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Multiple Acts of Identification among Educators in a Post-Conflict Situation: Evidence from Kosovo

by

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Abstract

Multiple Acts of Identification among Educators in a Post-Conflict Situation: Evidence from Kosovo draws upon the personal and interpretive journeys of Kosovar Albanian and Kosovar Serb educators. This study examined the possibility that multiple acts of identification not only exist but contribute to the future of democratization in education. Inquiring into the lived experiences of educators in Kosovo, examining how multiple acts of identification contribute to the understanding of identity formation within intricate political and social situations, and understanding how these processes of identity formation interweave with both individual and collective associations have been the primary objectives of this study. This study concludes that *Kosovar*, as a civic identification, encompasses but does not supplant other acts of identification and advances democratic dispositions in both the political and social realm.

Acknowledgements

Prefacing each chapter in *Multiple Acts of Identification among Educators in a Post-Conflict Situation: Evidence from Kosovo* are excerpts of poetry taken from the work of Aleš Debeljak, a Slovenian poet now residing in the United States. Writing against the backdrop of the disintegration of the former Yugoslavia, Debeljak explores images of tradition and architecture while juxtaposing human voice with human love (1999, p. 58). Although Debeljak wrote little between 1990 and 1995 as Yugoslavia slid into the third Balkan War of the twentieth century, his poetry commenced with the birth of his first child, his muse. *The City and the Child* is a contemplation of loss and history as well as birth and renewal.

Having come across *The City and the Child* shortly after my return to Canada from working in Kosovo, Serbia and Montenegro, I found reflective solace in the metaphorical and symbolic language of Debeljak. As my own thoughts and experiences interweaved with alluded images of fallen cities and ruins of war, I also began to meditate on the possibility of renewal and rebirth for all who had experienced loss, hardship and pain. My apologies go to the author of these poems for only being able to represent each poem in part; however, my acknowledgments are also given in that "where history falls into oblivion, there the conditions for its repetition are ripe" (Debeljak, 2002, p. 882).

Dedication

Growing up in a family of Croatian immigrants was the beginning of a lifelong journey. Journey, as metaphor, infuses the pages that are to follow and marks moments of celebration and happiness as well as moments of sadness and disorientation. The inspiration to engage in academic work in the fields of education and democracy took root at home. Conversations and arguments about what is just in the world took shape as each sister took turns debating and asserting her viewpoint alongside those of my mother and father. These discussions continue to this day but for the loss of one who empowered me to go into the world and see, experience, listen to and give voice to those who struggle for democracy. This thesis is dedicated to those who challenged me on this journey and to those who did not let me turn back.

Table of Contents

List of Tables

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

> And strangers seduced by the glitter of a glorious past, and the source of oxygen barely seen on the survey maps of mystics. And dandelions growing over your pedestal, and the moonless night, and the smoke of offerings scorching faded arabesques. I know them all. Mine is the calendar of kneeling in a country obliterated by the future of an illusion. Tell me, how could I not recognize myself in the sotto voce of an elegy for orchestra and voice? How could I not sweetly tremble in the prayer in which contempt decays? If no one else will, I'll move my lips to keep your path forever open (Debeljak, 1999f, p. 39).

1.1 Introduction

Writing against the tragic backdrop of the Balkan wars that disintegrated Yugoslavia in the 1990s, Aleš Debeljak, a Slovenian poet, metaphorically creates an image of a people – any people previously encompassed within Yugoslav borders whether Albanian, Bosnian, Croatian, Macedonian, Montenegrin, Serbian or Slovenian – struggling to envision themselves in the future. His metaphors and images commence each chapter and serve as a poetic device for understanding the words, voices and stories that are read, listened to and understood in this thesis. Although each chapter functions as a whole to extrapolate and explore the necessities of academic research, as parts of a whole, the chapters are ensconced within a poetic realm. The meditation precipitated by the metaphorical language of Debeljak infuses the telling of this journey as well.

1.1.1 Objectives of the Study

The purpose of this narrative study is to examine, analyze and understand, through the narrative stories of Kosovar Albanian and Serb educators, the experiences of living within cultural complexity in a post-conflict situation. In order to describe and research the lived experiences of educators in post-conflict situations such as Kosovo, I sought to explore and

understand narratives of lived experiences of educators within a cultural complexity. These educators perceived themselves as developing an evolving identity. Thus, the specific objectives of this study are:

- To inquire into the lived experiences of Kosovar Albanians and Kosovar Serbs who may have experienced the roles of the oppressor and/or the oppressed and who are actively participating in the democratization of education;
- To explore how theories can illuminate complex political identifications and suggest some form of resolution; and
- To understand how identity formation may influence the commitment to collective rights when individual identities are culturally complex and overlapping.

1.1.2 Scope of the Study

This study afforded the research participants an opportunity to reflect upon the practices and identifications that guide their work as educators in a complex post-conflict situation. These reflections led to the theorization of how lived realities affect notions of collectivity, inclusivity and democracy. Coming to Kosovo in the role of an international educational consultant from Canada whose goal was to become immersed in the local context, my participation in this work was integral in that I had both a familial exposure and professional knowledge of the political and social issues of the former Yugoslavia.

It is important to note, however, that religion was not considered in the scope of this study given the fact that the majority of Kosovars are secular. Religion as it intersects in the politics of identity has been examined and researched in Kosovo (Duijzings, 2000, 2002) as well as in Croatia, Serbia and Bosnia (Kunovich, 1999). Preferring to speak of Kosovar society as a single *frontier* society in which ethnic contact and cooperation have transcended

religious boundaries instead of as a society divided by two ethnic groups, Duijzings acknowledges that religion has factored as a key to bridging a gap of differences only if similar religious characteristics are shared (2000). Although religion re-appears as a factor in the *imagined community* of Kosovar Albanians and Kosovar Serbs, the reality, Duijzings concludes, is that "unlike Serbian nationalism, where ethnic and religious identity have merged, Albanian nationalism nowadays lacks any strong religious attachments" (p. 157). Consequently, navigating the inner realities through verbal accounts and reflection without a strong focus on religion retains our attention as we seek to understand the myriad intersections between inclusion, pluralism, and democracy.

For participants and researcher alike, this study is also a personal journey wrought with interpretation, nuance and pain, for it is a recollection of lived experiences, a recounting of narrative journeys and a reverberation of democratic struggles. The negotiation of differences and the reconciliation of the past with the present are complexities that I encounter as an emerging academic as well as a practitioner in the field of international education and as a daughter and descendant of Balkan history. Understanding, conceptualizing and negotiating identity not only enhances awareness of one's self and one's work but is requisite if any attempt at interpreting the intricacies of identity formation is to be made.

Intrigued by the idea of identity formation and the ability of individuals to negotiate differences between the dominant culture of a society and the culture of their heritage, because of my own experiences having immigrant parents, I was unable at times to articulate the lived experiences of one who is neither here nor there. As part of recent work in the area of teacher education in Kosovo, I have been considering the relation of social justice to

identity, specifically the relationship of democratic practices on the identity formation of educators.

From 2004 to 2006 I worked first in the capacity of In-Service Advisor and then as a Professional Development Advisor in Kosovo, Serbia and Montenegro respectively. Living and working in Kosovo and Serbia for the better part of two years allowed me the opportunity to participate in the cultural and social environments while maintaining a position of neutrality as a Canadian consultant. Primarily engaged in training and implementing of in-service programming on learner-centered teaching methodologies to minority community groups (i.e. Kosovar Serbs, Roma and Bosniaks) as well as Kosovar Albanians, I also worked on regional educational conferences which sought to bring together local educational stakeholders. Working on the Educator Development Program (EDP) in the Balkans not only permitted the opportunity to engage in dialogue and discussion with local educators in a professional capacity but on a personal level as well. As a result, engaging in academic research equalled an educational opportunity that I pursued on my own time, but one which informed my own daily observations, reflections and ponderings about the democratization of education in Kosovo particularly.

1.1.3 Significance

As little research has been done into the identity formation of perceived minority groups in post-conflict societies, this study serves as a basis for further exploration into the realities of collective identifications, inclusivity and democratization, as well as their theorization. The theorization of identity formation as it pertains to collective and individual acts of identification and subsequent acts of inclusion and adherence to democratic principles informs political actions and international interests in post-conflict situations. In general

terms, then, the quest for peace and stability in politically unstable geographical regions of the world underlies the provision of humanitarian intervention in post-conflict societies as well as the forces that influence democracy and education.

1.2 Kosovo – A Contextual Background

Kosovo, a small landlocked region located to the southwest of Serbia, shares borders with Macedonia, Albania and Montenegro. Ethnically diverse, the majority of the population (90%) is Albanian. It is, however, the historical exchange between the Albanians and Serbs (approximately 5% of the population) that has coloured the understandings of the past, the present and perhaps the future.

1.2.1 A Politico-Historical Review

On the eve of battle, Knez Lazar warned:

> Whoever is a Serb and of Serbian birth, and who does not come to Kossovo Polje to do battle against the Turks, let him have neither a male nor a female offspring, let him have no crop…(Kaplan, 1993, p. 39).

Written on a 100-foot monument overlooking the Kosovo Polje, these historic words allude to a history replete with war, vengeance and retribution. Kosovo Polje, the site of the infamous Battle for Kosovo in 1389 and the location of ancient monasteries and holy places of the Serbian Orthodox faith, symbolized the demise of the Serbian medieval kingdom and resulted in the consolidation of the Ottoman Empire in the Balkans (Brown, 2001). Because Kosovar lands were under Turkish Ottoman control for the next five hundred years, the Serb legends surrounding the spiritual connection to Kosovo began to diminish as the Albanian presence increased. By the 1970s, as the inexorable gap between Serbian and Albanian minorities widened, a shift in Kosovar governance decentralized Serb political dominance resulting in Kosovo's autonomous status in the Yugoslav constitution.

The Yugoslav Constitution of 1974 gave Albanians in Yugoslavia the status of *national minority.* In short, the Albanian *nation* within Yugoslavia, in particular Kosovo, was considered an autonomous province equal to that of Vojvodina in northern Serbia. The only difference between an autonomous province and republic in Yugoslavia was the right to secession (Brown, 2001). However, in 1989 Milošević abrogated the 1974 Constitution and Kosovo immediately lost its autonomy. Revocation of the status of autonomy resulted in a mass expulsion of Albanian workers from administrative and professional posts, thus creating a sizeable disenfranchised, unemployed and impoverished minority (Mertus, 1999). This abrogation initiated a political and economic descent into a decade of oppression and apartheid-like conditions. Although the Serb minority held not only administrative control but control over most positions of authority within political, health and educational institutions, Brown notes that:

> ...a historical shift in Albanian attitudes was occurring. Many Kosovars no longer were intimidated by this new cycle of Serb repression. They began to realize what their numerical superiority could mean in terms of power; they had experienced the fulfillment of having their own enlarged state; a new younger elite was forming, conscious and proud of its ethnicity (p. 171).

Comprising approximately 90% of Kosovo's population, ethnic Albanians, once the largest national minority group within Tito's Yugoslavia, became the largest minority group within the territorial boundaries of Kosovo (Judah, 2002; Malcom, 2002).

By 1989, Slobodan Milošević, the Serbian leader, had rallied 250,000 Serb supporters in Kosovo Polje in support of his campaign for a Greater Serbia, the purpose of which was to return Kosovo – the heartland of the Serbian nation – to Serbian control using arms if deemed necessary (Ignatieff, 2000). Consequently, Serb out-migration from Kosovo was

fuelled by Albanian intimidation within. Brown observes that "the depth of Serb humiliation can be understood only if their racist contempt for Albanians is also realized" (Brown, 2001, p. 163). In his research on ethnic cleansing, Bell-Fialkoff notes that to stop Serb out-migration, "the sale of real estate involving Albanians and Serbs was prohibited" and "a new program of instruction limiting the use of Albanian was introduced in the schools of Kosovo and at the Prishtina University" (1999, p. 163). By 1992, ethnic strife and uprising between Kosovar Serbs and Kosovar Albanians had begun and would continue until the NATO bombings and United Nations intervention in the late 1990s.

The NATO campaign against Serbia was followed by the introduction of an interim government in Kosovo led by the United Nations which shifted the balance of power from Serb to Albanian hands. On June 10, 1999, the United Nations Security Council in Resolution 1244 authorized the Secretary General to establish "an international civil presence in Kosovo in order to provide an interim administration for Kosovo under which the people of Kosovo can enjoy substantial autonomy...while establishing and overseeing the development of provisional democratic self-governing institutions" (*The new Kosovo protectorate*, 1999, p. 2) leaving the Yugoslav and Serbian governments without an official role. In addition to other responsibilities, the interim civilian administration, the United Nations Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), was called upon to coordinate humanitarian and disaster relief of all international agencies and to promote human rights. UN Secretary General Kofi Annan was quoted as saying that "the task before the international community is to help the people in Kosovo to rebuild their lives and heal the wounds of conflict" (*Statement by the President of the Security Council*, February 6, 2003).

1.2.2 Quest for Autonomy and Inclusivity

The future status of Kosovo as an independent state is now being considered by international actors along with the participation of the Kosovar and Serbian governments. One of the most recent reports on the progress of the Kosovo status resolution talks concludes that "...Kosovo's Albanian majority has mostly followed a path of institution-building and minority accommodation on an implicit promise of statehood" and recommends that "[t]he international community must now quickly match up its diplomatic manoeuvres with its promise if it is to continue to exert authority in Kosovo and win a battle of wills with a backward-looking Serbian political elite intent on partition" (*Kosovo status: Delay is risky*, 2006, p. 23). This quote implies that assumptions can be made about notions of inclusivity in post-conflict societies. In Kosovar society, at least, the accommodation of minority groups is requisite to political talks related to the final status of Kosovo – whether as state, nation or protectorate. Ethnic stability has been temporarily achieved since 1999 with the presence of international agencies such as the OSCE, European Union and UNMIK administration, yet ethnic peace and tolerance continue to be goals and not achievements.

1.2.3 The Development of the Parallel System in Kosovo

> The Kosovar "parallel state" consisted of a loose conglomeration of educational and cultural institutions, health services, social assistance networks, political parties, local financial councils, and a government-in-exile (Pula, 2004, p. 797).

Between 1988 and 1992, the Kosovo educational system splintered into two separate systems – the small official system for Kosovo Serb students and the large unofficial system for Kosovo Albanian students. The initial descent into the splinter began in the 1991/92 school year with the refusal of Kosovar Albanian teachers to supplant the Kosovar

curriculum with a curricula largely emphasizing Serbian cultural, historical and geographical information. In reprisal, the Serbian authorities restricted enrolment in Albanian-language schools in effect preventing the continued education of a large percentage of Albanian students. The final action leading to the splintering of the educational system in Kosovo came about when the Serbian authorities physically blocked entrance of Kosovar Albanian teachers and students to all school buildings, including the University of Prishtina. The subsequent dismissal of teachers and professors led to the development of an underground Albanian-language educational system (*Kosovo spring*, 1998).

