

Masthead Logo

The Qualitative Report

Volume 17 | Number 11

Article 2

3-12-2012

Democracy and Social Justice in Sarajevo's Schools

Peter McDermott

Pace University, pmcdermott@pace.edu

Brian Kirby Lanahan

College of Charleston, LanahanB@cofc.edu

Follow this and additional works at: <http://nsuworks.nova.edu/tqr>

Part of the [Quantitative, Qualitative, Comparative, and Historical Methodologies Commons](#), and the [Social Statistics Commons](#)

Recommended APA Citation

McDermott, P., & Lanahan, B. K. (2012). Democracy and Social Justice in Sarajevo's Schools. *The Qualitative Report*, 17(11), 1-27. Retrieved from <http://nsuworks.nova.edu/tqr/vol17/iss11/2>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the The Qualitative Report at NSUWorks. It has been accepted for inclusion in The Qualitative Report by an authorized administrator of NSUWorks. For more information, please contact nsuworks@nova.edu.

Democracy and Social Justice in Sarajevo's Schools

Abstract

After the end of the 1992-1995 Bosnian war, the people of Sarajevo found themselves rebuilding their country while also learning to live with their former enemies in this developing democracy. In this study we examined the extent to which democratic practices and social justice values were being taught in Sarajevo's schools. Using a case study method, we gathered data gathered from interviews with educators in a variety of roles in Sarajevo, observations of elementary and secondary classroom teaching, and daily reflective journal entries about living and teaching in the city during the fall of 2008. Our data analyses revealed that democratic teaching practices and multicultural values are not being taught in Sarajevo's schools. Instead, entangled and fragmented governmental structures, lingering emotional trauma from the war, and a general sense of pessimism about the future are interfering with educational reform and movement toward a democratic and socially-just society.

Keywords

Bosnia and Herzegovina, Social Justice, Multicultural Education, Democratic Teaching, Case Study

Creative Commons License



This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-Share Alike 4.0 License](http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/).

Democracy and Social Justice in Sarajevo's Schools

Peter McDermott

Pace University, Manhattan, NY, USA

Brian Kirby Lanahan

College of Charleston, Charleston, SC, USA

After the end of the 1992-1995 Bosnian war, the people of Sarajevo found themselves rebuilding their country while also learning to live with their former enemies in this developing democracy. In this study we examined the extent to which democratic practices and social justice values were being taught in Sarajevo's schools. Using a case study method, we gathered data gathered from interviews with educators in a variety of roles in Sarajevo, observations of elementary and secondary classroom teaching, and daily reflective journal entries about living and teaching in the city during the fall of 2008. Our data analyses revealed that democratic teaching practices and multicultural values are not being taught in Sarajevo's schools. Instead, entangled and fragmented governmental structures, lingering emotional trauma from the war, and a general sense of pessimism about the future are interfering with educational reform and movement toward a democratic and socially-just society. Key Words: Bosnia and Herzegovina, Social Justice, Multicultural Education, Democratic Teaching, Case Study.

Democracies require their citizens to live and work with one another for the public good (Apple & Bean, 2007; Carnegie Corporation, 2003). Although they are based on majority rule, democracies simultaneously protect minority and individual rights, promising equality for all, respect for human dignity, and protection of the welfare of others (Beane, 2005). Education is essential to a democracy's success, as schools are where children learn to interact and live with others (Apple & Beane, 2007; Beane, 2005; Carnegie Corporation, 2003; Dewey, 1916/1966; Parker, 2003). Schools that teach democratic ways of living emphasize participatory learning, critical thinking, and respect for ethnic and cultural diversity. Schools in democratic societies should model democratic classroom processes and teach social justice (Freedman, 2007; Friere, 1973/1993; Shor, 1992). In post-conflict and emerging democracies, such as Bosnia and Herzegovina, education plays a particularly important role in establishing social stability, because schools are where children can learn about democratic processes, develop respect for ethnic and cultural differences, and value social justice.

Between 1992 and 1995 Bosnia and Herzegovina suffered war, ethnic cleansing, and genocide, and the city of Sarajevo experienced the longest military siege of the 20th century (Berman, 2002; Maček, 2009). The city's residents lost family members, friends, and property during the war. Education and employment were disrupted, and people endured enormous emotional trauma from the conflict. Given the three years of military conflict and the tremendous suffering of its people, we wondered what Sarajevo's schools were teaching regarding embodied democratic principles, multicultural values, and social

justice. The findings of this inquiry provide insights into how socio-political forces can facilitate or obstruct the growth of democratic education and social justice in post-conflict societies. Although the findings of the study are situated in the time researchers conducted it, the results might still be important to those involved in educational reform in Sarajevo, and perhaps contribute to their thinking about how to make the city's schools more democratic, multicultural, and socially just.

Democratic teaching methods are widely known and characterized by student involvement in classroom learning activities, critical thinking, and collaborative decision-making. Although a variety of perspectives about social justice exists (e.g., Boyles, Carusi, & Attick, 2009; North, 2006), the current study focuses on its implications with regard to public education in Sarajevo—namely, all children have a fundamental right to quality education (UNICEF, 2009), regardless of their ethnicities, religious, and cultural backgrounds. The purpose of our case study was to investigate the extent to which democratic practices and social justice values were being taught in Sarajevo's schools. More specifically, we examined two questions relating to public education in Sarajevo:

1. In what ways does education in Sarajevo embody democratic teaching practices and social justice values?
2. What contextual variables are influencing the teaching of democracy and social justice in Sarajevo?

Brief History of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Sarajevo

After World War II, General Josip Broz Tito ruled Yugoslavia as a single-party dictatorship until his death in 1980 (Glenny, 1996). Nationalistic forces subsequently emerged, and republics and providences declared their independence from Serbia; Slovenia, Macedonia, and Croatia asserted their independence in 1991, Bosnia in 1992, Montenegro in 2006, and—most recently—Kosovo in 2008. When Bosnia declared its independence, a three-year civil war among Bosniaks, Croats, and Serbs erupted, with the Bosniaks and Croats ultimately joining forces against the Serbs. At that point, the United Nations viewed the conflict a civil war and consequently refused to intervene (Glenny, 1996). Finally, after three and a half years, the United States aggressively intervened to stop the conflict (Malcolm, 1996)—although after an estimated 110,000 people nationwide and 10,000 in Sarajevo had died (Tabeau & Bijak, 2005).

Prior to the war, Sarajevo had a well-known multicultural tradition; indeed, in many respects, the 1992-1995 war surprised the city's residents (Maček, 2009). To this day, people often speak of how well Muslims, Christians, Orthodox Christians, and Jews once lived and worked together. Under the socialist government, residents studied one another's religious and cultural traditions; and intermarriage and festive social interactions among groups were common. Sarajevo's residents often point to evidence of such multicultural heritage in the proximity of the Christian Orthodox and Roman Catholic cathedrals, a Jewish synagogue, and an Islamic mosque located only a few blocks from one another in the Bascarsija (old town) area of the city (International Crisis Group, 1998; Tomasevic, 2006).

After the war, Sarajevo experienced significant success in rebuilding its infrastructure, with the United Nations, NATO, the Netherlands, the United States, and

Germany being particularly generous in helping the city rebuild (Becker, 1998). Although Sarajevo has been almost entirely rebuilt, smaller cities and villages have been slower to recover. In fact, in some cities, such as Bana Luca, Zenica, and Mostar, many partially destroyed and vacant buildings remain visible on their main streets while ethnic tensions and hostilities continue to be particularly high (Bilfesky, 2008). As recently as the spring of 2009, the United States' vice president gave an emotional and pointed speech in which he warned the Bosnian parliament about falling back on old patterns of animosity and hatred (Kulish, 2009).

Theoretical Framework Informing the Current Study

Ideas supporting this study stem from three theoretical traditions: (1) research literature on democratic teaching practices as evidenced in the work of Apple and Beane (2007), Giroux and McLaren (1986), and Shor (1992); (2) literature about multicultural education, as seen in the work of Banks et al. (2001), Nieto (1999), and Sleeter (1996); and (3) research on social justice teaching as explained by Ayers, Quinn, and Stovall (2009), Christensen (2000), Cochran-Smith (2004), and Darling-Hammond, French, and Garcia-Lopez (2002).

