack of distinction in the participants' perception between the locally and universally justifiable moral values, since philosophical discussion about the epistemology of moral claims is rarely under discussion in any society. This would corroborate Halstead's (1996a) suggestion that teachers could introduce the values and practices of their own society as objective reality. Later we will discuss the implications of these findings for teacher education knowledge base.

*RQ 5: Do teachers' beliefs about their moral roles manifest in teacher practices and if so how? What is their association with teacher-student relationships and cultural competence?*

In the fifth study we developed paternalist and liberal scales for measuring teachers' beliefs about moral values from the items generated in the fourth study, and used these scales to explore the associations between teachers' beliefs about moral values with student-teacher relationships and with metacognitive, cognitive, motivational and behavioural components of teachers' cultural competence. The reason for this exploration was to check whether and how teachers' beliefs about

moral values are associated with those aspects of teacher competence that have already been proven beneficial for learners, such as high levels of control and affiliation in student-teacher relationships (Brekelmans et al., 2000; den Brok, et al. 2004) and culturally responsive teaching (Gay, 2002; Villegas & Lucas, 2002).

Positive associations have been found between teachers' paternalist beliefs and their own perceptions of control. A negative association was found between teachers' liberal beliefs and students' perceptions of affiliation. Positive associations have been found between teachers' liberal beliefs and their metacognitive and motivational cultural competence, and between affiliation and metacognitive, cognitive and motivational cultural competence.

This study identified two distinct groups of teachers, one with less (N= 42), and one with more liberal views of their moral roles (N=39). The comparison of the two groups of teachers showed that those with more liberal attitudes also had higher levels of cultural consciousness and motivation, while the groups did not differ in their student-teacher interpersonal relationships. The percents of variance that the beliefs about values explained in both relationships and cultural competence were very small.

The fifth study also reported a coincidental finding that the subsamples of teachers from the three post-Yugoslav countries (Bosnia & Herzegovina, Croatia and Serbia) and from the Netherlands did not differ in their distribution across the groups with lower and higher liberal attitudes, as might have been expected on the basis of different cultural values in these countries (Hofstede, 1986).

The differences in teachers' and students' perceptions of relationship dimensions, and the finding of positive relations of the beliefs about values with metacognitive and motivational, but not with cognitive and behavioural components of cultural competence, were interpreted as teachers' espoused beliefs being at odds with the practiced ones. The findings about the two groups of teachers were interpreted to offer no basis for preferring one or the other with the view to their interpersonal relationships, and an indication that those with more liberal attitudes also have higher levels of cultural consciousness and motivation, desired for culturally responsive teaching.

### *Integrating the findings*

The answers to the thesis' research questions provided by the five studies could be summarised as follows: teachers' and teacher educators' perceive the structure of competence to include four aspects of 1) dealing with values and child-rearing; 2) understanding of the education system and contribution to its development; 3) subject knowledge, pedagogy and curriculum; and 4) self-evaluation and professional development. They rated all but the *understanding of the education*

*system and contribution to its development* aspects as very important for the teaching profession. The perceptions of all but *dealing with values and child-rearing* aspects of competence differ across countries with similar educational and societal contexts, but different decentralisation policies. Views close to the *Didaktik* and Curriculum pedagogical cultures coexist in teachers' and teacher educators' individual perceptions of the substance of each of the aspects of competence, and of competence-driven changes in teacher education curricula. Further study of the perceptions of *dealing with values* showed that teachers' beliefs close to paternalist, liberal and social-relativist conceptions of moral values and roles could be identified in teachers' reasoning about ethical dilemmas that arise in school lives, but reliable scales could be constructed only for measuring paternalist and liberal beliefs. Teachers' paternalist attitudes are positively associated with their own perceptions of levels of control in teacher-student relationships, while teachers' liberal attitudes are negatively associated with students' perceptions of levels of affiliation. Teachers with more liberal beliefs reported more consciousness of cultural differences and motivation to consider those differences in their teaching, but not that they know more about different cultures, or adjust their behaviour in cross-cultural interactions.

We now turn to the question of how these pieces of evidence relate to the overall objective of this thesis to explore the meaning of teacher competence in contexts of change with the view to contributing to an understanding of the missing elements of teacher preparation for dealing with moral values and change. For this purpose we evaluate the usefulness of the concept of competence for articulating a more comprehensive knowledge base for teacher education, focusing on the preparation for moral purposes and change agency and their relation to the aspects of teacher competence identified in the studies.

*Is the concept of competence useful for articulating a more comprehensive knowledge base for teacher education?*

The concept of competence adopted for the purpose of this thesis (discussed and defined in the first three studies) includes elements of competence defined as 'a dynamic combination' and 'an integrated set' of cognitive, metacognitive, practical and interpersonal skills, knowledge and understanding, beliefs, moral values and attitudes teachers need for effective teaching in diverse contexts (Gonzales & Wagenaar, 2005; Tigelaar et al., 2004). In the contexts of change it has been argued that every teacher must also become effective at managing change (Fullan, 1993b) and that teachers' moral purposes are central to sustaining their motivation, commitment and effectiveness (Day, 2002). Both change agency and moral purposes imply the need for teachers to practice reflection in their daily educational action (Fullan, 1993b). Consequently, an adequate knowledge base for comprehensive teacher education would need to include teacher preparation for dealing with moral values and for change agency, and for reflection, alongside the usual preparation in subject-matter and pedagogical knowledge and skills. How do,

then, the findings of the thesis' studies relate to the aim of articulating such an extended knowledge base for teacher education?

