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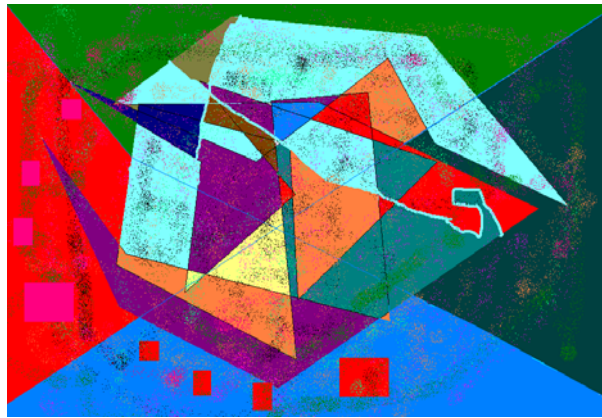
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## **Will contact increase trust?**

– A case study of the Young Officers Programme

by  
Peter Håkansson

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## 0 Summary

This study tries to find out if increased contact leads to increased trust between individuals and communities that earlier were enemies. The theoretical baseline for the study is the contact theory. According to the contact theory the more contact, under the right circumstances, the less trouble. Empirical research supports the theory on the individual level. However, when it comes to an aggregated level, it is more difficult to see results that support this theory. This, for example, applies to areas with high ethnic heterogeneity (higher proportion of an ethnic minority) that have more negative ethnical attitudes.

Forbes' "Romeo-and-Juliet effect" explains how individual positive effects can exist at the same time as negative effects on an aggregated level. If there is increased interaction between two individuals, this will threaten the group identity, because people who interact will change, will have new influences and maybe learn new languages. Increased contact will therefore mean increased competition between incompatible ways of life. Those who find their own group's values and beliefs true and their culture the most natural (or virtues) will find contact with outsiders a threat, and they may react to increasing contact by trying to discourage it.

The results from this study give a mixed picture. When asked, the participants think they have changed, but the questions in the questionnaire indicate that they haven't. The divided and inconsistent results indicate problems with the method used. The core question, however, is whether the participants have changed, as they say themselves, or haven't changed, as the results from the questions indicate. We don't know, we can only speculate. The most logical answer points to a bias in the first questionnaire. This means that the participants may have answered in a way in which they felt they were expected to answer.

Even if the results give a mixed picture, the participants are more trusting than the average citizen in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH). In the study I have tried to measure whether there was a "Romeo-and-Juliet effect". In this context the question is if the participants' surrounding are negative (towards the participants or their attendance) because the participants are positive or has become more positive. I asked the participants how their friends look upon them now. If we are to believe the results, the participants' friends look upon them now with more credibility than before.

The results from this study ought to be considered in coming Young Officers Programmes and similar inter-ethnic projects. balkans analysis group recommends the following:

1. Consider conditions for positive effect of contact.
2. Use experience-based learning, which includes problem solving, and exercises based on cooperative dependency.
3. Focus more on inter-ethnic confidence building in the design of the programmes. This might mean longer programmes, control of the social activities towards inter-ethnic mixing and relation building.

4. Consider what strategies to use to foster new leaders. If a “Romeo-and-Juliet effect” is to be avoided when the participants come back to their units, parallel processes have to be used. This means that also the “old” leaders are educated.
5. Running evaluations of the programmes to increase knowledge of inter-ethnic confidence building.
6. We need much more research on contact, conditions for positive effects of contact and the “Romeo-and-Juliet effect”. The results in this study gave a mixed picture and the group that was studied was very small. We need several new studies with control groups where the nationalities are kept apart, to be able to say what effects contact has and under what conditions different behaviour could be explained.

# 1 Introduction

What happens if you have to spend time together with someone you were at war with just a few years ago? Will you change your opinions about this person and the group he represents? What will your friends say? Will they treat you as a traitor or will they treat you as someone with greater knowledge and credibility?

This paper tries to answer these questions. I had the possibility to carry out a before/after-study for NATO's Security Co-operation Programme for Young Officers. This means that I gave the participants a questionnaire on the first day of the programme, and another questionnaire on the last day. The questions were about trust in general (social trust) and trust within their own communities (partial trust) and trust in people from other communities. The Young Officers Programme aimed to identify a group of potential future leaders in the armed forces of Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) and the participants spent altogether four weeks together; three of these four weeks were spent abroad. 12 Bosniaks, 12 Croats and 12 Serbs were picked for this programme.

The theory we will use for this evaluation is contact theory. In short, contact theory tells us that the more contact people have with each other the less risk there is for conflict. This depends upon the idea that people's prejudices will decrease as they have more contact. However, contact theory has been criticized from other standpoints, not the least that it is too focused on the individual. It doesn't take group interaction and group identification into consideration.

Another effect that has been discussed is what is sometimes called "the Romeo and Juliet effect". This means that even if two people love each other, the *groups* they represent will not start to love each other. On the contrary, "love" on the individual level can further separate groups and increase hostility. The contact theory and opposing theories are briefly described in section 2.