Democratic Teaching Practices

The terms *student-centered*, *participatory*, and *collaborative teaching practices* are all used in this study to describe classrooms in which teachers actively involve children in democratic learning. Participatory teaching enables students to experience and learn democratic processes in their classrooms, so they can later live democratic ways of thinking and acting in their own communities and neighborhoods (Beane, 2005). Dewey (1916/1966), Greene (1985), and more recently the Carnegie Corporation (2003) have argued that schools are the single most important place in which children learn democratic ways of thinking. Most children experience schooling, in which democratic processes can be efficiently modeled and experienced. Democratic methods require a curriculum that emphasizes respect for individual rights, human dignity, social justice, and the common good. At the same time—and most importantly—democratic teaching practices actively involve students in critical thinking and collaborative decision-making (Apple & Beane, 2007; Beane, 2005).

Multicultural Education

Multicultural education (Banks et al., 2001; Ladson-Billings, 1994; Nieto, 1999; Sleeter, 1996) offers a second theoretical framework with regard to teaching and learning in Sarajevo's schools. Banks (1988) conceptualized four approaches to multicultural education. In the first, students study the contributions of ethnic minority groups, while the curriculum remains the same. In this approach students might study food, holidays, or customs of minority groups, but such efforts are ancillary to learning the formal curriculum. A second approach is to modify the existing curriculum by incorporating the contributions of various ethnic and cultural groups, yet the voice and narrative remain largely the same—typically that of the dominant social group. The third approach is

transformative, in which the curricula are changed to include not only the study of ethnic minority groups, but also their perspectives and voices for interpreting events. For example, in such an approach, students might study the arrival of Columbus to the new world, but from the point of view of native people whose land Columbus visited. The fourth approach is that of social action, in which students examine challenges and problems in their own communities, ranging from the discrete (e.g., the need for a neighborhood playground) to the more systemic social challenges of homelessness, lack of healthcare, or unemployment, and take group action to contribute to change.

Banks et al. (2001) propose essential considerations about multicultural education that we believe are pertinent to Sarajevo. The first relates to teacher learning. Banks et al. argue that teachers in multicultural schools must discover their own values about diversity. Teachers should develop content knowledge about their students' ethnic and cultural backgrounds and heritage, examine how institutional knowledge often reinforces stereotypes about ethnic minority groups, and study how to support the academic and social success of all children in their classrooms. Another consideration about multicultural education (Banks et al., 2001) requires that students have equitable access to learning and that the highest academic standards be applied, regardless of their ethnic and cultural backgrounds. Banks et al. argue that schools have the responsibility to improve intercultural understanding and respect among diverse students.

Recent research and newspaper reports about multicultural education suggest Bosnia's educational system remains fragmented. Pasalic Kreso (2008) found that in smaller Bosnian cities children are learning divisive and biased information about the war. Pasalic Kreso reported that in some areas Christian children are being taught that the Muslims caused the war, whereas in other areas Muslim children are being taught that the Christians initiated the conflict. In addition, although Civitas International's texts are officially being used for civics education, the language of some of the other textbooks—particularly those found in rural areas of the country—reveal rigid ethnic divisions and fragmentation (Pasalic Kreso, 2008). Alic (2008) described Bosnian schools in which Muslim and Christian children are segregated to different parts of the school buildings; textbooks used on one side of the building are different than those on the other. The language of these textbooks contained nationalistic statements that inflamed ethnic tensions among students. He discovered that these textbooks contained political inaccuracies, false and misleading information about Muslim and Christian religions, and they unfairly assigned blame for the 1992-1995 war to one side or the other, depending on whether it was a Serb, Croat, or Bosnian text.

Theories about multicultural education provide the framework for our thinking about teaching and learning in Sarajevo. Unfortunately, recent reports suggest that ethnic and religious differences were again serving as political boundaries among the people.

Social Justice Teaching

The third theoretical support for this study comes from the literature focused on teaching for social justice (e.g., Ayers et al., 2009; Cochran-Smith, 2004; Darling-Hammond et al., 2002). Social justice teaching involves helping students recognize and understand how the social dynamics of equity, access, and privilege affect achievement and success. Social justice teaching requires involving students in recognizing how

achievement and success can be socially constructed because of the access and privileges some people have and others lack. Social justice teaching applies to Sarajevo, because issues of social identity, power, and religion triggered the war and significantly influence people's lives today. Schools should offer caring learning environments in which these issues can be examined so that conflicts of the past will not be repeated. Within a social justice framework, teachers are encouraged to teach their students how to work for social reform, equity, and justice. This is especially important in Sarajevo, given its history of social conflict and war.

Sarajevo's Civic Education Textbooks

Civitas International (Center for Civic Education, 1994) publishes a curriculum framework for teaching civics and democracy in K-12 schools. Civitas materials are widely used in newly democratic countries, particularly in former socialist states, where students are learning the rights and responsibilities of democratic citizenship for the first time. Since 1996, the Civitas program has been used to train thousands of Bosnian teachers about democratic methods of teaching, and its civics education curriculum is now used from kindergarten through tenth grades (Krogh, 2008).

Civitas is part of the Center for Civic Education (1994) and serves more than 50 countries. It is funded by the U.S. Department of Education under the Education for Democracy, the U.S. Department of State, the U.S. Agency for International Development, and other sources. Children in kindergarten to ninth grade are taught differing versions of Civitas International's "Foundations of Democracy" curricula in Sarajevo. Eighth-grade students study "Foundations of Democracy," which is part of "Project Citizen," a nationwide endeavor. At the tenth-grade level students are taught the "Democracy and Human Rights" curriculum.

Civitas curricula are designed to promote the acquisition of civic dispositions as defined by the Center of Civic Education's "National Standards for Civics and Government." These include civility, individual responsibility, self-discipline, civic-mindedness, open-mindedness, willingness to compromise, toleration of diversity, patience and persistence, compassion for others, generosity, and loyalty. These materials are designed to present content and skills needed to facilitate the development of democratic dispositions in developmentally appropriate ways. For example, the kindergarten curriculum, "Foundations of Democracy," introduces the concept of authority through the use of cartoons, movies, and classroom activities such as electing classroom leaders. Similarly, tenth-grade students studying "Democracy and Human Rights" are exposed to the nuances of democratic concepts through classroom discussions; they assess rules and laws as democratic or non-democratic based on their understanding of participatory practices.

Personal Filters for Interpreting Events and Ideas in Sarajevo

The authors' personal histories shape the observations and interpretations reported here (Heath & Street, 2009; Patton, 2002). We are United States citizens, and the project took place through U.S. State Department scholarships (Fulbright) focused on sharing civic education and democratic methods of teaching in Sarajevo. Both authors are male,

hold doctoral degrees, and have studied and taught democratic methods and multicultural issues in teaching and learning in our home institutions. Our interest in teaching in Bosnia stemmed from our varied and independent personal experiences of teaching Bosnian refugees in the United States and working with teacher educators in emerging democracies in Eastern Europe, Central Asia, and Africa. Our ongoing studies in civics and democratic and participatory methods of teaching served as the lens with which we interpreted, observed, and interpreted events and activities in Sarajevo.

Methods

We used a case study method (Merriam, 1998) for learning the extent to which democratic teaching practices and social justice values were being taught in Sarajevo schools. The Institutional Review Board of our home institution approved the study methods, so that principles of beneficence, respect, and justice (U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, 1979) would be maintained throughout data collection and analysis. Officials at the U.S. Embassy in Sarajevo, our local sponsor, provided permissions to conduct the study. Participation in the study was entirely voluntary, and pseudonyms for the individuals presented in the manuscript are used to maintain their confidentiality.

Our primary data came from interviews with educators and students in the universities, teachers and administrators in the city's public schools, and a Ministry of Education official from the Sarajevo canton (county). In addition, we observed classroom lessons in elementary and secondary schools and kept daily journal entries about living and teaching in the city.

Two institutions served as our hosts. Brian taught at Sarajevo's Pedagogical Academy, and Pete taught at the Faculty of Philosophy. The Pedagogical Academy enrolls students in early childhood and elementary teacher education, while the Faculty of Philosophy offers coursework in general and specialized education to undergraduate and graduate students in librarianship, counseling, and secondary teaching.