Perhaps a good place to start is to consider the findings of the third study about the meaning of each of the aspects of competence for the competence-based change of teacher education. In theory, the views of competence close to the *Didaktik* culture (Westbury, 2000) seem better suited for the purpose of articulating a knowledge base inclusive of moral purposes and reflectivity since they acknowledge the need to provide room for teachers to inculcate moral values, to consider individual child development, to reflect on the what & why of curricular content, and so on. At the same time, the views closer to the Curriculum culture might serve better the proclaimed aims of preparation for change agency in contemporary educational contexts in which the emphasis is increasingly on the need for building practical skills, evaluation based on student outcomes, reforms based on empirical evidence, and so on (Hopmann, 2007). The finding of both kind of views in individual teachers' and teacher educators' perceptions of competence triggers a question about whether these cultures, or some of their elements could be married in a knowledge base inclusive of preparation for moral purposes and change agency? This might be easier for some aspects of competence than for others. For example, a belief in the need for a broad subject matter preparation does not seem irreconcilable with the need for teachers' preparation for translating content knowledge into pedagogically valuable forms, or for the practical preparation for daily school and classroom activities. Engaging in empirical inquiry is complementary to the aim of building teachers' reflectivity (Liston & Zeichner, 1990). Other aspects of the two cultures might be harder to match. It is often suggested that the requirements of external evaluation based on pre-defined outcomes is incompatible with teachers' moral purposes (e.g. Day, 2002; Hopmann, 2007). In this vein, the view of competences as observable and measurable outcomes of teacher education would seem to confine the space for teacher preparation for dealing with moral values and for change agency, but a broader understanding of competence might be useful. Below we consider what the findings of the studies offer with a view to establishing each of the two missing elements as essential parts of teacher competence as basis for teacher education.

### *Values and moral purposes*

The overall thesis offered some findings relevant for establishing preparation for dealing with values and moral purposes as an essential part of the knowledge base for teacher education. They include: teachers' perceptions of the importance of this aspect of competence, links between philosophical and contextualised perspectives of moral roles, teachers' uncertainty about justifying and inculcating values, the difficulties involved with conceptualising and operationalising the beliefs about moral roles and proving their relations with teaching practices. Below we discuss

each of these findings and their meanings for conceptualising a knowledge base for teacher education and for further research.

The findings of the first three studies about the perceptions of dealing with values and moral purposes as a very important aspect of teacher competence reinforce the claims found in the literature about values and moral purposes as essential parts of the knowledge base for teaching as a moral activity (Campbell, 2004; Carr, 1993b; 2003; Colnerud, 2006; Elbaz, 1992; Hansen, 2001; Oser, 1986). Besides, no difference in the perceptions of importance of this aspect of competence depending on policy contexts in the second study, and no difference between the beliefs about moral values of teachers from culturally different countries in the fifth study, suggest that these might be universal features of teachers' perceptions of their moral roles.

According to Pajares (2003) philosophy teaches us that complex human processes, such as reflective teaching, must be understood as having both situational and universal properties. He argued that the cultivation of situated judgement is required to contextualise the meanings that can be drawn from the local understandings of universal principles. Application of philosophical perspectives on teachers' contextualised reasoning about their moral roles in the fourth study offered one possible way of linking the epistemological stances about moral claims with teachers' situated judgments. Providing teachers with opportunities to reflect on these links could help them unpack their assumptions and understand how they influence their teaching decisions. Other authors argued that this kind of raising teachers' professional awareness about their beliefs, including beliefs about moral values, is necessary for an adequate preparation for reflective practice (see e.g. Schussler, Stooksberry and Bercaw, 2010).

Pajares (2003) suggested that even without the cultivation of situated judgement, people are likely to strive for judgment of some sort. If teachers themselves perceive teaching as a moral, normative profession, they are likely to seek to address values and moral issues in their teaching practice. However, the findings of the third study about teachers' uneasiness with this aspect of competence, the inconsistency in their reasoning about moral roles suggested by the fourth study, and the mismatch between teachers' espoused and practiced beliefs found in the fifth study, might be confirmations that teachers are insufficiently prepared for this aspect of their work, as reported in other studies (Chang, 1994; Goodlad, 1991; Klaassen, 2002; Penn, 1990; Sanger, 2008; Willemse et al. 2005; Zgaga, 2006). Again, these findings could be seen to reinforce empirically the necessity of integrating moral purposes in the definition of competence as basis for teacher education.

The attempts of the fourth and fifth studies to investigate the manifestations of teachers' beliefs about moral values in their ethical reasoning and practices also confirmed some of the difficulties inherent in conceptualising and operationalising teachers' beliefs about moral values. These difficulties might be at least part of an

explanation for the absence of focus on moral values from teacher preparation and research (Pajares, 1992). The fourth study offered three conceptions of teachers' moral roles, but only two could be confirmed empirically in the fifth study as reliably measurable. The findings of the fifth study showed that only a small percent of variance in students' and teachers' perceptions of relationships and in metacognitive and motivational components of teachers' cultural competence could be explained by the beliefs about moral values.