## 2 Theory

### 2.1 Contact Theory

The core idea behind contact theory is the more contact, under the right circumstances, the less trouble. According to Gordon Allport, prejudice may be reduced by equal-status contact between majority and minority groups.<sup>1</sup> However, Allport recognises that different types of contact may have different effects in different circumstances. The main conditions for positive effects of contact are generally:

- a) equality of status of the different groups,
- b) their cooperative interdependence in the pursuit of common goals, and
- c) the presence of supportive social norms.

Allport's student Thomas Pettigrew dismissed the view that if only different groups could have more contact, their relations would automatically improve.<sup>2</sup> According to Pettigrew contact must instead be seen as *a factor that amplifies or reduces the effects of other factors*. Its effects depend on the other factors present in the situations in which they occur. The basic issue concerns the types of situations in which contact leads to distrust and those in which contact leads to trust. Pettigrew summarizes Allport's conditions for a positive effect of contact as follows: Prejudice is lessened when the two groups (1) possess equal status, (2) seek common goals, (3) are cooperatively dependent upon each other, and (4) interact with the positive support of authorities, laws, or customs.

Consequently, contact could increase trust or decrease trust, depending on whether the conditions have been fulfilled or not. When it comes to the Young Officers Programme it is difficult to see that these prerequisites would not be fulfilled. The three nationalities possess equal status through the constitution and it is hard to see that they haven't been treated in the same manner in the programme. Most of the time they spent together they spent abroad, outside their own environment. This normally brings people with the same cultural heritage and the same language together and may build some dependency when it comes to cooperation. I will therefore, as a starting-point, expect that trust will increase due to the programme.

#### 2.1.1 Critique

Allport's and Pettigrew's contact theory has been criticized because it is, according to the critics, too focused on the individual. According to Blumer<sup>3</sup>, race prejudice derives from a group position, rather than from individual feelings. Consequently, one has to understand the process by which groups form images of themselves and others, rather than the relations between individual members in the groups.

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<sup>1</sup> Allport (1954)

<sup>2</sup> Pettigrew (1971)

<sup>3</sup> Blumer (1958)

A famous experiment by Sherif<sup>4</sup> consisted of eleven- and twelve-year-old boys, all white, middle-class and Protestant, who were attending three-week summer camps in Oklahoma. The boys were divided in two groups. During the first week of camping the two groups were kept apart. During the second week they were brought together in competitive sports games. During the third week they were brought together but now they needed to cooperate. Observation of the children (their name-calling, friendship choices and so on) suggested that competitive situations create “ethnocentric” stereotyping and hostility and that contact alone has no effect on attitudes.

By dividing the boys into two groups they were stimulated to invent and build group identification and group perception. The competitive games supported the process. This brought the group members closer to each other, but on the other hand it separated members from different groups. When the groups were brought together and given tasks that required cooperation, the process had already started and it was difficult (impossible) to take a step back.

### **2.1.2 Empirics**

Forbes describes the last thirty years of empirical research on contact theory.<sup>5</sup> His conclusion is that when it comes to interaction between members of different ethnic groups<sup>6</sup> there is undoubtedly a positive correlation. However, the causal mechanisms that produce this correlation remain unclear despite more than thirty years of quantitative research. Increases in interaction cause reductions in prejudice, but positive ethnic attitudes also sometimes encourage interaction.

Forbes also describes empiric research on ethnic heterogeneity. Even though this is on an aggregated level, a strict interpretation of contact theory is - the more mixing, the less prejudice. However, research on the issue tells another story. Studies show, with few exceptions, that areas with high ethnic heterogeneity (higher proportion of an ethnic minority) have more negative ethnic attitudes. This result poses an interesting question. How can interaction by individuals be positive while interaction on an aggregated level is negative? Forbes answers this question.

### **2.1.3 The Forbes model**

Contact has two aspects: the individual aspect and the collective aspect. Individual contact, and specifically voluntary contact, is in general associated with positive attitudes, because contact means personal interaction and personal interaction generally goes together with like and

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<sup>4</sup> Sherif and Sherif (1953)

<sup>5</sup> Forbes (1997)

<sup>6</sup> The terminology “ethnic groups” might be a bit confusing in the Bosnian context. In BiH there are the three constituent peoples that sometimes are called “ethnic groups” or nationalities. Then there are the minorities that might really be considered “ethnic” in the “real” meaning of the word (like the Gypsies). When I speak about ethnic groups or nationalities in this report I mean the three constituent people (Bosniaks, Croats, Serbs).

friendship. Per the definition, if you don't like the person, you don't interact.

Think about two people from two different ethnic communities that start to socialize. No matter the reason, they will after some time understand each other better, understand each other's cultures, language, traditions and change or hide opinions about the other ethnic community. After additional time they will learn each other's language, celebrate each other's holidays and be familiar with each other's habits and culture. In other words; they will change. Consequently, increasing contact will in the long run be a threat to the groups' different ways of life (i.e. language and culture).

