

**MAINSTREAMING OF
INTERCULTURALISM:
A case study on minority integration policies in
Bulgaria's education system**

Name: Ivan Ivanov

Student number: 506279

Supervisor: dr. Asya Pisarevskaya

Second Reader: Iona van Breugel

Study Program: Governance of Migration and Diversity

Date: 10/August/2020

Words: 18788

Table of contents

Executive summary	4
Acknowledgements	5
List of acronyms	6
1. Introduction:	7
2. Theoretical framework:	11
2.1 Education	12
2.2 Mainstreaming	14
2.2.1 Perspectives of equality	15
2.3 Interculturalism	15
2.4. Interculturalism in Bulgaria	17
2.5. Mainstreaming of Interculturalism	18
3. Research Design	18
3.1. Research Question	19
3.2. Case Selection	19
3.2.1. A look at minority policies in the past 1950-1989	20
3.2.2. Post-totalitarian era and present day	21
3.2.3. The Framework Convention for the protection of national minorities (FCNM)	22
3.2.4. Case sample	23
3.3. Methods	24
3.4. Limitations of research	29
3.5. Ethical consideration	30
4. Educational integration of children from national minorities groups in Bulgaria	30
4.1. The Republic of Bulgaria national strategy 2004-2015; 2015-2020	31
4.1.1. Identified problems by the strategy	31
4.1.2. Strategic goals	32
4.1.3. Strategy update and build up 2015-2020	33
5. Data Findings	35
5.1. Equality as a core category	35
5.2. Equal treatment category	36
5.2.1. Institutional dimension	36
5.2.2. Social dimension	37

5.3. Equal opportunity	40
5.3.1. Educational inclusion dimension	40
5.3.2. Cultural preservation and development dimension	44
5.4. Minority Perspective	47
5.4.1. Social Dimension	47
5.4.2. Economic Dimension	49
5.4.3. Political Dimension	50
6. Analysis	52
6.1. Equality and mainstreaming	52
6.2. Intercultural policies and mainstreaming	55
6.3. Focus on Intercultural strands	57
7. Conclusion	60
References	63
Appendix A: Overview document analysis	66
Appendix B: Interview topic questions	67

Executive summary

In 1989 the communist regime in Bulgarian fell. It finally brought democratic changes, opened the free market, guaranteed freedom of speech and human rights and equality. After five decades of ethnic tension and human rights violations in the small Balkan country a discussion formed up. The topic on the agenda was “intercultural education”. Throughout the 90s philosophers, sociologists and education experts debate on how to implement this intercultural approach. In 2003 the Ministry of Education presented its strategy called “Educational Integration for children from Minorities” implementing intercultural policies.

In this study I research the implementation of the “National Education Strategy” applying the theoretical concepts of mainstreaming as a policy implementation strategy and interculturalism as a policy philosophy. The study focuses on equality as a binding factor to a common goal. **Methods.** This study adopted a qualitative case study design, open coding policy documents and interviews with municipal schoolteachers. **Findings.** This study found that equality between minority and majority population in education is used as a factor that binds interculturalism and mainstreaming. This is observed by deconstructing equality as a core policy goal into three categories. Category of equal treatment consisting of institutional and social sub-category. Category of equal opportunity, consisting of educational inclusion and cultural preservation and development sub-category. Last category is minority perspective consisting of social, political and economic sub-category. **Conclusion.** This study shows that intercultural policies are mainstreamed in Bulgaria’s education with a predominant emphasis on early levels of education (kindergarten, primary school) and more limited policy implementation in high-schools and universities. Intercultural education focuses on teaching children of socio-cultural diversity which is expected to transcend into the general societal sphere. **Recommendations.** Although there is a visible structure of how intercultural policies and mainstreamed, the approach lacks standardization for a smoother implementation of policies and the effective cooperation between education institutions. The intercultural dialogue can be deepened much more by involving interested parties with experience in the field on intercultural education.

Keywords: mainstreaming interculturalism, integration policies, national minorities, equality, intercultural education

Acknowledgements

I would like to express my gratitude to dr. Asya Pisarevskaya for her guidance and support throughout the process of writing this thesis. I would also like to thank the respondents who participated in this study. Thank you for your time and all the insight on how educational policies are implemented. I am also grateful for the additional effort some of you took to provide me with additional information on policies and topics or to connect me with other relevant actors in the field. I would also like to thank my study peers for their feedback and, most importantly, for sharing the mental struggle of writing a thesis with me.

Can't forget to thank my friends Nora, Olé and Wilfred for keeping me sane during this whole process.

Finally, I would like to express my gratitude to my parents who have always been there to support me and encourage me throughout my years of study and through the process of writing this thesis. I would not stand where I am today if it weren't for them. Thank you.

List of acronyms

EU - European Union

FCNM - Framework Convention for the protection of National Minorities

MES - Ministry of Education and Science

NES - National Education Strategy

NSI - National Statistical Institute

NGO - Non Governmental Organisation

UN - United Nations

1. Introduction:

“Unity makes strength” is the motto of the Republic of Bulgaria. As a person coming from the Balkans, a culturally, religiously and ethnically diverse region that is often associated with political instability, nationalist agendas and ethnic tension, I have always asked myself the question: how does one bring people together in understanding their differences and unite them as equals. The Balkans is a place where each country has or had its idea of a greater homogeneous state along with political and historical reasons to begrudge their neighbour. As minorities were considered a danger to the state, giving opportunities for forging claims over their ethnic background, even though these people were born and raised in the specific place they have inhabited for generations. Multiple attempts to assimilate these minorities into the mainstream or send them back to the country of ethnic origin, examples can be made in the aftermath of World War I with all the population exchanges, also during WWII and the latest the Bulgarian Assimilation Policy towards minorities during the 1980s and the war in Yugoslavia in the 1990s.

After the fall of communism and the embrace of democracy, free market economy and freedom of speech and human rights changes started happening. All former Eastern Bloc countries start making progress towards democratisation, many focused on joining the European Union. Bulgaria was one among these countries and as a EU application candidate it had tasks that were to be achieved in order for it to join the EU. The major task ahead of Bulgaria was to work on integration of its national minorities, due to human rights violations in the previous decades towards them. Slowly the country started amending violations done during the past assimilation policies referred to as “Revival process”. Violation such a forceful name changes, limitation on expression of speech, cultural and religious discrimination, expulsion and property confiscation (Republic of Bulgaria, 2003). With the democratic processes kicking off the country started promoting inclusion within society and integration for minorities, meaning changes were in the making in all fields.

One such field that I believe is of key importance is Education, which is the focus on this research paper. Education is responsible for integrating children within society teaching them the social norms and values preparing them to be active participants in modern society. Not

only that, but education has the power to influence children and define what person would a child grow to be based on what it has been taught. In 2003 Bulgaria began work on an educational strategy that has a heavy focus on the integration of minorities through education. This was inspired by the “Declaration by the European ministers of education on intercultural education in the new European context” of the same year. This declaration admits the diversification of European societies, the different culture, ethnicity, religion, language and other aspects categorising society (EUME, 2003). Thus it promotes an intercultural approach that safeguards diversity and teaches understanding and tolerance.

This intercultural approach to integration through education is implemented within the National Education Strategy, although this is not the first time it is used in Bulgaria. Interculturalism has been part of the ongoing debate of education since the fall of the communist regime in 1989. This debate itself is part of the larger topic of cultural diversity and equality of Bulgarian society.

The earliest research on interculturalism in Bulgarian education is from prof. dr. Lazar Koprinarov (1992) in it he depicts interculturalism as an approach that promotes mutual understanding and tolerance between ethnic groups as well as cultural appreciation which would lead to “accepting the others as your own”. Other researchers such as Makariev and Grekova (2002) are looking at ways to balance cultural diversity at school and Ivan Ivanov (2002) presents a similar outlook as L. Koprinarov, but adding more depth to the process of intercultural education specifically within the parties involved and their roles.

My study will be built on the systematic implementation of intercultural policies in all levels of Education. The study focuses on the National Education Strategy (NES) first implemented in 2003 and later updated in 2015. It focuses on providing equal access, opportunity and treatment for all children in Bulgaria. I will analyse these policies to grasp a better understanding of the logical structure that constitutes equality. While the policies have nationwide scope, I focus on the specific context of Stara Zagora province, and will aim to answer the following research question: *“How are intercultural minority integration policies mainstreamed within Bulgarian primary and secondary education?”*

I will start my study by exploring the NES and reports from the Framework Convention of the Protection of National Minorities (FCNM) to determine the scope and the policies used. Then I will obtain and analyse the information related to the policies implementation from local

actors in Stara Zagora involved in the Education System. I will finish by looking at the whole equality policy structure and the involvement of interculturalism.

My study is especially relevant within the upcoming re-evaluation and modification of the *“Strategy for integrational education of children and students from ethnic minorities”* with an end period in 2020 and implementation of a new strategy in the beginning of 2021 (Ministry of Education and Science, 2015). The strategy will be evaluated and it will be modified or completely remodelled depending on the progress it has made based on statistical data from the National Statistical Institute (MES, 2015). It is of societal relevance to research the development of an mainstream approach to intercultural integration that will lead to recommendations for application of this method in other fields such politics, culture, economy, sports, media, etc.

From a theoretical standpoint my study is relevant because it is one of the first that looks at this policy approach through a governance perspective. It combines P.W.A. Scholten & I. van Breugel (2018) and Barrero’s (2018) concepts of mainstreaming with Bouchard’s (2011) and Barrero’s (2015) concepts of interculturalism in the field of migration governance. The correlation between mainstreaming and interculturalism made by Barrero (2018) will be empirically tested in this study in the field of education. The findings made in this study can bring more insight as to how these two theoretical concepts work together.

In order to reach an answer to my research question here is how I will construct my research. I will divide my paper in seven chapters, the first one is the introduction that presents the problem, the goals of the research and how it is structured. In the second chapter I will present the theoretical framework in which I will build my theoretical concept of mainstreaming and interculturalism based on existing literature. Chapter three is my research design, methodology and case selection, firstly presenting the sub-questions that I will answer in order to reach my main research question, secondly I will explain how my research will be done based, what data I will collect and how I will analyse it. Chapter four will showcase my findings on the topic of educational integration and the policies that are applied. Chapter five I will analyse the findings and connect them with the theoretical framework established in chapter two thus answering the posed sub-questions. In the last chapter six I will make my conclusion based on the findings in previous chapters I will conclude with an answer to the research question and finish with some recommendations on things that could be emphasized more or improved.

2. Theoretical framework:

In the following paragraphs I explain several concepts that helped and guided me through my research and enabled me to convey the approach that I took with this thesis. First, I go through the concept of integration, the context of which is of key importance to my topic, as the type of integration can vary from one approach to another with each having a different goal. In my case I claim that integration serves a purpose to achieve equality between minority and majority population by providing equal opportunity, equal treatment and taking in consideration both sides' perspectives. This integration equality is applied through Mainstreaming that is used as a strategy to implement generic policies in all domains. The main philosophy behind this integration is interculturalism which through its three strands contractual, cohesion and constructivist affects the social, economic and political fabrics of society in theory leading to an integration based on mutual respect, understanding and increased participation in all domains of society by minorities (Zapata Barrero, 2015).

In the following paragraphs I expand on the touched upon concepts, define what they mean and how they would function, present their importance and possible weaknesses and shortcomings and also establish the links between them.

In Europe “Integration” is the most popular way of conceptualising the development of relations between European nation-states and their “ethnic” immigrant populations (A.Favell, 2010, p.371). Integration represents the level at which the constituent parts of a society are able to relate to one another (Entzinger & Biezeveld, 2003). Groups and individuals can relate based on the contacts they have and the connections they make or have with their surroundings. The relations are influenced based on the number of connections to places, contacts with people and also the nature of the two. Depending on how close people can relate to one another or the surrounding places, the more they can identify to them (Entzinger & Biezeveld, 2003). These factors may vary depending on the situational circumstances. In terms of integration of minorities Entzinger & Biezeveld (2003) outline two dimensions: Institutional that promotes the participation of minorities in societal institutions such as education, politics, economy, labour and others. The second dimension is normative and it relates to identity changes that happen to minorities.

It is important for this case study to differentiate national minorities from immigrant minorities when speaking of integration. Looking from a political and legal perspective and considering the specific integration approaches a distinction must be made between long-established national minorities and newly arrived immigrant groups (Gennaio Giugno 2000, pp. 133-134; Kymlicka, 1996). National minorities have formed up a long time ago, either through acts of conquest, colonisation, division or merger of lands or also through separating national groups from their main national body which led to the formation of a multinational network (Gennaio Giugno 2000, pp. 133-134;). Immigrants on the other hand are expected to arrive either individually or with families and are obliged consciously or willingly to learn and adhere to the rules of the host society (Gennaio Giugno 2000, pp. 133-136; Philipov, Naidenova, Totev, 1999).

The distinction between national and immigrant minorities can be much more complex than this based on the political or social context. The general implications are that people from national minorities can relate to the broad society they are born in (society of origin) and can identify based on their community and surrounding. With immigrant minorities the perception is that they have to learn about the host society in order to relate to it. Thus in my study integration serves as a concept that increases the level at which minorities can relate to society (Gennaio Giugno, 2000;Entzinger & Biezeveld, 2003). In connection to national minorities, integration is in pursuit of improving the relations between all groups existent within Bulgarian society.