The difficulties in conceptualising beliefs about moral values and proving their relationships with teachers' practices must have contributed to the separation of values from knowledge as a kind of loose side component that might or might not feature teacher preparation, rather than a firm part of the knowledge base for teaching and teacher education. This dualism in thinking about knowledge and values as separate components of teaching has been viewed as inappropriate by the proponents of the revised teacher education that needs to acknowledge that knowledge and teaching are value-laden (Carr, 1993a, Day, 2002; Goodlad, 1991; Villegas, 2007). Similar recognition is made in the recent conceptualisations of teacher competence adopted in this thesis, as mentioned at the beginning of this section. Thus, a broader conceptualisation of teacher competence is compatible with the knowledge base for teacher education inclusive of preparation for dealing with values and moral purposes. Villegas (2007) also argued that if preparation for values is to become a systematic part of teacher preparation, beliefs about values must also be part of assessment of the teacher candidates, but for this, further research would be needed about their manifestations in practice.

The findings of the fifth study about the significant, albeit small, associations of teachers' beliefs about moral values with the aspects of their practices beneficial for students, such as the levels of control and affiliation in student-teacher relationships, and components of cultural competence, suggest that future research in this field might be worthwhile. Other researchers who attempted to empirically study beliefs share a view that the research effort should be continued and intensified to try to develop a more refined understanding of the connections between teachers' beliefs and their actions in classrooms, and their students' learning (see e.g. Pajares, 1992; Villegas, 2007). In the review of research of teacher beliefs, Pajares (1992) concluded that such research needs to seek clear conceptualisations, careful examination of assumptions, and precise meanings of specific belief constructs. We will discuss later the implications of the thesis' studies for future research

### *Change agency*

In contrast to values and moral purposes, the need for integrating the preparation of teachers for change agency in the knowledge base for teacher education advocated in the literature (Fullan, 1993b; Hargreaves & Fullan, 1992; Goodlad, 1991) has only partly been confirmed in teachers' and teacher educators'



perceptions. The findings of the first and second studies showed that teachers rated the *understanding the system and contribution to its development* aspect of competence as less important for their work than the other three aspects of competence. However, the findings of the third study made clearer that there was a difference between the perceptions of developments at national and local levels. While teachers and teacher educators looked to the higher levels of education authorities as rightly in charge of guidance e.g. for the external curriculum setting, they recognised their own roles in development and cooperation at the levels of school institutions and their local environments.

Teachers, teacher educators and student teachers were critical of the existing discipline-based teacher preparation as inadequate for this aspect of their work, including for preparing teachers to change conditions that affect teaching. It was argued in the first three studies of this thesis, and in the literature (see e.g. Fullan, 1993a; 1993b) that a substantial change in building and empowering the teaching profession critically depends on building teachers' awareness and competence for change agency. Other authors who conducted similar studies in other contexts (e.g. Lasky, 2005) also reported a disjuncture between teachers' identity and expectations and the school reform contexts, and showed that the political and social contexts along with teacher development shaped teachers' sense of identity and sense of purpose. This is corroborated by the finding of the second study about the differences, even if small, in teachers' perceptions across different country contexts suggesting that policy environments can have an effect on teachers' perceptions of their roles as change agents. In particular, we looked at the Macedonia country context in which teachers evaluated higher some aspects of competence, including *understanding the system and contribution to its development*, pointing in the direction of comprehensive decentralisation efforts focused on teachers' professional development as potentially effective factors in changing teachers' perceptions.

Fullan (1993b) argued that change agency and moral purposes need to be linked: 'Moral purpose without change agency is martyrdom; change agency without moral purpose is change for the sake of change' (p. 5). Both link to the need for building teachers' reflectivity emphasised in the literature (Zeichner, 2006; Liston & Zeichner, 1990) and supported by the perceptions of high importance of the *self-evaluation and professional development* aspect of competence found in the first two studies. The framework distinguishing between the *Didaktik* and Curriculum cultures developed in the third study offered one possible structure for reflecting on assumptions, perceptions and their implications, that integrates elements of values and moral purposes, subjects matter and pedagogy, change agency and (self-) evaluation.

In sum, for the concept of competence to be useful as a basis for teacher education promoting broader conceptions of teacher professionalism (Hargreaves &

Fullan, 1992; Fullan, 1993b) it would need to integrate moral purposes, change agency, and reflectivity as essential parts of the knowledge base for teachers. The separation of knowledge from values, change agency, or reflection is not useful for such a fuller knowledge base, as it leaves too much room for treating moral purposes and change agency as optional elements of teacher preparation. In contrast, a comprehensive teacher education program would need to address these elements systematically and in relation to its other components. This means all elements of competence (knowledge, skills, values and attitudes) would need to be represented in teacher preparation as integrated and dynamic parts of the knowledge base, course design and student assessment. We will discuss below the implications for policies and practice of teacher education and development.

## **Strengths and limitations, and future research**

### *Strengths*

A major strength of this thesis is in its contribution to the aim of articulating a more comprehensive knowledge base for teacher education as discussed above. Other strong points of the research carried out for this thesis can be identified in: its ecologically grounded investigations combining quantitative and qualitative methods; the new instruments it developed and applied in contemporary setting to explore an important but under-investigated area of educational research; and the use of these new instruments in combination with the existing reliable and valid measures of constructs that have previously been proven beneficial for learners.

The value of ecologically grounded investigations lies in their potential to contribute to a contextualised study of internationally discussed topics of teacher competence and preparation for moral roles and change agency. All five studies used teachers' beliefs to shed a light on the particular contextualised meanings of such internationally discussed topics. Ecologically grounded studies of teachers' beliefs are commended (Pajares, 2003) as having the potential to contribute to the much needed articulation of a clearer conceptualisation of the knowledge base for teacher preparation. Mixing quantitative and qualitative methods helped build such ecologically grounded teachers' beliefs into instruments that can be used with bigger samples and for cross-country comparisons.