Participant Selection

Sandra, a faculty member with 38 years teaching experience in one of our host institutions (Journal entry, November 14, 2008), served as the facilitator of our school visits and interviews. As a senior faculty member with a life-long history in the city, Sandra used her understanding of Sarajevo's educational system and personal connections to identify schools to visit and people whom we might interview. Because of her support and relationship with Sarajevo's educational leaders, many of whom had direct knowledge of the school system both before and after the war, we were able to interview two other university faculty, one of whom was a professor of comparative education and another an English language instructor; a public school director (principal) whose building was known for progressive ideas and had been visited after the war by former US President, Bill Clinton; a non-governmental organization (NGO) director with preschool programs throughout the city; and an assistant minister of information for the Sarajevo canton. In addition, we held impromptu discussions with university faculty, teachers in the classes we observed, and with university students who attended classes

where we guest-lectured. We often asked Sandra what she thought about our interpretations of what we had heard and seen in Sarajevo and, as such, she served as the study's peer-reviewer.

Sarajevo was Sandra's home city. As a child, she attended public schools located near Sarajevo's "Old Town." Her mother was an elementary classroom teacher in the city after World War II, and Sandra taught in the city's public schools, as well. Sandra loved Sarajevo and raised her own family in it. During the 1992-1995 war, she and her family fled the region, but they returned after the Dayton Peace Accords (1995). Sandra is bilingual, fluent in Bosnian and English, and consequently served as a rich resource for us. She knew Sarajevo during socialist times, the war, and now this transitional period, as the country sought to stabilize politically and economically. We asked Sandra whether she would identify building principals for us to interview and explained that we were especially interested in visiting schools that would reveal interesting examples of school reform. Thanks to Sandra's contacts and knowledge of the city, we were able to visit a variety of Sarajevo's schools, including a gymnasium known for its pedagogical reform, an elementary school known for its inclusion of children with disabilities, a trade school, and other institutions with long-established histories of offering high-quality education to the city's children.

This study could not have taken place in the way that it did without Sandra's help. We relied on her willingness to obtain access for us to schools and educators throughout the city. Sandra even selected university students to serve as our interpreters. We trusted her judgment that the schools we observed and the people whom we interviewed would display the best educational practices in Sarajevo. In some respects, this role of research facilitator that she graciously assumed also meant that she was the gatekeeper of what we observed and heard about education in Sarajevo. Yet, throughout the four months of the study we never encountered any situations in which we questioned her sincerity in helping us learn about the successes and challenges of education in Sarajevo. Indeed, Sandra often spoke about the importance of school reform, and she felt that our presence, as well as that of other international guests, would help facilitate educational change in the city and canton (i.e., county).

Data Collection

Merriam (1998) argues that understanding a case "mandates both a breadth and depth of data collection" (p. 134). In our study, we used multiple data sources in order to have a greater likelihood of obtaining descriptive validity and trustworthiness in discovering residents' interpretations of teaching and learning in Sarajevo. Our data sources consisted of (1) six planned interviews, (2) thirteen classroom observations, and (3) daily reflective journal entries about our teaching and living in the city.

Interview Procedures

The primary data source for the study consisted of the six planned individual interviews with educators in Sarajevo. Field notes were written of each of these interviews and in several instances digital audio recordings were made, as well.

The interviews usually lasted about 60 minutes in length. Both authors participated in four of the interviews, but because of scheduling conflicts we each conducted an additional interview independently of the other. All interviews were semi-structured. That is, we initially planned to follow a specific sequence of questioning, but often our interviewees spontaneously moved to other educational topics without our prompting; consequently to obtain the most meaningful information we followed the flow of their thoughts and did not interrupt them. Before closing the interviews, we returned to any questions that were left unanswered.

Our interview questions were generated from the purpose of the study. That is, we composed our questions to examine the extent to which democratic teaching practices and social justice values were being taught in Sarajevo schools. We produced our question list by first independently brainstorming questions that we believed would uncover the participants' thoughts about these issues, and then we compared and contrasted our questions until reaching consensus on 20. We subsequently collapsed this list of 20 questions into eight that we later shared with Sandra to elicit her responses about them. These final eight interview questions are displayed in Table 1.

Table 1. *Questions Asked of Study Interviewees About Teaching Democracy and Social Justice in Sarajevo School*

-
1. What are the successes of teaching about democracy and social justice in Sarajevo schools?
 2. What are the current challenges of teaching about democracy and social justice in Sarajevo's schools?
 3. What reforms are necessary for promoting education about democracy and social justice in Sarajevo's schools?
 4. What could have been done differently in the past to better promote democracy and social justice in Sarajevo's schools?
 5. What changes to teacher education are needed to better promote democracy and social justice in Sarajevo's schools?
 6. How are educators and social service professionals connected in Sarajevo?
 7. Were any areas of education more democratic and social just before the war?
 8. What are the benefits and challenges of having multiple international NGOs involved in promoting democracy and social justice in Sarajevo's schools?
-

We scheduled the interviews beforehand and held them in quiet locations where it would be unlikely that the sessions would be interrupted. For instance, we interviewed Esmā in the lounge of the Holiday Inn, which is located across the street from the university; the Holiday Inn is the where the first bullets were shot to start the 1992-1995 Bosnian war. The other interviews took place in the participants' school offices. Table 2 identifies the interview schedule and professional positions of our interviewees (pseudonyms are used throughout).

Table 2. *Calendar Schedule and Professional Roles of Interviewees*

<i>Date</i>	<i>Position</i>	<i>Pseudonym</i>
12 November	Faculty	Mirza
13 November	Faculty	Sandra
14 November	Faculty	Esmā
21 November	NGO official	Dina
21 November	School Director	Lada
12 December	Public official	Emina

Classroom Observations

A second data source came from our observations of 13 classroom lessons in Sarajevo's schools. These observations provided a background context for comparing and contrasting what we were learning from the planned interviews. Three of these observed lessons were part of the Civitas International curriculum (Center for Civic Education, 1994).

Merriam (1998) explains that field notes contain verbal descriptions of the activities being observed, direct quotations or summaries of what people said, and interpretations or comments about the observations. We independently prepared our own field notes, and separated our written descriptions of classroom activities from our interpretations. Such a field note system is recommended by Merriam and has been shown to be efficacious for the many challenges of data retrieval and analysis involved in qualitative research (Hubbard & Power, 2003). To remain as unobtrusive as possible, we typically sat in the back of each classroom and used the observation period to write classroom descriptions and key ideas about the lessons; afterwards we rewrote these classroom observations and notes by filling-in missing information and keyboarding our entries into our word processing programs. We labeled each of the field notes with dates, location, and school name. We did not share our analyses with one another until we had completed all of the lesson observations. To facilitate access to and location of the data in our field notes, we often prepared summary paragraphs describing salient issues and patterns that emerged from each of the classroom observations. We had independently conducted classroom observations in the past, and we were comfortable writing field notes in this way. Figure 1 provides a sample field note entry.

Figure 1. *Sample classroom observation – October 22, 2008*

Summary of Observation

Brian and I observed at this public school which was located downtown, across the river from the “old city.” The school actually consisted of three buildings, two of which were elementary and one was for the middle grades. We first observed a Bosnian language class in the middle school building and then a first grade social studies lesson in another building. We ended the school visit by observing a student council meeting in the elementary school. My impression of the first lesson was excellent because the teacher used drama, illustrations and frequent student participation. The principal accompanied us for both classroom observations.

Observation of the middle school Bosnian language lesson:

Twenty-four students were in the classroom and they sat in clusters of four. As we entered the room two girls stood-up and greeted us; they welcomed us to the class and said that they hoped we would “Enjoy the lesson.” The teacher stood at the front of the room at an overhead projector. She used an infrared pen for pointing at the screen as she conducted her lesson about the Bosnian author, Ivo Andric, a Nobel prize winner of literature. The story the children were reading was about an old man who never married and had no children.

The teacher projected a list of story events on the overhead. Then she asked children questions about each event. The children eagerly participated. The teacher wrote the story protagonist’s name on the overhead and asked children about his physical characteristics. Children said, “He was old,” “He had a mustache,” “He wore new shoes,” “He liked to play with children.” The teacher then asked, “How did others see him?” She asked one boy to stand and dramatize the old man. The boy presented a monologue, mostly without looking at his notes, that the old man might have said. The teacher explained that the man must have been very lonely and sad because he had no one. She again asked how the man saw himself, how others perceived him, and what the author thought of him. She asked the children for their opinions, and many contributed ideas.

Next two children performed a dialog and afterwards described the character's (Achmed) personality. One child said, “Old people do not have patience when children are playing near their houses.”

The teacher then displayed a hand drawing of Achmed standing alone with another drawing with children around him (compare/contrast). She asked, “What inferences can we make about human beings?” One of the children said, “Children give a sense of life.” She ended the lesson with a quote from Aristotle pertaining to happiness.