This means that prolonged contact between group members threatens group identity. Increasing contact will therefore mean increasing competition between incompatible ways of life. Those who find their own group's values and beliefs true and its culture the most natural (or virtues) will find...

“... contact with outsiders a threat to the general welfare as they conceive it, and they may react to increasing contact by trying to discourage it. They may foment hostility between the groups and try to keep members of the out-group (or out-groups) in sub-ordinate positions in order to minimize their influence on members of the in-group. These people – the cultural or ideological conservatives – may well become more unfriendly towards outsiders as a result of other people's friendly contacts with them. Their influence on the attitudes and policies of the group may outweigh the influence of those who actually have the contact with outsiders.”<sup>7</sup>

Forbes' model gives a rational explanation to why like (or even love) between individuals can develop into hostility between groups. Forbes calls this a linguistic model<sup>8</sup>, but others have called it the “Romeo and Juliet effect”.

“As Romeo and Juliet knew, when some people become more positive in their attitudes toward each other, other people become more negative.”<sup>9</sup>

## **2.2 Trust**

There is an ongoing debate in social science circles about social capital as a key resource for societies. Social capital has been defined as generalised trust and reciprocity, norms and networks.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Forbes (1997), p. 167

<sup>8</sup> ... because Forbes develops his thoughts from the development of languages. If two people meet with different languages, to understand each other at least one has to speak another language. After some time and after intense interaction, the languages will change (due to contact). This is how modern languages today have developed. (Forbes, 1997)

<sup>9</sup> Forbes (1997), p.167

Various authors have claimed that social capital oils the wheels of democratisation and economic development and prosperity.<sup>11</sup> Putnam also argues persuasively that low levels of social capital lead to increased levels of violence and other criminal behaviours. Through these effects, high levels of social capital create an environment where internal security and peaceful development can flourish.

Across the diverse social capital literature, trust and networks are taken to be two key components of the concept. In particular, it is generalised trust that has been the focus of leading writers on trust. Attitudes of generalised trust extend beyond the boundaries of face-to-face interaction and incorporate those people who do not have any personal relationships.

### **2.2.1 Generalised trust vs. partial trust**

Generalised trust is about trusting people in general, all people across ethnical boundaries and national restraints. Partial trust is about turning towards “your own” and trusting your own community.

The distinction between generalised trust and partial trust is clearly described by Rothstein.<sup>12</sup> Rothstein uses the opening scene from Francis Ford Coppola’s picture “The Godfather” as an illustration of the problem. The poor undertaker Amerigo Bonasera is a man that has immigrated to the US from Sicily. He has always believed in the American system and American institutions. Now his daughter has been raped and assaulted by two American hooligans. The boys were prosecuted but weren’t given a punishment that Bonasera considers fair. Because of this he has now lost his trust in the system and turned to his “own”, i.e. his local mafia boss. One can also see that Bonasera has lost his belief in the universal legal system, i.e. the same treatment for everyone.

According to Rothstein this example shows that Bonasera and his family will turn from being generalised trusters to being partial trusters. They will not believe that they can trust people in general anymore and can now only trust their own community. They will distrust most of the institutions and believe that the institutions are constructed in a way that treats them unfairly.

Just as generalised trust has positive effects on democracy and economic prosperity, partial trust will have a negative effect. A person with high partial trust (but low generalised trust) will act in a way to favour his/her own community, distrust people from other communities and distrust (universal) institutions because he/she believes that they will disfavour his/her community.

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<sup>10</sup> Putnam (1993)

<sup>11</sup> See among others Putnam (2000), Rothstein (2003), Knack & Keefer (1997)

<sup>12</sup> Rothstein (2003)



### 3 Prerequisites

The theory sets the scene for the study, but the outcome of the study is totally dependent on the method chosen, the design of the Young Officers Programme and events in the world during this period that might influence the participants.

#### 3.1 Methods

This study aims to measure the impact of the programme on the participants' values. The central question is then: Did the participants change their values *as a result of this programme?*

The ideal situation would be to be able to measure what the evaluators call the counterfactual state<sup>13</sup>, namely a situation that would occur if the programme hadn't taken place.

I have chosen a before-and-after method. I didn't, at the time, have any possibility to have a control group. This is a shortcoming of this report. The problem is that between the first and the second questionnaire many events took place that might have influenced the participants in ways we can't estimate. This is a problem because it could have influenced the participants even if they didn't participate in the programme. It may have influenced the counterfactual state.

I have chosen to measure the participants' values with a questionnaire. The wording of the questions is, of course, essential for the interpretation. Also the respondent's interpretation of the interviewers expectations is of major importance for the outcome of the questionnaire. As the results will show, this might change over time, in the way that the interviewers expectations will be more important to the respondent in the beginning of the programme, than in the end. This will obviously bias the results.

There were 36 respondents in the first survey and 34 respondents in the second. It has been most important to protect the respondents' anonymity. This is difficult when the group is small and they know each other. Because of this, there are no analyses on nationality. I have also, whenever possible, tried to not comment on details, because this could identify the respondent.