As an instrument of resistance, Kosovar Albanians engaged in a *shadow* or parallel educational system supported by funds from the Albanian diaspora and a 3% 'income tax' collected from families and businesses (Clark, 2000). Many of the teachers in the parallel system were underpaid and worked in tenuous conditions, yet these teachers viewed their work as a contributing factor to the state-building of Kosovo. Although the shadow system was conducted openly and was somewhat tolerated by the Serb authorities, repression and intimidation continued (Pula, 2004). As a result, quality diminished as the scarcity of textbooks and a decreasing enrolment impacted the efficacy of the system. Politically, however, the shadow system proved symbolic in that school papers stamped as having been issued by the "Republic of Kosovo" in effect overtly resisted the Serb oppression.

Because many of the teachers who had been teaching in the shadow system continued to teach in public and private schools run by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MEST) in Kosovo, MEST is now facing the difficult task of trying to assess teacher credentials and qualifications as well as provide in-service teacher training in the latest educational trends and developments (Anderson & Wenderoth, 2007). However, it

is important to note that "older teachers, who have no choice of an alternative career, tend to be more conservative rather than reform-minded. Teaching as a profession is not attractive to young people, because of insecure pay and poor conditions of work" (Maliqi, 1998, p. 115).

1.3 An Overview of the Organization of the Thesis

Following upon *Chapter One* which introduces and contextualizes the topic and major issues, *Chapter Two* reviews the most influential theories of identity formation, nation-building, and lived experiences. Drawing from the humanities and social sciences, identity and identification are taken up as idea, concept and process. Conceptualizations of identity through hybridity theory, through transcultural theory and through civic pluralism are discussed.

Methodological design and issues are outlined and explored in *Chapter Three.* Engaging in narrative research which seeks to give voice to meaning of lived experiences, I have made use of both memory and voice to unravel the narrative journeys of the research participants. By doing so, I have also relied on my own cultural and linguistic backgrounds to both inform and guide the journeys of the participants. In other words, these spaces invited me to dwell within and cultivate the understanding of my own heritage while unfolding the identity of others. This unfolding, though, presented a problem of negotiating across cultural and linguistic similarities as well as differences.

Chapter Four focuses on the analysis of emergent patterns in the data: *Schooling as passive resistance to oppression, transformation from victim to potential oppressor,* and *the emergence of a civic identification.* Set within the context of segregation and oppression, these characterize the evolution of the formation of identities of the research participants.

Chapter Five delves into an interpretation of the data with respect to the theoretical framework previously set forth in Chapter Two. Understanding that the road to democratization in post-conflict Kosovo directly transcends temporality in the minds of the research participants, I explore the possibility that a plurality of identifications affect the emergence of a civic identification and the resolution of the status of Kosovo and its inhabitants.

In conclusion, identity as a social justice issue is discussed in Chapter Six as it relates to the process of democratization. The notions of *being* and *becoming* interrelate as the journeys of the educators continue as they struggle daily with the (re)emergence, (re)conceptualization and (re)cognition of their own identities and with the commitment to democratic change.

CHAPTER TWO: THEORETICAL POSITIONINGS AND FRAMEWORK

> A spring bubbles. As if a dam broke. Yesterday it seemed to be dying away. Yet the pressure of change is becoming slightly cruel. There is no name for the earthquake that threw the monuments off their pedestals. Only the muse behind the poet's statue kept her wings (Debeljak, 1999a, p. 63).

2.1 Introduction

Philosophical change often meanders just as water does. It flows around and over the crevices of rocks, follows the momentum of streams long past and moves towards an undetermined end. This fluidity is never constant and predictable as trappings along the way cause a backflow leading to a rise in pressure and then an eventual eruption of sudden energy. The *muse behind the poet* is forever silent yet present. She inspires ideas, concepts and theoretical underpinnings within a poet to rise from the subconscious and then collide with one another. An explosion of ideas leading to new frames of thought result. The muse may not, however, always be present near the collision of ideas – the metaphorical earthquake – but instead, she may be waiting in a break in the stream, forsaken and destitute, for the direction of the stream has moved away from her and towards another direction. The muse may choose to wait for the stream to wind its way back to her or, perhaps taking up agency, the muse may choose to follow the stream and engage in the currents of philosophical, social, cultural and ideological movements of her poet.

Guided by the muse on her journey, Chapter Two outlines the social and philosophical continuum along which issues of identity formation are discussed. Grappling with notions of *self* as a research subject, I begin by embedding the theoretical framework as a whole within a narrative model of identity which presupposes interconnectivity between selfhood and experience. Within the narrative model of identity, three processes of identity

formation are explored: *Identity within hybridization*, *identity within transculturation*, and *identity within civic pluralism.* Crucial to the triangulated model of identity presented in this chapter is the recognition that a multi-axial understanding (Brah, 2003) of identity is being taken up. In other words, multiple interpretations prevail and none is exhaustive or fixed. Without discounting the importance of other social, cultural and political influences on identity formation, a particular examination of *gendered identifications* as intersecting within the larger conceptual framework of the narrative model of identity is emphasized. Moving from the conceptualization of theory into practical applications, a discussion of *identity formation as democratization* concludes this chapter.

2.2 The Notion of *Self* as Research Subject

To speak of *self* is a reflexive process of understanding the experiential realm of a physical being. The quintessential question of "Who are you?" has been asked of children at young ages when they learn to artistically represent themselves. It is also the question that adolescents ask as they engage in rituals, traditions, acts of independence and attachment to family and friends, designed to distinguish themselves from others and to align themselves with others. Whether subconscious or not, this same question (re)appears at different points in human lives so as to make sense of change and shifting perceptions of the *self.* Neither recent nor primeval, the question of *self* remains constant and intuitive. A large body of research in the humanities and social sciences is devoted to understanding the *self.* In the following discussions, *self* will take the form of *identity* and later *identifications* as a review of the literature weaves in and out of multiple understandings, conceptualizations and applications of the notion. As the literature reveals, the notion of *identity* as a singular fixed concept transforms into a concept implying multiple dynamic complexities.

2.2.1 Identity as Singular, Plural or Act

The idea of identity is historically rooted in a dualistic Cartesian interpretation based on difference. In this mathematical realm, identity is created only when a difference exists. If no degree of difference can be ascertained, identity remains fixed and constant regardless of any type of discourse (Goddard, 1998). In order for identity to move from an idea to a concept, it must move away from a mathematical meaning based on dualism to a philosophical or literary meaning based on metaphor. Conceptualizing identity as metaphorical rather than pre-determined mathematical dualism reveals a multifarious concept in many guises: as non-instrumental forms of social action, as collective phenomena of group sameness, as deep and foundational forms of selfhood, as interactive and processual products of social action, and as dynamic and unstable modes of the *self* (Brubaker & Cooper, 2000). Building upon these conceptualizations of identity, identity studies relate to *culture* (S. Hall & duGay, 1996), *ethnicity* (Guibernau & Rex, 1997), *gender* (Ramet, 1999) and *nation* (Gellner, 1983), to name but a few.

What is common however among the vast literature of identity studies, or identity politics, is the assumption that identity does indeed exist. Nonetheless, there are contradictory voices and views. Acknowledging that identity studies continue to be developed and undertaken as prominent discourses, Malešević has recently disregarded the concept of *identity* as both a tool and object of research (Malešević, 2006). Arguing that a distinct lack of empirical evidence for the existence of *identity* renders it a null concept, that is, an "operational phantom" with which to work (p. 37), Malešević advises against explaining any form of social action as being rooted in *identity* stating:

> (...) even when researchers...acknowledge that some forms of 'identity' are contingent, situational and instrumental...

> there is no self-evident rationale for why, or explanation of how, the concept of identity is necessary to explain individual's and group's multiple and fragmented perceptions and understandings of 'selves' (Malešević, 2002, p. 208).

Identity, in this view, has become an inclusive explanatory tool to apply to dramatic modern social changes – in effect, taking the place of the concepts of *race*, *national character* and *social consciousness.*

Even within the metaphorical realm of *identity*, a dualistic interpretation prevails. Morphing from the dualistic (non-)existence of *self* and its *identity*, a distinction lies in the location of this identity. The politics of the location of identity reveals a dichotomy between the inward view of self and the outward view of self. As purported by Charles Taylor the modern *self* views the individual (i.e., the inward view of self) as having a cultural, religious, ethnic or linguistic affiliation which must be engaged as identity in a communal dialogue with others (Taylor, 1989). In so doing, a dialogical relationship with others negotiates an internal and external identity. Taylor calls this process of articulating and defining oneself, the modern ideal of *authenticity* (1994). Through authenticity, new importance is given to the notion of recognition, termed a *politics of recognition.* In essence then, an individual's identity is formed through family, relationships, associations and dialogues with others, both within a collective and with others outside permeable boundaries.

The emphasis on the individual as self acquiesces to the notion that the identity of an individual is two-dimensional. For Appiah (1994) identity is located in a personal dimension and for Taylor (1994), in the intimate and public spheres. The personal dimension encompasses features or characteristics of an individual's identity which are particular to that individual. Collective identities, on the other hand, "count as social categories, as kinds of persons" (Appiah, 1994, p. 151) whereby recognition of identity is made possible through

heterogeneous attachments or norms such as gender, ethnicity, religion and sexuality. Group identification, consequently, becomes significant socially inasmuch as it serves as a political means to advance the interests of individuals within a congruent group (Gutmann, 2003). The argument follows, then, that the individual as self finds mutual recognition in group identification in order to advance political and social interests that are homogenous to others in the group and to benefit from these interests.

2.3 The Narrativization of Multiple Acts of Identification

The social construct of identity is problematic for subjectivity inherently influences its interpretation. Layers of experiences, thoughts, and (mis)conceptions superimpose one another to create the meanings of identity. Whether one adheres to the modernist notion of a stable and objectified identity built by and upon preconceived social constructs or whether the notion fluctuates as part of the borderless, fluid, performative and strategic postmodern identity, subjectivity plays an important role. Whether constrained by physical boundaries or living in a borderless world in which movement is fluid, global and unimpeded, humans continually engage in negotiations of identifications. Acts of identification are the embodiment and embeddedness of narratives and as such are situated in particular localities – real or imagined (Reisenleitner, 2001).

The narrative model of identity presupposes the interrelationship between selfhood and experience. Before selfhood can be understood, experiences must have been lived (or occurred):

> A consequence of the developmental and intersubjective nature of selfhood is that our personal histories precede our explicit self-understandings and so, our lives need to be recounted in order to be understood (Atkins, 2004, p. 346).

Implying that narrative identity is an embodiment of lived experiences and re-interpretations of self suggests the need to problematize the process of identity formation. Arguing against the concept of personal and narrative identities in an elitist approach, one line of psychological reasoning in the structural mode concludes that an individual has fashioned a successful identity if lived experience and life events can be coherently presented in a persuasive narrative (Slugoski & Ginsburg, 1989). Linking the narrative model of identity emanating from a modern structural approach to discourse analysis in which fluency, deliberation and negotiation of language are essential to the composition of dynamic, flexible and multiple identities are expected. A discursive approach to researching identity, thus, opens up a narrative space from which voice as narrative reflects the lived experiences of individuals as they negotiate their identities on a daily basis.

As stated in earlier work elsewhere (Petrunic, 2005), in a postmodern world, identities can be changed and manipulated as often as the subject determines it is needed. Through narrative research, this identity continues its transformation through the process of interpretation and analysis. Postmodern identities are layered upon differences that overlap each other as opposed to the search for similarities and homogeneity. Therefore, social negotiation of difference is a continuous process that seeks to engage acts of identifications in a process of formation. Social development, then, resides in the tension within and between narratives and not in the conformity and sameness of them (Rosenwald, 1992; Rosenwald & Ochberg, 1992b). This tension can only be articulated whereby the view of language as a social discursive practice (Tonkiss, 2001) is applied in an interpretive context that produces locality and allows for the creation and re-creation of identifications.

2.3.1 Identity within Hybridization

An alternative perspective to the tension between individual and collective narratives, cultural hybridity theory arises with recent research on non-hegemonic resistance movements in which intersecting particularities of multiple identity positions are being used to create opportunities to negotiate differences across cultures (Bhabha, 1990a, 1990b, 1994, 1996, 1997; Brah & Coombes, 2000; Caglar, 1997; S. Hall, 1996; S. Hall & duGay, 1996; Kraniauskas, 2000; May, 1999a, 1999b; Modood, 1997; Papastergiadis, 1997; Pieterse, 2001; Werbner, 1997a, 1997b, 1997c). Re-examining modern perspectives of identity-building has revealed that the influence of cultural phenomena on the formation of identity attends to the dimensionality of culture rather than its substantiality. Cultural hybridity addresses "...the jarring of meanings and values generated in-between the variety and diversity associated with cultural plenitude; it represents the process of cultural interpretation formed in the perplexity of living, in the disjunctive, liminal space..." (Bhabha, 1990, p. 312). The real or imaginary differences of culture function as a way to mobilize group identities (Appadurai, 1996), further suggesting that hybrid identifications are multiple and thus may offer a location for resistance, protest, tolerance and pluralism. Cultural hybridity theory thus offers certain philosophical and practical tenets that may bring understanding to an experience that for a long time remained unnamed, but an experience nonetheless, that many undergo and struggle with daily.

Location inherently implies the existence of boundaries, margins and limits. An initial foray into the theory of cultural hybridity first developed by Homi Bhabha (1994) reveals that the location of cultural identifications is situated on liminal or marginal boundaries. This suggests that whatever interstitial space is created is a result of the interplay of subjectivity

and spatiality. A faulty literal interpretation of this interplay assumes that cultural groups and the individuals who ascribe membership to them are persons with essentialized cultural attributes. This faulty logic would suggest that hybridization is a result of a combination of distinct characteristics or traits into a third distinct being (Caglar, 1997; Modood, 1997; Pieterse, 2001; Samad, 1997). Such arguments negate the process of negotiation occurring in the spaces of discontinuity and disjuncture (Rose, 1995). It must be conceded that this negotiation and articulation of cultural differences serves to marginalize acts of identifications. As a result, the process of marginalization neither account for the interactional aspect of the local and global nor the exchange of experiences, ideas, goods or commodities.

2.3.2 Identity within Transculturation

The struggle to centre the margins continues as bounded and closed communities become increasingly globalized, fluid and dynamic. Focusing on the processes of globalization on the effect of identity formation (Kurti, 1997; Melucci, 1997), other scholars propose exchanging the influences of culture, ethnicity and religion for the politics of production and consumption of locality. Expanding on the concept of the citizenry as *imagined community* (B. Anderson, 1991) to that of the *imagined world* (Appadurai, 1996) not only shifts the terminology of identifications but the frame of reference as well. No longer located on the periphery, cultural identifications now flow across global boundaries (Hannerz, 1997). The interplay of political and economic forces contributes to the shaping of multiple identifications through interaction and subsequent exchange of information and ideas. The transgression of boundaries at the intersection of multiple sites of belonging and acts of identification is played out through the pressures of globalization.