This thesis developed three such ecologically valid instruments with adequate, although varying reliabilities. The validity of the instruments was shown in the possibilities to generalise the results in different contexts (e.g. those of the first pilot study in the second cross-country study). The scales' reliabilities (measured by Cronbach's alpha coefficient) of the questionnaire about teacher competence developed in the first and refined in the second study ranged from .81 for *values and child-rearing*, to .91 for *understanding the system and contribution to its*

*development* scale. The reliabilities of the paternalist and liberal scales measuring teachers' beliefs about moral values in the fifth study were .70 and .71 respectively. The reliability of the framework for interpretation of the perceptions of change developed in the third study was .88 by Kappa measure of agreement between two raters. Some constraints on the construct validity are discussed in the next section.

The use of some of these newly developed instruments with the existing ones was beneficial in two regards. On the one hand this enabled us to start exploring the links between the newly operationalised concepts of paternalist and liberal attitudes from the forth study with the aspects of teacher competence beneficial for learners. To this end the fifth study explored associations between teachers' beliefs about moral values with building effective student-teacher relationships and culturally responsive teaching. On the other hand, this provided an opportunity to apply the existing valid and reliable instruments in new contexts and, thus, contributed to the richness of data in these related areas of research about teachers' interpersonal relationships (den Brok, et al. 2003; Wubbels & Levy, 1991; Wubbels et al. 2006) and cultural competence (Gay, 2002; Villegas & Lucas, 2002).

### *Limitations*

The studies of the thesis also share some of the limitations involved with the research based on self-reported teachers' beliefs. They relate to the issues of construct validity, measure of reliability based on internal consistency, and of inconsistency between espoused and practiced beliefs. We discuss each below as well as the attempts to overcome them in some of the thesis' studies and directions for possible improvements in future research.

The issue of construct validity can be illustrated in the design of the first two studies. We developed the initial statements of competences using the frameworks promoted in European contexts, namely in the European Tuning Project and the Scottish and the Dutch national frameworks. Although we adapted these statements in consultation with local experts, it is possible that these researcher-determined statements might differ from those really important for the participants involved in the study. We sought to reduce this possibility by asking the participants in the pilot study to add any statements they thought we had omitted, which were then used in the second study. We also sought to further clarify the participants' perceptions of competence in the third study the findings of which offer some indications for possible future refinements of the instrument. For example, with a view to a better differentiation of the participants' perceptions in the domain of *understanding of the education system and contribution to its development* two separate scales could be constructed with items about participation in developments at national and local levels; in the domain of *subject knowledge, pedagogy and curriculum* separate scales could be constructed to differentiate between subject-matter, pedagogical content knowledge, and curricular knowledge. A greater differentiation of contextual

and policy factors that affect teachers' perceptions of competence might have been precluded by the limited variance in the country contexts.

We took a different approach to the development of the constructs reflecting the beliefs about moral values by mirroring teachers' own utterances from the fourth study in the items of the questionnaire developed for the fifth study. There we faced a different issue. Only for two out of three conceptions identified in the utterances, it was possible to construct reliable scales, indicating a need to improve the conceptual basis for classifying teachers' beliefs about moral values. Further to this point, the reliabilities of the paternalist and liberal scales developed in the fifth study were adequate, but not outstanding. We discussed this issue in relation to the problem of distinguishing between the inconsistency with which individuals might have rated the items in the two value scales, and the inconsistency which might have resulted from randomly filling out of the questionnaire. A way to overcome this limitation in future research might be to ask the participant themselves to assign one of the conceptions to examples of moral statements or arguments.

Finally, including no observations, the research has shown what teachers and teacher educators think should be competence and beliefs about values, not how these perceptions relate to what teachers actually do in their school and classroom environments. The fifth study deals with this distinction by using students' perceptions as a more relevant indicator of the practised student-teacher relationships and closer to those of independent observers (Cornelius-White, 2007; Ellis et al., 2007). The study of espoused rather than practiced beliefs still serves the purpose of articulating the knowledge base, but the research about how teachers are to develop competences would need to look into the teachers' practiced beliefs as well.

### *Future research*

We argued that for building the moral and change agency aspects of teacher competence as an essential part of teacher preparation the research needs firstly, to aim at a clear articulation of the meaning of these components and their relation to other aspects of competence; secondly, to seek to understand how such a more comprehensive competence can be developed in teacher education and development programmes; and, finally, to attempt addressing the issue of more adequate ways of assessing such a more comprehensive competence.

This thesis addressed the first of these aims – an articulation of the meaning of competence in change contexts, and in particular of the moral and change agency aspects of it. These efforts could be taken further in at least two directions. One would be to continue an exploration of how moral values and change agency are associated with those aspects of teacher competence that have already been proven beneficial for learners – a kind of exploration we started in the fifth study. The other, complementary, direction of research could look into the relations between the

various aspects of competence. For example, one could explore the links between teachers' beliefs about knowledge and those about moral values, or between reflectivity and change agency, or any other combination of different aspects that could help understand the relation between the moral purposes and change agency with those aspects of teacher competence whose effects on learners have already been shown in previous research.

The research aiming to understand how a more comprehensive competence could be developed in teachers would need to consider the contexts in which teachers learn and develop. Comparative studies could provide valuable information about the systemic and policy factors that affect teachers' beliefs and practices. For example, the study of the effects of decentralisation in education could be taken further by comparing countries that are more different than the ones studied in the second study of this thesis to explore whether its findings were idiosyncratic to the region or could be generalised further. School and classroom environments would be other important levels of analysis in the attempts to understand how teachers develop a more comprehensive competence, and in particular how their espoused beliefs translate, or not, into their practiced beliefs. As mentioned earlier, observations would be essential for such research, as well as qualitative investigations of the factors that affect change in teachers' perceptions and practices of their moral purposes and roles as change agents.