Notice that because of the small number of participants, the percentage rates are enlarged. One person equals 2.8 % in the first survey (1/36) and 2.9 % in the second (1/34). This means that it is enough for one person to change his opinions to have (what is considered in other opinion polls) a large change.

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<sup>13</sup> For a discussion on general evaluation problems see for example Håkansson & Pauloff (2002)

## **3.2 The design of the Young Officers Programme**

### **3.2.1 Purpose**

The purpose of the programme, which falls under the auspices of NATO's Security Co-operation Programme with BiH, is to identify a group of potential future leaders<sup>14</sup> for the BiH armed forces with a view to:

- Developing a long-term relationship with them and preparing them for working more closely with international military and security structures.
- Providing them with a general orientation towards NATO and PfP.
- Exposing them to how other nations fulfil their international obligations by contributing to Multinational Peace Support Operations.
- Encouraging them to think about and discuss the practical issues facing the BiH military both today and in the future.
- Providing each member of the group with the opportunity to get to know and to work with colleagues from other parts of the armed forces in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

### **3.2.2 Organisation**

The Young Officers Programme 2003 started off in Oberammergau on the 28<sup>th</sup> of April.<sup>15</sup> This year the group had an introductory seminar at which they learned about NATO, PfP, and the role of the IC in BiH and what steps BiH needs to take in order to join PfP. The participants were given the first survey on the first day, 28<sup>th</sup> of April. The group stayed for one week and went home on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of April. Whilst in Oberammergau they were all accommodated in the NATO Community Club - each having their own room/bathroom etc.

The second phase took place in BiH in May where the participants saw how a multi-national Peace Support Operation worked and linked up with a group from the Konrad Adenauer Foundation.

In October, the group was back in Oberammergau, this time to learn about Civil Emergency Planning and Civil-Military Co-operation.

Finally, the group went to Sweden where they learned about the NORDCAPS system, the Swedish approach to conscription and visited SWEDINT and the Swedish PfP training centre. In Sweden the participants were given the second survey, the "after-survey". The group travelled to Sweden on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of November and returned to Sarajevo on the 7<sup>th</sup>. The event itself took place between the 4<sup>th</sup> and the 6<sup>th</sup> of November. They stayed

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<sup>14</sup> This approach could, of course, be discussed from a timetable aspect. To foster young professionals to become future leaders takes a lot of time (maybe 10 –20 years). They might also have to go through obstruction from the old predominant elite. An alternative would be to have parallel processes where both the young and the old were to be educated. However, this is another discussion and isn't dealt with in this study.

<sup>15</sup> The participants arrived on the 27<sup>th</sup> of April.

in a Hotel, most sharing a twin room, but a couple in singles. There was no direction from NATO to mix (inter-ethnically) for room sharing purposes.

### **3.2.3 The Group**

The group consisted of 36 individuals, most of them junior officers (Lieutenants/Captains). Of the 36 participants, there were 12 Croats, 12 Serbs and 12 Bosniaks.

#### *Selection Criteria*

- Career officers assessed as having the potential to rise quickly to the senior ranks
- Middle ranking officials assessed as having potential to rise to senior positions, preferably in positions dealing directly with policy, planning and/or financial issues.
- English language skills desirable but not essential, some training might be available.

### **3.2.4 Selection Method**

The process for military officers was by individual application. A detailed questionnaire was required. Applications were to be sorted by the SCMM Secretariat and nominations passed to NATO HQ (through the BiH Mission).

## **3.3 Events of special importance during the period**

There was a six-month period between the two questionnaires. During this period certain events took place in BiH and in the world that certainly influenced the individuals in some way. One example is the death and funeral of former President Alija Izetbegovic. Mr. Izetbegovic died on the 19<sup>th</sup> of October and his funeral was the 22<sup>nd</sup> of October. It is my personal opinion that the funeral created and raised nationalistic feelings among some Bosniaks. The same day Mr. Izetbegovic was buried, the Hague Tribunal informed the government that Mr Izetbegovic was to be prosecuted for war crimes.

The Defence Reform Commission presented its report on the 25<sup>th</sup> of September 2003. The report became final after long negotiations. The Bosniak delegation was of the opinion that the conclusions in the Defence Reform Report were a step backwards from the situation today.

There were also events that brought people together. One such event was the qualifying match for the European Football Championships. The national team of BiH had the possibility to qualify if they beat Denmark on the 11<sup>th</sup> of October. The match ended in a draw and BiH didn't manage to

get to the Championship, but the important thing was that it, in my opinion, it brought people from different nationalities together.

There have also been events in the world outside of BiH that might have influenced people in different ways. The UK and US attack on Iraq and so-called “war on terrorism” might have influenced some people in their views regarding Muslims. The ongoing conflict in the Middle East might have changed some people’s opinions about peaceful coexistence and ethnic barriers.

How these world events influenced the participants, we don’t know, but they may have. Because we have no control group, we cannot say how much or in what way these events influenced the participants.