Whether labelled transcultural positionality (Anthias, 2001), transculturalism (Gunew, 2002, 2004; Hoerder, Hebert, & Schmitt, 2005; Ortiz, 1995) or transculturation (Hoerder, Hébert, & Schmitt, 2005), or transnationalism (Brah, 2003; Day & Thompson, 2004), the emphases are on a movement *across* borders – real or imagined – and on the creativity of this movement in terms of new possibilities and new productions.

Situational and performative, acts of identification are no longer rooted in fixed and essentialized identities along the margins, for they have become fluid, mobile and ephemeral. The plurality of subject positions allows for the subject to be mapped across several geographies of cultural transformation (Pile & Thrift, 1995). The mapping of identifications *across* geographies and the resultant process of transculturation leads to a "confluence of narratives" (Brah, 2003, p. 617) whereby the (re)lived, (re)produced and (re)imagined narratives of the social and the cultural may encounter the civil and the political.

2.3.3 Identity within Civic Pluralism

The third theory to be considered in this chapter is that of the formation of identifications within civil society. Defined as a realm in which acts of identifications and associations to other individuals are voluntary, civil society is a state of pre-political activity that functions as the prerequisite to later political society involving a democratic citizenry (Eberly, 2000; Ehrenberg, 1999).

Loosely portrayed as a community of individuals tied together through voluntary associations, the notion of civil society concedes that in addition to economic and linguistic attributes, geographical, ethnic, religious and cultural attributes influence a community (Eberly, 2000). If, however, these attributes are the only similarities that bind a collective, acts of identification are still embedded within hybridized and essentialized processes.

Moreover, identities that have been affected by globalizing forces and have undergone movement – whether real or imaginary – across borders and within cultural flows, may still not be prepared to participate in civic society. Of utmost importance to the process of identity formation within a civil society is the nature of *voluntary* association. Walzer explains:

> ...if there were a rule, even an implicit and unenforceable rule, that each person "belonged" to only one association or one set of associations, because of his or her social class...or religious or racial or gender identity, the resulting society would not be "civil" in the liberal sense. Membership would be a trap, even if it were still, formally, a choice (2002, p. 35).

The ability to choose identifications and associations is prerequisite to civic pluralism. Competing causes and interests, however, may cause social conflict that is further exacerbated as politics of identity and recognition intensify conflicts within civil society. Acts of identifications which oppress others because of racial, ethnic and gender differences, for example, create exclusionary or marginalizing tendencies that threaten the democratic space of a civic pluralism (Seligman, 2002).

As the third sphere in which identity formation takes places, civil society is integral to social and cultural integration and reproduction of its individuals and collectives. The supportive role of civil society in the process of identity formation is important in the mutual exchange of shared meanings as opposed to a colonizing power differential based on hierarchical structures (Chambers, 2002). Following within the narrative model of identity, discourse as a communicative action is the tool by which a civil society is deemed healthy or not. According to the philosophical thought of Habermas, Chambers further explicates that it is through shared interpretations and understandings of individuals (i.e., through their mutual acts of identification) that a civil society can engage in healthy and democratic civil associations. Otherwise, communication usurped by power, is intrinsically "hierarchical and

coercive" and leads to hegemonic and destructive practices within and between collectives in a civil society (p. 93).

2.3.3.1 Gendered Identifications

Speaking to the continuum along which identity formation has been discussed thus far, from hybridity to transculturation to civil society, Balibar warns that the language of discourse itself must be heeded so as not to unintentionally marginalize individuals within collectives (2004). Distinguishing between primary identifications (i.e., class, religious, linguistic) and secondary identifications (i.e. national, civic), Balibar points out that the transformation of primary into secondary identifications cannot be simultaneous since "primary identities as such have an ability to resist integration, even when individuals accept integration 'intellectually'" (p. 28). In other words, the process of developing, claiming and understanding identifications is prone to creating counter-discourses and slow sequential development.

One such counter-discourse is that of the feminist conception of civil society. Historically linked to the structure of the family, women have long been positioned within the domestic sphere of civil society (Phillips, 2002). Echoing Balibar's warning about delineating specific spheres of associations within civil society, feminist thinkers have been wary of engaging in a "doctrine of spheres" (p. 74) that unwillingly restrict women. Phillips reasons that voluntary associations within civil society apply to all but one act of identification: that of being a woman. She further asserts that most acts of identification can be concealed from others but few can conceal whether they are male or female. As a primary position (Balibar, 2004), a gendered identification is not one that can be chosen voluntarily and therefore becomes an identification that can resist integration in the discourse of identity

formation. The attraction of civil society to gendered identifications, however, is that "(f)eminism is always in some sense about transformation, about articulating previously unheard voices, (and) exposing previously unchallenged bias" (Phillips, 2002, p. 74). Although the potential exists for gendered identities to become a contested terrain (J. Mertus, 1999), they can also become transformative identifications within civil society in that the communicative discourse of civil society allows for listening to and respecting a multiplicity of voices.

The following table summarizes the key notions, principles and processes as well as the strengths and weaknesses of the three major theoretical positionings discussed thus far.

Table 1. Summary of Theoretical Positionings

	[Cultural] Hybridization	**Transculturation**	**Civic Pluralism**
Key Notions	non-hegemonic resistance movement(s); multiple identity positions create opportunities to negotiate differences across cultures	the interplay of political and economic forces; multiple identifications shaped through the interaction and exchange of information and ideas	a state of pre-political activity; acts of identifications and associations are voluntary
Principles and Processes **Focuses on:**	▪ the dimensionality of culture ▪ the process of cultural interpretation	▪ the flow of culture, ideas and experiences ▪ the process of globalization	▪ the influences of geography, ethnicity, religion and cultural attributes ▪ the process of voluntary association

Comparison of: **Strengths and Challenges**	▪ may offer a location for resistance, protest, tolerance and pluralism ▪ implies the existence of boundaries, margins and limits ▪ may essentialize or marginalize acts of identifications	▪ allows for a transgression of boundaries – real or imagined ▪ allows for multiple identity positions through flexibility, creativity and fluidity ▪ may not necessarily incorporate political agency	▪ encourages dialogue and discourse as a communicative action ▪ allows for multiple identity positions through active listening, dialogue and respect ▪ may unintentionally marginalize individuals within collectives

2.4 Identity Formation as Democratization

Interconnected to the social and the cultural, the narrative model of identity includes a search for political agency. The narrative, or the voice, representing multiple acts of identifications becomes a tool for struggle as well as for recognition. If interpreted as narrative for inclusive political communication, voice serves "to explain meanings and experiences when groups do not share premises sufficiently to proceed with an argument" (Young, 2000, p. 7). Identities or acts of identification open up the possibility for individuals to take into account lived experiences to further pursue political goals as a collective.

Returning to the multi-axial perspective of identity formation as power mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, it is imperative to move the processes of identity formation within the narrative model of identity to their possible practical applications – specifically, to their roles in the process of democratization as it pertains to both individual and collective subjectivities. Brah situates this discussion as thus:

> A multi-axial performative conception of power highlights the ways in which a group constituted as a 'minority' along one dimension of differentiation may be constructed as a 'majority' along another. And since all these markers of

> 'difference' represent articulating and performative facets of power, the 'fixing' of collectivities along any singular axis is called seriously into question...individual subjects may occupy 'minority' and 'majority' positions simultaneously, and this has important implications for the formation of subjectivity (2003, p. 622).

The influence of processes of identity formation on democratic processes within a civil society are situated in revised liberal democratic theory in which the plural identifications of the collective emerge to accommodate collective differences while simultaneously honouring individual identifications (Kymlicka, 2002a). Arguing consistently that culture and identity embody interests that are pertinent to freedom and equality, the primary principles of liberal democracies, he stresses that it is crucial to differentiate between minority rights that are restrictive to individual rights and those that are supplemental to individual rights (Kymlicka, 1989, 1995, 2002a, 2002b; Kymlicka & Cohen-Almagor, 2000; Kymlicka & Opalski, 2001). Supplemental individual rights are further divided into rights based on internal restrictions and external protections. Internal restrictions result when individual members of a group make claims against their own group members. External protections, on the other hand, characterize group claims against the larger – perhaps more dominant – society. A group can become destabilized if individual members choose not to follow the traditions and norms of the group thus resulting in an internal restriction. A minority group trying to protect itself from the economic or political pressures of the dominant group in society is trying to protect itself externally (Kymlicka, 1995, 2002a). Identity formation, then, is threatened as external protections flow from conflict between groups. In other words, inter-group power relations set a minority group based on cultural, ethnic, religious or other social associations against that of the dominant power group, including other minority groups.

Positioning the theoretical underpinnings of identity formation processes as they relate to inter-group relations in Kosovo in particular requires recognition that historical, geopolitical and demographic struggles strongly influence the politics of recognition at play. The interpretation of the nature of inter-group relations, however, has been analysed and applied to several countries in East and Central Europe (Kymlicka & Opalski, 2001). Although acknowledging that inter-group relations are often highly politicized due to perceived misunderstandings and affronts, Kymlicka negates the importance for members of the dominant group to understand the lived experiences of the individuals of the minority group (2001). Dismissing these perceptions and lived experiences negates the effects of individual identities on the composition of a collective identity.

Furthering this theorization, other scholars conclude that inter-group conflict is the result of either territorial disputes (Jovanović, 2002) or extreme forms of nationalism (Kemp, 2002) as evidenced in the following statement: "(t)he 'we' is the dominant national group...members of minorities either assimilate, carve out their own niche...stick to themselves, or leave" (p. 2). Leaving little space for a negotiation of identifications, Kemp assumes that the dichotomy between majority and minority positionings within society is arbitrary and unavoidable in that a minority group in a society is composed of the weakest and the most threatened individuals banding together in political futility. Not acknowledging the coercive effects of power differentials risks subsuming or denying an identity, a risk that invites "cultural domination, non-recognition, and disrespect" (Kiss, 1999, p. 198).

Mis-recognition (the misapplication of identifications) and non-recognition (the unwillingness to recognize identifications) are two distinctions that Fraser outlines in her discussion of the negative impact of power on minority identifications (2000). Injustices

relegated to the cultural and the symbolic characterize the former whereas practices of cultural domination relating to non-egalitarian institutional practices pertain to the latter.

Revising her argument to include a third dimension to understand the politics of recognition as they affect identity formation, Fraser elaborates the role of the cultural and the symbolic by including the significance of the political in struggles of recognition. She explains that "what is at issue here is inclusion in, or exclusion from, the community of those entitled to make justice claims on one another" (Fraser, 2005, p. 75). Political boundaries of a community may exclude those who have the right to be represented and heard in a civil society. In short, the willingness of collectivities to recognize and respect the identifications of its own individuals and collectivities emerges from the processes of identity formation as they relate to the social and the cultural followed by subsequent political goals related to the multiple identifications.

2.5 Concluding Thoughts

The narrative model of identity presupposes that identity formation reflects the postmodern tenets of fluidity and fragmentation, performance and strategy, in order for individuals to negotiate multiple identifications. *Identity within hybridization* pertaining to the real or the imaginary is based on the idea of *being the other.* Acts of identifications run on two parallels: "on the level of the imaginary, you identify with a specific object you want to be, whereas on the level of the symbolic, you also identify with the gaze...creating the field in which identification takes place" (Ditchev, 2002, p. 236). Cultural hybridity theory seeks to create discursive space in the margins – the liminal space – where the two subjectivities intersect.

Moving along the continuum of identity formation, *identity within transculturation* takes into account the forces that bring the global to the local. Unwilling to essentialize identities, proponents of transculturalism speak to the cultural and social flows that construct notions of belonging and acts of identifications. Transcultural identifications are "shaped by discourse" and "draw the attention to power relations in which identity is embedded" to create new positionings or acts of identification (Hoerder et al., 2005, p. 16).

The third process of identity formation is that of *identity within civic pluralism.* The social and cultural realm in which individuals are free to voluntarily choose, without fear or reprisal, associations to which they wish to belong, characterizes the primary principles of civil society. Civic pluralism is thus the ability to choose and engage in multiple identifications in a common "space of uncoerced human association" (Eberly, 2000, p. 7). Although conceding that all acts of identifications may not lead to associations forming collectives, civil society attempts to uphold egalitarian practices. Fissures cracking through civil society, however, threaten to rupture into competing claims of identifications. Gendered identifications are neither voluntary nor inherently egalitarian given the fact that "even when the category [civil society] has been made more welcoming towards women, the problems that generate it still derive from a nonfeminist agenda" (Phillips, 2002, p. 73).

Identity formation as democratization is a practical application of the formation of identity on democratic processes and the understanding of minority and majority collectives. An alternate level of interpretation of identity-building put forth by Ditchev is epitomized by the realm of symbolism. The gaze of the subject on the object (Ditchev, 2002) implies intrusive observation and opposition. *The other* is not just in an oppositional stance but assumes a stance of naming the objects within its gaze. In an effort to comprehend the processes by

which neighbours become enemies, Ignatieff denies the claim that the nationalist wars of the 1990s in Yugoslavia stemmed from tribal hatreds and past hostilities (1998). Instead, he purports that the various ethno-national groups were engaged in a *minor narcissism of difference* claiming that characteristics that once seemed less important to discern identities become the minor differences or divisive factors of warring ethnic factions (p. 56). In other words, the personal dimension of the imaginary takes on increasing symbolic power for which acts of identifications become more pronounced and dichotomous. Such fissures further the fragmentation of a collective identity as they inversely give more credence to the cultural rather than the common civic and political sphere of identifications.

The interpretation of the process of identity formation as it relates to the Kosovo context will be discussed in Chapter Five where glimpses into the omnipresent forces shaping acts of identifications in Kosovar educators are revealed. Whether identities are characterized as essentialized, transcultural or civic are relevant to the lived experiences of participating educators in Kosovo and the future autonomy of the region.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGICAL DESIGN AND ISSUES

> They say a draft of a sonnet can't be squeezed out of memory's decay. Well, perhaps. But that would be a bitter image. I can only say: silence interests me less than the imperfect passion of a word, from which a seed explodes into flower. Channeling the delirious vows of strangers, the century's bodies and souls, into the aqueduct of language: I know in my blood that this is not in vain (Debeljak, 1999d, p. 25).

3.1 Introduction

Silence holds its mythological power in the tension between the said and the unsaid, perhaps in the world of thought. It is the said and the spoken, however that morph the world of thought into the world of living, understanding and experience. Imperfect or not, a word emotes to the listener an image that is constituted of the remnants of the experience it is trying to recall. This calling upon the word from individual narratives through the vehicle of voice, interlaced imperfect passions through re-interpreted words/worlds with which participants pieced together their stories. The primary purpose of this chapter is to outline the methodological paradigm, processes, and mechanics of evoking such narratives to harness the voices that represent truth and haunt memories.