The principle leaned over and told us it was this was a “traditional lesson but very well done.” She said it was “Very important that children feel happiness after all that has happened in Bosnia.”

Interpretative Notes

The boy who dramatized Achmed must have spent time rehearsing this because he was so good at it. The teacher used multiple ways of teaching, including drawing, questioning, use of the overhead and chalkboard, and drama. The purpose of the lesson was to teach children about the value of respecting old people as well as reading Bosnian literature and language. Most of the classroom decorations (8 out of 13) were drawings that the teacher had apparently made.

More notes

The principal told us that there are 800 students in the three school buildings; 350 in the middle school with 20 teachers in this building and 120 in all. There were 1200 students in the school prior to the war and there are a lot of reasons why there are fewer now (emigration, declining birth rate, high unemployment).

With the exception of two school visits, in which scheduling conflicts occurred, we both observed each of the scheduled lessons. Table 3 identifies the dates of these classroom observations.

Table 3. *Schedule and Subject of Classroom Observations*

<i>Date</i>	<i>Grades</i>	<i>Subject</i>
26 September	Primary	Language arts and math
3 October	Secondary	Bosnian language
8 October	Secondary	Civic education
8 October	Secondary	History
9 October	Secondary	English language
9 October	Secondary	Civic education
20 October	Primary	Language arts
20 October	Primary	Language arts
20 October	Secondary (8 th)	Biology
22 October	Middle school	Language arts
22 October	Primary	Language arts
22 October	Primary	Student council
24 December	Kindergarten	Civics education

Reflective Journal Entries about Teaching and Living in Sarajevo

A third data source consisted of our daily journal entries about our living and teaching in the city. These entries provided a written history of our life in the city, recording our thoughts about our interactions with city residents, students, and educators. Our journal entries contained daily anecdotes about our classroom teaching in our respective universities, descriptions of our discussions with students and faculty, and our reflections about whether Sarajevo's schools were teaching for democracy and social justice. These journal data often offered additional information about inferences we had made from our interviews and classroom observations. For instance, in one of the interviews, Esma (Reflective journal, November 14, 2008) said that NGOs were the only groups encouraging school reform within the city; we subsequently confirmed Esma's statement while informally talking with many others at our respective universities who corroborated the impact of the NGOs on school reform and how local politicians and educational leaders seemed ineffective in doing the same.

Our daily journal entries about living in the city provided rich background information to help contextualize data from our interviews and classroom observations. One journal entry (Reflective Journal, September 16, 2008), for instance, contained an anecdote about Pete's interaction with his landlord. The landlord talked about how her basement apartment served as the family's shelter during the war. The landlord's entire family, as well as neighbors from both sides of the building, fled each night to this basement apartment to protect themselves from the constant shelling that took place throughout the siege of the city. In another entry (Reflective journal, September 9, 2008), Adair, a native of Bosnia and an employee of the U.S. Embassy, shared how his father died during the war. Adair said he sat with his father's body overnight, as is required in the Muslim tradition. By the time of his father's death, Adair had become numb from nearly four years of war and death. Adair said he had seen so many dead bodies. Another example of a daily journal entry (Reflective journal entry, December 9, 2008), was the result of a Sunday afternoon walk during which Mirza, a university administrator, shared how her elderly mother-in-law died during the siege. Mirza, her husband, infant daughter, and mother-in-law lived a few blocks from the city center and within walking distance of the university. One evening when the mother-in-law stepped outside the apartment building, she was killed by a sniper's bullet.

Data Analysis and Representation

Merriam (1998) recommends that data analysis proceed simultaneously with data collection. For us, data analysis became a reflexive process in which ideas generated one day were compared and contrasted against new data that we subsequently gathered. Initially, we analyzed our data independently of one another and searched for categories and themes in our interviews and observations. Later met in a café along the Majacka River to discuss the themes emerging in our data. It was here that we identified and discussed the interviews and observations that offered our richest data sources. We agreed that our interview with Esma (November 14, 2008) and our observation of the civics education class (October 8, 2008) were particularly informative in providing information about our research questions. Esma's interview was very substantive in content because she explicitly identified and explained educational and social issues affecting children's education. For example, she said she did not think the country's leadership dealt with the underlying emotions and consequences of the war. She explained there were few systematic reforms to public education and the politicians were not addressing these needs. Esma felt especially strong that national healing, reconciliation, and justice were not taking place in her country.

The civics lesson (October 8, 2008) provided clear evidence that at least some teachers effectively taught with interactive and democratic methods. This was one of the first lessons that we observed where children were actively involved in classroom learning by sharing their points of view with one another. It contrasted with others that were primarily teacher-centered with students having largely passive roles in learning lesson content. Our interview of Esma and our observation of this civics lesson represented the clearest points in our data where themes pertaining to our research questions emerged.

We then generated a list of themes from our data until we were each comfortable that they could be corroborated and triangulated with additional data sources. At this time we also discussed patterns in our data about services for children with special needs, preschool education (Step by Step), and the effectiveness of student councils in the city schools, but we did not believe we had gathered sufficient data to corroborate any themes and therefore did not include this in our analyses. When we felt confidence with our analyses, we shared them with Sandra who served as our peer reviewer (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

We often asked Sandra questions to help us understand what we heard about the war and its effects on education. For instance, after we learned about the rape camps that were held during the war in the city soccer stadium to humiliate the Muslim families, we asked Sandra about them. We asked her what happened to the children who were products of these rapes. Sandra explained, “Yes, it caused great humiliation for the girls and their families - some of them were just 12 or 13 years old.” But she thought most of the mothers kept the children and tried to forget the experience. Sandra said it is, “Natural for a mother to feel that way toward their children regardless of how they were conceived.”

Trustworthiness of our Findings

The trustworthiness of a study’s data is an essential component of all qualitative research. In establishing the trustworthiness of our study’s findings, we followed the recommendations of Lincoln and Guba (1985), who explained that qualitative research—instead of following traditional concepts of validity and reliability—must address concepts of credibility, confirmability, dependability, and transfer.

Credibility (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) pertains to the conventional research concept of internal validity. In our study, credibility was established in several different ways. First we had prolonged engagement at the study site. Pete lived and worked in Sarajevo for 16 weeks, while Brian did so for 32 weeks. We interacted with people in our communities and developed a sense of what it was like to be a resident of the city. We socialized, attended receptions, visited museums and restaurants, shopped, and participated in daily living as much as anyone could as a temporary resident of the city. We shared our perceptions with Sandra, who, as an unintended consequence of this sharing, served as a peer-reviewer of our research findings (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Peer-reviewers offer an opportunity to confirm researchers’ findings with an insider’s point of view about the phenomenon being studied. We had every reason to believe Sandra’s interactions with us were honest and direct and that we could trust her responses to our ideas.

Transferability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) is the second criterion for establishing the trustworthiness of qualitative inquiry. In effect, it is up to readers to decide whether the outcomes of a study in one context will apply to another. One of the characteristics of transferability is offering thick descriptions of the settings, events, and people being studied. We worked to provide such descriptions of our findings.

Dependability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) is the third component of trustworthiness. We first analyzed the data independently of one another; only after we completed our initial analyses did we share and work to corroborate our findings. Neither author had any

vested interest in the study outcomes, and in this sense we functioned as outside “auditors” (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 318) of the phenomena being studied—namely, the extent to which democratic practices and social justice values were being taught in Sarajevo’s schools. Consequently, we shared our methods for data collection and analysis with readers.

Lincoln and Guba’s (1985) fourth and final principle of trustworthiness is confirmability. We each wrote a daily reflective journal of our experiences of teaching and living in Sarajevo. These entries consisted of logs of daily activities and events, descriptions of those activities and events, and our personal interpretations and reflections about them. An additional way in which our study method works toward confirmability is that—prior to its beginning and again later after our initial individual data analyses—we corroborated our interpretations with one another. We suspect that two independent researchers, as in this study, offers a greater chance of obtaining trustworthy interpretations of the phenomenon being studied than either of us might have obtained if we had studied it alone.