## 4 Results

### 4.1 Generalised trust

We asked two questions to measure generalised trust. The first was:

*Do you agree or disagree with the following statements:*

- a. *“People in general are honest”*
- b. *“People in general are not as trustworthy as they used to be”*

The results are shown in table 1.

Table 1  
Are people honest or not as trustworthy as they used to be?  
Percentage

	“People in general are honest”			“People in general are not as trustworthy as they used to be”		
	Before	After	Change in units	Before	After	Change in units
Agree to a large extent	47.2	41.2	-6.0	61.1	55.9	-5.2
Disagree to a large extent	33.3	52.9	19.6	25.0	32.4	7.4
DK/NA	19.4	5.9	-13.5	13.9	11.8	-2.1

Source: Young Officers Questionnaire.

Table 1 shows that the participants tended to believe to a higher extent both that people in general are honest but also that people in general were more honest before. The major change, however, is that the participants tend to choose the option “Disagree” more frequently after the programme, especially when it comes to the statement “People in general are honest”.

The second statement/question on the generalised trust issue was the following:

*Circle the statement you agree with the most?*

- a) *“Most people can be trusted”*
- b) *“You must be careful dealing with people”*
- c) *I do not agree with any of the offered statements*

Table 2 shows the results.

Table 2  
Can people be trusted or do you have to be careful? Percentage

	Before	After	Change in units
"Most people can be trusted"	41.7	41.2	-0.5
"You must be careful dealing with people"	36.1	41.2	5.1
I do not agree with any offered statements	22.2	17.6	-4.6

Source: Young Officers Questionnaire.

Table 2 shows that the numbers of participants that think that most people can be trusted was stable throughout the programme. It also shows a small increase in participants that think that they have to be careful in dealing with people.

However, it is very important to emphasise that the number of participants (as a percent of all participants) who think most people can be trusted is very high. The World Value Survey (WVS) has been asking this question in its surveys since 1980. The Survey is done every fifth year and covers a range of countries worldwide. The latest available data from the WVS is from 1995-1997 (in BiH April 1998). Table 3 shows the result from this question in the WVS 1995-1997.<sup>16</sup>

Table 3 is sorted from low trust to high trust. As the table shows, BiH is among the countries that have a higher level of trust.

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<sup>16</sup> World Value Survey (1998)

Table 3  
 Percentage of people in their respective countries  
 who think they can trust others, or have to be  
 careful.

	<b>Trusted</b>	<b>careful</b>	<b>dk</b>	<b>ROW TOTAL</b>
Brazil	2.8	96.5	.7	100.0
Peru	4.9	92.2	2.9	100.0
Philippines	5.5	93.8	.8	100.0
Turkey	5.5	94.5	.0	100.0
Puerto Rico	6.0	94.0	.0	100.0
Macedonia	7.5	84.3	8.1	100.0
Venezuela	13.7	86.3	.0	100.0
Slovenia	15.5	84.5	.0	100.0
Poland	16.9	77.5	5.6	100.0
Argentina	17.5	82.5	.0	100.0
S Africa	17.6	78.9	3.6	100.0
Azerbaijan	19.4	75.2	5.3	100.0
Nigeria	19.5	80.5	.0	100.0
Pakistan	20.4	78.7	.9	100.0
Bangladesh	20.5	77.4	2.2	100.0
Estonia	21.1	76.8	2.2	100.0
Georgia	21.4	70.2	8.4	100.0
Chile	21.4	76.2	2.4	100.0
Lithuania	21.6	75.8	2.6	100.0
Uruguay	21.7	76.2	2.2	100.0
Moldova	21.8	76.5	1.6	100.0
Ghana	22.5	77.5	.0	100.0
Belarus	23.0	72.5	4.5	100.0
Russia	23.4	73.7	2.9	100.0
Armenia	23.5	71.7	4.8	100.0
Croatia	23.6	76.4	.0	100.0
Bulgaria	23.7	59.1	17.2	100.0
Latvia	23.9	72.8	3.3	100.0
E Germany	24.3	73.2	2.5	100.0
Dominic Rep	25.2	70.0	4.8	100.0
Mexico	26.4	67.6	6.0	100.0
Bosnia Herceg	26.9	68.2	4.9	100.0
Serbia	28.4	67.0	4.5	100.0
Spain	28.7	67.7	3.6	100.0
Ukraine	28.8	64.1	7.1	100.0
Britain	29.1	69.1	1.8	100.0
S Korea	30.3	69.6	.2	100.0
Montenegro	30.4	63.8	5.8	100.0
India	33.0	51.3	15.7	100.0

USA	35.6	64.4	.0	100.0
Switzerland	37.8	54.5	7.6	100.0
W Germany	39.9	55.7	4.4	100.0
Australia	39.9	60.1	.0	100.0
Taiwan	41.8	58.2	.0	100.0
Japan	46.0	54.0	.0	100.0
Finland	46.9	51.6	1.5	100.0
China 90	52.7	47.3	.0	100.0
Sweden	56.6	38.3	5.2	100.0
Norway	64.8	34.4	.8	100.0
<b>COL TOTAL</b>	<b>25.2</b>	<b>71.7</b>	<b>3.1</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: World Value Survey

As table 3 shows, the participants of the Young Officers Programme are, when compared with these numbers, trusting people. However, as stated earlier, it is important not to think of the participants as a sample from the Bosnian population. They were chosen for this programme and you can expect them to differ a great deal from the average when it comes to values and opinions. Also the fact is that this is a very homogeneous group, all men between 27 and 35 years old with the same employer and similar educational backgrounds.