3.1.1 Purpose of the Study

Set within a quest for autonomy and inclusivity in post-conflict Kosovo, this study inquires into the forces of cultural pluralism and its effects on minority group rights, recognition and civic identity formation of educators who are professionally responsible for preparing young people to accept one another and to learn to live together. In order to do so, I examine the lived experiences of Kosovar Albanians and Kosovar Serbs who are involved in educational practices and who have experienced oppressive ethnicized forces in the past decade.

3.1.2 Significance of the Study

Examining the phenomena of multiple identity formation among educators in a post-conflict situation is expected to be of both theoretical and practical importance to the researcher, the participants, the research community and society at large. Engaging with identity narratives of educators in Kosovo is likely to offer insight into the realities of their lived experiences. The interpretation of these realities is expected to permit an exploration of the notion of inclusivity in a post-conflict society as it relates to the processes of multiple identifications.

The findings are likely to contribute to understandings of the influences and processes of identity formation in post-conflict and post-communist societies. Given that this topic has not been researched extensively, the findings would be of interest to citizenship theory, multicultural theory, educational policy makers and international education in the areas of minority group rights, pluralism and social justice.

3.2 The Research Paradigm

This qualitative research takes up an interpretive paradigmatic approach to the phenomena of ethno-cultural and civic identity formation in post-conflict contexts, through the study of narratives of lived experiences by means of open-ended interviews. The ontological question of the nature of a lived experience and its narrative presentation originates from phenomenological theoretical grounding (Creswell, 1998). "Emphasizing the fundamental place of consciousness" (Fawcett & Hearn, 2004, p. 205) requires an analysis of values and assumptions of the participants and of the researcher.

Worldview assumptions are paradigmatically encompassed in the question of the nature of reality. For those who have experienced oppressive forces in their lifetimes, voice and language are a means by which to express their quest for understanding. Simply seeking

to understand the essence of a lived experience, as purported by phenomenological research (Creswell, 1998; Moustakas, 1994), falls short of the quest for understanding the social and cultural actions that have contributed to the formation and evolution of lived experience. Confronting the social and cultural realities that blend and fuse through the processes of memory, recollection and storytelling, Bateson suggests that:

> [i]t has become commonplace to speak of the discomfort that occurs on meeting members of another culture as 'culture shock,' but the same experience can occur in rediscoveries of the self...in severe culture shock, one may feel that one is going insane. Yet everyone has traveled to wondrous places, and most of us lack the words to tell the tale or even to remember it (1994, p. 58).

A case in point, the words of Debeljak, however imperfect, help us to overcome the cultural shock and move into the process of struggle from which memories will be summoned to create a narrative journey of re-discovery.

3.2.1 Narrative Research

Stemming from the human rights movement, narrative research seeks to give voice to the disenfranchised. The recounting of personal stories serves not only as a simple tool for telling but as a tool by which identities can be shaped, formed and created through telling (Rosenwald & Ochberg, 1992a). Investigating lived experience necessitates a methodological approach that permits and encourages the "reflective structure of human consciousness" (p. 341).

Exploring the phenomena of acts of identifications in educators in post-conflict Kosovo requires an in-depth analysis of the inner realities of individuals who are prepared to verbalize experiences that may have been traumatic or oppressive. The nature of narrative analysis implies that only those people whose lived experiences are relevant to the issue

being investigated should be approached. Lieblich et al. (1998) explain that "narrative methods can be considered 'real-world measures' that are appropriate when 'real-life problems' are investigated" (p. 5).

Narrative analysis, as a methodological approach, invites individuals to narrate experiences in their lives which help them reconstruct and re-interpret past events resulting in claims about their personal and narrative identities. Riessman believes that individuals narrativize lived experiences which represent "a breach between ideal and real, self and society" (1993, p. 3). Therefore, a narrative approach to examining the phenomena of pluralities among educators lends itself to a narrative reading and analysis in order to assert the interconnectivity between subjectivity and identity.

3.2.1.1 Ethics of Doing Narrative Research

Before engaging in the narrative research, ethical clearance for this study was approved by the Conjoint Faculties Research Ethics Board at the University of Calgary (see Appendix A for *Certification of Institutional Ethics Review*). Although informed consent is mandatory before engaging in studies with human subjects, such consent fails to encompass the vulnerability of the participant and the sensitivity to the phenomenon being investigated. Although Josselson asserts that the emotionality of a narrative disappears once it is committed to a written format, literature teaches us otherwise (1996). Written words and narratives continue to evoke emotions for readers and writers alike. Thus, the reading and analysis of the narrative text continues and may strengthen with each additional reading for the interpreter of that text.

Despite the fact that the main goal of the researcher is to understand and pay attention to the phenomena re-appearing and emerging from narrative text, the limitations of

conducting narrative research must be considered as the *first ethical issue.* Issues of exposure and vulnerability are prevalent in situations in which narratives weave in and around episodes of the past involving intense feelings and emotions. Even after participants are given the opportunity to revisit transcripts of their narrative interviews, fears of exposure may remain. Pseudonyms may only slightly veil an individual's identity (Chase, 1996).

A *second ethical issue* is that of the researcher's vulnerability. For the participants, telling their story gives them a sense of agency so that they can "make something of the experience and, thereby, of oneself" (Ochberg, 1996, p. 98) especially in narratives where instances of oppression are recounted. Even though the participants may have internally grappled with their own narratives as well, once the narrative was voiced, many participants audibly expressed relief at having had the opportunity to engage in an emotional or psychological release. As the researcher and interpreter of these narratives, however, I continued to struggle long after the interviews concluded as I relived the experiences of my participants. Each reading of the narrative and each interpretation pulled me into a deeper understanding of the experience being examined. McCormack states that "stories are most instructive when they are most personal; however, this is also the time when the owners of the stories are most vulnerable" (2004, p. 233). To further this observation, the ethical researcher becomes most vulnerable once the narrative interview has ended. It is at this juncture that the interplay of interpretation and analysis seeks to unravel the positioning and relationship of the researcher to the narrative itself. At this point, the researcher risks engaging in feelings of empathy and sympathy as the narrative voice [un]wittingly seeks to envelop and summon the researcher into the narrative. The ability of the researcher to step back and remain neutral while listening actively to the narratives allows for later unbiased analysis and interpretation.

3.3 The Role of the Researcher

The nature of narrative research implies a participatory role for the researcher. As the individual begins to weave throughout his or her lived experiences and strives to express the emotions, thoughts and inner realities of those lived experiences, the researcher as listener becomes enveloped in words and voices. Used as a persuasive device, the narrator tries "to convince others, and themselves, to take a particular view of their lives" (Ochberg, 1996, p. 97). By understanding the role of persuasiveness in narrative discourse, I became more attuned to my positioning in relation to the participant, the narrative, and my emotional and intellectual responses (C. McCormack, 2004). In other words, entering the phenomenological world of the participant created a hermeneutic space in which I could also experience the narrative of their lived experiences, but, at all times, my role as narrative interpreter required me to "constantly question, doubt, and look for gaps, contradictions, silences and the unsaid" (Lieblich, Tuval-Mashiach, & Zilber, 1998, p. 166).

Having had professional contact with all the participants prior to the commencement of the narrative interviews posed both advantageous and disadvantageous positioning. During the Milošević era, the Croatian and Slovenian governments protested the treatment of the Albanian population under the Serbian oppression (Pula, 2004; Silber & Little, 1995). Being aware of my Croatian heritage, both Albanian and Serb participants accepted my presence in their narrative journeys. As such, my Croatian heritage indirectly suggested an alliance with the Albanian independence movement. Several of the Albanian participants insinuated that Croatians and Albanians together would fight the Serbian oppression. Likewise, the Serb participants grasped onto my heritage by subsuming me into their heritage. Not only within the Kosovar Serb community but in Serbia proper as well

comments such as the following were constant: "You are a Croat. Croats and Serbs are both Slavs. You are one of us." Not revealing whether or not I agreed with these assumptions, I acknowledged that this acceptance with those research participants of Serbian background may have contributed to a greater level of openness.

Gaining entry into the research site and acceptance as a researcher were both key elements to my role as a researcher. As the narratives gained momentum and became entwined in discussions of identity, my Balkan heritage was pushed to the side as participants focused more on my role as an international in the Kosovar context. Speaking about the tensions in their identity formation, my role as a researcher morphed under a disadvantageous light. At times when blame or anger was expressed at the international community for its role in Kosovo, I absorbed accusations and recriminations as an international. Shedding light on this experience, Mandelbaum advises that "when the reproachable event is recounted in story form, recipients…can be co-participants in the production of what the storytelling means and thus in the production of the reproach (1993, p. 262). This interactional construction of reality intimates that, as an active listener, my interpretation is a process of linking the world of the participants to the world of my understanding, a "re-contextualization" of the lived experiences and a transformation of the researcher as listener to the researcher as audience and co-author (Mandelbaum, 1993). This same struggle is echoed by McCormack who warns the researcher against writing out his/her own experiences with the narrative during the phases of research analysis and interpretation, yet at the same time being mindful of not colonizing the re-telling of the participants' narratives (2004). The embodiment of my own experiences with the narratives contributes to rather than devalues the evolution of the narrative.

3.4 Research Site

All research participants were interviewed in Prishtina, Kosovo at a location chosen by the participants in order to ensure their comfort, safety and privacy. As the largest city in Kosovo and the center of political and economic power, Prishtina was chosen as a research site because the main campus of the University of Prishtina and the central offices of the majority of non-governmental agencies reside there. While my professional work took place around Kosovo, Prishtina remained the center of activity because of my frequent traveling. Like many campus towns and political centers, residents of Prishtina choose to work in the city but commute to their hometowns every weekend to spend time with families and relatives. Therefore, most interviews took place after work so as not to interfere with familial responsibilities on the weekends.

In addition to the ease of research organization, Prishtina attracts the most highly educated and literate individuals of Kosovar society who find employment with international organizations, donor agencies and the University of Prishtina thereby making the potential pool of participants both accessible and valuable in terms of teaching and work experience in educational institutions.

In terms of a valid research setting, I was familiar with the location, work and goals of the participants' institutions. However, my lack of language skills in Albanian prevented researcher bias to some extent as I was unable to read print media or understand news casts that reported daily on many of the activities taking place within these institutions. When considering the familiarity of researchers with the research setting, Hanson contradicts the belief of many researchers that research must take place in a setting in which the researcher is a stranger (1994). She observes that "it is essential for the researcher to have some

knowledge and understanding of the research setting to be able to carry out pertinent research effectively" (p. 941). Through my professional work, I had knowledge of the research setting but was not familiar enough to be considered a researcher who has gone native (Field & Morse, 1985) thereby not entirely incorporating the values of the participants. Nonetheless, living and working in Kosovo for a prolonged period has undoubtedly been infused into my own lived experiences. My own lived experiences have had profound effects on my own role as researcher and educator.

3.5 Collecting and Gathering Narrative Data

Since data for this study were collected in a two-month period in which I was not located full-time in Kosovo, time was of the utmost importance in terms of scheduling interviews with participants. Therefore, in order to investigate the real-life problem of engaging in the democratization of education and the inclusion of minorities, it is necessary to hear the narrative life-stories of those who were directly involved in these educational practices. The majority of my work in Kosovo was conducted in the English language although my work with the Serbian minority in Kosovo was largely conducted bilingually; an English-Serbian interpreter was available at all times. Albanian, on the other hand, is a language with which I have little familiarity, aside from rudimentary phrases and words.

The design of this study incorporated the language and time restrictions leading to a decision to interview only participants who were proficient in English. Given my years of experience in teaching English as a Second Language, I relied on my ability to assess an individual's oral competencies and abilities to communicate main ideas and nuances.

3.5.1 Instruments

Two types of instruments were central to this study: a *Demographic Profile Form* (see Appendix B) and an unstructured, open-ended, in-depth interview. Both are described in the subsequent sections.

3.5.1.1 The Demographic Profile

The demographic profile form solicited basic information, including gender, educational experience, age, and ethnicity as well as their teaching and work experiences, useful for the analysis and interpretation of the interviews. The participants were invited to sign the consent form and complete the demographic profile form before the onset of the interview.

3.5.1.2 Interviewing Techniques

In order to describe and research the lived experiences of Kosovar Albanians and Kosovar Serbs who live within cultural pluralities, this qualitative study entailed a narrative and interpretive description of the meanings of lived experiences of several individuals as well as an exploration into the structures of consciousness of human experiences. These lived experiences, therefore, had to be deemed fundamental to the understanding of cultural pluralities, or identifications, for the participants. As such, a *Script for Presentation of Project to Participants* was read to the research participants prior to the commencement of the interview (see Appendix C) and an opportunity was given for the participants to ask any clarifying questions about the interview topic.

Open-ended interview questions were the most appropriate for this research study. An unstructured interview allows for the flexibility of the participants to engage in personal expression and an exploration of their lived experiences while simultaneously creating a space for the researcher to tentatively direct the narrative interview so that it remains

focused on the discussion of relevant themes. An open-ended format, moreover, permits the conversation to dwell on a specific theme while allowing the narrator to provide the content and details (Bernard, 1994). Accurately illustrating a theory of interpretation that can be applied to interpreting narrative interviews, Eco states:

> In other words, the author offers the interpreter, the performer, (...) a work to be completed...It will not be a different work, and, at the end of the interpretative dialogue, a form which is his form will have been organized, even though it may have been assembled by an outside party in a particular way that he could not have foreseen (1989, p. 19).

Therefore, the narrative interview provides a stable yet flexible structure upon which an open-ended work can be produced. The act of interpreting the interview is itself an interpretative form that may have been shaped differently by another interviewer since it is proposed that reality cannot be interpreted linearly but instead abstractly.

All interviews were recorded simultaneously using a micro-cassette recorder and a digital voice recorder with a built-in microphone. Interviews took place in a location chosen by the participants and were never in a public place. Interviews took at least 90 minutes and on average lasted two hours.

3.5.2 Classification and Organization of Interview Data

Once all interviews were concluded, I transcribed them word for word consciously choosing not to engage an external transcriber so as to be able to delve even deeper into the inner realities of the participants through their voices. Although time-consuming, I chose not to use any software programs to aid in the classification and organization of themes. Understanding from the narrative research literature (Josselson, Lieblich, & McAdams, 2003; Lieblich et al., 1998; J. McCormack & Alexander, 1997; Riessman, 1993) that no one way of approaching narrative data is advocated, I chose to enter the narrative worlds of the research

participants in as much depth as possible. The similarity that does exist in the process of narrative analysis is that of representing an experience through reflection, attending to the experience through a stream of consciousness, telling about the experience through dialogical conversations and interviews, transcribing the experience, analyzing the experience using different ideological and philosophical lenses and finally reading the experience for what is said and unsaid (Riessman, 1993).

Wanting to remain as close to the data as possible, I took into consideration that data analysis would be shortened if I employed a software program designed to search for keywords or alternatively if I chose to transcribe only certain sections of the interviews. However, believing in the importance of the entire interview context as outlined by the research participant, I theorized that the narrative interview had to be accepted as a whole, as an *open work* (Eco, 1989). As such, the written transcriptions underwent several readings in which I became enveloped in the worlds of the Kosovar Albanian and Kosovar Serb participants. Each reading represented a wave of interpretation and re-interpretation. Emergent themes began to reveal themselves and slowly a network of connections divulged the identities/identifications of living in a cultural plurality. These emergent themes were then classified in chart form in my own notes.