2.1 EDUCATION

Education has long been a factor that can both help and complicate integration. It is often depicted as an institution that promotes social mobility. It is a factor that determines the jobs and social class position of people, but also providing knowledge, skills and teaching the values, beliefs, habits and norms of the host society(Ianelli & Paterson, 2005).

In Bulgaria and the Balkans region in general, education has been given the potential to reconcile ethnic conflict between national minorities and the majority population (Siemienski Guillaume & Packer John, 1997). The reason for such conflicts in the region can be narrowed down to deeply rooted prejudice and mistrust caused by historical outcomes and events (Wijesekera, 2014) . Educational policies in the past have been taking approaches that undermined the existence of minority communities by threatening their own identity, culture

and language (Siemienski Guillaume & Packer John, 1997). Several studies have been made on such ethnic tensions in Northern Macedonia with Albanian, in Romania with Hungarian, in Latvia and Estonia with Russian and in Bulgaria with Turkish minorities (Ianelli & Paterson, 2005; Republic of Bulgaria, 2003). This presents a failure of the state to act accordingly, to provide equality, confront historic prejudice and mistrust as well as provide an environment that allows minorities to safeguard their linguistic and cultural characteristics.

The relation between minority and majority population has been complicated due to topics such as national, ethnic and religious identity, the interaction between ethnic and religious groups, the political and institutional aspect of education from historical point of view with multiple research done by Makariev (1997; 1999; 2004), Ivanov (1999), Chucker (2004) and Nunev (1998) on the topic. These issues led to an increase in stereotypes, prejudice and discrimination based on the ethnic and religious background of students (Sabev, 2004; Dragova, 2004).

Steps to overcome these issues have been taken on an international level focusing on basic human rights such as the “Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities” that has been adopted throughout European countries. This framework guarantees the rights of minorities to be able to develop their identity, language and culture, the right to establish and maintain private culture, the right to use minority language in public and private, the right of information through minority language media, newspapers and others. The rights provided have a general nature and do not disregard the need for the minority to learn the official language of the state and gain knowledge of the society as a whole (FCNM, 1995). This refers to the responsibility of people belonging to a minority to acquire the language and cultural knowledge (Siemienski Guillaume & Packer John, 1997, p. 2-13). On a national level the MES applied a national education strategy that promotes a concept of “integrational education”. Nunev (2009) defines the concept as *“institutional process of consolidation between educational entities that are carriers of cultural differences within the general education environment to meet the same educational standards”*. Educational integration has been a topic of research by other authors as well such as Koprinarov (1992), Makariev and Grekova (2002) and Ivanov (2002). They come to the conclusion that integrational education is promoting equality of treatment, access and opportunity to students on the bases of intercultural interaction and establishment of relations.

In the next paragraphs I discuss the concept of mainstreaming used as a strategy to implement intercultural policies on all levels of education.

2.2 Mainstreaming

Mainstreaming as a concept was introduced for the first time in 1985 and later used in 1997 by the United Nations as “*strategy for making women’s as well as men’s concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and societal spheres to achieve gender equality*” (United Nations, 1997). Mainstreaming has been predominantly used in the field of gender governance to promote “equality between men and women in all activities and policies at all levels” (Booth & Bennett, 2002). This strategy can be equally applied to other fields plagued by inequality regardless of scale or form of the organisation.

Booth & Bennet define mainstreaming within the European Union as a complementary strategy that combines different methods and tools to achieve a certain goal, which in my case is “education equality”. In order to apply mainstreaming to education equality the key is to define and conceptualize the key word “equality” in a similar way as it is done with “gender equality” by Booth and Bennet. Taking into account how gender equality is split within three perspectives: equal treatment, women’s perspective and gender perspective, following this logic, within my case “equality” can be looked at as: equal treatment, equal opportunity and minority-majority perspective. This conceptualisation of education equality is derived from the general goals set up in the 20003 Bulgaria’s report on “*The framework convention for the protection of national minorities*” and “*National Education Strategy*”. Each of these separate strands add context to the general concept of “equality”. What mainstreaming is then used to is implementing this equality dimensional concept into all policies and activities (Booth & Bennett, 2002; Republic of Bulgaria, 2012).

Due to the similarity mainstreaming gender equality, it allows me to use it in mainstreaming of intercultural integration policies in general governance and more precisely in the field of Education. It is important to understand that mainstreaming can be used as a strategy to achieve a certain goal and as a set of methods and specific tools to implement a strategy (Booth & Bennett, 2002; G. Caglar, 2013). For mainstreaming to be efficient in integration governance, the concept of mainstreaming must be linked with different models of integration, integration priorities, target groups that are concerned and then categorise it in the respective fields whether it is multiculturalism, interculturalism, assimilationism etc. (P.W.A. Scholten & I. van Breugel, 2018).

Mainstreaming does take some criticism, mainly for being too vague and abstract, making its goals hard to define (P.W.A. Scholten & I. van Breugel, 2018, p.7). Thus, without a clear concept and operationalisation mainstreaming can be misused and filled with misconceptions or wrong ideas that would spark old issues to re-emerge and simply complicate the situation further (Booth & Bennet, 2002, P.W.A. Scholten & I. van Breugel, 2018).

In order to evade vagueness in the concept I focus on defining equality by splitting it in several perspectives that consolidate the generic meaning of equality, relatable to the case that I'm studying . The perspectives that constitute "equality" are : equal treatment, equal opportunity and minority perspective.

2.2.1 Perspectives of equality

The principle of equal treatment establishes that all people – and in the context of education, all students– have the right to receive the same treatment and not to be discriminated against on the basis of criteria such as age, disability, nationality, race and religion. This category guarantees equality and equal opportunities irrespective of ethnic origin, race, religion, gender, age and sexual orientation (European Pillar of Social Rights, 2017).

Equal opportunities refers to an equal distribution, among individuals, of opportunities for education, training, employment, career development and the exercise of power without their being disadvantaged on the basis of their sex, ethnic background, language, religion, economic or family situation, and so forth (European Pillar of Social Rights, 2017).

Minority perspective refers to the specific social, economic and political situation of each minority group, taking into account struggles different minority groups have depending on the general situation they are in.

2.3 Interculturalism

It can be defined as an approach that transcends multiculturalism and the acceptance of multiple cultures existing together in a society, by challenging segregation tendencies within cultures and stimulating emergence of dialogue and interaction between cultures (Zapata-Barrero, R. 2017, p.194). Interculturalism as a criticism towards multiculturalism, arguing that multicultural policies have ignored important factors such as the interaction between people from different cultural and national backgrounds, focusing on groups instead of individuals and

framing culture as an iron cage (Zapata-Barrero R., 2015). What interculturalism suggest is a shift of policy focus to a more fast passed and flexible process deriving from interaction between people (Zapata-Barrero, R. 2015, 2017)

Secondly interculturalism is an intervention strategy that copes with diversity. In literature we see three hypotheses: social that addresses interaction between people, political that addresses the formation of national identity and cultural that addresses the development and conceptualisation of culture (Zapata-Barrero R., 2013). These hypotheses depict the effect of diversity and how interculturalism comes into play (Bouchard, 2012, Zapata-Barrero R., 2013, 2015, Cantle 2012).

Based the above mentioned hypothesis and theoretical application, Ricard Zapata-Barrero in his article "*Interculturalism - main hypothesis, theories and strands*" defines 3 normative strands through which interaction can be promoted: contractual, cohesion and constructivist strand (Zapata-Barrero R., 2015, p.4-9, 2017).

The Contractual strand is a tool that manages or influences national traditions, values and identity in a diverse country. This strand is concerned with two things. On one side there are the traditions that are passed down from generation to generation and viewed as the source of social stability that unites communities and creates a sense of loyalty in citizens (Zapata-Barrero R., 2015, Bouchard, 2012). On the other side is the respect of the rights of minorities. The idea of this strand is that the national traditions, norms and values are kept in equilibrium with the respect of rights of minorities, in this way it enhances stability through those policies and builds up trust (Bouchard, 2012).

The Cohesion views interculturalism is a tool to manage social inclusion within diversity and through interculturalism it promotes social cohesion in a diverse society. Its policies differentiate from the contractual strand that is striving for equilibrium in maintaining social cohesion (Bouchard, 2012). Instead it focuses on policies that promote intercultural communication, exchange and contact that lead to mutual understanding (Zapata-Barrero R., 2015, 2013). This way it deals with prejudice, racism, misconception of others and so on and in time this leads to social cohesion. The idea of this strand is to tackle inequalities through policies and then proceed with establishing an intercultural dialogue, promoting an actual physical bond (Zapata-Barrero R., 2015, p.5-11), 2013).

The Constructivist views interculturalism as a tool to manage innovations in diverse societies and its purpose is not to react against any negative circumstances that diversity brings. Instead what the constructivist strand would do is focus on generating innovation through interaction which brings something new that would drive individual and social development bonds (Zapata-Barrero R., 2015, p.5-11). The way this approach views diversity is as an opportunity and an asset that is to be used to help create positive interactions between people with common interests, but from a different background. What this approach comes down to is utilising people's capabilities as the driving force behind or motivating the people to create a bond (Zapata-Barrero R., 2015, p.5-11, 2013).

2.4. Interculturalism in Bulgaria

Interculturalism within education has been a widely discussed topic over the last three decades, not only in Bulgaria but in most Balkan countries. The attention it has gathered has gotten it a place among the more general political debate. It has opened ways and ideas for a fundamental change in education, teaching and instruction methods (Fay & Davcheva, 2005). Within Bulgarian education, interculturalism is perceived as an approach to create a system of connections between and within minorities and the majority ethnic groups in the country. Koprinarov (1992) defines intercultural education as a process that cultivates capacity of abilities, skills, norms and values that allow mutual understanding to appear. Other researchers as Makariev and Grekova (20020) define it as a type of education that improves relations between different cultures. While Ivanov (2002) defines intercultural education as an environment in which people from different ethnic, religious, social and political and political backgrounds bond together on the bases of mutual understanding and respect. The general interculturalism debate in Bulgaria is set on the topics of national, ethnic and religious identity, as well as implications of stereotyping, prejudice and discrimination within the education system (Fay & Davcheva, 2005).

There are two sides of debate on interculturalism within minority integration policies in Bulgarian education. Maya Grekova (1999) in her research on "*Cultural difference as a problem of intercultural education in Bulgaria*" explains interculturalism as a sign of maturity in society, stating that the topic of intercultural education is absent from the general discussion. She goes into further details explaining the reasons behind the absence within her sociological research (M. Grekova, 1999). On the other side there is the claim that interculturalism is being applied in education after the ratification of "Framework Convention for the Protection of

National Minorities” with changes being made that can be related to each of the three strands of interculturalism(M. Grekova, 1999; Fay & Davcheva, 2005; Chucker, 2004).

2.5.Mainstreaming of Interculturalism

Zapata-Barrero (2018) defines the process of mainstreaming interculturalism as follow “*Mainstreaming intercultural policies is a way to designate a public policy philosophy that emphasizes both the importance of promoting communication, interpersonal relations and even interactions (core concept of interculturalism) in all spheres of public life and basic structures of society and for all the components of the diversity dynamics, including nationals and citizens (core concept of mainstreaming)*” (Zapata-Barrero, R.,2018, p.191-213).

The theoretical framework I am formulating for this study is based on Entzinger & Biezeveld (2003) integration concept as a way to stimulate people from different groups to relate and participate in society and its institutions. In this study I discuss mainstreaming as a strategy to highlight the structure and implementation of intercultural policies in the education system with the aim of achieving educational integration on the basis of equality (Bouchard, 2012; Zapata-Barrero R, 2018; P.W.A. Scholten & I. van Breugel, 2018).

This study focuses on the institutionalisation of equality and it being a factor that brings together the concept of mainstreaming and interculturalism. By analysing educational integration policies within the context of Bulgarian education system it will help better understand the interaction between mainstreaming as an implementation strategy, interculturalism as a policy philosophy and equality as a factor and drive that leads to mainstreaming of interculturalism. In the following chapter I present the research design based on the theoretical framework presented.

3. Research Design

In this chapter I present the research design used to answer my research question. First I cover the sub questions that I have formulated in order to establish a connection between the different parts that constitute my research question and lead up to answering it. Later I discuss my case selection and the methodological approach that I took for this study.

3.1. Research Question

In this thesis I answer the following research question: *How are intercultural minority integration policies mainstreamed within Bulgarian education system?*

To answer this question a series of sub-questions connecting the different parts of my research are to be answered.

Firstly I answer the sub-question “*How is mainstreaming implemented as a strategy within integrational education?*”. This allows me to explain how mainstreaming is used to implement policies on all levels of the education system, with the policies targeting all parties participating such as teachers, students and parents regardless of background. With this question I show that equality is designated as a core value and goal incorporated within the policies.

The second sub-question “*How does interculturalism relate to mainstreaming within education?*” allows me to depict the intercultural approach of the policies explaining what makes them intercultural and making a connection with mainstreaming by elaborating on the implementation and effect scale. I do this by analysing policy documents, coding sections regarding education and obtaining additional information from interviews for additional information.