However, although the participants cannot represent the average of the Bosnian population, it is interesting to see how this group differs from the WVS. It is obvious that the participants that were picked for the programme had higher social trust from the beginning than the general population. Our concern in this study is, however, how their values changed during the programme. Table 1 and 2 show that the participant's values did not change significantly, at least not when it concerns the participants perceptions of honesty (question 1) or trustworthiness (question 2). The only result that is obvious is that the participants that tended to answer "Don't know" on the first questionnaire, tended to be negative on the second.

## **4.2 Partial trust**

Partial trust deals with the issue of trust within a special group. Here we want to know about trust within the national communities.

We wanted to know how trust reached between and over nationality boundaries. We decided to ask the following question:

*This question is about a fictive example. Let's suppose that you were going away for one month and you would need someone to look after your house. Among your neighbours there are many different nationalities.*



a. *How important is it to you that the person that would look after your house was of the same nationality as yourself?*

*Very Important      Important      Not so important      Unimportant      No opinion*

b. *Suppose you did not know the nationalities of your neighbours. How important would it be to find out their nationalities before asking any of them to take care of your house?*

*Very Important      Important      Not so important      Unimportant      No opinion*

Table 4 shows the result.

Table 4  
Who would you let look after your house? Percentage.

	How important is it that the person was of the same nationality as you?			How important would it be to find out their nationalities?		
	Before	After	Change in units	Before	After	Change in units
Very Important	5.6	0.0	-5.6	0.0	0.0	0.0
Important	13.9	26.5	12.6	13.9	29.4	15.5
Not so important	44.4	47.1	2.6	50.0	50.0	0.0
Unimportant	36.1	26.5	-9.6	33.3	20.6	-12.7
No Opinion	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.8	0.0	-2.8

Source: Young Officers Questionnaire.

Table 4 shows that there has been a move from “Not so important/Unimportant” to “Important” during the programme. Even if we take into consideration the drawback in the number of persons that think it is very important that the person that looks after his house is of the same nationality, it seems like the opinion that their own nationality is more trustworthy grew during the programme.

The next question on partial trust that we asked was:

*When it comes to the three constituent peoples in BiH, do you agree or disagree with the following: “People from the other two nationalities are not as trustworthy as people from my own nationality”*

Table 5 shows the results.

Table 5  
 People from the other two nationalities are not as trustworthy  
 as people from my own nationality. Percentage.

	Before	After	Change in units
Agree to a large extent	0.0	0.0	0.0
Agree to a small extent	13.9	14.7	0.8
Disagree	44.4	52.9	8.5
Totally disagree	38.9	20.6	-18.3
No opinion	2.8	11.8	9.0

Source: Young Officers Questionnaire.

The conclusion we can draw from table 5 is that fewer participants totally disagree with the statement. It seems that these participants instead do not have any opinion or have moved to “Disagree”. The number of participants that “Agree” are the same in the both surveys, but the rate differs because of there were 36 participants in the first survey and 34 in the last.

The results shown in table 4 and table 5 do not support the hypothesis that contact should lead to greater understanding and less prejudice. In fact the contrary seems to be the case.

### **4.3 Perceived change of values**

I showed in tables 1-2 and 4-5 that the values of the participants probably did not change much due to their participation in the Young Officers Programme. However, it is interesting to hear what the participants themselves think. We asked the following question:

*Compare your opinions now with the opinions you had before you started the Young Officers Programme. Have your opinions about the trustworthiness of people changed during this period?*  
*Yes, I trust the Bosniaks/ Serbs/ Croats more now than before.*  
*Yes, I trust the Bosniaks/ Serbs/ Croats less now than before.*  
*No, my opinions have not changed.*

Table 6 shows the results.

Table 6  
 Has your opinions changed during the programme?  
 Percentage.

	After
Yes, I trust the Bosniaks/ Serbs/ Croats more now than before.	58.3
Yes, I trust the Bosniaks/ Serbs/ Croats less now than before.	2.8
No, my opinions have not changed.	36.1
No answer	2.8

Source: Young Officers Questionnaire.

The total here isn't 34 but 36, because two participants answered twice. One participant trusted one nationality more and one nationality less (the only answer on less trust), the other one answered one nationality more and one no change.

The results are quite interesting revealing a totally opposite result from tables 1-2 and 4-5. It is obvious that the participants themselves think that they have changed.

Of course, one could speculate as to why the participants think they have changed, when the questions in the questionnaire indicate that they haven't. The divided and inconsistent results indicate problems with the method used. The core question, however, is whether the participants have changed, as they themselves say, or haven't changed as the results from the questions indicate.