3.5.2.1 Categorical-Content Perspectives and Narrative Analysis

The *categorical-content* approach is the most appropriate for a narrative that is being analyzed for themes that emerge from a whole (Lieblich et al., 1998). This contrasts with a *holistic-content* approach which is the choice for biographical accounts of life stories. The categorical-content approach engages the interpreter of the narrative into a contextualization of the narrative. A categorical lens is then directed to the content and emergent thematic patterns

are revealed and further analyzed in relation to the theoretical or ideological framework being proposed.

A categorical-content approach can be adopted "when the researcher is primarily interested in a problem or a phenomenon shared by a group of people" (Lieblich et al., 1998, p. 12), which is the case for the educators' narratives set in post-conflict Kosovo. Classifying and organizing a narrative story categorically relates to pertinent experiences related to instances of oppression in educational experiences, a description of hybrid or civic states of identity and questions about the future of Kosovar identity. Categorical-content categorization emphasizes periods of importance rather than chronological events.

3.5.3 Methods for Verification

Once the interview finished, I began transcriptions immediately. Not knowing the patterns that would emerge from the data, I chose to transcribe all interviews word for word. As I transcribed the audio-taped interviews, clarifying questions were formulated and sent to participants to be answered. Using strategies of triangulation, I invited participants to review their narratives for comprehension, accuracy of description, additions and omissions (C. McCormack, 2004). Some chose to reply with written responses and others chose to meet me a second time and give verbal responses. Those who responded with amendments were sent a second version of the transcript so as to ensure that the amendment was indeed accurate.

The final narrative signifies "the outcomes of a series of reconstructions" (p. 220). The initial reconstruction is the recollection of the lived experiences and their description to the researcher followed by the reconstruction of these experiences by the researcher who transcribes, analyzes and interprets them. Waves of reconstruction occur each time the

narrative is read inasmuch as its transformative effect alludes to the multiplicity of perspectives, truths, voices and meanings (C. McCormack, 2004).

3.5.3.1 Validation and Trustworthiness

Traditional criteria for the verification of quantitative research, reliability and validity (Hammersley, 1992; Mishler, 1990) are problematic when applied to narrative studies (Riessman, 1993) in that narratives are personal and interpretive in nature. Narrative research, instead, adheres to the criteria of transferability, dependability and confirmability within qualitative research (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). The interpretation of a lived reality exists only in the acceptance that the narrative is a discourse in which a historical truth is equated with a point of view. Therefore, it is neither the reliability nor the validity of these narrative truths that must be verified but the validation and trustworthiness of their content.

Validation of narrative truths does not imply a measure by which the degree of truthfulness or plausibility of a narrative can be ascertained. Credible accounts in narrative inquiry are characterized as having consensual validation. In other words, the exchange of perceptions and conclusions are validated in the research community as well as among informed individuals (Lieblich et al., 1998) is of the utmost relevance. Therefore, a narrative truth is one that is deemed to have corroborative evidence in the literature as well as significant personal truth and importance.

Trustworthiness is the process by which a personal truth lays claim to the social world whereas validation refers to the process of making our interpretations and claims to truth trustworthy (Riessman, 1993). For the purposes of this study, the categorical-content perspective of narrative study "focuses on the content of narratives as manifested in separate parts of the story, irrespective of the context of the complete story" (Lieblich et al., 1998, p.

12). In other words, a narrative journey does not necessarily begin at the beginning but instead weaves in and out of memories and interpretations of personal events. A life story, or a lived experience, in this study is related to pertinent oppressive educational experiences. The narrative journey touches periods of importance rather than chronological events in a past.

Validation and trustworthiness yield coherence in the narratives (Lieblich et al., 1998), the conceptualization of an interpreted and lived experience. The ability to play this conceptualization against extant theories and research determines whether or not a narrative journey has revealed patterns in the data that have undergone the process of validation in order to become trustworthy data.

3.6 Participants in the Research Project

After issuing approximately thirty invitations to participate in this study, I selected fifteen individuals to participate. As mentioned earlier, due to fears of reprisal from authorities, two participants withdrew their participation prior to the commencement of the interview. An additional two participants had scheduling conflicts and were unable to meet with me within the time allotted for the collection of data. I revoked the invitation to a fifth individual after I realized that she had not been truthful about the criteria for residency. Of the initial fifteen invited individuals, ten individuals participated.

3.6.1 Recruitment of Participants

The original design of this narrative study specified a group of six to twelve educators. Of the twelve research participants, two were of ethnic Serbian ethnicity and ten were of ethnic Albanian ethnicity.

I electronically circulated a *Letter of Invitation* to teachers, teacher trainers, project workers on educational projects and university instructors with whom I came into contact through my own professional work in Kosovo (see Appendix D). At times, I approached individuals in person and invited them to consider sharing their stories. Participants were invited to share their lived experiences in narrative interviews if they matched the following participant profile:

- Adult males or females engaged in educational practice in Kosovo;
- Individuals who have been residing in Kosovo for the last five years (i.e., ethnic Albanians or Serbs from Kosovo);
- Individuals who are able to communicate proficiently in English or Serbo-Croatian;
- Individuals who have experienced (or believe themselves to have experienced) the phenomena of cultural hybridity; and
- Individuals who can articulate these experiences in a narrative form.

Prior to the interview appointment, a *Summary of Project* was given to the participants so as to familiarize them with the scope of the study and the phenomena being studied (see Appendix E). As narrative interviews are lengthy in principle, this document served as a starting point from which their narratives could unfold (Riessman, 1993). Clarifying questions were posed about the meaning of cultural hybridity theory and after a discussion with illustrative examples, the *Consent Form* as approved by the Conjoint Faculties Research Ethics Board at the University of Calgary (see Appendix E) was presented for review.

3.6.2 Participant Profiles

3.6.2.1 Demographic Profiles of Research Participants

Ten individuals, five males and five females, participated in this study. In regards to ethnicity, seven participants identified themselves as ethnic Albanians, two as ethnic Serbs and one participant identified himself as Albanian-Bosnian. All participants are over the age of consent and are currently residing and working in Prishtina, Kosovo. At the time of this study, two participants were enrolled in undergraduate programs and the remaining participants had completed their undergraduate degrees with one participant having completed a graduate degree. At the time of the interviews, several of the participants either had already begun graduate degrees or were in the process of applying to graduate schools.

The following table summarizes the demographic profile of each participant. The ages and levels of education represented in Table 2 may have changed from the time of the interviews.

Table 2. Demographic Profile of Research Participants

Code Name	Gender	Ethnicity	Age	Degree Held	Teaching Experience	Other Relevant Work Experience
Beli	Male	Albanian	28	MEd	English instructor, university	In-service and pre-service teacher training (NGO)
Gjon	Male	Albanian	28	MEd in progress	English teacher , private elementary school	Coordinating English classes for a library
Anesa	Female	Albanian	42	MEd in progress	English teacher, vocational high school	In-service teacher training (NGO)
Dita	Female	Albanian	27	MEd in progress	English teacher, language center	Child-friendly programs in

					and public elementary school	schools (NGO)
Vjosa	Female	Albanian	28	BA in progress	None	Coordinating educational initiatives (NGO)
Tanja	Female	Serbian	47	BA	None	Coordinating educational initiatives (NGO)
Tim	Male	Albanian	27	MEd in progress	English instructor, university	English translator and interpreter (NGO)
Ramush	Male	Albanian/ Bosnian	29	BA in progress	Practicum teaching	Coordinating educational initiatives (NGO)
Sanja	Female	Serbian	30	BA	English teacher, public elementary school	In-service teacher training; English translator and interpreter (NGO)
Diar	Male	Albanian	34	BA	English teacher, public elementary school	In-service teacher training; coordinating educational initiatives (NGO)

3.6.2.2 Descriptive Profiles of Research Participants

The descriptive profiles serve as a brief glimpse into what the participants have become, but the profiles do not accurately illustrate who these individuals are. As young educated professionals who are conversant in English as well as one or both of the other two official languages in Kosovo of Albanian and Serbian, all are employed with governmental or non-governmental organizations thereby moving them out of classrooms until the time that their work contracts expire. Some have combined this professional experience with teaching at the university-level or through teacher training programs. Although direct classroom

teaching was not an implicit pre-requisite to participation in this research study, the majority of participants mentioned that economic realities seduced them away from classroom teaching. The average salary for teachers in Kosovo is approximately 200 Euros per month. International agencies, on the other hand, offer competitive salaries based on education and language proficiency (OECD, 2003).

The participant profiles are presented in the order that they were interviewed and do not represent any other hierarchical structure.

3.6.2.2.1 Beli (male, Albanian, 28)

An Albanian male who completed his Bachelor of Education at the University of Prishtina, Beli is currently working as a professor of English Language and Literature. He was born and raised in a small town located on the Kosovo-Serbia border moving to Prishtina to attend university. In addition to his teaching experience, Beli has worked as a project assistant for in-service and pre-service teacher training as well as the European Union.

3.6.2.2.2 Gjon (male, Albanian, 28)

Having completed his university education in Prishtina with a Bachelor of Arts in English, Gjon, an Albanian male, is using his education to teach privately and at the National Library in Prishtina. Soon after graduating with his degree, though, he spent two years as a classroom instructor contributing to the parallel system that had schooled him throughout his primary and secondary years.

3.6.2.2.3 Anesa (female, Albanian, 42)

Anesa is a female Albanian who completed her university degree in English language and literature at the University of Prishtina in 1986, approximately five years prior to the establishment of the parallel system. When the Serbian authorities dismissed Anesa along

with other Albanian teachers in a widespread dismissal in 1991, Anesa continued to teach her students in private homes and then returned to the same school when Albanians regained control of school buildings. Because of her English skills, Anesa joined an international educational project focusing on social development issues.

3.6.2.2.4 Dita (female, Albanian, 27)

Dita is an Albanian woman born in a village near Prishtina moving to the city at the age of nine. Before graduating with her degree in English language and literature in 1997, she began teaching adults for a private language school. Preferring teaching children to adults, she now divides her time between English classes in a primary school and an international non-governmental organization that provides teacher training to minority groups in Kosovo.

3.6.2.2.5 Vjosa (female, Albanian, 28)

Vjosa, an Albanian female, focuses her narrative experiences as a student in the parallel educational system and her pedagogical studies at the University of Prishtina. As a project worker for an international educational project, much of her experiences with training are work related.

3.6.2.2.6 Tanja (female, Serbian, 47)

One of two Kosovar Serb participants, Tanja is a female born in Serbia proper. Moving to Kosovo at a young age with her family, Tanja learned Albanian fluently and graduated from the University of Prishtina with a degree in English language and literature one year before the beginning of the parallel system. Making a conscious decision not to pursue classroom teaching, Tanja contributes to education in Kosovo by working on educational projects that access the Kosovar Serb community.

3.6.2.2.7 Tim (male, Albanian, 27)

Working on his post-secondary studies while moving subversively from one private house to another during the parallel system, Tim, an Albanian male, completed his university education in English language and literature after returning as a refugee from Macedonia. Upon graduation, he joined the newly-formed Faculty of Education at the University of Prishtina and began teaching English language and literature using a learner-centered approach.

3.6.2.2.8 Ramush (male, Albanian/Bosnian, 29)

Growing up in a mixed family of Bosnian and Albanian heritage but preferring to identify himself as an Albanian only, Ramush dropped out of classes when he entered middle school during the parallel system. Drawing upon his varied linguistic skills, Ramush secured a position with an international educational project and subsequently enrolled in English language studies in the Faculty of Education at the University of Prishtina.

3.6.2.2.9 Sanja (female, Serbian, 30)

The second of two Kosovar Serb participants is Sanja. Coming from Belgrade to attend the University of Prishtina and not seeing the importance of learning Albanian, Sanja continued her studies with a Serbian faculty in the department of English. After the NATO campaign, Sanja returned to Kosovo to teach English in various Serbian enclaves. Having completed several teacher training programs, she moonlights as a teacher trainer in the same schools where she has been a classroom teacher.

3.6.2.2.10 Diar (male, Albanian, 34)

Diar, an Albanian male, graduated with a degree in English language and literature during the parallel system. Wanting to contribute back to the cause, Diar began teaching schoolchildren in his hometown approximately 80 kilometers from Prishtina from 1994 to 1999. Deciding

to move his family to Prishtina, he found employment as a teacher trainer with several non-governmental agencies.

3.6.3 Commonalities in Research Participants

Commonalities in demographic profile have emerged among all of the participants. Similarities in language proficiency, work experience and educational background suggest that the participants in this study are elite individuals within Kosovar society.

The United Nations Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) has utilized three official languages for all communication: English, Albanian and Serbian. English, unsurprisingly, has become the common and dominant language for communication in both the public and private spheres of Kosovar society. Understanding the oppressive influence of the Serbian language in the recent past, most Serbs and Albanians will choose to converse in English in professional settings. Knowledge of and proficiency in English among the research participants, in particular, has elevated from a basic level of comprehension and usage to an advanced professional level of competency.

The ability to communicate effectively in two or even three of the official languages has been advantageous for these research participants as their language skills translate into a direct competitive advantage in the labour market. All but one participant is currently or has recently worked with either governmental agencies and/or non-governmental organizations. It can be assumed that contact with the international community has had some impact on the identity formation of these individuals as they come into contact with alternate modes of thinking, analysis and perspectives. Thus, the ten participants represent an elite and unique segment of Kosovar society. Advanced degrees, high levels of English proficiency, and

association with the international community characterize these select participants in their multiple identifications.

3.6.4 Delimitations and Limitations

3.6.4.1 Languages of Inquiry

All ten research participants chose to conduct their interviews in English. At some point in each of the narratives, the Serbian language was incorporated even though only eight of the ten participants declared it on their *Demographic Profile Form* as a language spoken. Such instances of language switching are indicative of the establishment of familiarity and trust between researcher and research participant in a safe space without fear of reprisals or judgment. The assurance that pseudonyms would be used in interview transcriptions, the guarantee of anonymity, as well as awareness of my conversational competencies in the Serbian language, which is closely related to Croatian, my mother tongue, may have also influenced the use of code-switching.

Language switching was also used differently by the two groups of participants. The Albanian speakers used the Serbian language mainly to exemplify utterances of discrimination or exchanges of disparaging dialogues. For the Serbian speakers, the switch to the Serbian language was exercised mainly with vocabulary words that did not come easily in English. Thus, the narrative could flow without the need for clarification or explanation.