The last sub-question “**Where do integration policies fit within the strands of interculturalism?**” answers what focus intercultural policies have. Whether it is to directly promote interaction between people in education, or an indirect approach that leads to interaction and last an approach that aims at an interaction based on balancing differences between groups maintaining equilibrium.

3.2. Case Selection

The time frame for this study is from the year 2000 till 2020. A period of policy implementation and initiatives that are based on the NES adopted by the MES in 2004 and updated in 2015. This strategy is influenced by the “Framework convention for the protection of national minorities” which as a framework gives guidelines and recommendations for a country signatory to follow while adapting to its own social, political, economic and historical context (FCNM, 1995).

Before I go into more details about the study time frame, I will provide a short background information on the policies towards minorities from the 1950s until 1989. This is important, because past policies had a lasting social, economic and political impact on minorities in the country. A policy takes time to have an actual effect and when it does that effect is a lasting one having its own consequences. The effects of them can be seen to this day within strategies of present-day policies that are constructed to counter some of those effects such as discrimination, segregation, prejudice and others. Thus, knowing the past can explain why certain policies presently are being made and applied the way they are. (Kancs & Lecca, 2018).

3.2.1. A look at minority policies in the past 1950-1989

After World War II a communist government was established in Bulgaria that lasted till 1989. During this period, the main concern of the authorities was to improve the relations with minorities within the country. Minorities were given the opportunity to develop their culture and traditions without restrictions, however the state looked at these minorities with distrust. This distrust is shown in 1948 when the Communist party starts deporting Muslim population from the southern regions of the country, replacing them with ethnic Bulgarians. This policy triggered a mass emigration primarily by ethnic Turks, of which 250 000 people left the country to Turkey in 1950. (Pozharliev, 2012; Bulgarian Helsinki committee, 2003, p.35-57).

The relations between the government and minorities can be seen within two legislative acts. The 1947 and 1971 constitutions. The first one guarantees equality and prohibits discrimination based on national, ethnic, cultural or religious background. It also foresaw opportunities for minorities to develop their culture and study their mother tongue. The second constitution makes changes to how minorities are referred to changing them from “national minorities” to “citizens of non-Bulgarian origin” (Pozharliev, 2012).

During this period efforts were made in education to tackle illiteracy. Designated minority schools were nationalised, and their number increased in the 1950s. The government encouraged minority media and cultural events and also introduced preferential scholarships for Turks applying in educational institutions, specifically in universities (Pozharliev, 2012).

However, the policies encouraging the ethnic identity of minorities during the communist rule drastically changed in 1956 with the new government. Decisions were made to merge Turkish and Bulgarian schools gradually, while publications in minority languages were shut down.

Those types of policies intensified and were followed by new decisions to impose large-scale limitations of Turkish culture (Pozharliev, 2012;Valeri Stoyanov 1998, p. 148-149).

Although it was officially implied that the emigration of Bulgarian Turks to Turkey was unrealistic, since the ethnic Turks were considered essential part of the Bulgarian people. In the 1960s the communist party commenced negotiations with the Turkish government to conclude an emigration agreement. Soon after that 130 000 people migrated to Turkey(Pozharliev, 2012;Evgenia Ivanova 2002, p. 108-112, Diulgerov 2000, p. 75-76).

In 1971 the communist party took a new decision and started a process of renaming Bulgarian Muslims. This decision sparked violence in several cities and villages resulting in civilian casualties. The government was putting efforts into assimilating Roma population in Bulgaria as well, although this process was done gradually, however the measures to integrate and improve their condition proved ineffective, insufficiently consistent or ill planned(Pozharliev, 2012; Gruev, Kalionski 2008, p. 191-192).

The peak of this renaming process was during the campaign targeting the Turkish minority. This led to many violations of basic human rights affecting 850 000 people. All this involved deportation, beating, imprisonment and other various abuses against Muslim ways of life and culture. The whole process was influenced by heavy propaganda, in the end roughly 370 000 Bulgarian Turks left the country in 1989, about half of them return back after the fall of communism(Pozharliev, 2012; Heper & Criss 2009, p.92;Eminov 1997, p.81).

3.2.2. Post-totalitarian era and present day

With the fall of communism and restoration of democracy the government commenced swift procedures to restore the ethnic and religious rights of minorities. The first policies focused on the most basic issues that could be solved swiftly. Restoration of people's names and also issuing amnesty and release from prison for all those who were imprisoned during the name-changing campaigns (Republic of Bulgaria, 2003). All those who were subjected to repression or wrongfully sentenced were acquitted and compensated monetarily. Lifting bans on religious expression and the freedom of association. All the efforts to amend and integrate minorities were unfortunately impeded by the economic crisis that hit Bulgaria in 1997, which impacted unevenly the population of the country. Roma and Turkish minorities were the most heavily affected ones, due to their educational, social and economic status being below the country average (Republic of Bulgaria, 2003). This clearly showed their unequal position.

Tackling all these issues a special department within the Council of Ministers was created to handle minority concerns, called the National Council on Ethnic and Integration Questions (NCIQ). NCIQ is cooperating with other governmental institutions and NGOs to achieve equality between minority and majority by making substantial changes to national legislation, adopting new laws and amending old ones (Republic of Bulgaria, 2003).

After ratifying the “Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities” in 1999 Bulgaria has been “adopting necessary, adequate measures to promote in all areas of economic, social, political and cultural life , full and effective equality” encouraging intercultural dialogue, tolerance and promoting mutual respect, understanding and cooperation between all people inhabiting the territory of the country (FCNM, 1995).

3.2.3. The Framework Convention for the protection of national minorities (FCNM)

FCNM is a legally binding agreement, signed by 39 nation states, dedicated to protect national minorities worldwide. A clarification must be made regarding legally binding, because the word “Framework” highlights the scope for member states to apply the Convention’s provisions to their specific country situation through national legislation and appropriate governmental policies (FCNM, 1995). These policy and legislation changes depend on the specific country's historical situation which in terms affects the social, political and economic aspects of that country. The FCNM sets certain principles to be respected, as well as goals to be achieved by the countries, in order to ensure the protection of national minorities (FCNM, 1995).

What the signatories of the FCNM are committing to promote full and effective equality of people belonging to minorities in all areas of economic, social, political, public and cultural life together with conditions that allow them to express, preserve and develop their culture, religion, language and traditions (FCNM, 1995). They have to ensure their freedom of assembly, association, expression, thought, conscience, religion and their access and use of media (FCNM, 1995). The FCNM also provides guidelines for their linguistic freedom and rights regarding education (FCNM, 1995) .

When looking at Bulgaria it is important to take in mind social, political, economic and historical context. It is a country the society of which went through rapid and extensive changes, most out of necessity: joining NATO, admission to the European Union, ratifying FCNM and others.

One of the major spheres impacted was education. Educational practices dating from the communist era have been significantly changed in order to support intercultural education. The main change comes with the National Education Act (NEA) according to which any or all privileges or limitations based on racial, ethnic, national, social status, religion, gender are being prohibited (Fay & Davcheva, 2005). The most visible examples of these reforms can be seen in foreign language teaching, where intercultural understanding and interaction has been adopted. The textbooks that students learn from have gone through changes as well, and have been developed in a way to teach and support minority education and societal education as citizens (Fay & Davcheva, 2005; Valchev, 1999;).

3.2.4. Case sample

In order to analyse and systematically categorise the general policy strategy and the subcategories of strands promoting intercultural education and their implementation in public schools and kindergartens, I have selected the province of Stara Zagora with administrative capital Stara Zagora. The national integration strategy is a top-down approach with several policies on education.

In the next paragraphs I provide some information on the population composition of the province. The ethno-demographic composition of the province is as follows based on the NSI of Bulgaria:

During the 2011 census out of the 333 265 population, 92,4% or 308 106 have answered the optional question regarding their ethnic identity. Out of them 265 618 or 86,2% identify as Bulgarian, with the country average being 84,8%. Ethnic Roma people come down to 24 018 or 7,8% with the country average being 4,9%. Ethnic Turks are 15 035 of the population or 4,9% with the country average being 8,8%. Finally only 1 715 or 0,6% have identified as belonging to other ethnic groups (Regional Development Strategy for Stara Zagora; National Statistical Institute).

The city has been one of the fastest developing cities in the country, receiving a national reward in the category “Best city to live in” in 2016(Regional Development Strategy for Stara Zagora; Regional Social Work developing Strategy) . The city was ranked first under special criteria representing expectations of modern man about the city where he works and lives. Among these categories are ecology, investments, new jobs, possibility to raise children, medical equipment, and educational institutions.

Education plays an important part of the provincial development strategy. There is a huge focus on improving quality and access to proper education within the strategic document plan, which is aligned with the general government strategy for integration of minorities.

3.3. Methods

There are two types of data I used for this research. First are Bulgaria's four policy report documents for the FCNM: first one is 2003, second one in 2007, third one in 2012 and fourth one in 2017 extracted from the official Council of Europe website: "[Specific monitoring In Bulgaria of the implementation of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities](#)". The access to this data is completely free and consists of detailed reports on the monitoring of FCNM for each country that has ratified the convention. The documents are based on a five-cycle report and currently Bulgaria is in its 4th cycle. The reports contained information on all existing policies and laws as well as changes and adjustments affecting all governmental institutions. Additional statistical data on Education was procured from the NSI which is also publicly available on its official website. Each report document contains information on policies, initiatives and work that is or has been done by the national government in connection with the basic human rights of minorities and providing equal opportunity and treatment to people from national minorities.

I analysed the documents through "open coding" going through each document, coding phrases and paragraphs that focus on education. I created several categories of which I made sub-categories that allowed me to define them and do further detailed depiction of the content (Glaser, 1978; Strauss 1967). The sub-categories to each allowed me to break down and understand the policy documents and to put all categories in order constructing an overview and understanding the ongoing process (Glaser, 1978; Strauss 1967). I have established the following categories from the policy documents in correspondence to the applied theories of mainstreaming as implementation strategy and interculturalism as a policy approach:

- **Mainstreaming** - in this category I coded words, phrases and whole paragraphs that specifically promoted the respect for basic human rights, religious freedom, equality, ethnic and linguistic identity in all spheres and fields of social, economic and political life. Coding these allowed me to pinpoint a core concept that was mainstreamed and applied and achieved through intercultural policies. Also allowed to show the scale of the strategy, the fields and subfields it was used in.

- **Equality** - in this category I analysed phrases and whole paragraphs that specifically referred or mentioned equality in order to define a general definition of the term, the way it was being used in the policy documents. Further analysis led to splitting equality into sub-categories which allowed me to clearly define the different properties dimensions and strands that made up equality such as - equal treatment, equal opportunity, minority perspective. Each of these was dimensionalized for example the minority perspective, there are multiple minorities and each has its own distinct social, political, economic situation (Glaser, 1978; Strauss 1967). Equal treatment could be based on problematic aspects and less problematic aspects looking into all the rights to receive the same treatment and not to be discriminated against on the basis of criteria such as age, disability, nationality, race and religion. While equal opportunity is more about the chances of a proper education, training, employment, career development and the exercise of power without their being disadvantaged on the basis of sex, race, language, religion, culture, economic or family situation, and so forth.
- **Interculturalism**- in this category I coded words, sentences and paragraphs from the policy documents that allowed me to split the information based on the three established strands of interculturalism in the theoretical framework: **Constructivist** - policies that specifically focus on promoting interaction. **Cohesion** - implementing policies that focus on tackling inequality and strive to reach an understanding between people. **Contractual** - maintaining national norms values and traditions in equilibrium with the respect for minorities identity such as language, culture, religion etc.

The second type of data that I collected is based on interviews from street-level bureaucrats in education such as teachers and principals of different schools. These interviews provided me with information on local and municipal level regarding the implementation and direct function of these nationwide policies. I conducted 8 individual interviews with teachers: 3 from major high-schools, teaching students from 8th till 12th grade, 3 teachers for major elementary schools, teaching from 1st till 8th grade and 2 from kindergarten taking care of children between 3 to 6 years of age.

The reason I chose to base my interviews on primary and secondary education teachers was because these institutions are the place where children acquire knowledge, certain skills, values, beliefs and habits. In their early stage children are not fully conscious members of society, they don't know their rights or duties nor how their society functions. Primary and

secondary school is what prepares children for everything previously mentioned. I believe that integration policies have a bigger impact at that stage, rather than in higher education such as university. In university children have already transitioned into adults, having the social norms and values taught into them along with their understanding of the world and how they see it. Thus the policy impact from social point of view in regards to personal development and interaction between minority and majority is much lower than in initial earlier stages of education (A.K.C. Ottaway, 2013).