1. The participants haven't changed.
  - a. There is an incentive in the question (table 6) to answer that they trust more. From an international community-perspective it would be the politically correct answer. Maybe some participants felt it to be the expected answer.
2. People have changed
  - a. People's opinions and values have changed *due to the programme*, but other events in the world around them have worked in another direction. The net effect is then that the participants' opinions haven't changed. When the participants are asked to compare their opinions before and after the programme, it might be easy to focus on the programme, because that is the focus. But, world events may have changed values unconsciously.
  - b. The answers in the first questionnaire were biased. The participants didn't answer the first questionnaire truthfully. They were trying to give answers they thought were expected, either consciously or unconsciously. This biased the answers. This means that the answers were too positive in the first survey. This explanation also has theoretical support. According to Schutz' FIRO-model (Fundamental Interpersonal Relationship Orientation) a group passes three phases in its development.<sup>17</sup> The first phase is the Inclusion phase. Here it is important for each and every group member to be accepted, i.e. to feel included. The last phase is called Openness.<sup>18</sup> This phase is characterized by openness and emotional honesty between the group members. If the participants went from Inclusion to Openness, they were trying harder to be pleasing when they came (because they were in a phase of acceptance) than in a later stage when they had left this stage.
  - c. We haven't followed each and every respondent. Every participant might have changed their opinion, but if the ones that were negative before changed to positive, while the ones that were positive before changed to negative, it shows as if nothing has happened. However, this hypothesis isn't consistent with the results from table 6, where 58 percent say they have a more positive view now.

#### **4.4 Group values**

In chapter 2 we discussed the "Romeo-and-Juliet effect", which means that even if a single individual becomes more positive toward an ethnic group, it doesn't necessarily mean that his/her ethnic community changes. On the contrary, his/her ethnic community might become more hostile to the individuals. To try to see this I asked the two following questions.

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<sup>17</sup> Schutz (1988)

<sup>18</sup> The mid-phase is called Control and serves as a phase where the group members get their roles in the group.

*a. This question is about a situation when you meet your friends from home (outside this programme) and come to talk about people from different nationalities. When you express your opinions about people from different nationalities, do your friends ...*

*Agree completely with your opinion.*

*Agree to some extent with your opinion.*

*Disagree with your opinion.*

*Strongly disagree with your opinion.*

*Don't know*

*b. In your opinion, has this changed during the last half year (the time you have been in the Young Officers Programme)*

*Yes, my friends tend to disagree more now.*

*Yes, my friends tend to agree more now.*

*No, my friends tend to disagree/agree just as strongly now as before.*

*Don't know*

Here question b) is of special importance. If the “Romeo-and-Juliet-effect” holds, the expected outcome would be that the friends would tend to disagree more now. Table 7a and 7b show the results.

Table 7a

When you express your opinions about people from different nationalities do your friends from home (outside this programme) ...

Percentage.

Agree completely with your opinion	11.8
Agree to some extent with your opinion	85.3
Disagree with your opinion	0.0
Strongly disagree with your opinion	0.0
Don't know	2.9

Source: Young Officers Questionnaire.

Table 7b  
 Has this changed during the time you have been in the  
 Young Officers Programme?  
 Percentage.

Yes, my friends tend to disagree more now	0.0
Yes, my friends tend to agree more now	50.0
No, my friends tend to disagree/agree just as strongly now as before	32.4
Don't know	17.6

Source: Young Officers Questionnaire.

As we can see from table 7b, 50 percent say that their friends from home tend to agree more with them now than before, while none said that their friends tended to disagree more now. The result doesn't support the "Romeo and Juliet-hypothesis". On the contrary it seems that the participants have gained credibility from the Programme.

However, these questions might be a bit simplistic. They assume that the participant's friends come from the same national community as the participant. This is, of course, a simplification. However, due to the hypothesis, more contact should lead to more hostility between all groups. Even if a participant has friends back home of all nationalities, the hypothesis implies that all nationalities would become more hostile towards him. He would become an alien, not belonging to any community. The results show the opposite.

#### **4.5 Institutional Trust**

We asked the participants about their opinions of some institutions. The question we put was: "Do you think that people in the following institutions are honest and that they do their doing their best in their job?" The alternatives were "yes", "no" and "don't know". Table 8 shows the results.

Table 8

“Do you think that people in the following institutions are honest and that they are doing their best in their job?” Percentage

	Police		Army		Central government		Entity government		Municipality government	
	Before	After	Before	After	Before	After	Before	After	Before	After
Yes	47.2	41.2	61.1	55.9	11.1	5.9	16.7	5.9	19.4	20.6
No	33.3	52.9	25.0	32.4	55.6	67.6	61.1	73.5	58.3	61.8
DK/NA	19.4	5.9	13.9	11.8	33.3	26.5	22.2	20.6	22.2	17.6

Source: Young Officers Questionnaire.