The primary use of English as the language of communication for the interviews served as a barrier for other monolingual Serbian speakers. Several individuals from the Kosovar Serb community who had expressed interest in participating in the research project later declined my invitation as they did not speak English at all. Trying to facilitate their participation, I inquired whether the use of an interpreter would alleviate this obstacle as I

feared that my limited conversational skills in the Serbian language may have been inadequate to grasp the nuances of the language. Declining this offer, many of these individuals explained that the sensitivities inherent in discussions of oppression and victimhood negated the use of a hired translator. Thus, a history of oppressive forces may have left indelible effects on potential participants. Jeopardizing the trust between researcher and participant if a third party was privy to the interview material was not a realistic option. An important factor in communication, language was a mitigating factor that should not have excluded such a large number of potential Kosovar Serbian research participants.

3.6.4.2 Fear of Authority

Throughout my work with the Kosovar Serb minority, I observed a tangible fear of authority on the part of the Kosovar Serb educators. Although never tacitly identified, *authority* referred to administrative officials in educational systems such as school directors and pedagogues who determined which trainings teachers could attend. Emphasizing the fact the my research was not officially being conducted as part of my professional duties as a teacher trainer, many Kosovar Serb educators worried about the potential of their administrative officials hearing of their collaboration with an *international.* Two examples illustrate this reality.

The first example is of a young Kosovar Serb who had agreed to take part in the research project after receiving the letter of invitation. However, this educator was not located in Prishtina but in a remote village in southern Kosovo bordering Albania and Macedonia. While trying to set up an interview time via the phone, he indicated that he would not consider traveling to the city as he was afraid of repercussions. Inquiring into the nature of these repercussions, the young educator explained that not speaking Albanian

would immediately identify him to the bus driver and other riders en route to Prishtina as a Serb. Having not entered Prishtina since before the NATO bombing campaign of 1999, he feared that the rumours of Albanian violence against the Serb minority would be realized in either discrimination or bodily harm. Unable to procure travel arrangements myself before leaving on a mission to Serbia ruled out the possibility of a face-to-face interview. My alternative suggestion of conducting the interview over the phone was also declined as he was unsure of who else might be listening to our conversation.

The fear of reprisal emerged a second time at the cusp of the commencement of an interview after work in a local coffee bar. This young professional was working with an international non-governmental organization on an educational initiative in one of the Serbian enclaves near Prishtina. After reviewing the *Summary of Project* document, a dialogue began about my own professional engagements in Kosovo ensued. Believing that I was creating a safe space for dialogue by conversing about my own work and workplace, I was shocked when this young man stood up and declared an end to an interview that hadn't yet started. When asked about his reasons for declining participation at this stage, he stated that he believed that I would not adequately listen to his story as I worked with too many Albanians and as such my bias as a researcher may have already been compromised. This experience served to heighten my awareness of the sensitivities involved and of the acute need to assure confidentiality and anonymity as well as to establish and maintain trust.

3.7 Concluding Thoughts

The draft of a sonnet, as poeticized by Debeljak at the beginning of this chapter, was the process by which I strove to harness the words and the silence of the participants as they narrated their journeys to me. Understanding the imperfect passion of the word requires a

surrendering to the voices of these individuals and an acceptance of their validity and truth. The meanings described, illustrated and conjured up by these voices will be revealed in the following chapter.

CHAPTER FOUR: PATTERNS IN THE DATA

> Yet you endure. You interrupt the world's monologue, its endless drone. You're the flickering snow on the screen, which is always on. The vault of the universe about you is crystal clear. The rest of us stare helplessly into the cold prison of the stars. We watch a finger rise from the flame flickering behind your back, which never consumes you. And on the arch of the sky the finger writes, tirelessly, "I am." (Debeljak, 1999c, p. 21).

4.1 Introduction

The imprint of what was considered reality is now no more than an echo, a murmur or a fleeting vision. In its place a vast and endless universe in which words that are etched in the sky open the opportunity to structure a new reality – a reconstructed image.

What follows in this chapter is an analysis of the narratives collected from both Kosovar Serb and Albanian educators. Little need existed for probing questions once the narrative began. Evoking their personal history from which they would start weaving their narrative, the educators took me along on their journey as an observer and sojourner in their experiences and thoughts. Questioning the semiotic interaction between the process of hearing and telling, Eco wonders:

> How does one bring the memory of past experiences to bear on a present experience? And how can this same process be translated into an act of communication between a verbal message and its recipient? (1989, p. 28)

Stories, narratives and experiences – are they always factual? Memory can be selective as to which memories need to be remembered and which suppressed. When memories are evoked, the subconscious may stress details that may at first seem insignificant but retain importance to the narrator or teller of the story (Lowenthal, 1985). The educators wove their stories about their experiences in the parallel school system of the 1990s in

Kosovo and the consequential effects these early experiences had on them as future proponents of democratic change within the Kosovar educational system today.

In order to describe and research the lived experiences of Kosovar Albanians and Serbs who live within a plurality of identifications, the narrative and interpretive descriptions dwell upon the meanings of lived experiences of these participants as well as explore the structures of consciousness of human experiences.

In this chapter, three broad patterns in the data are presented and analyzed: *schooling as passive resistance to oppression*, *the transformation of victim into oppressor*, and *the emergence of a civic identification.* The chapter concludes with a discussion of how identity formation of the participants reveals a changing state of being held in flux by their own volition as well as by the international community.

4.2 Emergent Patterns in the Data

In the metaphorical language of Debeljak, the evocation of memories of the past parallels the *enchanted gaze* of the *stunned witness.* What is created through this process of re-telling and re-experiencing is an *image of exile* in the minds of the participant and researcher alike. For the narrator, such imaging requires the suspension of present day realities to remember and interpret what becomes altered past realities. For the researcher as listener, narrated images can be gazed at and re-experienced through the lens of previous research and relevant literature. For the researcher as analyst, these images return, time and again, echoing in the ear and taking shape in the mind's eye. These narratives as corpus evolved as the researcher sought to identify meanings, themes and larger patterns, for subsequent analysis.

The first theme to emerge, *schooling as passive resistance to oppression* surfaced from the narratives to illustrate a movement of civil resistance within the institution of education. The

narrative journey for many participants began by returning to their earliest memories of schooling. Weaving past into present, participants moved the narratives to positions in the present social world in which they revealed a second theme, a *transformation from victim to potential oppressor.* This change rooted itself in the identity formation of some participants. With others, the transformative process continues to shift, wind and unravel along an open path to the future or stay rooted in an essentialized identification. The third pattern, therefore, is one that hints at *an emergent civic identification.* Cutting across the participants' entire experiences and thus across all three themes discussed in this chapter are the transversal themes of segregation and violence. As spatial and ethnic segregation are key components of inter-group forces of domination, it is important to observe how the participants become aware of the many ways in which they both experience oppression and resist it.

4.2.1 Schooling as Passive Resistance to Oppression

Keeping the spirit alive serves as the initial sub-theme of the participating educators who contributed to the civil resistance movement by teaching in the parallel system. Those participants who grew up and were educated in this parallel system, on the other hand, speak of a *thirst for knowledge.* Lacking fundamental resources in their classrooms, curriculum to learn and a safe space for learning contributed to the thirst for knowledge about a world that they feel was taken from them.

4.2.1.1 Keeping the Spirit Alive

> I was teaching at that time and of course it was a multicultural school…a multiethnic school where we had Serbs going to the same school as Albanians…it was somehow divided. It's not that people didn't talk to each other but somehow it was natural that Serbs would go one way in one corner and Albanians would take the other corner. And somehow I later

> realized that I was sitting...near the Serbian teachers' corner. And then I saw that some people were looking strangely at me asking a question. A silent question – like why are you sitting there (Anesa, Albanian, female).

The expulsion of Albanian primary and secondary schoolchildren, teachers and principals from all educational institutions in 1991 at the hands of the Serbian-controlled government negatively affected education (Demi, 1998; Pula, 2004). Speaking from the perspective of one of these expulsed educators, Anesa illustrates the invisible division between Serb and Albanian teachers within her own vocational school in Prishtina. Silently pondering Anesa's motivations for crossing an invisible line, her Albanian colleagues allude to a dichotomous space of opposition. Anesa's understanding of school space acknowledges the territorialization of two ethnic groups working within an educational and cultural space that is only physically shared. However, inherent in her description is a politics of recognition in that acts of identification are performative and ethnic. Although the school space is a shared public sphere in which competing ethno-cultural groups work, the private sphere of the staffroom is demarcated along ethnic lines, a fact that Anesa did not immediately recognize.

As one of the few research participants who had had teaching experience before the implementation of the parallel education system, Anesa's veiled surprise at the ethnic divisions within the realm of education was followed by her experiences as a parent sending her children into the underground system and her decision to continue teaching: "...no working conditions but it was more of keeping the spirit alive so it was not a qualitative education but it was something...it was something...". *Keeping the spirit alive* is a sentiment woven throughout Anesa's narratives and those of another research participant, Diar, who had also taught in the shadow system. Approximately five years after the establishment of

the parallel system, Diar was at the cusp of graduating from university and entering the system as a beginning teacher. He reflects:

> ...you go and teach and your first experience in a classroom is a room where there are mattresses around. There are no chairs and tables and nothing. You don't have any experience. You have nothing but you go there because you want to give some education to those kids...I was glad to see children grow and learn something and get registered and continue with their studies no matter the poor conditions (Diar, Albanian, male).

The parallel educational system became one of the more effective tools of passive resistance in the non-violent movement of Kosovar Albanians against Serbian oppression. Sacrificing for the good of the students and their future was deemed a respectable contribution to the non-violent resistance movement as it contributed to the cause – education as a means of resistance to oppression. As teachers, Anesa and Diar embraced a moral obligation to keep the spirit of education alive in the children they struggled to teach in makeshift conditions. In order to fully understand the decrepit conditions of these makeshift schools – basements in suburban houses or windowless rooms above a store shop - participants depicted schools as "you don't always have a seat for yourself so sometimes standing not manage [sic] to get into a classroom" (Beli, Albanian, male) or comparing classrooms to what existed centuries ago:

> Somebody released a space that you could use for opening a shop or supermarket and then he gave it...and brought some wooden seats. I had the opportunity to visit a historical university when I was in Spain and it was exactly those seats that university. It was the same...and that reminded me when we had our classes like how 500 years ago it was the same kind of seats (Vjosa, Albanian, female).

Travelling kilometres by foot to reach the hidden location of the school room, the young Kosovar Albanians risked their safety as they passed through security checkpoints manned

largely by the Serbian police. Keeping to small groups so as not to arouse suspicion, the participants recounted instances of fear and anxiety as they strove to reach their school location in time to get a seat on one of the few donated mattresses strewn across the floor. Young males especially recounted instances of terror as they were often stopped and questioned by the authorities about not enlisting in the Yugoslav army. Personal documents and identity papers were often left at home so as not to be confiscated by the authorities if they were escorted to the local police station.

4.2.1.2 A Thirst for Knowledge

Listening to the tales of terror coming from the memories of the research participants, dread and alarm coursed through my veins as I took notes during the interviews. Unable to equate these experiences of going to school with those that were pleasantly ensconced in my childhood memories, I wondered aloud about the motivational factors that urged these young Kosovar Albanians to continue risking their safety each day as they traversed the streets of Prishtina or other towns en route to the school sites that were so painstakingly concealed from the Serb authorities. What would motivate them to risk their lives in a situation that was edging closer and closer to wartime conditions?

Student demonstrations in October of 1997 protesting the conditions at the University of Prishtina simultaneously united students, teachers and professors seeking adequate physical space for Albanian students yet spurred the mounting derision of the authorities (Clark, 2000; *Kosovo spring*, 1998; J. A. Mertus, 1999; Pula, 2004; Silber & Little, 1995; Vickers, 1998). As protests flared up around the University of Prishtina in particular, passenger trains carrying students from Serbia proper were heading for the city on a regular basis. Ferrying students who had failed to enter one of the universities in Serbia, students

like Sanja resigned themselves to enrol at the University of Prishtina, which was perceived to be an academic institution of the lowest quality in the former Yugoslavia. Aside from Diar who had just graduated from the University of Prishtina when the expulsion of Albanian professors and students was actualized, the other Albanian research participants attended university classes under the parallel system. Those Albanians who did attend the University of Prishtina, as alluded to in Sanja's comments, came from Albanian-Serbian mixed marriages. Seemingly oblivious to the political campaign of then-Yugoslav leader Slobodan Milošević to repopulate Kosovo with ethnic Serbs and force Albanians to emigrate, Serbian students entered the campus of the University of Prishtina, a campus with a handful of Albanian professors and students still attending. Sanja remembers:

> We didn't know a lot about the situation here [Prishtina] at all. So I was told that they [Albanians] don't want to study with us and that's what I accepted for probably a few months until I would meet some Albanians in a café in a street and then they would say that we don't allow them to study. They would like to study with us. So it was a conflict in my head – what should I believe? (Sanja, Serbian, female)

When questioned about the apparent balance of power in her mind, Sanja quickly responded that it was the Serb minority in Kosovo who held the power in the community. Reflecting on her university days, however, Sanja acquiesced that even though she implicitly benefited from the power imbalance, her perception of the inequalities in the educational community was not complicit. She stresses:

> Already in 1996-1997 demonstrations were started in Belgrade against the regime but we couldn't start anything here. It was always dangerous somehow to have more than ten people in the street together. So we felt a kind of being isolated already at that time from Serbia because we really really wanted to fight back – fight against the regime but we couldn't although here [Kosovo] is the region where people

> mostly supported the ex-regime and Milošević but students didn't.

While Sanja indicates that Serbian students *wanted* to fight against the oppressive regime and the inequalities brought about by the power imbalance, the Albanian students were proceeding with their own passive resistance through a grassroots pursuit of knowledge.

The *golden generation* or *traumatized generation* is how the research participants referred to themselves. As such, this generation recognized itself as important actors in the pursuit of education. Those individuals who continued to study chose medicine or English as subjects of interest because these subjects would lead to positions as nurses, doctors or teachers in the parallel institutions of health and education thereby reinforcing the systemic resistance to the apartheid governance in Kosovo. A direct contribution to society through knowledge acquisition and specific skill-sets transformed itself into a direct contribution to the resistance movement. For some, the motivation of those who were at the forefront of the resistance movement, such as the teachers, was questioned. Acknowledging that he was a stellar student before the inception of the parallel system, Ramush was suspicious of the underlying motives of those who claimed to be proponents of resistance. He states:

> I had a sadness that I should go to the classroom and I thought that this didn't have anything to do with politics and what they [Serbs] were doing to us was wrong. I said I won't waste my time here just going around the houses – private houses – and try to keep up with what the professor is saying. I blame them 50-50. It was 50% the general situation and 50% was their fault in way because they just wanted to defend their nation. They didn't care about the education of their students at that time because that was a high priority for everyone (Ramush, Albanian, male).

Diar expresses similar sentiments as he admits that teachers and professors were poorly paid and therefore lacked motivation to continue teaching on a voluntary basis. Nonetheless, transitioning from the perspective of student to teacher, Diar comments:

> And I wonder what was the thing that made us stay and be part of education, continue and focus on your studies. I mean, why? The future...want to finish...I mean the only place we could work is in the school...until the conflict...you kind of think what you did and what happened to your family, what you did as a person for yourself...and what you did for education as a teacher and you said 'Well, I didn't leave the kids alone. I was glad to see children grow and learn something and get registered and continue with their studies no matter the poor conditions (Albanian, male).