Finally, only once a fuller knowledge base for teacher education has been clearly articulated, and adequate teacher education programmes have been developed, could research attempt to address the issue of adequate ways of assessing a more comprehensive teacher competence. Especially the research in the area of values and moral roles is often normative, while in practice teacher candidates and teachers continue to be assessed predominantly in the areas of subject matter and pedagogical knowledge and skills. While assessment (or evaluation) in other aspects of competence would be essential for a more comprehensive teacher preparation, it would also be premature without a clearly conceptualised broader knowledge base and an understanding of how a more comprehensive teacher competence can be fostered in teacher education and development.

## **Implications for policies and teacher education and development**

Considering the international popularity of the concept of competence in education and teacher education, the thesis holds potential for informing policies and practices of teacher education and development. Its studies are rooted in the contemporary policy concerns and discuss both the potential effects of policies on teachers' perceptions of competence, and especially the potential implications of the findings for changing policies and practices of teacher education and development.

In the second study we suggested that the preparation of teachers for their allegedly extended roles in the decentralised systems of education needs to be approached systematically and supported by creating an environment for change. Accordingly, transferring authorities in education and teacher development to the lower levels of governance would need to be accompanied by transferring powers over management of resources, and by building capacities for such management of all players at local level, including teachers, support staff, school principals and local education authorities.

The findings of the teachers' and teacher educators' high valuing of their moral roles suggest that the narrow view of competence as technical performance would be inappropriate as a standard of good teaching in times of educational change, or as basis for teacher preparation. In the third study we suggested that focus on outcomes and teacher performance threatened to move teacher education away from broader cultural, social and value-oriented understandings of the teaching profession. We argued that this would be inappropriate in contexts of change in which such understandings become even more important for teachers to develop into reflective professionals who consider broader social purposes and competing values in education. The same study showed that some of the elements of the culture of *Didaktik*, supposedly inherent in the teacher education traditions of continental Europe, might serve the ideal of the reflective professional better than the trends of pre-defining observable and measurable outcomes of learning. This has important implications for teacher education institutions undertaking competence-based reforms of their curricula if they want to avoid 'throwing the baby away with the water' effect of reform discourses. They might be right to ask themselves how to better prepare teachers for the changing contexts of education including increased focus on practical knowledge, external testing and so on. But they might also need to ask themselves whether they could achieve some of the goals of preparing the new teaching professionals by being truer to the original ideals of the *Didaktik* framework. Could they capitalise more effectively on the elements inherent in the existing teacher education?

Considering the internationally reported inadequacy of teacher preparation for some of the important aspects of their competence, a more comprehensive teacher education and development would need to incorporate elements raising teachers' awareness about the implications of various conceptions of their moral roles and an understanding of educational contexts in which they work. The findings and tools developed for the purpose of this thesis could be useful for developing such missing components of teacher preparation.

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## Samenvatting (Summery in Dutch)

### *Doel en achtergrond*

Dit proefschrift wil bijdragen aan het ontwikkelen van een completere, meer omvattende kennisbasis voor lerarenopleidingen met het oog op de veranderende eisen die aan docenten gesteld worden. Er wordt steeds meer erkend dat het werk van docenten te maken heeft met morele waarden en ethische dilemma's. Verder worden docenten in de literatuur soms omschreven als “instrumenten voor verandering” waarbij er van ze verwacht wordt dat ze niet alleen handelen op grond van wetenschappelijk gefundeerde didactiek en pedagogiek, maar dat ze zich ook verhouden tot onderwijsinnovaties die de context waarin ze werken beïnvloeden. Lerarenopleidingen en professionele ontwikkelingsprogramma's worden traditioneel vooral ontworpen om studenten op te leiden in vakdisciplines en pedagogisch-didactische vaardigheden, en zelden wordt systematisch en geïntegreerd aandacht besteed aan de voorbereiding op morele rollen en het omgaan met veranderingen. Deze stand van zaken is deels te wijten aan het gebrek aan conceptuele helderheid en het weinig voorhanden zijn van onderzoeksgegevens over morele rollen van leraren en het omgaan met veranderingen. Dit proefschrift wil bijdragen aan het opvullen van deze kennisleemte door een breder concept van docentcompetenties als basis voor de lerarenopleiding te verkennen, een kennisbasis die ook de voorbereiding op rollen in relatie tot morele waarden en veranderingen omvat.

Het proefschrift combineert een perspectief op opvattingen over competenties met visies over de eisen die aan docenten gesteld worden in een veranderende onderwijscontext. De vijf studies in het proefschrift onderzoeken de overtuigingen van docenten over morele waarden en onderwijsinnovatie om ontbrekende competentie-elementen in de kennisbasis van de lerarenopleiding op te sporen. De eerste twee studies onderzoeken de percepties van docenten en lerarenopleiders over docentcompetenties en het relatieve belang van de verschillende aspecten daarvan. De derde studie betreft de betekenis van docentcompetenties als basis voor lerarenopleidingen. Ze interpreteert daartoe de overtuigingen van (aanstaande) leraren, en lerarenopleiders in termen van de theoretische notie “Didaktik”, afkomstig uit Europa en in het bijzonder Duitsland, en het meer in de Verenigde Staten gewortelde begrip “Curriculum”. In “Didaktik” zijn onderwijsdoelen vooral gedefinieerd als algemene, globale aanwijzingen voor scholen en leraren, terwijl bij “Curriculum” de doelen vooraf strikt gedefinieerd zijn en geëvalueerd worden aan de hand van onderwijsopbrengsten. De vierde studie probeert morele waarden te con-