All the schools are located in the city of Stara Zagora, Bulgaria. I chose that city for several reasons. Firstly, the city population composition was similar to many major cities in the country see figure below from the statistics from the Bulgarian National Statistical Institute

Province	Ethnicity	Ethnicity	Ethnicity	Ethnicity
-	Bulgarian	Turkish	Roma	Others
Blagoevgrad Province	89%	6%	3%	2%
Burgas Province	80%	13%	5%	2%
Dobrich Province	75%	13%	9%	3%
Gabrovo Province	92%	6%	1%	1%
Haskovo Province	79%	13%	7%	1%
Kardzhali Province	30%	66%	1%	3%
Kyustendil Province	93%	0%	6%	1%
Lovech Province	91%	3%	4%	2%
Montana Province	86%	0%	13%	1%
Pazardzhik Province	84%	6%	8%	2%
Pernik Province	96%	0%	3%	1%
Pleven Province	91%	4%	4%	1%

Plovdiv Province	87%	6%	5%	2%
Razgrad Province	43%	50%	5%	2%
Ruse Province	81%	13%	4%	2%
Shumen Province	59%	30%	8%	3%
Silistra Province	57%	36%	5%	2%
Sliven Province	77%	10%	12%	1%
Smolyan Province	91%	5%	0%	4%
Sofia City	96%	1%	2%	1%
Sofia Province	91%	0%	7%	2%
Stara Zagora Province	86%	5%	8%	1%
Targovishte Province	55%	36%	7%	2%
Varna Province	87%	7%	3%	3%
Veliko Tarnovo Province	90%	7%	2%	1%
Vidin Province	91%	0%	8%	1%

Vratsa Province	93%	0%	6%	1%
Yambol Province	87%	3%	8%	2%
Blagoevgrad Province	89%	6%	3%	2%

Fig 1. *Population by province, municipality, settlement and ethnic identification (NSI, 2011)*

These interviews provided me information on the policies and initiatives that took shape and were implemented on a school level. They also gave me valuable insight based on the experience of these teachers and their take on the effects of these policies when it came to promoting cultural appropriation and equal treatment and opportunity.

Questions were focused on specific policies that were noted from the national integration strategy. They were related to the subject of equality and intercultural practices within education as well as the personal experience of the teachers. An interview guide with questions can be seen in the appendix. The questions were in open and closed format and aimed to acquire more detailed information on the different policies within minority integration strategies that were implemented on a local level.

Then the information was openly coded and allowed me to establish categories and sub-categories (mainstreaming, equality, interculturalism) adding more details to their dimension.

3.4. Limitations of research

I have identified some limitations within my data collection. Data collection is based on primary and secondary sources with primary focus on secondary sources. The analysis of the integration approach could not be made solely on NES documents (2004, 2015), I used Bulgaria's reports to FCNM (2003, 2007, 2012, 2017). Information on changes in 2018, 2019 and 2020 were not available from secondary sources due to the reports being expected in 2021. Thus, gaps in information are filled through interviews.

The primary data is based on interviews from teachers providing first-hand information. Due to the timeframe of my study (from 2000 till 2020) the teachers had to fulfil several criterion. First to have working experience of at least 20 years, making them able to provide information

for the whole NES period. Secondly, they must still be actively working, and not in retirement in order to provide valid and up to date information on the years 2018, 2019 and 2020 since the last FCNM report is from 2017.

3.5. Ethical consideration

When conducting my interviews participants are provided with a form to fill in and give their written proof that they are participating willingly in this research and allow me to voice record them. From ethical consideration I have agreed to keep their participation anonymous without using their names or quitting the places they work. The interviews are of purely informative use and are securely stored on an external hard drive.

Several ethical issues were taken into account while conducting this study. First is that I am representative of the majority population which exposes me to certain biases. I overcame these by objectively analysing and interpreting the received factual data in accordance with theoretical concepts (Chapter 2). Furthermore, the teachers were more open in the interviews, providing information on the topic as well as expressing their opinion and understanding of the minority integration policies. The explanation for this is that teachers perceiving me as a member of the majority population who is conducting research on minority integration, they presumed that I am aware of the general issues related to the integration of minorities. Doing so the teachers provided me with two types of information. First concerns the context and implementation of minority integration policies which is objectively analysed in accordance to the theoretical context. The second is connected with the effect of mainstreaming interculturalism upon the people targeted by it and the way they perceive the NES.

4. Educational integration of children from national minorities groups in Bulgaria

The aim of this chapter is to provide further contextual background for this study and discuss the two Bulgarian strategy policies from 2005-2015 and 2015-2020. It also provides information on the integration of these strategies on a local level. The strategies are generic

and apply to multiple cases, while on a local provincial level the situation varies based on the demographics and the distinction between the different minority groups specifics.

4.1. The Republic of Bulgaria national strategy 2004-2015; 2015-2020

The strategy from 2004-2015 was a key element of the national project to reform the educational system, ensuring a good quality education for all children in the Republic of Bulgaria. The strategy was based on multiple international and EU treaties, framework conventions and newly implemented laws.

The educational strategy is guided by the core values of respecting the rights and liberties of each individual and prohibits any type of discrimination. It strives to provide conditions in schools that encourage the interaction between different ethnic and religious groups. In terms this systematic approach aims to overcome the prejudice and discrimination based on ethnicity, religion, language and others.

4.1.1. Identified problems by the strategy

The strategy outlines common and specific minority obstacles that undermine the quality education, equal opportunity and treatment and the development of cultural identity for children.

There are several common issues that are on the strategy agenda. First one concerns the quality of education. NES (2004) states that there is not enough qualified teaching staff and there is no plan to retrain teachers and others for work in multi-ethnic environment. The lack of qualified staff also affects the quality of education that can be provided in remote settlements. In addition to this there is a lack of resources and conditions to teach minority mother languages in smaller and remote areas, coped with the lack of children to form a study group. The fact that not enough people are ready to work in a multi-ethnic environment points at the lack of socio-psychological climate within society that guarantees children's educational rights, integration and development of their culture. Furthermore, the culture and history of minorities is underrepresented and limited to only traditional folklore, without taking into account all other cultural achievements of minorities and their contribution to the national culture and

development of society. Lastly NES (2004) points out a lack of an institutional mechanism to coordinate these educational policies on all levels of the system.

The NES (2004) looks into specific minorities within the country and the problems they face. The biggest minority groups in the country are comprised of Roma and Turks with much smaller, but significant Armenian and Jewish minorities.

Roma children are isolated in kindergartens and schools within roma neighbourhoods as well as in mixed schools and kindergartens. A lot of them are not able to speak Bulgarian well enough which does not allow them to learn what they are being taught in school. This has led to some children being signed into schools for children with disabilities without them having any. The low level of literacy among adults and the level of poverty affects the children's attendance and dropout rates in schools.

Turkish children face similar issues with the knowledge in bulgarian language which affects their adaptation in kindergartens and schools. Another big issue is the ethnocentric education in school which harbours negative attitudes towards their community. Other issues are concerning the quality of education children can receive in their mother tongue due to lack of proper education staff for the purpose.

Armenian and Jewish children face issues specifically with the possibility of learning in their mother tongue outside the capital of Sofia as well as the lack of qualified staff for that.

4.1.2. Strategic goals

In order to tackle these obstacles, the state designated four goals that are affecting the integration of children from ethnic minorities. First is guaranteeing the right to equal access to quality education. Second is safeguarding and developing the cultural identity of minorities. Third goal is to create opportunities for a successful socialisation. Last is turning cultural diversity in a source of common understanding and spiritual development, creating an environment of respect, tolerance and understanding.

These general goals are to be achieved by focusing on several subgoals. Firstly the NES (2004) focuses on making regulation changes that guarantee the strategy implementation, and also improving the coordination efficiency capabilities of education institutions horizontally and vertically. Providing necessary financing to improve the quality of education and the

educational integration of children. Constructing modern schools with proper equipment and preparing the pedagogical and administrative staff to work in an intercultural environment.

The previously mentioned goals and subgoals are focused on general common issues that are to be tackled before achieving integration in the sense of mutual respect and understanding. Taking into account minority perspective several goals have been designated for each minority group within the country.

For Roma children the goals are the full integration within ethnically mixed kindergarten and school groups outside of roma neighbourhoods. An adequate staff must be prepared to work with Roma children, meaning teachers must be retrained or obtain qualification to work with mixed classes. Important step is to dismantle the practice of sending healthy children that struggle with bulgarian language to schools for children with disabilities. Educating illiterate adults in Roma communities which aims to stimulate parents to motivate their children in pursuit of education.

For Turkish children the strategy revolves around providing quality education for those who wish to learn their mother tongue, preparing a teaching staff for that and also making legal changes and providing conditions to overcome negative stereotypes and hate speech.

For children from Armenian, Jewish, Romanian and Wallachian minorities the strategy foresees expanding the network and improving the quality of teaching mother tongue. This means preparing teaching staff with the required specialisation, also ensuring proper textbooks and working with NGOs in providing extracurricular activities for children.

4.1.3. Strategy update and build up 2015-2020

The strategy for educational integration of children from ethnic minorities received an update that took into account the changes that occurred in Bulgarian society within the 10 years the initial strategy was in place. The 2015-2020 plan puts emphasis on four general goals. First is to fully socialise children from ethnic minorities, second is providing them equal access to a quality education, third is ensuring an intercultural education as a core aspect of Bulgaria's education system and fourth preserving and developing children's cultural identity (NES, 2015). To achieve these goals the strategy outlines several sub-goals.

For the socialisation of children, the goals are focused on promoting possibilities for intercultural interaction. This is done by running information campaigns among parents and the general community about the benefits of intercultural education. With close work being done with parents and communities do draw interest towards the educational process and overcoming stereotypes, discriminatory attitude and prejudice. In order to ensure this a proper coordination between parties involved and having interest in the educational process is established on a horizontal and vertical level. With this coordination, implementing educational integration strategies on municipal level is to help the systematic desegregation based on the specific region data and evade a rebound of segregation in the future.

For equal access to quality education the goals are as follows. Assistant teachers are assigned by school principals wherever there is a need for assistance with ethnic minorities. Any child experiencing difficulties with language is provided additional extracurricular lessons in bulgarian. In addition pedagogical staff is to receive the training and qualification to work in an intercultural environment, including teaching Bulgarian language. This pedagogical staff puts work with children in risk of dropping out or leaving school earlier, NES (2015) refers to them as children from vulnerable communities. The NES (2015) develops instruments to include children from all regions of the country in compulsory preschool education to counter the early dropout. An emphasis is put on organising extracurricular events and activities for recreation and sport in an intercultural environment to make children comfortable and motivate interaction.

The MES specifies within NES (2004) the implementation of interculturalism in integrational education. It designates several policies on how this is implemented. First interculturalism is to be incorporated institutionally and standardised within education and teaching staff is to be acquainted with all issues that intercultural education confronts and trained on how to work in a multicultural environment by applying an intercultural approach. Improvement in textbooks such as history or literature with elements of the history and culture of ethnic minorities bringing focus on their cultural achievements and their contribution to the national culture and development of society. Lastly increase in participation of parties interested and with experience in projects concerning work in a intercultural environment.

5. Data Findings

In this chapter I discuss the findings made by open coding government education documents relevant to answering my research question and sub-questions. I present the findings in a top-down manner starting with the core category and moving down to the interrelated sub-categories then to their dimensions and finally the themes that were created based on the document coding.

5.1. Equality as a core category

Equality is a broad term that envelops different concepts and ways of application. In my case within the integration strategy “equality” presents a core general goal to be achieved. This is the case with Bulgaria’s minority integration policies in education and it can be seen clearly within the strategy that groups up all policies within the field (NES, 2003, 2015). This strategy is commonly referred to as “Integrational Education” and what it aims is to not simply achieve equality in the true definition of the word, but to provide conditions for equity between different minority groups and the majority population (NES, 2003). Thus in this way bringing to the social participation possibility of all citizens.

Equality is mentioned multiple times within the strategy in a generic context to counter discrimination, segregation and prejudice on one side, and promoting citizen’s participation in society and intercultural values such as interaction between different groups of people and inciting mutual understanding and respect between them (NES, 2003, 2015). I have depicted three interrelated sub-categories that equality can be analysed from. They are equal treatment, equal opportunity and minority perspective. All three are mutually dependent as parts of equality as a whole. When striving for equality between minority and majority, what the government does is taking into account the social, economic and political factors affecting minorities. Each minority has a distinct situation from the other. For example Roma minority is plagued by higher illiteracy rate compared to other ethnic groups in the country based on statistics from the Bulgarian National Statistical Institute and this in terms affects the dropout rate of children from roma minority (Republic of Bulgaria, 2003). This illiteracy rate is a result of past segregation policies that did not provide the proper high-level education due to unjust treatment.

I go more in depth in the following chapters disentangling the interconnected findings further reasoning how the three categories of equality interact with one another.

5.2. Equal treatment category

Equal treatment within the context of integrational education refers to specific measures that ensure an environment in school that take discrimination, segregation and prejudice out of the picture so that it does not affect students throughout their educational path. This includes measures that prohibit institutional discrimination and segregation through predominantly legal changes, ensuring the full access to the educational system to children without any biases (Republic of Bulgaria, 2003, 2017; NES, 2003). The legal changes handle the institutional dimension, while additional efforts are made to affect the social dimension which influences people's perception. In the following paragraphs I discuss these dimensions in more detail with information retrieved from policy documents and interviews.