Like these students, five other research participants entered the parallel educational system in primary school and experienced their entire education in hidden classrooms, with absentee professors, mattresses and planks of wood in lieu of tables and chairs. Others entered the shadow system as university students engaged in protests and demonstrations; few graduated in the end and those who did, re-entered the parallel institutions as replacements for older and less motivated (discouraged?) doctors, teachers and professionals. Others still were educated in a quasi-multicultural setting in which physical spaces were shared by Serbs and Albanians even though the allegorical space of resistance and domination interplayed symbolically only to be realized later in the 1990s as Kosovar society divided along ethnic lines. Eventually by the time of the NATO campaign of 1998, these individuals had to choose sides – either civil resistance with the majority Albanians or power-sharing with the minority Serbs. Emerging from the narrative paths as one of these individuals, the participants soon positioned themselves in the present as advocates of the Kosovar educational system. Inversely positioned from where they entered their narrative paths and educational experiences, the Kosovar Albanians are no longer experiencing the same

apartheid-like conditions they experienced during the Serb repression. Contrastively, the Kosovar Serb educators find themselves in a minority position in that they must often live and work in Serbian enclaves.

4.2.2 The Transformation of Victim into Oppressor

Echoing sentiments of rightful justification, the Albanian participants oriented their narrative journeys in the present social world. In this present world, their lived experiences are being influenced by their positioning on the issues of minority recognition and rights in Kosovo. The perception of who is or is not a minority in Kosovo opens the discussion in this section and is then followed by insight into the impact these perceptions have on the democratization of educators themselves.

4.2.2.1 Differing Perceptions on *Minority*

The narrative accounts of the participants reveal a spectrum of positionings on the naming of minorities, resulting from the 1974 abrogation of autonomy and the 1989 creation of the new Kosovo protectorate, as discussed in Chapter 1. For the purposes of this study, *minority* was used as a reference term for either the Kosovar Serbs or the Kosovar Albanians although other minorities comprise the geographic territory of Kosovo. Without demarcating this difference in the narrative interviews, all research participants identified themselves as members of minority groups at one time in their life - whether as the Albanian minority oppressed by Serbian apartheid rule or as the Serbian minority being oppressed by the majority Albanian rule.

Intertwining past experiences of oppression with present lives as professional educators, participants infused their lived experiences with moments of suffering and oppression. The perceived levels of suffering of individuals impacted the perceived notions

of equality and their inclusion in the Kosovar community. Put another way, once the balance of power shifted between the Serbs and Albanians, feelings of revenge for past wrongs and injustices conflicted with feelings of empathy and guilt for mistreatments being undertaken against the now-Serb minority at the hands of Kosovar Albanians. Official reports remark that:

> (w)hile it is impossible to be certain that the prime motive for attacks by ethnic Albanians upon non-Albanian targets is one of revenge, the level of anger and hatred amongst ethnic Albanians towards the Kosovo Serbs and other minority groups, who allegedly assisted the Yugoslav military and security forces in the recent conflict, cannot be overestimated (*Violence in Kosovo: Who's killing whom?*, 1999, p. 3).

The revenge-empathy tension is demonstrated in the following description which reveals the process of recognition of the cyclic nature of oppression:

> There is a feeling of revenge. At that time I suffered so much so I don't want you here anymore but things change. Why are they not here? You don't want to do the same to somebody that they did to you but that's a big issue, I mean. After all that, people are not safe from minorities – Serbians (Beli, Albanian, male).

Although the power balance had already shifted in favour of the Kosovar Albanians by this time, Beli expresses fear that the minority Serbs continue to pose a threat to the safety of Albanians. Further clarifying the connection between perceived levels of suffering and the interpretation of what an inclusive society means, Beli comments:

> So it's the level of suffering. Who they [the minorities] are and what [they are] is the issue with them. It's not an issue of who are the majority of the population and who are the minority…it's an issue with the Serbian minority and that's because of all the things that happened. I don't think that's an issue with any other minority…but when we talk about Serbian minorities it's always a polarized issue if you would say something like 'OK, this is how it should be.' Then you

> are perceived differently. People will say 'Who are you and whom do you belong to?'

The *polarization* of the issue related to minority inclusion in Kosovar society is inferred in Beli's thoughts. Giving credence to the understanding that revenge against and suffering of those who once oppressed and persecuted others are not necessarily prerequisites to an inclusive society, the bonds of perception outweigh the moral obligations of justice for others. In other words, what Beli is intimating is that subjugating the rights of the Serb minority - albeit a minority that was alleged to have been responsible for the subjugation of others – is preferable to being labelled as a traitor to one's own cultural community or ethnic group. Thus, the victim begins his transformation into a potential oppressor while conceding its unethical nature.

A further inference suggests that one's willingness or unwillingness to adhere to the principles of an inclusive society is inversely proportionate to one's perceived level of suffering and to one's own subjugation. Prevailing through the narratives of the Albanian participants in particular is this very sentiment as is illustrated by a participant who divides her time teaching English and working for an international educational project:

> We [my family and I] can't agree that you need to make peace with somebody who killed your family members. That's one obstacle…even people who have worked for internationals and have had time to get things into their head that things should be this way and this way…they might do it in that international environment where they work but once they are outside that circle, in their ordinary circle, they do the same (Dita, Albanian, female).

Anesa echoes this pattern but stresses the need for the community and educators to work synchronously to combat prejudices. She states:

> I mean education has a large role to play as well as involving the community itself because it's not only things you learn in

> school that would always be remembered but the family and what comes from there…it's in vain if you tell somebody to respect human rights in school yet when that individual goes home, the parents teach the children to hate somebody else or to kill somebody else because a piece of land is theirs. It's useless so it has to be worked on two fronts: community and also education together (Anesa, Albanian, female).

The perceived level of suffering of the victim becomes an obstacle prohibiting an acceptance that equality and inclusion can be achieved between the oppressor and the oppressed

4.2.2.2 Perceived Issues of Disadvantage and the Impact on Educators

The interpretation of *minority* as a categorical term for the Kosovar Serb population of today and the Albanian population of yesterday seemed comprehensible until an Albanian participant reminded me that the Kosovar Albanians continue to consider themselves as minority group in terms of the Balkan region. Unable at first to conceptualize the continued use of *minority* within the narrative discourses as it pertains to numerical representation, I started to wonder if the interference of a second language may have taken root. Upon further thought and in taking up the notion of *catching up*, the notion of *minority* can be interpreted as *disadvantage*. In other words, 'minority' status, whether social, political or numerical, is actualized as social practice:

> To be sincere, although I don't have prejudices…when I say 'society', unconsciously I think Albanians, but I don't exclude the other ethnic groups. I refer more to Albanians because I still think that they need to catch up…if I compare for example Kosovo with the region and the region I mean Bosnia, Serbia, Montenegro, Croatia and I think we still have this catching up related to the region…in a sense of culture, values, equality, development, work ethics and some other things (Anesa, Albanian, female).

What this reflection implies is that the balance of power not only produced a political shift within Kosovar society after the NATO campaign but that it produced an internal dilemma

for the Albanian majority which inversely affected its acceptance of the Serbian minority. A cursory examination of the lived experiences related to minority perceptions would suggest that most minorities in Kosovar society who assimilate to the majority Kosovar Albanian society are not of explicit concern to the debate of minority inclusion. For those belonging to the Kosovar Serb minority, on the other hand, it is a polarizing issue. Asked to clarify his commitment to including all minorities in his university English class, a professor offered an exclusionary answer:

> ...if you are asking me about having Turks join the university, I wouldn't mind having them in my class but if you ask people if they can...join class with Serbs, that's a different issue...even if you say you want to have a mixed class, if you say you want a Serbian student in my class then you will be perceived and looked at through different eyes because of that. So it's again which minority you want to integrate and the other issue is how will they integrate? (Beli, Albanian, male)

Integration of Serbian minorities with Albanian students is neither possible nor acceptable in the mind of Beli as he fears that it would be viewed as a traitorous act against his own ethnic group. Asking a similar question to a Serbian educator and expecting a corroborative response to the one above, Sanja offered a response purporting assimilatory strategies:

> I would like in Serbian schools for children to learn the Albanian language definitely. It's not important what will happen...I believe now you have 120 000 Serbs in Kosovo. If half of them leave because Kosovo gets independence, you will again have a kind of 50 000 people which is a kind of minority which again will have to be integrated so they should learn Albanian language in school and give the opportunity to Albanians if they would like to learn Serbian (Sanja, Serbian, female).

As mentioned earlier, a careful reading of the participants' narratives brings forth a cyclical tension whereby Kosovar Serbs and Kosovar Albanians interchange the roles of oppressor

and oppressed. Upon several subsequent readings of the narratives, however, another insight emerged. The struggle with understanding one's own reshaping or shifting identifications directly affects whether or not the identifications of another are accepted. In other words, the narrative journey is static in nature for participants such as Beli. Requiring that ethnic identifications remain in opposition to each other prevents Beli from engaging in measures of integration, inclusion or even tolerance. In order to reach a level of acceptance of the other, participants must acknowledge that additional identifications may need to exist. These identifications suggest that the notion of 'ethnic identity' and its understandings need to make room for a common civic identity. In such a case, Kosovar Serbs and Kosovar Albanians would not exist in opposition to each other but instead interact with each other as different voluntary associations in a common public space.

Returning to the metaphor of *catching up*, I began to wonder whether or not the research participants were aware of the tensions between internal and external aspects of identifications. The polarizing issue of the inclusion of Serb minorities alongside Albanians in schools and classrooms seems to me to be more of an *internal* identity struggle with *external* effects on inter-group relations. Political issues notwithstanding, the tensions expressed in the voices of the participants did not represent a clear conflict *between* groups labelled as 'the oppressor' or 'the oppressed'. Instead, the narratives revealed an internal struggle *within* those individuals who labelled themselves as 'the oppressor' or 'the oppressed'. To crystallize the issue once again, I reformulated the question as: Does the inclusion of one depend on the ability to come to terms with the identifications of another, or does it depend on the acceptance of one's own identifications? Hoping to show his commitment to the democratic inclusion of minorities in his classroom, a teacher asserts:

> We have this terrible experience of being oppressed, of not being equal to the Serbians, to the Turks, to the others and they should feel that they are equal to the Albanians. That is the best way of being integrated here. That is the best way the Albanians can lead their nation toward independence. We understand that if we become independent, we know from the beginning that we are not oppressor that we will give, for example, Serbians all the rights that they will demand. We will consider them as equal to us (Gjon, Albanian, male).

Considering 'the other' to be equal is not the same as *believing* that 'the other' is equal. Without belief, little conviction exists for democratic change to occur in education. The questioning at this stage of the narratives no longer focused on the dichotomous identities of Kosovar Serbs and Kosovar Albanians in opposition to 'the other'. Instead the focus is on the influences of a new emerging identification as Kosovar upon lived realities. Since the independent state of Kosovo is yet to be resolved, the shift of identifications creates uncertainty and anxiety. As a result, the political implications of such identifications as well as the absence of official documentation, such as a charter, upon which to base adherence and observation of democratic principles remain untenable.

4.2.3 The Emergence of a Civic Identification

> If you were called this or that in your country, it makes a difference. But if this uncertainty continues, then we don't want to change. We don't want to belong to the new identity…because what if this doesn't become an independent country. Are you changing and becoming something else? (Beli, Albanian, male)

The participants inevitably struggled with their identifications within Kosovo – a geographic entity that continues to exist as a province of the Federal Republic of Serbia and Montenegro albeit under an interim UN government. The streams of consciousness steadily weaving throughout the participants' earlier experiences with respect to the roles of victim or oppressor reveal an acute familiarity with both as lived experiences.

The narratives of the present, in contrast, are jagged, jarred and uncertain. Increased tension developed as I probed deeper into the meanings of living within the boundaries of Kosovo today. For the eight Kosovar Albanian participants, this discomfort suggested an unwillingness to release the need to feel vengeful towards those who had oppressed them through their formative educational, social and political experiences. For the two Kosovar Serb participants, the expressed desire to assimilate completely into Albanian culture thereby erasing the politics of difference (and recognition) seemed more favourable than confronting the meaning of being a *Kosovar* without the attached ethnic category of *Albanian* or *Serb.*

An identity as Kosovar is dependent on the status of Kosovo. Until the resolution of its final status, the integration of minorities, in particular the Serb minority in Kosovo, is not a personal, professional or political commitment that these educators could make. In the professional sense, those educators who have interacted with the international community know that they are expected to encompass the rights of minorities in their work. Whether this knowledge can be transformed into a deeply held democratic belief and pedagogical action is not clear.

The absence of a political and legal framework for the development of an identity based on territorial autonomy with clear geographic boundaries places Kosovo and its inhabitants in flux without strong attachments and points of reference. This flux makes for very uncomfortable struggles for identification. Notions of belonging showed cleavages to ethnicity and nationhood rather than attachment to a new *Kosovar identification.* An additional point is that without adequately defined places and symbols of attachment, there can be no identifications. Rigorous dialogues in the popular press on what it means to be identified as a *Kosovar* illustrate this struggle for identification:

> Is it about the identity of all Kosova's inhabitants or only a part of them? Does it imply collective identity or only individual identity? (Kullashi, 2005, p. 17)

> The tensions and contradictions raised by the use of the categories Kosovar, Albanian and Kosovar Albanian are merely illustrations of the flux and re-negotiations of their cultural borders and contents (Pula, 2005, p. 34).

> In its positive understanding, Kosovar identity should have an institutional character, a European reformist orientation, and a civilized image that implies the acceptance of democratic values, pluralism, the rule of law and the defense of human rights, especially the rights of minorities (Bajrami, 2005, p. 66).

To be called a *Kosovar* was either rejected outright or seen as a future possibility dependent on political outcomes but it was not an inherent identification for any of the research participants. Ethno-historical identifications or memories reveal history as a continuum along which battles, wars and conflicts with clear outcomes can be located. Ethno-history here serves as a crutch for the role of a victim as injustices can be recited through generations, relived and re-experienced. A newly independent state of Kosovo would require the beginnings of a new history and a new identity, beginnings with which this participant is not entirely comfortable, but which nonetheless allows him to see the need for a broader political adherence:

> ...you have that sense of continuity that you are moving towards improving your rights but people might be afraid because there is a new identity created and all those things now you belong to this new country...it would be reasonable if you had independence because you don't want to be with those issues anymore because you have your country. You know where you belong. If you do not have your own country, it is better to belong to a nation which is larger than the area where you belong (Beli, Albanian, male).