ceptualiseren en operationaliseren als een van de aspecten van docentcompetenties. De vijfde studie tenslotte exploreert verbanden tussen overtuigingen van docenten over morele waarden met een interpersoonlijke perspectief op effectieve relaties tussen docenten en hun leerlingen en cultureel responsief lesgeven. Het doel van deze verkenning is te laten zien of en hoe morele waarden van docenten samenhangen met docentcompetenties waarvan is bewezen dat ze positief bijdragen aan de ontwikkeling van leerlingen, namelijk hun cognitieve en affectieve resultaten. In het proefschrift worden hiertoe instrumenten ontwikkeld die gebruikt kunnen worden in lerarenopleidingen en voor onderzoek naar docentcompetenties en het geeft een aanzet tot het toepassen van deze instrumenten. De gegevens voor het proefschrift zijn voornamelijk verzameld in landen op de Balkan– een context van belangrijke veranderingen in onderwijs en samenleving die onder meer gekarakteriseerd kunnen worden als decentralisatie van het onderwijs en andere maatschappelijke instituties, en diversificatie van waarden.

### *Onderzoeksvragen*

De vijf studies van het proefschrift richten zich op de volgende onderzoeksvragen:

1. Welke percepties hebben docenten en lerarenopleiders van de ordening van docentcompetenties en van het belang van de verschillende aspecten daarin?
2. Hoe verschillen deze percepties in verschillende landen met een vergelijkbare onderwijs- en maatschappelijke context, maar met verschillende mate van decentralisatie?
3. Wat zijn de percepties van docenten en lerarenopleiders van de inhoud van veranderingen in het curriculum van lerarenopleidingen die door het denken in competenties worden geïnitieerd? Kunnen deze percepties worden geïnterpreteerd met behulp van een onderscheid in onderwijscultuur te karakteriseren als respectievelijk “Didaktik” en “Curriculum”?
4. Hoe worden overtuigingen van docenten over morele waarden en hun rol bij het overdragen daarvan weerspiegeld in hun redeneringen over ethische dilemma's op school? Kunnen deze redeneringen worden gebruikt om opvattingen over morele rollen van leraren integraal te operationaliseren?
5. Manifesteren de overtuigingen van docenten over hun morele rollen zich in hun lespraktijk en zo ja, hoe? Is er verband tussen die

## overtuigingen en de leraar-leerlingrelatie en culturele docentcompetentie?

### *Methoden*

Dit proefschrift gebruikt een combinatie van kwalitatieve en kwantitatieve methoden om de bovengenoemde vragen te beantwoorden. Kwantitatieve methoden zijn in de eerste twee studies gebruikt om de percepties van docenten en lerarenopleiders van competentie te bestuderen, gevolgd door een kwalitatieve aanpak in de derde studie om deze percepties diepgaander te onderzoeken. Voor de vragen over de overtuigingen van docenten over morele waarden, verkent een kwalitatief onderzoek in de vierde studie de redeneringen van docenten over morele dilemma's op school. De verzamelde kwalitatieve gegevens zijn gebruikt om items voor een instrument te ontwikkelen voor de vijfde studie, die weer een kwantitatieve methode gebruikt. Het combineren van kwalitatieve en kwantitatieve methoden heeft het mogelijk gemaakt om onderliggende overtuigingen in het ontwerp van instrumenten mee te nemen.

Om bij te dragen aan een omvattender kennisbasis voor lerarenopleidingen, hebben de studies van dit proefschrift gebruik gemaakt van onderzoek naar de percepties van docenten zelf. Daarmee wordt recht gedaan aan de opvatting dat het beroep van docent van binnenuit moet worden opgebouwd, en dat veranderingen daarin, om succesvol te zijn, rekening moeten houden met de eigen overtuigingen van docenten. Alle studies onderzoeken overtuigingen van docenten. Daarnaast onderzoeken de eerste drie studies ook de overtuigingen van lerarenopleiders en leraren-in-opleiding. De laatste studie vergelijkt overtuigingen van docenten met die van hun leerlingen.

### *Bevindingen*

De studies in dit proefschrift leveren de volgende antwoorden op de vijf onderzoeksvragen op.

Onderzoeksvraag 1: Docenten en lerarenopleiders zien vier aspecten als onderdeel van competenties: 1) omgaan met waarden en opvoeding; 2) inzicht in het onderwijssysteem en bijdragen aan de ontwikkeling daarvan; 3) kennis van het vak, pedagogiek en didactiek en het curriculum; en 4) zelf-evaluatie en professionele ontwikkeling. Behalve het tweede aspect beschouwen ze alle aspecten van competenties als erg belangrijk voor het docentschap.

Onderzoeksvraag 2: De waardering van competenties door docenten en lerarenopleiders zijn over het algemeen hetzelfde in vijf Zuidoost-Europese landen (Bosnië & Herzegovina, Kroatië, Macedonië, Montenegro en Servië). Ze vinden het

inzicht hebben in het onderwijssysteem en het bijdragen aan de ontwikkeling daarvan minder belangrijk voor docenten dan de andere drie aspecten van docentcompetenties. Er zijn een paar kleine maar niet onbelangrijke verschillen gevonden tussen de waardering van docenten uit Macedonië en die uit de andere landen, waarbij Macedonische docenten het belang van alle aspecten van competenties behalve het eerste hoger waarderen.