5.2.1. Institutional dimension

The legal perspective of this dimension is covered within the Law of Public Education which ensures the access to children regardless of their ethnicity, religion or gender to school. The law prohibits the separation of children and formation of separate classes based on ethnicity. This is specifically orientated towards mixed schools. There are three types of schools that can be seen in Bulgaria based on demographics - predominantly majority in most cases centrally located schools, predominantly minority schools located either in the outskirts of towns and cities, in predominantly minority neighbourhoods or provincial regions and the last type of school is mixed which can be seen mostly in outer neighbourhoods (NES, 2015). All three types of schools are relevant for the province of Stara Zagora and its provincial capital. What must be made clear is that there are no intentionally created separate schools for ethnic Bulgarians or ethnic minorities. Only exceptions are schools located in predominantly minority neighbourhoods which logically led to the school in that area to be attended primarily by children of minority background. This created a self-segregated area, because schools in Bulgaria are assigned to accept students based on their home address and their parents' work place allowed certain flexibility when it came to enrolment options (NES, 2003; Republic of Bulgaria, 2003) Initially with the aim of evading this segregation a law that disallows the assignment of schools to certain districts was removed allowing children to be enrolled in any school disregarding location, thus allowing the mixture of students in an attempt to integrate

children from minorities (Republic of Bulgaria, 2017). This ruling is applicable for kindergarten (children from the age of 5 to 6) and primary school 1st till 7th grade.

The following quote from a teacher participating in my interviews says this concerning the consequences of removing school district assignment:

“What happens is that in the outer neighbourhoods, instead of children staying there and studying in the schools present in the area, they come to the central schools and wish to study there. These schools are obviously better, with better facilities...umm better maintained, more money have been invested in them before (schools have existed way before the schools in outskirts districts) in a way. For example the school I worked at in the outskirts of town is way more equipped with better facilities compared to some central schools, but what happened is that people (parents) started talking that there are Roma and Turks in the school, that the school is not good . All the children from the neighbourhood (that the school is assigned to) started traveling to the central area (to study) while the local school was left without any students. Like this one beautiful school became neglected and the amazing pedagogical staff has to spread out looking for work”(In interview: primary school teacher)

This statement depicts a clearly visible social dimension of equal treatment that shows the existent prejudice and stereotyping. The school district distribution was re-established again in 2019 , the reasoning is as noted the slow decay and abandonment of schools on the outskirts or in provincial areas. This is to prevent the appearance of minority schools and allow the social dimension of the educational integration strategy to fully unfold.

The analysis of documents and interviews showed that legally the rights of every person to access and pursue further education are guaranteed by law, but these laws do not have a direct effect of being the socio-economic driver for people (Republic of Bulgaria, 2017).

5.2.2. Social dimension

This dimension showcases the different approaches that are taken to promote interaction, understanding between people as well as build up confidence in minority identity. These approaches are a national initiative thus a top-down approach that leaves no place for local municipal initiatives in this case Stara Zagora.

Changing someone's view or perception of how things are takes time and is hard the older the person that is being attempted to be influenced. The approaches taken into school can be split in two themes: cultural diversity and social interaction. The NES (2003, 2015) implements the following: changes in school curriculum, preparation of pedagogical staff and creating a role for specialised mediators. The following interview quotes presents more details on what these changes are and how they operate.

“Purely lexically every single textbook is revised, so terminology or words such as “Ottoman slavery (Ottoman period), word gypsies (derogatory word for roma people) are gone from school textbooks. It is ottoman presence, Roma minority or ethnic minority population. All textbooks and history books mostly are fine now.” (In interview: primary/secondary school teacher)

All textbooks that are used in public schools are firstly approved by the Ministry of Education and Science and have to be in regulation with the Law on Education. Thus all textbooks are revised removing the terminology that instils prejudice and stereotypes. When referring to Turkish minority, when a child is being taught from young age and encounters teachings that showcase Turkish people in a negative light due to the background history from the Ottoman period (Republic of Bulgaria, 2003, 2007). Similar is the case with Roma people that have the negative sides being brought up front in textbooks. This creates a whole perception for a group of people without even having the opportunity to interact with anyone, thus inciting prejudice in one's mind especially from a young age (Republic of Bulgaria, 2012). Revisioning the textbooks removes this negative effect and allows for a more neutral judgement of people and acceptance of diversity. The next quote presents what is being done to promote diverse culture:

“There is something important that is being done from the Ministry of Education, it is really well thought up as a strategy, although faces some resistance from ethnic Bulgarian because in textbooks from 1st till 4th grade there is a Roma folk tale, Turkish folk tale. The names there are typical for the cultural background of that population....which is done with the idea to have this understanding and tolerance, after all we have African folk tales, Indian folk tales, why not have in the textbooks....roma folk tale or just like there is in the textbook for 4th grade story for Bango Vasili (Roma New Year) what is it, why is it being celebrated, who is he, this explained in details. This makes children feel having confidence...umm how to say adequate and calm, because

it is not shameful to say that you are “roma” (In interview: primary school teacher)

New textbooks and school curriculum have started to include the diversity aspect of the country's population. Minority groups are being present in textbooks, allowing for both children from minorities and majority to learn about the culture of minority groups and their participation and contribution towards Bulgaria (Republic of Bulgaria, 2017). Compared to their underrepresentation before, this approach to educational integration helps build up minority's identity and confidence as well as allows for the appearance of mutual understanding (NES, 2015). Although the changes have provoked slight resistance from some Bulgarians with the claims of “washing history” and changing “facts” the Ministry of Education and Science is trying to maintain a balance between national history in terms of accuracy presenting facts and on the other side respecting minorities without inciting violent language or subtle messages that portray minorities in a negative light (In interviews: with teachers).

These changes to the school curriculum are to positively influence current and future generations, although textbooks are not the only thing being focused on. A professional pedagogical staff that is qualified and aware how to approach, interact and work in general with children in conformity with the educational integration strategy (NES, 2003,2015). Teachers are being trained multiple times per year, the following quotes from two teachers that I interviewed tells more about the training courses:

“Teachers have the right at the beginning of the school year to decide what training course, in what qualification and specialisation they want to go to go in. After that the school administration makes the decision, whether it will do a training course based on the selected themes and invite lecturers to hold the training at school or to send the teachers directly to such courses to other towns where it is being held....everyone have the right to chose how to specialise”(In interview: secondary school teacher)

~

“I have gone through multiple training courses, but not in that direction (working children from minority groups). Overall they were in the area of psychology. handling problematic children , aggressive children...but not in working in a culturally diverse environment....These training have the weight as umm degrees, they are even mandatory, but every person (teacher) is

selecting the topic. Since there is a huge problem with aggressive children in bulgarian schools or unfocused attention this is what I have specialised in. The school I work in doesn't have a big need of what you are asking me about (working in an intercultural environment)"(In interview: primary school teacher)

The NES (2003, 2015) focuses on preparing teachers to work in an ethnically and culturally diverse environment. It is not mandatory for every teacher, but it depends on the school and the student's demographic. If the school has issues with children being aggressive then the school administration would focus on preparing its staff for such scenarios. If the school has children from minorities then focus is on courses preparing teachers for working in such an environment and learning what approach to take when facing specific issues. Thus, every teacher is obligated and encouraged to have the qualification for the specific school where the teacher would work. The courses have weight and give credits for teachers that unlock ranks or levels in the specified qualification degree they are focusing on (Republic of Bulgaria, 2007).

5.3. Equal opportunity

Equal opportunities within the context of education referes to providing the chances for children without them being disadvantaged based on sex, ethnicity, language, socio-economic status and others. From analysing policy documents and interviews with teachers I was able to distinguish two dimensions of education inclusion and social integration that are focusing on providing and ensuring an equal start for children into education and their successful socialisation.

5.3.1. Educational inclusion dimension

This dimension discusses approaches taken to provide children a good quality education with an equal start for all so that they can successfully climb the education ladder if they wish and as far as their skills bring them.

The NES (2003, 2015) marks fluency in Bulgarian as a top priority. This is the national language and the only language courses are being taught in public schools. Thus if a child is unable to understand or learn the language it will logically have difficulties integrating and

advancing further with its education. What the state is doing is promoting the early education of children and even making education compulsory starting from kindergarten for children of the age 5 to 6 which is the last 2 years before they go to school (Republic of Bulgaria, 2017). The reasoning behind making kindergarten compulsory is to socialise children specifically from minorities and get them immersed in an environment where Bulgarian is spoken (Republic of Bulgaria, 2017). The following quotes from kindergarten teachers tell more about the functions of kindergartens.

“Children from minorities come (to kindergarten) with their own values and understanding and a poorer vocabulary. All children in kindergarten are following the same rules, the younger ones are easier to get used to and learn the different norms and values, also we approach them with more repetition, patience and explaining” (In interview: kindergarten teacher)

“Learning Bulgarian in kindergarten at the beginning is at a really low level, because children can barely speak at that stage. Later things develop more in the 2nd and 3rd and 4th group (kindergarten is split in groups based on the age). Focus is mainly on communication, among children and between children and teachers.” (In interview: kindergarten teacher)

“A lot of colleagues are struggling with children from minority groups, especially in places where the majority of the children are from roma communities. The primary work is to teach these children Bulgarian and to overcome their mother tongue, because they speak mainly in Romani and do not use Bulgarian (at home) “(In interview: primary school teacher)

From this we see that teaching Bulgarian is a struggle to children where Bulgarian is barely spoken or not spoken at all at home. This is why at kindergartens a big focus is placed on communication and socialisation of children, giving them the needed time to practice spoken Bulgarian. Some children from minorities or immigrant families are not exposed to Bulgarian at home, simply because it is not being spoken, thus the only time they have the opportunity to practice it is in kindergarten which is a limited time (Republic of Bulgaria, 2012, 2017). The following quote shows what approach is taken when dealing with children that may struggle or don't have the necessary level of fluency in Bulgarian:

“Additional care would be put in...umm...how to explain it...To a degree that makes the child comfortable with us, in a sense to socialise better and understand Bulgarian this is an effort made on individual level, so that the child can adapt and learn how to fulfil tasks and listens to orders. Thus, additional care not in the sense of more training or education. but in a sense of predisposing the child so that it socialises better and gets along with the rest of the children. We try to equalize the level that children are in a group and go ahead without letting children fall behind.”(In interview: kindergarten teacher)

What I found is that children are not directly targeted nor have a prioritized special attention that they receive. Now these conditions are applicable in most cases to kindergartens where children are mixed or in kindergartens assigned to districts inhabited predominantly by minorities where the only one speaking in Bulgarian are the teachers thus children are less exposed to the language (Republic of Bulgaria, 2003). Teachers take a more indirect approach initiating socialising games seem in the following quote:

“We focus on collective work, teach children to share toys, to help each other, to be tolerant. We make role games that simulate life for example on theme family they roleplay family relationship, then they can roleplay different theatre plays. These are games in which we give them the beginning (of the story as tasks) and let them play it out collectively.”(In interview: kindergarten teacher)

In these situations no matter the efforts of teachers, if the environment does not allow for children to submerge in an atmosphere that stimulates their bilingual education, then learning the language is impossible. In Bulgaria most commonly this is the situation with children from roma minority that are segregated in separate neighbourhoods where people speak predominantly in Romani, while Bulgarian is barely used (NES, 2003). Minorities such as Turkish, Armenian, Jewish, Greek and others tend to be more integrated within cities. Thus children whose parents speak Bulgarian and don't live in segregated neighbourhoods have an equal opportunity to proceed further in education, due to knowing the language.

The last 2 years of kindergarten prepare children for school and in primary school from 1st till 7th grade is where children start learning written along with spoken Bulgarian. This is where teachers are the ones that start taking the initiative. If a child is struggling with Bulgarian it is up to teachers to determine and offer individual assistance or consultation (Republic of Bulgaria, 2007, 2012, 2017). There is an option to sign-up for additional Bulgarian lessons which are counted as extracurricular or simply optional, here is a quote from interview explaining how these classes work:

“In order for there to be additional lessons (Bulgarian) at the very beginning of primary school within the curriculum there is the option to choose 3 courses so called....umm how to say it....these are three hours of enhanced education in a specific subject and quite often technically convenient subjects are being selected such as music, art, some sort of sport in order to diversify and make it easy for children in the initial process. In populated areas with minority populations, where children are having difficulties with Bulgarian language, these three hours are one sport plus two Bulgarian language classes, so that the lack of knowledge can be not simply to practice, but simply to overcome and speak fluently in the language. Thus making children more literate in Bulgarian, because the initial start in education is extremely important.”(In interview: primary school teacher)

Not knowing Bulgarian is one of the factors that lead to an increase in dropout rate, because children lose confidence in their abilities when they are not doing well in school due to insufficient knowledge. Since Bulgarian education is made so that children cannot fail and repeat the school year till 7th grade, children that face actual difficulties and slowly lose motivation due to weak results or lack of knowledge get pushed till they reach 7th grade after which they drop out (Republic of Bulgaria, 2012).

5.3.2. Cultural preservation and development dimension

This dimension discusses the approaches taken to ensure the opportunity for minorities to preserve and develop their culture, stimulating a feeling of pride and the general self-esteem of children from minorities.