Emergent Themes

Five themes emerged from our data. Theme one is: *The lack of a multicultural education curriculum in Sarajevo’s schools*. This was a recurrent concern of our older interviewees who often said that the city’s schools were more multicultural under Tito than they now were. Theme two is: *Educators value participatory and democratic methods of Teaching*. Many educators in the city, particularly those interested in school reform, such as some university faculty and school directors, expressed value in having their teachers use democratic and participatory methods of teaching; teachers in their buildings were encouraged to participate in Civitas training where such methods could be acquired. Theme three is: *A sense of pessimism about education and social reform in Sarajevo*. A general sense of pessimism exists among young faculty and university students regarding social change and school reform in Sarajevo. Simply stated, given the country’s history, they expressed a feeling of hopelessness that reform would ever occur. Theme four is: *Lingering emotional trauma from the war*. Sarajevo’s people hold traumatic memories and emotions about the war. The final theme to emerge from our data, Theme five is: *A view of fragmented political and educational systems*. Sarajevo citizens perceived their government as fragmented and ineffective in legislating and enforcing social and educational reform for its people.

Theme one: The lack of a multicultural curriculum in Sarajevo’s schools. Several of our interviewees, as well as other students and educators whom we met, explained that Sarajevo’s schools do not teach the 1992-1995 war because people are conflicted about whose story should be told (Reflective journal, November 2, 2008). That is, should a Bosnian narrative about the war be incorporated into the school curricula or should the Serb story be taught? Because the country does not have a multicultural curriculum, building directors do what they can to teach children about the cultural groups within the country, but there is great variability as to how well this is done (Reflective journal, October 3, 2008). Excerpts from our interviews with Lada and Mirza’s provide evidence of these sentiments:

We don't teach the 92-95 war, only 'Dayton.' We are waiting for the history to be written. Maybe it is taught in small towns, but it is forbidden here (Sarajevo)... Politicians are the first ones who are to blame, but parents also bear some of the blame. Parents have terrible memories of the war. They are reluctant to have their children learn about the other groups who harmed them during the war. (Lada interview, November 21, 2008).

Schools in Sarajevo are integrated but in some rural areas, and particularly in regions near Croatia, many schools are segregated. There are 50 segregated schools in the country, and some are actually segregated within the building with Muslims on one side of the building and Christians on the other. (Sandra interview, November 13, 2008)

Multicultural education—or more precisely, its absence—is problematic in Sarajevo. Repeatedly, we were told by our interviewees and people we met in our daily interactions (e.g., Reflective journal, September 22, 2008; Reflective journal, November 17, 2008) that under President Josip Broz Tito, Christian and Muslim children learned about one another's cultures, but after the war the country's long history of multicultural education ceased. Interviewees said the citizenry is becoming more fragmented and segregated in its understandings about one another than ever before. Esmā explained, "...before the war education was more multicultural...it was part of the socialist tradition to look at what people had to offer the system so that would become good workers." Sandra told us she would like to see a national curriculum in the country that was multicultural. She heard James Banks present his ideas about multicultural education at an international education conference—she even enjoyed a lunch with him. Since then, she has appreciated and advocated for the application of his ideas in BiH (Reflective journal, November 13, 2008).

Interviewees and others often expressed their belief that the education system was more multicultural before the war than it is now. For example, at a reception at the U.S. Embassy, a native Bosnian said, the following:

Under Tito everyone went to school together (Muslims, Christians, and Orthodox). But now, as a result of the war, some children attend separate schools by religion. Parents are uninterested in integration because they are afraid that their children would learn values that they don't support. Democracy won't occur in Bosnia until school integration takes place. (Reflective journal, September 22, 2008)

Participants said that today's children are not learning about other cultural and religious groups, as they did before the war. Sandra believed that although the former socialist method of teaching was primarily recitation and did not encourage critical thinking, children learned about other people's traditions and heritages, and this was a strength of their educational past (Interview, November 13, 2008). For example, under socialism, all children learned both the Cyrillic and Roman alphabets, but today they learn either one or the other. Pride in the multicultural heritage of the city was often spoken about in terms of the 1984 Olympics, which successfully brought people from around the world to

Sarajevo for the winter games. Many of the study's participants consider those Olympics to be the shining moment of the 20th Century for the city and Bosnia and Herzegovina (Reflective journal, December 19, 2008).

Sandra told us that some parents of young children are uninterested in having schools teach about other ethnic groups. According to Sandra, "The parents don't want it [multicultural education], and the politicians play on those fears for their own self-interests" (Reflective journal, November 14, 2008). She shared an anecdote about how ethnocentric and parochial some of the schools have become. She described a Sarajevo preschool in which the building principal allows the teaching of Islam, but not Christianity. When Sandra asked her, "Why not (permit teaching of Christianity)?," the principal said, "None of the Christian parents asked me for this" (Reflective journal, November 14, 2008).

At a December 2008 education conference in the city there was general agreement among the speakers that the country's education system was badly fragmented, and this interfered with the country's progress at being accepted into the European Union. Speaker after speaker spoke about "curricula confusion" where children learn one of three different histories depending on the region they attended school. Speakers argued that children are not learning about the country's social and ethnic diversity, but only about history from an ethnocentric perspective. One speaker said, "We can't agree on the truth, yet it is called a 'multi-perspective' approach to the curriculum...although people say it is our national history is placed in a regional context, it is all too fragmented" (Reflective Journal, December 15, 2008).

The lack of intercultural understanding among Sarajevo's citizens is increasingly considered a major problem in the city and country. Some citizens even perceive this problem as laying a foundation for another war (Reflective journal, December 19, 2008). After the *New York Times* published a story about the country being on the brink of war (Bilefsky, 2008), we learned at a dinner party that some professionals in the city agreed that the country was moving in that direction, but it was not as imminent as the *Times* story suggested. An assistant director of one of the NGO's in the city explained that he did not think Europe understood the complexity of the country, but he felt sure that pouring money into Bosnia was not solving its problem (Reflective journal, December 19, 2008). A journalist said that young adults "have no memory of Bosnia's multicultural traditions and things will only get worse" (Reflective journal, December 19, 2008) after the current generation of older politicians leave office.

Theme two: Educators value participatory and democratic methods of teaching. We observed lessons in which participatory and interactive methods of teaching occurred (October 8 & 24). Mostly these lessons came from the Civitas (Center for Civic Education, 1994) curriculum and were taught by teachers who had been trained in its methods of teaching. Civitas serves as the official civics curricula for all of Sarajevo's elementary and secondary schools. To illustrate, we observed a participatory and interactive lesson about democracy in one of the city's high schools. The lesson was taken from the secondary course "Democracy and Human Rights" (Classroom observation, October 8, 2008). The instructor had been trained in Civitas' teaching methods. The school's director, Lada, explained that the U.S. Embassy paid for the teacher to participate in the Civitas workshops. This particular lesson exemplified

democratic and interactive model of teaching, because it was student-centered, students' voices were valued, their opinions were elicited throughout most of the lesson, and they needed to think critically throughout it. During at least half of the lesson, students participated in small group brainstorming activities and then reported to the full class; in this case, they compared the characteristics of democratic and non-democratic governments.

The observation (Classroom observation, October 8, 2008) took place in the following way: The school director and vice-director sat with us in the rear of the classroom as the lesson began. About 25 students sat in rows as they waited for the lesson to begin. The teacher began the lesson by asking, 'Who would like to review what we did the last time?' One girl stood and summarized the previous lesson. The teacher asked, "How do we create good rules?" Many students raised their hands and shared answers.

The teacher then taped a poster onto the front dry-board with the title "New rules" written on the top center. The new rules were a parody and contained the following items:

The teacher is the classroom authority figure; There will be no parent or student councils; Classes last as long as the teacher wants; the teacher makes the decisions as to when recess break occurs; There is no talking during the lesson; The teacher is classroom leader; Students must clean the classroom; Students must wear uniforms; There will be punishment if the preceding rules aren't followed. (Classroom observation, October 8, 2008).

The teacher placed a second poster on the board with the title, "Democratic Rules." Its rules contrasted with the first poster because, because it emphasized student freedoms—particularly those about freedom of speech and choice of clothing to wear for school. This second poster indicated that its rules had been developed by members of the "Education Department" and listed the following items:

Everyone must respect the class rules; Lessons are 45 minutes long; Students can go out during lunch, but not during break; Students have freedom of speech; Students select their own classroom president; Students can decide on their own school clothes as long as they are clean and appropriate. (Classroom observation, October 8, 2008).

The teacher discussed the rules listed on the posters with her class. At one point, the school's director interjected, "All new students sign a school declaration form when entering the school. What did it say?" This entrance form is a statement of basic rules for community respect in the school, and students dutifully recalled the rules. Following this exchange with the director, the teacher divided the class into two large groups and asked those on one side to brainstorm the characteristics of a democratic government and for those on the other to do the same for a non-democratic one. She told the students that afterwards they would present their ideas to the entire class.