Onderzoeksvraag 3: In de percepties van docenten en lerarenopleiders van het curriculum van de lerarenopleiding en veranderingen daarin blijken bij respondenten tegelijkertijd elementen voor te komen die geïnterpreteerd kunnen worden respectievelijk als “Didaktik” of “Curriculum”. Overtuigingen die geïnterpreteerd worden als “Didaktik” zijn: overdracht van waarden en opvoeding is het primaire doel van onderwijs; systematische onderwijsverandering moet plaats vinden op basis van theoretische en niet zozeer empirische overwegingen; docenten moeten een brede kijk hebben op wat zij onderwijzen en aan wie en waarom; docenten zelf en hun collega’s kunnen het beste de kwaliteit van het lesgeven vaststellen; een brede, omvattende competentieopvatting moet de basis voor de lerarenopleiding vormen. Overtuigingen die geïnterpreteerd zijn als “Curriculum” zijn: lesgeven is een waarde vrije bezigheid; systematische verandering moet gebaseerd zijn op empirisch bewijs vanuit 'wat werkt'; docenten zijn uitvoerder van extern ontwikkelde curricula; resultaten van leerlingen zijn een geschikte basis om docent te beoordelen; docentcompetenties zijn duidelijk, vooraf gedefinieerde resultaten van lerarenopleidingen die in de praktijk zichtbaar moeten zijn.

Onderzoeksvraag 4: In de redeneringen van docenten over ethische dilemma's in school konden paternalistische, liberale en sociaal-relativistische opvattingen over morele waarden en rollen worden geïdentificeerd. Een paternalistische houding houdt in dat docenten de plicht hebben om waarden te bevorderen die objectief gezien als waar of goed kunnen worden beschouwd. Onder meer doen ze dat door zelf het goede voorbeeld te geven. Bij een liberale houding vinden docenten waarden voornamelijk een kwestie van persoonlijke keuze, en dat ze, net als iedereen, het recht hebben om hun eigen waarden te kiezen, zolang ze maar geen standaarden voor goed professioneel gedrag schenden. Een sociaal-relativistische houding is aanwezig wanneer docenten oplossingen voor ethische dilemma's beschouwen in het licht van waarden die zijn ingebed in sociaal- en cultureel gedefinieerde conventies. Betrouwbare schalen konden alleen worden geconstrueerd voor het meten van paternalistische en liberale opvattingen.

Onderzoeksvraag 5: Er is een positief verband gevonden van een paternalistische opvatting van docenten met hun eigen perceptie van hun invloed op leerlingen, maar niet met de percepties van hun leerlingen van die invloed. Een negatief verband werd gevonden tussen een liberale overtuiging van docenten en de leerlingenpercepties over hun emotionele nabijheid tot leerlingen. Tenslotte zijn positieve verbanden gevonden tussen een liberale overtuiging van docenten en hun metacognitieve en motivationele culturele competentie, en tussen de door leerlingen

ervaren emotionele nabijheid van de leraar en de metacognitieve, cognitieve en motivationele culturele competentie van de leraar.

### *Conclusies*

Docenten vinden zelf het omgaan met morele waarden een erg belangrijk deel van hun competentie, terwijl ze de rol als actor in onderwijsveranderingsprocessen als minder belangrijk ervaren. Tegelijkertijd zijn er aanwijzingen dat docenten onzeker zijn over de implicaties van hun morele rollen voor hun lespraktijk. Er zijn indicaties dat de overtuigingen van docenten over competenties afhangen van de context waarin ze werken. Morele competentie-elementen en elementen die gericht zijn op het omgaan met en bijdragen aan veranderingen moeten versterkt worden en systematisch worden ondergebracht in een omvattender kennisbasis voor lerarenopleidingen.

Een competentiebegrip voor een lerarenopleiding die een omvattende opvatting van docentprofessionaliteit nastreeft, moet in de kennisbasis ervoor ook morele doelstellingen, omgaan met veranderingen en reflexiviteit integreren. In de basis voor de lerarenopleiding kenniselementen afzonderen van waarden, veranderingsbekwaamheden, of reflectie zou te veel ruimte laten om de laatste onderdelen als keuze-elementen te behandelen. Alle competentie-elementen (kennis, vaardigheden, waarden en houdingen) moeten niet alleen in de kennisbasis voor de opleiding van docenten geïntegreerd en dynamisch gerepresenteerd zijn, maar ook in de curriculumopzet en de beoordelingen van studenten.

Het proefschrift heeft aanwijzingen opgeleverd om een meer omvattende kennisbasis voor de lerarenopleiding te articuleren en heeft een aanzet gegeven tot onderzoek naar de overtuigingen van docenten over morele waarden in de lespraktijk en het omgaan met onderwijsveranderingen. Verder onderzoek is nodig om een omvattender competentiebegrip te concretiseren en adequaat te evalueren. De bevindingen van dit proefschrift hebben implicaties voor het beleid en de praktijk van de lerarenopleiding. In het licht van het feit dat internationaal lerarenopleidingen vaak als tekortschietend worden ervaren, moeten opleidingen werken aan bewustwording bij studenten van hun opvattingen over morele rollen en de veranderende onderwijscontext waarin ze werken. De bevindingen en instrumenten van dit proefschrift kunnen een bijdrage leveren aan de ontwikkeling van nu vaak ontbrekende elementen in de lerarenopleiding op het gebied van waarden en het omgaan met veranderingen.