When looking through the educational integration policy reports one main thing was pointed out: minorities are underrepresented, their achievements and historical contribution to the state were downplayed or not included. The NES (2003, 2015) makes changes to the school curriculum that were previously mentioned (5.2.2. Social Dimension) implementing textbooks edits that aim to provide knowledge on the traditions and culture of different ethnic groups that live in the country. These changes affect predominantly children from 1st till 7th grade, thus focusing on primary education in order to influence children at a young age when they start becoming conscious of their surroundings (Republic of Bulgaria, 2007, 2012). This is why the focus in kindergarten is solely on socialisation and teaching the norms and values withheld within society.

Through reworking textbooks, having classes that talk about the different ethnicities, their cultures and traditions Bulgarian education system is attempting to instil not only respect and tolerance for different cultures, but to increase the confidence of children from minorities by making their culture present in the mainstream and overtime overcoming stereotypes. Within subject “Родино знание” which can be translated to homeland studies children from 1st till 5th grade read and learn about the different ethnicities in Bulgaria such as Roma, Turks, Armenian, Jews, Greeks, Wallachian and other smaller minorities (Republic of Bulgaria, 2012). They study stories about different festivities or historical backgrounds and contributions. This strives to affect children from minorities in a positive manner showcasing this curious factual information about their community and breaking stereotypes.

Furthermore inclusion of minorities within the education curriculum also helps the preservation of the minorities, their culture and traditions. Thus, children from minorities are integrated in society while preserving their identity. When children learn about their culture and traditions at home and then again at school, they do

not feel segregated, instead they become incorporated as a part of society (NES, 2003, Republic of Bulgaria 2012). It is one thing to be taught your culture and traditions at home and then face something completely different and it is another to experience that you are part of many others at school and within the educational process.

Language is another method to preserve minority identity. While Bulgarian is made a compulsory language, people whose mother tongue is not Bulgarian have the right by law to be provided the opportunity to learn their native language at school if they wish so from 1st till 8th grade. These mother tongue language courses are voluntary, but have the weight as a standard course, meaning they are graded and are included within the diploma (Republic of Bulgaria, 2017). The government is able to provide such courses to groups of up to 7 children minimum while relying on NGOs to assist with smaller groups. The Ministry of Education is making sure that the education in the mother tongue provides a quality education, the same as a Bulgarian child would get to learn Bulgarian (Republic of Bulgaria, 2003). Teachers are being sent on specialisation to gain the experience and certificates, for example teachers teaching Turkish are sent to Turkey, or Russian teachers are sent to Russia. There are also minorities such as Roma where teaching the language is difficult due to the lack of books and secondly the lack of actual teachers.

When speaking with the interviewees those who worked in mixed schools were familiar with the option for children from minorities to study their mother tongue, but no one stated that children have ever chosen to do so at their schools. Similarly, to the national statistic from the Ministry of education that shows a steady decrease of children that choose to study their mother tongue at school (Republic of Bulgaria, 2017). This can be seen on the following table pulled out from the ministry's archive:

School year	engl ish	arab ic	arm enia n	gree k	hebr ew	ger man	ro m a nia n	rom ania n	turkish	hun gari an	fren ch	ch ec k	Total

2014/2015	27	21	81	35	197	-	-	-	6381	-	-	-	6742
2013/2014	27	29	96	26	308	-	-	-	6690	-	-	-	7176
2012/2013	3	39	101	16	309	-	-	-	6349	-	-	-	6817
2011/2012	3	32	138	14	173	-	-	13	7117	-	-	1	7491
2010/2011	3	27	151	-	-	-	-	26	6678	20	-	1	6906
2009/2010	-	31	133	-	-	-	-	26	8633	-	-	-	8823
2008-2009	1	28	136	47	-	1	-	28	10323	-	17	-	10603
2007/2008	-	-	31	-	-	-	52	-	12344	-	-	-	12427
2006/2007	6	-	51	-	-	-	12 7	-	13805	-	-	-	13989
2005/2006	-	-	67	-	-	-	48	-	13800	-	-	-	13915

Fig 2. Number of students studying mother tongue by school year (NSI, 2015)

The explanation of teachers on this trend is that parents teach their children at home, while when it comes to school focus is more on Bulgarian language due to the importance of knowing it in order to advance in education and life (Republic of Bulgaria, 2017, NES, 2015). While based on the National Education Strategy and analysed policy reports there is a shortage of materials such as textbooks and also on teaching staff. Some languages such as Hebrew and Armenian cannot be learned outside the capital of Sofia due to again shortage of teaching staff (NES, 2015). Based on this I can conclude that the quality and possibility of teaching minority

language at school has not reached a level that assures proper education of the language, having in mind that the practice has worked since the mid 90s and number of students have slowly been decreasing. It is debated because Bulgaria is having a demographic crisis with very low birth rate and a lot of schools barely able to gather enough children for classes compared to before (NSI, 2011).

What I can conclude is that the inclusion of minority culture, traditions and language in school curriculum is an opportunity for children from all ethnic groups in the country to learn about their heritage and if they have the wish to learn their native language, because language is a symbol of culture and history.

5.4. Minority Perspective

In minority perspective I discuss the effects of social, economic and political dimensions. These dimensions have a varied effect on every minority in the country. Overall within this category I present the measures taken to combat the negative factors that stagnate the gradual integration of minorities within society, whether these factors are segregation, discrimination, stereotyping or prejudice.

5.4.1. Social Dimension

This dimension discusses the policies and information from interviews that depicts the interaction, perception and understanding of ethnic minorities and their culture. Over the past issues concerning prejudice, stereotyping and stigmatization have created a long lasting effect on such as increase in drop-out rates among minorities and absenteeism from school (NES 2003, Republic of Bulgaria, 2003). The NES (2003,2015) attempts to overcome these issues by promoting better interaction between teachers, students and parents. Although there is no clear new process that defines how this is done other than the standard methods shown in this quote from an interview:

“The mass practice is to hold parents meetings, but if there is a need individual meetings can be held with the individual families. Quite often in the days for consultation with parents we call the parents of children that had some sort of an issue....quite often they are from Roma communities, children that have encountered

a problem with studying. These meetings are attended not only by the teacher and parents but also the school psychologist if there is a need and a representative of the school administration. These meetings are initiated most often by the teacher, but it is also the parent's responsibility to look after their child's education." (In interview: primary school teacher)

The strategy really relies on parents cooperating with teachers for the benefit of their children to succeed. This is a very standard approach that works to a certain extent up to a point where progress is not being made and parents refuse to cooperate. This is the point where children start missing classes, not going to school or drop out entirely. When this happens the authorities mainly social services with the assistance of police are obligated to intervene, because by law education is mandatory up till the age of 16 (Republic of Bulgaria, 2003, 2007). In some cases this sort of interaction only aggravates the situation, leading minorities to distance themselves. An initiative to improve the interaction between teachers, parents and children that builds up trust and teaches understanding has been the implementation of assistant teachers or also called mediators (Republic of Bulgaria, 2007). These mediators are assigned to schools that have mixed students or are entirely attended by students from ethnic minorities. Their role has slowly evolved since their first implementation in 2003 as assistant teachers that help students when they have language or other problems that affect their adaptation process. They began taking more responsibility and their role expanded further by handling the integration of children in the education process and establishing contact between the ethnic community, parents and teachers (Republic of Bulgaria, 2003, 2007, 2012). The following quotes from an interview shows some of the aspects of a mediator:

"In our school the mediator does not enter classes to assist the teacher. We use the mediator only for contact with the family, with the parents. During the long distance education (due to COVID-19) colleagues that teach in classes that have children from minorities, they used the mediator to take school materials to those children who couldn't participate in online education, not having computers or internet. Then they provided them

materials on paper and after some period they passed by to pick them up. They were the connection between the teacher and the family”(In interview: primary school teacher)

“Colleagues (teachers) have special assistants from the minority community, for example Turks or roma people....mediators who make the process of adaptation more natural between majority and minority, because there is an obvious difference in the way of thinking and the culture and the way of studying ,, language barriers. Thus, without a good stable connection between teachers and mediators things wouldn't workout, especially motivation.” (In interview: primary school teacher)

These mediators are people initially encouraged from minority background, although anyone who wishes can become one as long as they have the required education and gone through obtaining the needed qualification for the duty. While the Ministry of Education is slowly closing down segregated schools and relocating children to nearby schools, simply mixing the students is not enough to promote positive interaction. This is where mediators step in, they are the link that establishes a foundation based on interaction, mutual understanding and healthy participation in society (Republic of Bulgaria, 2007). Unlike the indirect approaches that influence predominantly children such as changes in school curriculum, establishment of mixed schools, the inclusion of minority history, traditions and culture within education, mediators present a direct approach that influences the interaction between teachers, students and parents by conveying society's norms and values through the prism of minority perspective.

5.4.2. Economic Dimension

This dimension I discuss the policies and information from interviews that depicts the economic circumstances that are hampering the access and in term the successful integration of children from minorities in the educational system.

Poverty in Bulgaria is an issue that affects 23% of the population according to the statistics on Poverty and Social Inclusion Indicators in 2017. When looking at the

statistics on ethnic background 15,2% of the Bulgarian, 77,2% of the Roma, 37,7% of the Turkish population and 20,4% people from other minority backgrounds are at risk of poverty. This means that two third of the population affected by poverty in the country is of minority background (NES, 2015). Poverty sets disadvantages that have a large impact on the opportunity for children from such disadvantaged families to have proper, accessible education. The lack of access to such education creates a poverty cycle, because education is a ladder that provides opportunities for people to integrate in society and attain better jobs.

Educating a child is not free and definitely not cheap if you lack the financial capabilities. The Ministry of Education aims for a full inclusion of all children that are of compulsory school age. Currently the Preschool Education and School Education Act implements several measures to assure equal access and opportunity for children from disadvantaged families to attend school (Republic of Bulgaria, 2012). This includes student scholarships based on family status and also school grades, free textbooks from 1st till 7th grade, school dormitories, school meals free of charge in kindergartens, preschools and primary school (1st till 4th grade), free public transport up till 12th grade (end of high school). In the long-term the Ministry of Education looks to make education freely accessible and affordable for everyone from kindergarten all the way to high school (NES, 2015). Along these measures there are always the standard social benefits provided by local municipalities as long as children actively attend school.

These measures lift the financial burden from financially disadvantaged groups, of which big percentage are from ethnic minorities. Facilitating accessibility to a good, quality education in terms providing better job opportunities.

5.4.3. Political Dimension

This dimension discusses the policies and information from interviews that depicts the elements of political history affecting minorities in the country such as the patriotic upbringing within the educational system. Furthermore I look into the measures taken to counteract these past trends or weaken their effect and promote mutual understanding.

Minorities in Bulgaria have a long history dating back several centuries. Through the centuries there were a multitude of events happening that influenced the current political situation (Republic of Bulgaria, 2003). These events have affected minorities by depicting them negatively creating stereotypes and prejudice towards them. Within the policy documents the way the Ministry of Education attempts to counter these politically created circumstances is by editing school books specifically removing hateful or offensive words that instigate or create prejudice and stereotypes towards different ethnic groups within society (Republic of Bulgaria, 2003). Some teachers expressed negative or concerning views regarding these changes, specifically towards changes in school books on history stating that the intentions behind this policy are positive for society, however they rebuke to happen by twisting historical accuracy and facts

The political dimension comes down to maintaining a sustainable balance between national history, tradition and culture on one side and the respect for national minorities and their traditions, culture, language and history.

6. Analysis

In this chapter I apply the findings of my study to the theoretical framework established in Chapter 2 and answer the posed sub-questions. Doing so I will answer the main research question which is:

How are intercultural minority integration policies mainstreamed within Bulgarian primary and secondary education?

The expectation of my study was that equality is the core binding factor used within educational integration to mainstream intercultural policies (equality as per the developed theoretical framework). This analysis chapter first links policies and interviews findings with the concept of mainstreaming integration policies (sub-question 1) which indicates the implementation of policies on all levels of education targeting all parties involved (Zapata-Barrero, R. , 2018; P.W.A. Scholten & I. van Breugel, 2018). I do this by analysing if the policies share the philosophy of equality and integration within the context of my study and as presented in the theoretical framework.

Secondly, I link the findings in the context of interculturalism. I analyse if the policies are promoting communication, interaction or interpersonal relations between people directly or indirectly (Zapata-Barrero, R. , 2017). I make a link between the policy goals to an equal educational integration and interculturalism as an integration method that promotes interaction which leads to mutual understanding, tolerance and equality (sub-question 2).

Lastly I look at the intercultural policies and link them to the three strands of interculturalism: contractual, cohesion and constructivist (sub-question 3). I analyse if the intercultural policies lean more towards one strand or maintain a balance between all in order to determine the focus of intercultural policies within education.

6.1. Equality and mainstreaming

This chapter answers the first sub-question:

How is mainstreaming implemented as a strategy within integrational education?

In *Chapter 4* I review and describe the NES its issues and goals within education and in *Chapter 5* I discuss my findings based on Bulgaria's FCNM reports on the rights, liberties and integration of national minorities. In this section I link my findings to the theoretical concept of mainstreaming discussed in the theoretical framework and more specifically the policies aiming to achieve integrational education based on equality within the education system.