After ten minutes, the teacher called on two girls to come to the front of the classroom, where they dramatized both types of governments as might be evidenced in everyday student-teacher interactions. The first scenario illustrated a teacher who was

empathetic, patient, and compassionate. The second scenario was the opposite, because the girl dramatized irritability, impatience, and disinterest while a student asked questions of her. The students' role-playing was convincing and engaging, although it seemed rehearsed. After the dramatization, the teacher asked the class how the two skits differed.

Lada again interjected by asking the students what they thought about the lesson. One girl stood and said, "We like it because it is a different approach. We have teamwork and debates." The two groups then gave their reports, and the teacher concluded by asking, "How do we act in a democracy?" Some of the students' answers included the ideas to "respect rules," "freedom of speech," "active students," and "critical thinking." The lesson ended with the teacher assigning a descriptive essay about democratic citizenship for homework. During a follow-up interview, the teacher explained the reason for the essay: "These ideas about democracy are so new and different for some of these children, I find if they write about it I can see if they really understand" (Classroom observation, October 8, 2008).

We discovered that not all of the civics lessons involved student participation or democratic classroom processes (Classroom Observations, 9, 20, & 22). We later observed the same lesson repeated in another school (Classroom observation, October 9, 2008). This time the lesson seemed unsuccessful, because the teacher lacked classroom authority and understanding of how to effectively work with groups of adolescents. The teacher was perhaps in his late 50s or early 60s. Prior to the lesson, he seemed very friendly and warm with his students; however, later on it became clear that his students did not respect his authority. He lacked effective classroom management skills, because students talked behind his back, and a few even threw items across desks to one another in other parts of the room. Throughout this particular lesson, students talked with one another. One student threw items out the classroom window, and a group of boys signaled and communicated across groups without the teacher's awareness. The lesson did not reflect good teaching in either a conventional or democratic sense. It was the only time we observed students acting disrespectfully toward their teacher. The lesson surprised us in its ineffectiveness, especially because the teacher had been trained in Civitas International's student-centered methods of teaching and our observation had been scheduled several days in advance. Our feeling was that this teacher misunderstood the interactive teaching methods that he received from Civitas International.

We observed other lessons that were largely teacher-centered and non-participatory. One occurred in a first grade where the classroom teacher positioned children into a semicircle and asked of them questions about their weekend (Classroom observation, October 22, 2008). Standing adjacent to an overhead projector, the teacher then showed a series of color transparencies illustrating pictures of families that appeared to be taken from an illustrated book. She periodically asked questions of the children about how they spend their time at home. At one point a boy talked about playing soccer with his father and that he and his father rooted for the Chelsea soccer team. However, the teacher did most of the talking during the lesson, which ended with the children coloring a flower from a workbook page that seemed unrelated to previous discussion.

Theme three: A sense of pessimism about education and social reform in Sarajevo. Overall, a general sense of pessimism emerges when some Bosnians talk about education and social reform. During one of our own lessons, for example, a university

student explained, “Whenever change has occurred, it has been an unhappy one for Bosnia” (Reflective journal, October 3, 2008). In another lesson, a university student responded to a question about social reform in Bosnia by saying “We have no hope for reform in Bosnia” (Reflective journal, December 4, 2008).

We often heard from university students that their system of higher education is stale, and the faculty have not changed in their thinking about the world since the collapse of Yugoslavia. “Old teachers grew up in the socialist era and they are stuck in those methods,” said one graduate student (Reflective journal, December 4, 2008). “Their dream,” one university student explained, “was to get a teaching position and live their lives...they never consider social change, and they don’t work for change” (Reflective journal, December 4, 2008). When asked about teacher education, university students frequently said many of the university faculty were older and studied under socialist times, and consequently teacher education has changed very little as a result (Reflective journal, December 4, 2008). A building director said (Reflective journal, October 3, 2008) that she needs to provide professional development for the new teachers she hires, because many of them do not know the new interactive methods of teaching. She assigns them a building mentor and requires them to attend professional development opportunities that are provided throughout the city by the various embassies, language institutes, and NGO’s.

At an ambassador’s reception (Reflective journal, September 22, 2008), a journalist privately shared his opinion that the university system was corrupt, and that many of its faculty were outdated in their content knowledge. The journalist explained that, when he examined the publication record of faculty at one of the universities, he could find little research being published. He thought the faculty were too busy teaching overload courses at other university campuses—sometimes even canceling classes at one location to teach at another in order to earn additional money.

Rumors persisted among students that some faculty members did not read students’ examinations, and the media have even reported cases in which students paid faculty with money or sex (Balkan Investigative Reporting Network, 2008). Of course, this is not true with most of the university faculty, and we heard laudatory evaluations about some of them (Reflective journal, November 11 & 13, 2008). Yet, a pattern emerged in what we were told by many university students and some faculty that the university system has changed little since socialist times. Students often complained that they have no voice or process for presenting their concerns to the university administration (e.g., Reflective journal entries, November 13, 2008; December 12 & 20, 2008).

School directors sometimes expressed dissatisfaction with the quality of teacher education in the country. Lada explained that she provides a mentor for all of her new teachers, because many of the new university graduates do not know the new participatory teaching methods (Interview, November 21, 2008). When mentors cannot be found in her own school, Lada finds them in other city schools. Lada said “Older (university) teachers were harder to change.” She said that “there were problems with the Bologna process” and that many university faculty “don’t teach the newer methods of teaching.” Another school director said that the canton was imposing a curriculum on the schools, but the new teachers were not being prepared to teach it. He complained about new teachers’ lack of preparation in theories of teaching and learning (Reflective journal,

October 20, 2008).

Larisa, a teacher educator in an outlying city, explained that most faculty members perceived their positions as career accomplishments (Reflective journal, December 21, 2008). Consequently, her view is the faculty at her school have not changed their pedagogy from the socialist era. Larisa said that few incentives exist for faculty to change, and national educational reforms have not successfully reached the university system. As a result, university students are not learning contemporary methods of teaching, and their instructors typically lecture to them about educational theories rather than teach them methods of teaching (Reflective journal, December 21, 2008).

Theme four: Lingering emotional trauma from the war. Esma explained that people have not healed from the emotional trauma of the war. She said people were so relieved to have the conflict end that they never considered what would happen afterwards. Esma stated that the government had not addressed the social and emotional damage that the war had caused.

What is really bothering people are the unsolved traumas. The country is still struggling with the past and we're losing a generation. People are afraid to open up because of the past—reconciliation and justice should have come before education....We have not been able to have justice, so many can't heal.

Thus, Esma claimed that although many of the physical structures of the city have been repaired, the war's emotional damage on people and their families have been addressed very little. Esma stated,

The International Tribunal for Justice has provided some satisfaction in bringing war criminals to justice; it has helped move the country forward, but much more needs to be done.

Emina, the ministry interviewee, shared similar points of view about the emotional impact of the war. Emina said major challenge facing the country was the "psychological impact" the war had on the current generation of young adults.

Theme five: A view of fragmented political and educational systems. The structure of the current government lacks authority to reform the educational system. According to BiH's constitution, each canton has the right to educate its children in their mother tongue and have a locally-developed curriculum. As a result of the Dayton Accords (1995), separate sets of education laws exist—one set for each of the two entities (BiH and the Republika Srpska) and another set for each of the federation's cantons, as well as one for the self-governing District of Brcko (Pasalic-Kreso, 2002). None of the 13 sets of laws is enforceable nationally. In response to pressure from the international community, legislation was passed in 2003 to provide a structure for a national educational governing body (Ministry of Civil Affairs of Bosnia and Herzegovina, 2004), but the government has been incapable of agreeing on the various issues related to ethnic bias and local curricula control. As a result, the legislation has never been implemented.

Lada shared her frustration with what she believed is a fragmented educational system: “We don’t have a national curriculum, and this is a problem. The ministers of education at each of the cantons report to their political parties....It is a catastrophe. That is why we don’t have money to return to schools.” She further explained that everything that takes place in a school depends on the commitment and quality of the building principal, and leadership quality varies greatly. It is up to the individual schools to find their own financial resources. She said educational reform is a national issue, but the lack of a national curriculum means that education is suffering. No state plan exists—“it is improvisation.” She further said, “The federal ministry of education has no authority; it can offer recommendations, but cannot implement them. The federal authority does give some money for textbooks, but even here agreement is lacking in regard to how the 1992-1995 war should be taught.”

People in Sarajevo repeatedly explained that the national government has no power. The ministry official, Emina, deferred blame, because she said there was little the ministry could do when local politicians have their own educational ideas that often interfere with school reform.