The table shows that the participants seem to be more eager to say “no” afterwards than before. This can show that the participants are more critical after the programme than before. It also shows that the participants are less eager to trust the institutions after the programme. If we follow the line of arguments from section 4.3, the answers in the first might have been biased, and the “real” values should in fact be more negative. In this case, the participants have, more or less, the same confidence after the programme as before. If we on the contrary believe that the results show real change of values, the change might come from the programme (increased critical thinking) or it might have come from events around the world. We can neither confirm nor reject these hypotheses from the data we have.

The participants think that the police and the army are relatively trustworthy. The central government had the lowest level of trustworthiness both before and after the programme, while the entity governments experienced a large decrease in trustworthiness. The numbers for the Municipality government were quite stable. If municipality government is compared with central an entity governments, the participants had a fairly positive opinion about the municipality government.

The results follow results from UNDP’s Early Warning System reports.<sup>19</sup> UNDP’s surveys show a high confidence in the police in all three national communities. The surveys also show that people have positive experiences with the police. In the July-September 2002 survey as much as 50.7 % were largely or entirely satisfied with the actions taken by the police in relation to requests for assistance. However, not many sought assistance from the police during the last three months, only around 3.5 %.

IDEA shows that<sup>20</sup> the army and the police are among the most trusted institutions both in the Republika Srpska (RS) and in the Federation (FBiH). In the RS, 34.9 % trust the police and 54.0 % trust the army. In the FBiH,

<sup>19</sup> UNDP (2002)

<sup>20</sup> IDEA (2002)

the numbers were 44.3 and 50.0 % respectively. In comparison, local authorities got 20.5 % in FBiH and 18.4 % in the RS.



## **5 Conclusions and policy recommendations**

### **5.1 Conclusions**

#### **5.1.1 Possible positive effects of contact**

The results in this study give a mixed picture. According to the perceived values among the participants, they have changed attitudes. They say themselves that they are more positive after the programme than before. However, this doesn't show in the data. I have compared the answers from the first and the second survey. It is difficult to trace any change in values, at least when it comes to the number of positive respondents.

When it comes to the interpretation of these results one can only speculate. The most reasonable explanation comes from the theory of group development and group interaction.<sup>21</sup> In the beginning of a group session (for example; project group) the first phase a group comes to is the inclusion phase. In this phase, the group members want to be accepted. If this is true, the participants were trying harder to fit into the group when they first came together (because they were in a phase of acceptance) than in subsequent stages. This gives us two implications.

1. If this is the case, the answers were biased towards being more positive than otherwise in the first questionnaire.
2. The method of a before-after study can't be used for groups like this.

There are, of course, ways to deal with these methodology problems. One is to use a control group. The control group would do everything the same with the only difference that the participants are ethnical separated. Another alternative is to give the participants a third questionnaire ½ year after the ending of the programme. This would give a hint of sustainability of the results.

#### **5.1.2 No Romeo and Juliet effect**

Forbes' "Romeo-and-Juliet effect" explains how individual positive effects can exist at the same time as negative effects on an aggregated level. If there is increased interaction between two individuals from different ethnical groups, this might influence a change of traditional values in both groups. People, in the ethnical groups, who find their own group's values and beliefs true will find contact a threat and they may react to increased contact by trying to discourage it.

I found no "Romeo -and-Juliet effect" in this data. On the contrary, the participants have more credibility from their own communities (i.e. friends back home) now than before. This is a very positive outcome from the Young Officers Programme.

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<sup>21</sup> Schutz (1988)

### **5.1.3 Change of values takes a long time**

The study brings up the question of what timeframe is needed for values to change. We know that it takes a long time to change values. To trust people in general or to distrust people in general can be a value that might be deeply rooted. The Young Officers Programme may have lasted for too short a period to trace real change.

Another issue that the programme brings up is what strategies should be used to foster new leaders. The Young Officers Programme has focused on the young and coming. We can use the “Romeo-and-Juliet effect” to try to forecast what might happen when the participants come back to their units. According to the “Romeo-and-Juliet hypothesis”, the superiors that believe that the way things have been done before is the only way, will find the Young Officers and their new ideas a threat.

## **5.2 Policy recommendations and continued research**

The results from this study ought to be considered in upcoming Young Officers Programmes and similar inter-ethnic projects. The Balkans Analysis Group recommends the following:

1. Consider conditions for positive effect of contact.
2. Use experience-based learning, which includes problem solving, and exercises based on cooperative dependency.
3. Focus more on inter-ethnic confidence building in the design of the programmes. This might mean longer programmes, control of the social activities towards inter-ethnic mixing and relation building.
4. What strategies to use to foster new leaders have to be considered? If a “Romeo-and-Juliet effect” is to be avoided when the participants come back to their units, parallel processes have to be used. This means that also the “old” leaders are educated.
5. Running evaluations of the programmes to increase knowledge of inter-ethnic confidence building.
6. We need much more research on contact, conditions for positive effects of contact and the “Romeo-and-Juliet effect”. The results in this study gave a mixed picture and the group that was studied was very small. We need several new studies with control groups where the nationalities are kept apart, to be able to say what effects contact has and under what conditions different behaviour could be explained.

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