Mainstreaming could be identified at all levels of education. It is used as a strategy that combines different methods and tools to achieve educational integration on the bases of equality (Bennet & Booth; 2002). Equality based on the NES and FCNM reports splits on equal treatment and equal opportunity with minority perspectives taken into account in the study context (Zapata-Barrero, R., 2018). The policies found are being mainstreamed on all levels of education and the philosophy behind them splits in equal treatment and equal opportunity. However the policies have bigger focus and intensity in lower levels of education such as kindergarten, pre-school and primary school. The reason for this is that policies focus on providing the required knowledge and skills for children to begin their education on equal footing.

The equal opportunity perspective is mainstreaming policies split in categories of educational access and inclusion and cultural preservation and development. The policies found are influencing factors such as accessibility for all children to education institutions, quality of education children can receive whether they are in a mixed school, predominantly majority or minority school, additional education in Bulgarian if needed and lastly promoting an environment of cultural tolerance and understanding. Bulgarian language is the main factor that determines if a child can continue its education beyond primary school. Throughout kindergarten, preschool and primary school policies emphasize on providing opportunity for children to learn and improve their Bulgarian. This also includes training of teaching staff and adjustments to the school curriculum to accommodate additional lessons. Changes are made to give children the opportunity to learn about their culture, traditions and history. Although first it is limited to voluntary lessons in mother tongue up till high

school that are available predominantly in major cities and second to inclusions of cultural, traditional and historical lessons in primary school only.

Within the perspective of equal treatment which within the context of mainstreaming promotes policies that counteract issues such as discrimination, segregation, prejudice and stereotypes throughout education system (P.W.A. Scholten & I. van Breugel, 2018). The policies target two categories: institutional and social (Chapter 5.2). Within the institutional category policies focus on providing equal access, prohibiting discrimination or preferential acceptance of children based on their background. This is adopted within the laws on education, although the return of signing children to primary schools and kindergarten based on district severely limits the choice of schools that children can attend hampering the desegregation process of schools.

Within the social category policies focus on promoting tolerance and understanding. Currently this is done in two ways. First through changes within the school curriculum such as edits of school books removing language that directly or indirectly promote dislike towards minorities throughout educational levels on the bases of national or patriotic values. Additionally detailed information on minorities and their culture is incorporated to promote tolerance and understanding within school books. The cultural promotion is done only in primary school and focuses on folklore, history and traditions. Mother language lessons is another approach promoting minority culture, although the number of children using it decreases with each year, this is because of several factors. First there are not enough specialists that can teach the languages, which limits the scope of availability to major cities only, while the minority population in the country lives in rural areas (Republic of Bulgaria, 2003). Secondly by training educational staff to work with children in an intercultural environment. Currently training is done only for teachers that are in schools that have a significant number of students from minorities. Where teachers are not trained, mediators are assigned to establish a link between the educational institution and children with their parents.

To summarise mainstreaming within integrational is used as a strategy that implements policies for which the main philosophy is equality within education. The NES (2004, 2015) policies are applied to all levels of education, most notably

early stages for all parties involved, without basing the policies on ethnic, religious or any other sort of profiling. Mainstreaming within integrational education implements policies to achieve equality within two categories. First is equal treatment with focus on the institutional and social dimension (Chapter 5). Second is equal opportunity with focus on educational inclusion and cultural preservation and development dimensions. The policies incorporate the social, economic and political issues for all groups within the country without profiling its target based on ethnic or religious background (P.W.A. Scholten & I. van Breugel, 2018).

6.2. Intercultural policies and mainstreaming

This chapter answers the second sub-question:

How does interculturalism relate to mainstreaming within education?

Answering this question consists of two parts. First part presents the policies implemented and links them with the theory of interculturalism. The second part is linking these intercultural policies with mainstreaming in terms of implementation scope and area of effect.

The findings made in *Chapter 5* have pointed out several main approaches that the MES undertakes in order to achieve its goal of equality through education between ethnic groups. The policies philosophy take an intercultural approach that aims for equality by emphasising on the categories of equal treatment, opportunity and minority perspective. What makes these policies intercultural is their emphasis on promoting interactions whether it is direct or indirect, personal or interpersonal (P.W.A. Scholten & I. van Breugel, 2018).

There are several major policy approaches implemented in the NES (2004, 2015) and I will go through them explaining their intercultural properties. The main policy focus is on promoting ethnic diversity in schools by bringing awareness of the diverse bulgarian ethnic community. As shown in the findings this is done in several ways.

First there is the inclusion of minority history and culture as part of the school curriculum. It is implemented on a nationwide scale in primary schools and it

presents an indirect interaction which teaches children about culture, history and traditions of ethnic groups. The goal is to bring cultural and historical awareness to children by pointing out the commonalities shared between them. The policies also help establish and safeguard the cultural identity of minority children by introducing the different cultural and ethnic aspects in a common environment. The cultural and historical aspects of minorities were not represented in education before 2004 (NES 2004).

Interculturalism is seen in the desegregation of minority schools by creating more mixed schools. Interacting with the knowledge from textbooks and then applying it to personal interaction between students. The policy triggers interactions that transcend into the higher level of education such as high schools and universities. This explains why no specific intercultural policies are implemented at these levels. Intercultural interaction, tolerance and understanding is fostered in primary education. Access to higher education institutions depends on individual knowledge, skills and talents, by law no person is to be discriminated against or to be subjected to preferences upon acceptance and during the application process (NES, 2015).

Concerning laws regarding education, they do prohibit all sort of discrimination and prejudice towards people based on their ethnicity, nationality, culture, language, religion and others, but they do not affect the social interaction. For example not all teachers undergo training on how to teach in a diverse environment and the ones that do go through such specialisation courses are specifically working in mixed schools or predominantly minority attended schools. For future teachers and pedagogical staff, intercultural education as a methodology is incorporated within study courses within designated university program courses (Republic of Bulgaria, 2017). Currently the role of mediator is looked as a delegation of teachers duties and it only makes interaction more complicated in an attempt to mediate social interaction between teachers, students and parents. The mediators are used only in schools that have a significant number of students from minorities, thus the schools where the number of students from a minority is too small, thus if an issue occurs the chances that teachers are prepared are low. While the NES (2015) claims that all pedagogical staff is to be trained and be prepared for to work in a diverse school

environment my findings show that the approach is selective based on the type of school in terms of student composition.

Based on the school student composition the MES is slowly desegregating educational establishments such as schools and kindergartens specifically those within segregated minority neighbourhoods. This desegregation is done by strategically closing down district schools or limiting the amount of children they can accept and it is a decision for the local municipality. Children are distributed to nearby schools, allowing them to mix and triggering an interaction between the students. Simply mixing the students is not leading to interactions automatically. A key element is the fluency in Bulgarian language, which is heavily emphasized within the educational strategy. The mandatory preschool attendance and additional Bulgarian lessons in primary school are bringing opportunity for children to improve their language skills. The policy relies on children either having a foundation already in Bulgarian language or that the mandatory preschool education provides them with the sufficient knowledge for them to continue developing in primary school where additional lessons are incorporated within the school curriculum.

To summarise, the NES (2004, 2015) is using interculturalism as a policy philosophy that promotes interaction between all parties within the education system. These interactions promote mutual understanding, compassion and tolerance between minority and majority students. These abilities are leading to the goal of equality in education by stimulating equal treatment and opportunity. There is a heavy focus of these policies in kindergarten, preschool and primary school as they are considered the foundation on which these abilities are built. When discussing secondary school and higher education such as high-schools, colleges and universities the focus is on institutionalising opportunity and treatment. This relies on maturity that is fostered through the intercultural interactions that are embedded in earlier stages of education.

6.3. Focus on Intercultural strands

This chapter answers the third sub-question:

Where do integration policies fit within the strands of interculturalism?

In Chapter 2 I reviewed three policy strands of interculturalism : *contractual*, *cohesion* and *constructivist*. Each of them promotes a different focus on how interculturalism is applied. When analysing my findings I found all three strands presented within the intercultural policies with some being more prevalent .

Analysing the policies and their purpose I verified an emphasis towards the contractual strand. Keeping a balance between national traditions, culture and history and maintaining respect and tolerance for the culture and traditions of minorities without compromising or discriminating against any of them (Zapata-Barrero R., 2018). This intercultural strand is observed through the school curriculum changes from 1st till 12th grade (throughout primary and secondary school). These changes refer to: first the inclusion of minority culture, history and traditions in school books and classes and secondly to the edits made in history, geography and literature school books (Chapter 5). During my interviews teachers expressed concerns regarding changes in the subjects of history and literature, referring to this process as history washing. Data findings show that school books in the past fostered a strong patriotic identity in children, this patriotic identity comes in conflict with the new approach of intercultural education today and is something that is to be monitored in order to maintain the balance that the contractual strand is focused on (NES 2004; Zapata-Barrero R., 2015). The inclusion of minority culture and history as well as the implementation of mother tongue lessons is looked as a positive change based on the observations of teachers. The mother tongue lessons, although important for the cultural identity for children, are not making a big impact based on the decreasing number of children using this opportunity. Reasoning spans from the lack of specialists that can teach and availability mostly in major cities to lack of information on the subject, which was expressed by the unawareness of teachers being interviewed regarding this.

The cohesion strand is observed in areas where policies are implemented to remove inequalities and then proceeds promoting dialogue and interaction (Zapata-Barrero R., 2015). The most vibrant example seen is the implementation of mediators that help overcome and clear misunderstandings. These mediators help children from minorities become adjusted to the environment and assist if there are school related issues, but they do not get involved with the education process. The assistance from

mediators helps children become more comfortable which leads to them interacting more freely with others in an intercultural environment at school. I observed another form of encouraging interaction between children and it is based on the inclusion minority culture, traditions and history within school curriculum. This policy allows children to learn about others and observe the commonalities that are shared. In this way they overcome any prejudice or stereotypes at school and become more inclined to interact (Zapata-Barrero R., 2015).

The constructivist strand is observed in areas where policies are implemented to directly cause interaction between individuals (Zapata-Barrero R., 2015). This is observed within two policies. First is the policy of mixing children in schools, the drawback observed is that there is an expectation that children will interact in all situations as long as they are put together. This expectation is observed as false, children do interact without any issues in early levels of education between 1st and 4th grade. Findings from interviews confirm positive interaction specifically in primary school, while issues are being observed after 5th grade onward with most common causes being violence between children the causes for which vary. One policy can be identified as successful in triggering a direct positive interaction between children. It is observed within the organised extracurricular events and activities for recreation and sport in an intercultural environment. These events are organised either by schools or as a public event by municipalities, however they lack the consistency to make a significant impact.

To summarise the intercultural policies observed in this study showcase implications of all three strands described by Zapata-Barrero (2015). I observed a higher emphasis on establishing and maintaining a sustainable balance between national traditions, norms and values on one side and the respect of minorities rights, culture, traditions and language. The constructivist and cohesion strands are seen implemented to a limited extent that aims to probe the efficiency of their implementation on a more consistent basis.

7. Conclusion

The goal of this study is to answer the question: *How are intercultural minority integration policies mainstreamed within Bulgarian primary and secondary education?* What this study showed within the context of Bulgaria's educational integration is that the whole process strives to achieve equality within education, providing equal access and treatment to every citizen. It does it by mainstreaming policies to all levels of education and affecting all parties that participate. The policies being mainstreamed are applying interculturalism as a policy philosophy that promotes direct, indirect, personal and interpersonal interaction that teaches children to learn about others, see the differences and create a positive interaction based on the commonalities (Zapata-Barrero, R. , 2018, P.W.A. Scholten & I. van Breugel, 2018).

My findings observe how educational strategy is structured around equality with policies focusing on three categories. First category is equal treatment which consists of a social and institutional dimension. From the institutional dimension it observes legislative changes that consolidate institutional treatment of the diverse population and from the social dimension it observes the social perception of ethnic groups and how interaction based policies are affecting this perception.

Second is equal opportunity which consists of education inclusion dimension and cultural preservation and development dimension. The education inclusion dimension observes what access children have to a good education based on socio-economic factors and how policies aim to improve the quality of education and access to it. The cultural preservation and development dimension observes the policies implemented to foster respect and understanding for different cultures and traditions to develop in a tolerant environment.

Last is the category of minority perspective which consists of social, economic and political dimensions. It observes how policies are tuned to serve the need of the diverse population in education, instead of focusing on ethnic group based policies

This approach to integration maintains a balance between the norms, values and traditions within society on one side and the respect, understanding and tolerance

for minority culture, traditions and language on the other. Maintaining that balance allows for a mutual intercultural integration, however a disturbance can make the scales tip towards segregation or assimilation as seen from historical examples on the case study (Pozharliev, 2012).

Several conclusions can be made based on the findings reflecting the intercultural education policies. First all documents refer to intercultural education and educational integration without conceptualising them in depth thus we have to logically deduct the purpose and end goal of these two concepts and create a definition. Furthermore these concepts are not implemented within education laws, the only acts that can be seen are those prohibiting any act of discrimination based on ethnicity, nationality, religion, sex, gender and others. If these policies are to be pursued further it would be beneficial for them to be incorporated and defined within an official document related to the Ministry of Education and Science. This shows a lack of institutional standardization of the approach.