Participants often reported that Sarajevo’s current political system was too complex to enact educational reform. One of the key challenges facing the system is that the country has 13 cantons, each with its own education ministry. Consequently, it is nearly impossible to find agreement among the cantons. Moreover, politicians play to their distinctly different ethnic and religious populations, making it difficult for them to think of the national good. As Emina, the ministry interviewee explained, “The political parties do not promote democracy.” Esma said reform has not occurred at all at the university level and noted that ideas from the former socialist system still have great influence: “I’m still seeing authority in education, and education faculty are transmitting that.” Esma indicated that even teachers at a recent education conference were reluctant to think critically and speak up when asked to do so. She stated, “Fear of authority is still present among faculty here.”

At a citywide conference, the Norwegian Ambassador publicly announced that Bosnia had made little commitment to educational reform, and consequently the country was in danger of being refused admission to the European Union (Reflective journal, December 11, 2008). He explained that the country’s leadership has neglected education and it was “the least reformed sector in this country.” He further stated “...education is under-prioritized in Bosnia, but it is necessary for the country’s admission into the EU...Membership in the EU will not occur without priority given to education” (Reflective journal, December 11, 2008).

The Bologna accreditation process (2005) is challenging Bosnia’s university system to reform, but implementation has fostered distrust and resentment among students. For example, master’s students expecting to graduate in spring of 2007 suddenly learned that because of the Bologna process an entire year of study had been added to their degree programs (Reflective journal, October 3, 2008). The students did not understand why this had happened, and many were upset with it. They felt powerless, and as a result, the Bologna process is often maligned by students and questioned by the faculty (Interview, December 12, 2008). BiH’s university system seemed overwhelmed with meeting the Bologna standards, and students expressed dismay at having no voice in the process.

Conclusion

We investigated the extent that democratic teaching practices and social justice values were being taught in Sarajevo's schools. Five themes emerged from our data, and these were as follows: Theme one is: The lack of a multicultural education curriculum in Sarajevo's schools. Sarajevo's schools are not offering a multicultural education, and participants often said that the city's curriculum was more multicultural under Tito than now. Theme two is: Educators value participatory and democratic methods of teaching. Democratic teaching practices were evidenced some of the time, but this was the exception and not the rule. Theme three is: A sense of pessimism about education and social reform in Sarajevo. Among young adults there is a general sense of pessimism about the country's future. Theme four is: Lingering emotional trauma from the war. Many of our participants felt that lingering traumas and emotions from the 1992-1995 war are inhibiting social reform. Theme five is: A view of fragmented political and educational systems. Often our participants attributed the lack educational reform to an inefficient government lacking authority to institute needed policy changes.

Through Theme one, the participants report that Sarajevo's schools do not offer a multicultural curriculum. Often school directors, university faculty, and classroom teachers who participated in this study explained that there is no official curriculum in which students learn about other ethnic and cultural groups. University faculty participants reported that prior to the war education was broader and richer than it is now. Older residents who talked with us lamented the loss of what they felt was the city's rich multicultural tradition, and how they wished that their children and grandchildren experienced the kind of education the city's schools offered during the Socialist period. Furthermore, we were told by the study's participants that the 1992-1995 war was not being taught in Sarajevo, and students were not learning about the historical factors that ignited the conflict. Consequently, elementary and secondary students in the city, regardless of whether they were ethnic Serbs or Bosniacs, were neither learning about the war, nor about one another's cultural traditions and heritages.

Theme two revealed evidence that in some lessons teachers engaged students in participatory and democratic teaching methods and student-centered learning activities. This was often so in lessons taken from the Civitas curricula where teachers had been trained in how to use democratic and participatory methods. Yet, this kind of teaching was the exception, because we observed more teacher-centered lessons where students were uninvolved and had little opportunity to express their opinions, act democratically, or think critically.

As indicated in Theme three, we discovered a general sense of pessimism about educational and social reform in the city. Some university students and faculty revealed this pessimism when they spoke about having little hope for the future, or how they felt that whenever change came to Bosnia, life only worsened. Some people explained that the university system is held-back by faculty whose world-views and knowledge base were acquired during the former socialist times and have not changed since then.

Through Theme four, participants told us that the war's emotional traumas permeated contemporary life in Sarajevo and interfered with social and educational reform. Throughout the city ethnic rivalries remained beneath the surface, with an afternoon soccer match at the downtown stadium as easily sparking conflict between

young Muslim and Christian men as it might bring them together for a good sporting event. The lack of reconciliation among the city's ethnic groups is interfering with educational and social reform.

Many of the study participants reported through Theme five that the current political structure interferes with educational reform. More specifically, they voiced concern that there is no central educational authority that can implement nationwide change. Each of the 13 cantons has its own educational policies and programs, but the study participants said the cantons were influenced by local ethnic and political factors and not with a broader sense of statesmanship and concern for the nation.

Although the conclusions of this study are framed by our experiences of living and teaching in Sarajevo in the fall of 2008, we believe that the themes identified here are trustworthy. Brian and I lived and taught in the city during the semester we collected data, and three data sources (participant interviews, classroom observations, and daily reflective journal entries) were used to understand the meaning participants' perceived in school curricula and teaching practices. In addition, a university faculty member in Sarajevo, who was a native of the city, served as a peer-reviewer of our observations and inferences. These multiple data sources and checks contribute to the trustworthiness of the five emergent themes.

Implications

We examined the extent to which democratic teaching practices and social justice values were being taught in Sarajevo's schools. Ordinarily, the purpose of qualitative research is to describe and explain the meaning people construct of their daily lives, and rarely do researchers venture toward advocacy. However, Denzin (2010) recently argued that qualitative researchers have a responsibility to advocate for social justice when they see such a need in their data. Following Denzin's argument and the evidence uncovered in this study, we offer three recommendations for educational reform in Bosnia: (1) Empower the national government to establish public policies to reform education. The present system, with 13 separate cantons with their own governing bodies, makes it impossible to institute social and educational reform. (2) Create a national multicultural curriculum, so that children in elementary and secondary schools throughout the country will learn to appreciate and respect the ethnic and social diversity in their country. Presently, the country lacks such a national curriculum, and what is taught is susceptible to parochial interests and biases, rather than the greater national good. (3) Improve teacher education, so that new classroom teachers learn participatory and democratic approaches to teaching and learning. Such pedagogy should be integrated throughout the university system, so that today's teaching candidates will understand and effectively use these methods when employed in the city's schools.

The 1992-1995 war and its aftermath have made democratic teaching practices and social justice values a difficult and complex issue for Sarajevo's schools. During the war, ethnic Serbian and Bosnian neighbors fought against one other and genocide occurred (Maček, 2009; Tabeau & Bijak, 2005). Even today, in smaller cities and villages, ethnic Serb children are sometimes taught that Bosnians caused the war, and Bosnian children are being taught the Serbs and Croats were responsible for it (as described by the study participants). Given these practices, it is a tremendous challenge to

implement a multicultural curriculum that the various constituencies will accept. Yet, to do nothing is allowing ethnic and religious biases to misinform children's hearts and minds. As hard as it might be to accomplish, we recommend that Sarajevo's children learn to value and respect one another, regardless of the differences in their ethnicities, cultural traditions, and family histories during the war.

Some study participants remained hopeful that democracy and social justice could still occur despite the many challenges faced in Sarajevo. Clarke-Habibi (2005) reported successful educational reforms in Bosnia through the efforts of many NGOs such as Soros's Open Society Institute, Save the Children Foundation, and the Education for Peace program. Such efforts provide glimmers of light for the future. Yet, we believe that—until systemic political and educational reform occurs—the current generation of children will not be taught to think democratically and act for social justice. Given such circumstances, we fear that it is too easy for old ethnic disputes and rivalries to worsen and for conflict to return. Consequently, we urge public policy makers to begin the reforms recommended here.