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## About the author

Nataša Pantić was born on 20<sup>th</sup> September 1977 in Zvornik, Bosnia and Herzegovina. She completed her pre-university education in Zvornik, Moscow, and Loznica before starting the undergraduate study of the English language and literature at the University of Belgrade in 1995. She worked as an Education assistant with the Organisation for European Cooperation and Security before entering the Master programme in Education Science at the University of Edinburgh in 2004. Her Master degree was awarded with distinction upon the completion of the dissertation under the supervision of prof. dr. David Carr. Since 2006 to the present date Nataša has been working as a researcher with the Centre for Education Policy in Belgrade on a number of projects dealing with the educational change in post-Yugoslav countries. She started the doctoral study at Utrecht University in 2008 under the supervision of prof. dr. Theo Wubbels and presented her research at several international conferences.



## Publications

### Edited books:

Pantić, N. (Ed.). (2008). *Tuning Teacher Education in the Western Balkans*. Belgrade: Center for Education Policy.

### Chapters in edited books:

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ECER (European Conference on Educational Research) *Preparing teachers for inclusive education in contexts of social and cultural diversity in the Western Balkans*, Helsinki, 23-27 August, 2010.

EARLI (European Association for Research on Learning and Instruction) *The 'What' and the 'How' of competence-based teacher education – a perspective from the Western Balkans*, Amsterdam, August 25 – 29, 2009.

CIES (Comparative and International Education Society) *Competence-based teacher education – comparing views of teachers and teacher educators in five Western Balkan countries*, Charleston, South Carolina, March 22 – 26, 2009.

TEPE (Teacher Education Policy in Europe Network) *Teacher Competence as a Basis for Teacher Education – Tuning Teacher Education Curricula in Five Western Balkan Countries*, Ljubljana, February 21-23, 2008.

# Appendices

## Appendix A: Full lists of items in the four competence scales

### *Values and child rearing:*

Commitment to racial equality by means of personal example, through curricular and other activities

Readiness to be tolerant towards differences (ethnic, gender, social, cultural, linguistic and religious)

Commitment to gender equality by means of personal example, through curricular and other activities

Ability to contribute to prevention of violence in school

Ability to act as a moral model for children

Ability to contribute to building pupils' awareness of importance of health and environment protection

### *Understanding of the education system and contribution to its development:*

Readiness for cooperation with the local community in organising curricular activities (eg. organizing practice lessons in a local enterprise)

Readiness to participate in public debates on educational topics by following and participating in the work of relevant bodies at different levels

Readiness to participate in school development planning

Readiness to contribute to building pupils' awareness of the need of participation in a democracy

Ability to conduct research for education development

Understanding of the laws and authorities in education

Understanding national priorities in education

Readiness for cooperation with the stakeholders from health and social institutions

Ability to predict new demands on education by labour market

Ability to participate in projects in field of education

Ability to use computer and Internet and design their effective use in teaching and learning

***Subject knowledge, pedagogy and curriculum:***

Ability to prepare and implement lessons in a way that provides continuity and progression in learning

Solid knowledge of the subject or group of subjects one is to teach

Understanding of the assessment system and familiarity with different ways of assessment

Ability to implement in practice the principles of good discipline

Ability to implement curricula

Grasp of practical aspects/skills involved with a subject or a group of subjects s/he is to teach

Ability to develop linguistic and numeric literacy of pupils

Dedication to the profession and work with children

Ability to inspire curiosity and encourage pupils to take initiative and responsibility for their learning

Ability to use a spectrum of teaching strategies in accordance with subject, theme and individual pupils

***Self-evaluation and professional development:***

Ability to critically reflect upon their own value system

Ability to use interactive teaching methods

Readiness to take initiative and responsibility for their professional development

Ability to critically reflect on and evaluate their own educational impact

Ability to critically evaluate and adapt curricula

Readiness to cooperate with pedagogs, psychologists and career counseling service

Ability to recognise and adequately respond to gifted pupils

Ability to recognise and adequately respond to pupils with learning difficulties

Ability to contribute to the creation of climate conducive to learning and development of all pupils

Awareness of the profession's importance and responsibility

Readiness to contribute to the development of profession's ethics

Ability to establish and maintain positive human relations with pupils, parents and colleagues

## **Appendix B : Full lists of items in the paternalist and liberal scales**

The items in the paternalist scale:

1. Teachers should exemplify proper models of behaviour at all times.
2. Teachers should wear decent dress.
3. It is important for a public school to promote general moral values.
4. Imparting appropriate values is part of teachers' educational role.
5. We should stick to the norms of a society we live in.
6. A teacher should guide students' to commit to those views that are considered as right in their own environment.
7. Publically funded schools should provide moral education accommodating the values espoused by the local communities.

The items in the liberal scale:

1. School achievement is the most important outcome of education.
2. Any question may have more than one answer.
3. The basis for the moral authority is the majority opinion of the education professionals.
4. Teachers should use a variety of methods considering the preferences of their pupils.
5. We can only evaluate teachers' conduct based on the professional standards.
6. Values are a matter of personal choice.
7. Teachers should be free to choose their conduct.
8. A state should enable those parents who wish a particular kind of education for their children to seek it with support of public funding.
9. Teachers should be free to choose their dress.
10. Teachers should be free to choose their way of expression.
11. We need to consider the fact that children we teach will live in a different world and have different perspectives.
12. Parents should entrust their child's upbringing to the professionals.