Second remark is that not all policy goals in schools and education are fully applied. As observed not all teachers are trained and prepared to work in an intercultural environment. Thus far intercultural training is being provided to teachers that already work in predominantly minority schools or a mixed ones.

In terms of the opportunity for children from minorities to adjust and interact in an intercultural environment within Bulgarian school system, improvements are required within Bulgarian language classes. Children whose mother tongue is not Bulgarian are not fully able to catch up in just two years of mandatory preschool education since the emphasis there is not on language but more on school etiquette. Furthermore, interviews confirm that lessons in Bulgarian at school from 1st till 7th grade present a difficulty for children that are not fluent enough. In Bulgaria there are not only children from national minorities, but also children of foreign long term or short-term residents and they find it difficult integrating simply because Bulgarian language courses are made to build upon an already established foundation. Overall the educational integration is focused on early stages of education emphasizing on sociocultural factors such as language courses, changes in school curriculum that teach about the different cultures, traditions and ethnicities. This is because most presented in the NES (2004, 2015) are encountered

in early levels of education, which explain why the implementation of intercultural policies within high schools and universities are limited to teaching staff training and institutional legislative adjustments.

In theoretical sense this study shows how equality can serve as a binding factor for the mainstreaming of intercultural integration policies. It utilises interculturalism as a policy philosophy that focuses on promoting positive interactions between the broad population regardless of background, paired with mainstreaming as a strategy to implement policies in all spheres of society, institutional levels and onto the whole population (Zapata-Barrero, R. , 2018, 2015; P.W.A. Scholten & I. van Breugel, 2018). From a migration governance perspective, the study adds more insight to the mainstreaming of interculturalism as an integration approach that evades ethnic based or target group policies instead it is used to improve the interaction between the diverse country population.

In conclusion this study has presented an overview of Bulgaria's education policy strategy and opens possibilities for further future research when the education strategy is re-evaluated in 2021. As observed from the findings several policies still require improvements. Standardization of intercultural integration within education institutions can provide smoother implementation of policies and more clarity within education institutions. Intercultural interaction can be improved more, through deeper dialogue with parents, and involvement of interested parties that have experience in intercultural environment and lastly by expanding the training of teaching staff to include all teachers. Emphasizing on intercultural education by providing more possibilities for interaction between children can lead to the birth of more tolerant society that throws behind ethnic tensions from the past.

References

- A.K.C. Ottaway. (2013). *Education and Society* (Vol. 1). Routledge.
- Ali, S., & Gidley, B. (2014). *Advancing Outcomes for All Minorities: Experiences of Mainstreaming Immigrant Integration Policy in the United Kingdom*. Migration Policy Institute Report, 1–32. <http://migrationpolicy.org/research/advancing-outcomes-all-minorities-experiences-mainstreaming-united-kingdom%0Apapers3://publication/uuid/5746DD1A-C3BC-44C4-9478-AFD424B57500>
- Bakalova, M. (1997) *The Bulgarian ethnic model: legal framework and policy aspects*, in: A. Andonov & P. Makariev (Eds) *Intercultural education. Studies and exercises* (Sofia, Minerva), 14–54
- Bankova, P. (2000) *[Images and encounters through tradition]* (Sofia, Interethnic Initiative for Human Rights).
- Bertossi, C. (2011). *National models of integration in europe: A comparative and critical analysis*. *American Behavioral Scientist*, 55(12), 1561–1580. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0002764211409560>
- Booth, C., & Bennett, C. (2002). *Gender mainstreaming in the European Union: Towards a new conception and practice of equal opportunities?* *European Journal of Women’s Studies*, 9(4), 430–446. <https://doi.org/10.1177/13505068020090040401>
- Bouchard, G. (2011). *What is Interculturalism?* *McGill Law Journal*, 56(2), 395. <https://doi.org/10.7202/1002371ar>
- Boucher, G. (2011). *Book Reviews: Book Reviews*. In *Critical Sociology* (Vol. 37, Issue 4). <https://doi.org/10.1177/0261018311403863>
- Bozec, G., & Simon, P. (2014). *The Politics of Mainstreaming Immigrant Integration Policies Case study of the France*. August, 1–61.
- Bozec, G., & Simon, P. (2014). *The Politics of Mainstreaming Immigrant Integration Policies Case study of the France* (Issue August).
- Caglar, G. (2013). *Gender mainstreaming*. *Politics and Gender*, 9(3), 336–344. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1743923X13000214>
- Centre, E., & Sofia, T. (n.d.). *European Intercultural Workplace : Bulgaria* European Centre for Education and Training.
- Chucker, S. (2004b) “*The challenges of intercultural education*”, : O. Sabev (Ed.) [Beyond difference] (Sofia,FDRZ), 48–52.

- Council of Europe, & European Commission. (2009). Intercultural Cities, Towards a model for intercultural integration. *International Affairs*, 124.
http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/cultureheritage/culture/cities/ICCMoDelPubl_en.pdf
- Dimova, L. (2013). At least three reasons why the ESS should measure ethnic identity. 17.
https://www.europeansocialsurvey.org/docs/about/conference/DIMOVA_Why-ESS-should-measure-ethnicity-.pdf
- Entzinger, H., & Biezeveld, R. (2005). Benchmarking in Immigrant Integration. *Managing Integration. The European Union's Responsibilities Towards Immigrants, August*, 123–136.
- Evgenia Ivanova – “The integrated outcasts, or how the process called “Revival” 1912-1989”, 2002
- Fay, R., & Davcheva, L. (2005). Interculturalizing education in Bulgaria: the contribution of the National Helpdesk for intercultural learning materials. *Intercultural Education*, 16(4), 331–350. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14675980500303803>
- Fay, R., & Davcheva, L. (2005). Interculturalizing education in Bulgaria: the contribution of the National Helpdesk for intercultural learning materials. *Intercultural Education*, 16(4), 331–350. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14675980500303803>
- Fetzner, A. R. (2018). Interculturalidade nas Escolas: um estudo sobre práticas didáticas no Pibid. *Educação & Realidade*, 43(2), 513–530.
<https://doi.org/10.1590/2175-623665337>
- Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities. (1995). *Helsinki Monitor*, 6(1), 120–126. <https://doi.org/10.1163/157181495X00162>
- Grekova, M. (1999) Cultural difference as a problem of intercultural education, in: G. de Keersmaeker & P. Makariev (Eds) *Bulgaria – facing cultural diversity* (Antwerp, IPIS), 114–131.
- Group of Specialists on Gender Mainstreaming for the Council of Europe. (1998). *Conceptual Framework, Methodology and Presentation of Good Practices*. May.
- Ianelli, C., & Paterson, L. (2005). Does education promote social mobility? *CES News*, 35(June), 1–4.
- Kancs, d’Artis, & Lecca, P. (2018). Long-term social, economic and fiscal effects of immigration into the EU: The role of the integration policy. In *World Economy* (Vol. 41, Issue 10). <https://doi.org/10.1111/twec.12637>

- Koprinarov L., (1992), Intercultural education - Open Education, № 1
- La, R., & Haug, W. (2015). National and immigrant minorities : problems of measurement and definition. 56(1), 133–147.
- Makariev, Pl., M. Grekova. (2002) Configurations of cultural diversity in schools - Education policy and cultural differences - Strategies of educational research and policy, additional issue
- Mihail Gruev, Aleksei Kalionski – “Revival process. Muslim communities and communist regime”, 200 8
- Pozharliev, L. (2012). *Nationalism Revived : The “ Revival ” Process in Bulgaria . Memories of Repression , Everyday Resistance and Neighborhood Relations.*
- Pozharliev, L. (2012). Nationalism Revived: The “ Revival ” Process in Bulgaria . Memories of Repression , Everyday Resistance and Neighbourhood Relations.
- Sabev, O. (2004), Stereotypical mutual perceptions and discriminatory practices between muslims and non-muslims, in: O. Sabev (Ed.) Beyond difference, Sofia, FDRZ, 34–40.
- Sieminski Guillaume ; Packer John. (1997). Integration through Education: The Origin and development of the Hague Recommendations. *International Journal on Minority and Group Rights*, 4, 187–198.
- The Bulgarian Helsinki Committee - “The Human Rights of Muslims in Bulgaria in Law and Politics since 1878”, 2006
- P.W.A. Scholten & I. van Breugel, (2018), New Trends in Migrant Integration Policies In Europe. Mainstreaming Integration.
- Valchev, R. (1999) “Education for democratic citizenship”, Sofia, Open Education Centre).
- Valeri Stoyanov (1998) - “The Turkish population in Bulgaria between the poles of ethnic politics”
- Vertovec, S. (2007). Super-diversity and its implications. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 30(6), 1024–1054. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01419870701599465>
- Vertovec, S. (2007). Super-diversity and its implications. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 30(6), 1024–1054. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01419870701599465>
- Veselin Angelov – “Strictly Confidential. Assimilation campaign against Turkish minority in Bulgaria 1984-1989”, 2008
- Wijesekera, H. D. (2014). Education as a Tool of Ethnic Integration: Are We

Successful? *SSRN Electronic Journal*, September.

<https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.2438371>

- Zapata-Barrero, R. (2013). The three strands of intercultural policies: a comprehensive view. GRITim Working Paper, 17.
- Zapata-Barrero, R. (2015). Interculturalism: Main hypothesis, theories and strands. *Interculturalism in Cities: Concept, Policy and Implementation*, 3–19.
<https://doi.org/10.4337/9781784715328.00007>
- Zapata-Barrero, R. (2018). Mainstreaming and Interculturalism's Elective Affinity, 191-207

Appendix A: Overview document analysis

Report Submitted By Bulgaria Pursuant To Article 25, Paragraph 1 Of The Framework Convention For The Protection Of National Minorities (2003)

Retrieved from: <https://www.coe.int/en/web/minorities/bulgaria>

Second Report Submitted By Bulgaria Pursuant To Article 25, Paragraph 1 Of The Framework Convention For The Protection Of National Minorities (2007)

Retrieved from: <https://www.coe.int/en/web/minorities/bulgaria>

Third Report Submitted By Bulgaria Pursuant To Article 25, Paragraph 2 Of The Framework Convention For The Protection Of National Minorities (2012)

Retrieved from: <https://www.coe.int/en/web/minorities/bulgaria>

Fourth Report Submitted By Bulgaria Pursuant To Article 25, Paragraph 1 Of The Framework Convention For The Protection Of National Minorities (2017)

Retrieved from: <https://www.coe.int/en/web/minorities/bulgaria>

Strategy for Educational Integration of children and students from ethnic minorities (2004)

Retrieved from: <https://www.mon.bg/bg/143>

Strategy for Educational Integration of children from ethnic minorities (2015)

Retrieved from: <https://www.mon.bg/bg/143>

Appendix B: Interview topic questions

Teachers general background information:

1. What is your education/study (specialisation) background?
2. How long have you been a teacher for?
3. What compelled you to be a teacher?
4. What is your role as a teacher and how do you define it?

Case related questions on minorities

1. Are you familiar with old policies towards ethnic minorities regarding education?
2. Can you give me a general view/perception of these policies?
3. Have you had any intercultural experience within your line of work?

Intercultural policies related questions schools:

1. Government has been reducing the number of specialised ethnic schools (roma schools) and focus on more mainstream schools with more diverse students. Are these mainstream schools being reorganized in a different way and how?
2. Can you explain how and why children are restricted to attend school within their designated neighbourhoods?
3. How are children from minorities being integrated within education?
4. There is a claim that education leads to better integrations and one of the biggest problems that the education system struggles with is dropout rates of students in Bulgaria, especially from ethnic minorities. Can you tell me anything about measures and initiatives being taken in order to prevent this?
5. Are there any social benefits or assistance provided to children from poor households relieving the financial burden that comes with educating a child?
6. There are a lot of suggestions on more open discussions between teachers - students - parents for multiple topics. How and to what extent is this being implemented?
7. Do schools have a different or more specific approach/treatment towards children/students from minority backgrounds?

8. Government has been suggesting a focus on a more intercultural approach to education, teaching children about diversity and mutual respect for the different types of ethnicities and their cultures within the country. Can you give me an example of such a method or initiative applied within schools?
9. Do you think school curriculum can have an effect on students, the way they are being taught in specific subjects?
10. Any person whose mother tongue is not bulgarian has the constitutional right to receive lessons in their language (roma, turkish, armeneian, hebrew, greek, romanian, walachian etc.) Can such lessons be held in every school that has children from minorities that wish to study their mother tongue? How does it work?

Intercultural policies related questions kindergartens:

1. How does one apply for a kindergarten?
2. Are there any restrictions regarding kindergarten that one can apply to? Are there any requirements? (within specific area/region)
3. Have you worked with children from minorities? If yes is there a different approach towards them and how does it differentiate (local initiative or from governmental level)?
4. There is a compulsory 2 year pre-school education for children before they start primary school. This has been specifically made compulsory for children from foreign or minority backgrounds that their mother tongue is not Bulgarian. Can you tell me more on the education process?
5. Are there any benefits or social aids for children from poor households?
6. What are these preparatory classes about, what do they prepare the children for exactly and how?
7. Are children being taught or given lessons on cultural differences and diversity in general?
8. Can you tell me anything about the socialisation of children in kindergarten?