References

- Alic, A. (2008, June 3). Bosnia and Herzegovina: Teaching intolerance. *Transitions Online*. Retrieved from http://www.soros.org/initiatives/esp/articles_publications/articles/bosnia_20080603
- Apple, M., & Beane, J. (2007). *Democratic schools: Lessons in purposeful education*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Ayers, W., Quinn, T., & Stovall, D. (2009). *Handbook of social justice in education*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Balkan Investigative Reporting Network. (2008). Prostitution claims shake Bosnian University. *Balkan Insight.com*. Retrieved from <http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/main/news/13306/>
- Banks, J. A. (1988). Approaches to multicultural curriculum. *Multicultural Leader*, 1(2), 1-3.
- Banks, J., Cookson, P., Gay, G., Hawley, W., Irvin, J., Nieto, S... Stephan, W. (2001). Diversity within: Essential principles of teaching and learning in multicultural societies. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 83(3), 196-203.
- Beane, J. (2005). *A reason to teach: Creating classrooms of hope and dignity*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Becker, E. (1998, April 12). Aid groups are hands that help in Bosnia. *New York Times*, p. 7. Retrieved from <http://search.proquest.com.library.sage.edu:2048/nytimes/docview/430961177/12DF699CFBD38C60984/4?accountid=13645>
- Berman, D. (2002). *The heroes of Treca Gimnazija: A war school in Sarajevo, 1992-1995*. New York, NY: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Bilefsky, D. (2008, December 14). 13 years after peace accord, fear grows of new ethnic conflict in divided Bosnia. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from <http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?res=9900EEDB143EF937A25751C1A96E9C8B63&scp=1&sq=Fears+of+new+ethnic+conflict+in+Bosnia&st=nyt>

- Bologna Process. (2005). *Guide to the Bologna process*. London: The European Unit. Retrieved from http://www.europeunit.ac.uk/sites/europe_unit2/bologna_process/index.cfm
- Boyles, D., Carusi, T., & Attick, D. (2009). Historical and critical interpretations of social justice. In W. Ayers, T. Quinn, & D. Stovall (Eds.), *Handbook of social justice* (pp. 30-41). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Carnegie Corporation. (2003). *The civic mission of schools: A Report from Carnegie Corporation of New York and CIRCLE: The Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement*. New York, NY: Carnegie Corporation. Retrieved from http://civicmissionofschools.org/cmossite/campaign/cms_report.html
- Center for Civic Education. (1994). *National standards for civics and government*. Calabasas, CA: Center for Civic Education.
- Christensen, L. (2000). *Reading, writing, and rising up: Teaching about social justice and the power of the written word*. Milwaukee, WI: Rethinking Schools.
- Cochran-Smith, M. (2004). Defining the outcome of teacher education: What's social justice got to do with it? *Asian-Pacific Journal of Teacher Education*, 32(3), 193-212.
- Clarke-Habibi, S. (2005). Transforming worldviews: The case of education for peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina. *Journal of Transformative Education*, 3, 33-56.
- Darling-Hammond, L., French, S., & Garcia-Lopez, S. (2002). *Learning to teach for social justice*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.
- Dayton Peace Accords (1995). United States Department of State, November 21, Dayton, Ohio. Retrieved from <http://www.state.gov/www/regions/eur/bosnia/bosagree.html>.
- Denzin, N. K. (2010). *The qualitative manifesto: A call to arms*. Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press.
- Dewey, J. (1966). *Democracy and education. An introduction to the philosophy of education*. New York, NY: Free Press. (Original work published 1916)
- Freedman, E. (2007). Is teaching for social justice undemocratic? *Harvard Educational Review*, 77(4), 442-528.
- Friere, P. (1973/1993). *Education for critical consciousness*. New York, NY: Seabury Press. (Original work published 1973).
- Giroux, H. A., & McLaren, P. (1986). Teacher education and the politics of engagement: The case of democratic schooling. *Harvard Educational Review*, 56(3), 213-238.
- Glenny, M. (1996). *The fall of Yugoslavia: The third Balkan war* (3rd ed.). London: Penguin.
- Greene, M. (1985). A philosophic look at merit and mastery in teaching. *Elementary School Journal*, 86(1), 17-26.
- Heath, S. B., & Street, B. V. (2009). *Ethnography: Approaches to language and literacy research*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.
- Hubbard, R., & Power, B. (2003). *The art of classroom inquiry: A handbook for teacher researchers* (Rev. ed.). Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- International Crisis Group (1998). *Rebuilding a multi-ethnic Sarajevo: The need for minority returns*. ICG Bosnia Project, Report #30.

- Krogh, S. (2008). Making Bosnia safe for Democracy: (With some help from the kindergartens). *Democracy & Education*, 18(1), 41-45.
- Kulish, N. (2009, May 19). Biden warns Bosnians about “old patterns.” *The New York Times*. Retrieved from <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/05/20/world/europe/20biden.html>
- Ladson-Billings, G. (1994). *The dreamkeepers: Successful teachers of African American children*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Lincoln, Y. & Guba, E. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publications.
- Maček, I. (2009). *Sarajevo under siege: Anthropology in wartime*. Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Malcolm, N. (1996). *Bosnia: A short history*. New York, NY: New York University Press.
- Merriam, S. B. (1998). *Qualitative research and case study applications in education*. San Francisco: Jossey Bass. M. Miles, & A. Huberman (1994). *Qualitative data analysis: An expanded sourcebook*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Ministry of Civil Affairs of Bosnia and Herzegovina (2004). Education development in Bosnia and Herzegovina: National Report. Retrieved from www.ibe.unesco.org/National_Reports/ICE.../bosniaher_NR08.pdf
- Nieto, S. (1999). *The light in their eyes: Creating multicultural learning communities*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.
- North, C. (2006). More than words? Delving into the substantive meaning(s) of “social justice” in education. *Review of Educational Research*, 76(4), 507-535.
- Parker, W. C. (2003). *Teaching democracy: Unity and diversity in public life*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.
- Pasalic-Kreso, A. (2002). Education in Bosnia and Herzegovina: Minority inclusion and majority rules: The system of education in BiH as a paradigm of political violence on education. *Current Issues in Comparative Education*, 2(1), 6-13.
- Pasalic Kreso, A. (2008). The war and post-war impact on the educational system of Bosnia and Herzegovina. *International Review of Education*, 54, 353-374.
- Patton, M. Q. (2002). *Qualitative evaluation and evaluation methods* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Shor, I. (1992). *Empowering education: Critical teaching for social change*. Chicago, IL: Chicago University Press.
- Sleeter, C. (1996). *Multicultural education as social activism*. Albany, NY: State University Press.
- Tabeau, E. & Bijak, J. (2005). Death estimate—War-related deaths in the 1992–1995 armed conflicts in Bosnia and Herzegovina: A critique of previous estimates and recent results. *European Journal of Population*, 21(2-3), 187-215.
- Tomasevic, B. (2006). *Sarajevo*. Trieste, Italy: Lloyd Publishers.
- UNICEF (2009). *All children everywhere: A strategy for basic education and gender equity*. New York, NY: UNICEF.
- U.S. Department of Health & Human Services (1979). *The Belmont Report: Ethical principles and guidelines for the protection of human subjects of research*. Washington, D.C. Retrieved from <http://www.hhs.gov/ohrp/policy/belmont.html>
-

Author Note

Dr. Peter McDermott is currently Professor of Education at Pace University in New York City, where he teaches courses in literacy education. He has taught internationally in Kazakhstan, Tanzania, Russia, and he completed a Fulbright in Sarajevo. His research interests are in qualitative methods of inquiry, urban education, literacy, technology integration, and constructivist approaches to teaching. His publications appear in *The Qualitative Report*, the *Journal of Teacher Education*, and in recent book chapters. He is a long-time member of the International Reading Association and the National Council of Teachers of English. Correspondence regarding this article can be addressed to Dr. Peter McDermott at E-mail: pmcdermott@pace.edu

Dr. Brian K. Lanahan is an assistant professor of social studies education at the College of Charleston, South Carolina. He completed a Fulbright in Sarajevo during the 2008-2009 academic year, and he currently he teaches graduate and undergraduate social studies methods courses. His research interests include high-stakes testing environments, comparative democracy education, and education in post-conflict countries. His most recent publications include a book chapter in the Elizabeth Heilman edited book, "Social Studies and Diversity Education" entitled "Teaching about Disasters Reported in the News," and a Social Studies Research and Practice Journal article entitled "Practicing Teachers as Elementary Social Studies Methods Instructors: Issues in Preparing Pre-service Elementary Teachers." Correspondence regarding this article can also be addressed to Dr. Brian K. Lanahan at E-mail: LanahanB@cofc.edu

Copyright 2012: Peter McDermott, Brian K. Lanahan, and Nova Southeastern University

Article Citation

McDermott, P., & Lanahan, B. K. (2012). Democracy and social justice in Sarajevo's schools. *The Qualitative Report*, 17(Art. 22), 1-27. Retrieved from <http://www.nova.edu/ssss/QR/QR17/mcdermott.pdf>