Redrawing borders and the emergence of a new identity within these borders incites fear and uncertainty. Lived experiences influence the commitment to a democratic future in which minorities are considered equal members of society and do not fear persecution. The lived experiences of individuals, however, must be respected as part of ethno-history in order to understand the forces leading to the present reluctance to commit to democratic change in the form of minority inclusion. Ethno-history justifies the lived experiences of the victim as much as the lived experiences of the oppressor but what the narratives reveal is that the dialogue and perceptions about new bounded civic and political identifications are ideological.

The narrative citations reveal profound struggles with being part of a larger imagined community. Yet, a closer reading of the arguments presented by the research participants shows that the *Kosovar* identity is already being lived and experienced. Perhaps it is the struggle for the fundamental recognition and respect of others that is resulting in continued tension, because *the other* may no longer exist in Kosovo except in the minds of those who are not prepared to accept the transformative identity of *Kosovar*. This struggle is evident in the following excerpts from an emotional monologue that peaked with moments of frustration and self-doubt:

> ...if I write only Albanian, the first thing that comes to your mind or my mind is Albanian from Albania. If you write Kosovar Albanian, that's not ethnicity. That's just a name. It was given to us. But if you ask me who you are...I don't know who the hell I am. You don't know who you are. There is no identity (Diar, Albanian, male).

When queried about the relation of his identity to his role as an educator, Diar continued with declarations on the role of education for the development of new identifications for new beginnings:

> You think, 'OK, what the hell can education do here?' We're still dealing with ourselves. We're still dealing and wanting to get cured from what we experienced – what everybody experienced. What can education do? ... Do you have the environment in Kosovo supportive of change and improvement in education? You don't have a supportive environment. To me, education and everything is related to the status of this place…So knowing all the things that happened and what people experienced, to me, history starts today when people sit and say, 'Look, no matter who we are, we want to have a country that has no name or that has a name. Whatever is [sic] the name and everything starts from today.'

The intricately entwined senses of self, of *being* and *becoming*, whether defined or imaginary, loosen and strengthen in meaning with the narration of experiences that influenced attachment and belonging in a society. Albanians and Serbs in Kosovo have experienced the cyclical roles of victim and oppressor throughout the centuries-long history of the struggles in the Balkan region and continue to struggle with those roles today.

For educators, their lived experiences affect their commitment to the inclusion of minorities in education, a democratic principle that presents an ideological pressure as *being* and *experiencing* transformed into *knowing* and *believing*. What began as a journey into the machinations of the post-conflict situation of Kosovo and the lived experiences of its educators evolved into a dialogical struggle. Faced with compromising the painful experiences of oppression, the participants encountered difficulty envisioning a future in which the democratic principle of equality in education could be attained. Storytelling and narrative truths are complicated in that historical accounts may corroborate certain details that shape collective identifications but then, in situations such as Kosovo, these need to change so as to construct a viable and vital new future.

4.3 Concluding Thoughts

Understanding and interpreting emergent patterns in narrative data presents a risk of faulty interpretation. However, when common themes reappear in the narrative accounts of several participants, the researcher must not only consider their importance but also subject them to theoretical analysis. This chapter discussed the threads of commonality woven throughout ten narrative accounts of Kosovar Albanian and Kosovar Serb educators, and identified tensions arising between ethno-historical identifications, the experience of oppression, and the need for an emerging civic identification to resolve the status of the region and its inhabitants. The threads of difference revealed that acts of identification are struggles in and of themselves. Whether identities even need to exist or whether identifications can be multiple and varied serve to highlight the tensions, doubts and hopes evident in these narrative discourses.

CHAPTER FIVE: INTERPRETATION

> Your breath is intoxicating: fresh as an olive branch slipped into the confessional. You are the funnel of the typhoon that forced demons and saints to speak the same language. And lined them up along the street. Are you coming? No, you're already here. The migration of matter from the dead to the living means nothing to you. You bring such terrifying beauty and unrest whirling in your orbit. As if you don't care for the armies that follow ancient roads through the capitals. This is our home today. Maybe tomorrow, too, if we still know how to love (Debeljak, 1999e, p. 48).

5.1 Introduction

Narrative journeys into the identities of individuals allude to the systems of meaning inherent in the cultural and social worlds of the narrators (Lieblich et al., 1998). Simultaneously, the assumptions of the interpreter of those narratives are revealed. Like the *funnel of the typhoon* winding its way along ancient roads through sites of history, the cultural and social influences on these narratives are wrought with historicity, oppositions and disruption. Recognizing that they may not fade away, Debeljak compels us to wonder whether the cultural and the social will continue to colour the possibilities of new beginnings.

In this chapter, the theoretical framework and positionings outlined in Chapter Two are juxtaposed against the patterns in the data and the narrative journeys of the research participants. What has emerged is a cogent continuum along which three processes of identity formation take place. The lived experiences that were narrated in the interviews reveal an internal struggle in which educators are unsure of how democratic dispositions can be acted upon if their own identities are being negotiated. Some participants willingly admit to clinging to essentialized identifications rooted in ethno-history and in opposition to *the other*. Largely due to globalizing factors and influences, other participants question the

negotiation of multiple identifications as they contemplate a new *Kosovar* identity that supports, not supplants, their ethnic identifications. This contemplation has brought yet other participants to consider the meaning of a multiplicity of identifications as evidence that civic identifications are akin to dwelling in a space in which democratic dispositions can safely emerge.

5.2 Formation of Identities/Identifications

Conceptualizing the identity formation of the research participants requires a step back into history before a foray into the present and the future can ensue. If the metaphor of continuum as it applies to identity formation is evoked once again, as the interpreter of narrative journeys, I must be prepared to wind through meanings punctuated with pain and conflict as well as hopes and aspirations for the future. Some narrative journeys halt in an in-between world where identifications are essentialized and hybridized. Other journeys continue along a continuum whereby multiple transcultural and globalized acts of identifications are created. Still other research participants use their narrative journeys to gaze to the future and ponder an existence of a civic identification not yet legally recognized but one that may still be whirling in the *funnel* of the social imagination. Regardless of where the journeys end, they all have a beginning.

5.2.1 The Ruins of Balkan Identity

> Ruins remain. They persist, whether beneath the ground or above. In remaining, they are always already of the past, yet given to the future. Ruins collapse temporalities. Landscapes and buildings in ruination, reduced to abandoned sites, are traces that embody a sense of loss. Ruins hold out an image of a once glorious present, another time, revealing a place of origin no longer as it was (Merewether, 1997, p. 25).

Collapsing temporalities entails the collision of past and present along the path to a future layered upon the foundations of what once was. Fragments of ruins and traces of loss represent metaphorical symbols of the former Yugoslavia. The populist notion of *balkanization* is called to mind to express the fragmentation of a geographical region into incongruent and conflicting pieces as understood in the following definitional concept of *Balkan* articulated by Hall & Danta:

> ...a veritable Balkan nest of geographical 'Russian' dolls consisting of at least three layers. The first, most territorially circumspect of these, 'the Balkans' encompasses Croatia, Bosnia-Hercegovina, Albania, Serbia, Macedonia, Montenegro and Bulgaria. Second, a somewhat larger extent of territory is implied by the term 'Balkan peninsula', which adds Slovenia and Greece to the above list. Finally, the largest areal unit is 'Southeast Europe', which can also be taken to include Romania and European Turkey (1996, p. 7).

Through his journalistic travels, Ignatieff observed that acts of identification in the former republics of Yugoslavia are contingent on what one is not in relation to the other (1998). Drawing from interviews with Serbian soldiers in their barracks during the Serbian-Bosnian conflict of 1998, Ignatieff observed that a dichotomy existed between the lived experiences of the soldiers and their participation in the ethnic conflict. He concluded that Balkan identities were relational differences and that relational differences equal an empty tautology – a conclusion shared by others who have examined cultural and ethnic explanations for the disintegration of Yugoslavia (D. Hall, 1996; Hoepken, 1999; Maliqi, 1993; Reisenleitner, 2001; Sardamov, 1997; Vasić, 1998). The argument follows that centuries of colonial domination under the Ottoman and Austro-Hungarian empires have resulted in tensions based on historical memory, claims to territory and linguistic differences.

The metaphor of Balkan identity emerging from ruins implies, however, that identity plays more of a role in building an acceptable, tolerant, inclusive and pluralist society than was once assumed. Through metaphorical language, Balkan scholars describe the geopolitical areas of the former Yugoslavia as *living between two* (Antić, 2003), as having a *transitory character* (Kiossev, 2002), and as *being neither here nor there* (Bjelić, 2002). Such ambiguous language may be in use in order to express the ambivalence and indeterminacy of Balkan identifications while geopolitical boundaries shift in response to pressures ascribed to the cultural, the symbolic and the political. Thus, the interpretation of Balkan identifications through notions of cultural hybridization allows intersubjectivity to take place resulting in a multiplicity of voices to be heard. Illustrating the analogy of Balkan identifications as ruins, Reineck comments on the influences of conflict on prospective identity formation in Kosovar children:

> It wasn't until today – imprinted with the ghastly wounds and bloody stories of these refugee children – that I comprehended the war. As the twentieth century draws to a close, the world looks pitifully upon Kosova, smoldering in ruin. The bloody war that ripped through Serbia has left a trail of torture and death, and sown the seeds of revenge into the next millennium (2000, p. 358).

Because of a lack of progress in developing a politically stable pluralist society and because of a history of colonial and imperial oppression in the Balkans, Antić concludes that the ambiguity of determining a Balkan identity is in fact the essence of a hybrid identity (2003). I would advance this argument by suggesting that it is not a fixed hybrid identity that has been created, but instead it is the transformation of multiple acts of identifications. However, this is not to say that no evidence exists in the participants' narrative journeys to suggest that some identities are hybridized and caught in a tension of essentialism.

5.2.2 Identity within Hybridization

Originally conceptualized as a third space, cultural hybridity attempted to disarticulate cultural differences by transgressing cultural differences. Critics of late have taken issue with the inability of hybridity to be ahistorical (Carton, 2007) arguing that hybrid identities imply an ontological state of being and dwelling. As such, hybridity cannot create a third space of being since "the realm of historical consciousness…is *always already* there as a state of being: omnipresent and universal" (p. 145). However, hybridity as a process of identity formation cannot be removed from the "practices of place and the lived experience of history" (p. 146). Thus, hybridization is not only a process resulting from the cyclical oppression of groups of people in the Balkans but also a consequence of the present crisis in identity for some educators in Kosovo.

A geographic metonym cannot assume the existence of a non-geographical entity (Kiossev, 2002) even though the term *Kosovar* came into usage after the NATO campaign as a linguistic response to define inhabitants of the territory of Kosovo (Kelmendi & Desku, 2005). Thus, the introduction of an international administrative structure (UNMIK) served only to confuse notions of belonging and selfhood:

> Anyways, you are under a foreign administration. You don't have the local capacity to take over. And again you have yourself at this point…you want to have a life where history doesn't repeat. You want to provide the opportunity for your children to have a better life and you don't have power to do anything because you don't know who you are (Diar, Albanian, male).

For Diar, the narrative journey of self-exploration gazes towards the future, but for a few participants, the gaze is inward and essentialized. Ethno-national cleavages based on national and regional identifications as Serbs or Albanians continue to influence notions of belonging

to an *imagined community* (B. Anderson, 1991), an autonomous Kosovo yet to be. The debate as to whether Kosovar identity is synonymous with that of a supra-Albanian identity (Bajrami, 2005) or whether political or historical explanations exist for a Kosovar identity to be equated to a national identity (Murati, 2005) are mirrored in the following narrative excerpts:

> If you were called this or that in your country that makes a difference. But if this uncertainty continues then we don't want to change. We don't want to belong to the new identity and that's because what if this doesn't become an independent country – are you changing and becoming something else? (Beli, Albanian, male)

> I don't like that feeling of being just a Kosovar because I'm Albanian from the beginning. From the beginning you were part of Albania…so I still feel myself Albanian not Kosovar…the Kosovar. I understand for the future to gain independence I have to feel myself for Kosova… (Gjon, Albanian, male).

Having a sense that an ethno-national declaration is necessitated by history and its role in the social, cultural and political realm underlies the hesitation to identify as *Kosovar*. The role of ethno-history on lived experiences not only influences notions of belonging but may be used as a justification to further claims of victimhood. Recognizing that a new mindset must be embraced, a young Albanian research participant attempts to envision a future in which past ethno-historicalities are pushed aside. His return to the role of victim, however, fails to transverse essentialized boundaries.

> (…) a new mindset that is being created by young people mainly and they just want to move on and they want to get rid of the past…We have leaders who always highlight the differences that there are between Albanians and Serbs, we need leaders who will focus on the similarities of both Albanians and Serbs. They were both living in this region for more than one hundred years…But there were more massacres that took place against Albanians and people still

> cannot have that kind of reconciliation with the past because the wounds are still fresh (Tim, Albanian, male).

What becomes clear in this excerpt is the acknowledgement that a tenuous balance once existed (and may still?) between some Kosovar Serbs and Kosovar Albanians. Co-existence was possible in that both groups were aware of each other within a shared territorial space. In fact, Duijzings cautions against ignoring the fact that despite recurrent conflict, instances of co-existence and "symbiosis" could be found when Serbs and Albanians lived in the same village and occasionally inter-married (Duijzings, 2000). In spite of the relative calm in the wake of the NATO campaign and the installation of the UNMIK-administered government, fissures cracking through society threaten to rupture once again into competing claims of ethno-national identifications. Ditchev attributes these fissures to a level of identity-building that lies in the realm of symbolism (2002). The subject of a gaze and the object of such a gaze imply opposition. *The other* is not just in an oppositional stance but in a position of naming the objects within its gaze.

In an effort to comprehend the processes by which historical neighbours become enemies, Ignatieff denies the claim that the ethnic conflicts in Yugoslavia in the 1990s stemmed from tribal hatreds and past hostilities. Instead, he purports that the various ethno-national groups are engaged in a *minor narcissism of difference* claiming that characteristics that once seemed unimportant become minor differences or divisive factors of warring ethnic factions (Ignatieff, 1998). In other words, the personal dimension of the imaginary takes on increasing symbolic power for which acts of identification become increasingly pronounced and dichotomous.

Narratives that revisited experiences working within the parallel system alluded to working within a hybridized space. The existence of Albanian-run parallel institutions in

direct opposition to the official Serb-run institutions was infused with passive resistance to *the other*. Although the physical conditions were not ideal, the struggle for identification as an Albanian nation fuelled ethno-nationalism. The parallel system was embedded with an Albanian purpose and in its absence, a suspended reality exists. Whether student or teacher, the Kosovar Albanian participants were able to distinguish themselves from *the other* whereas now the hybridized space in which they live and wait for resolution on final status leaves only furtive glances to the past. Even before the splintering of the education system, Anesa was able to vividly recall the silent questioning stares that accompanied her as she unwittingly situated herself closer to her Serbian colleagues in the staffroom.

Preferring not to engage in the realm of possibilities, for some research participants living on the hyphen as Kosovar Albanians or Kosovar Serbs is preferable to contemplating an uncertain future as a *Kosovar*. Waiting for the resolution of final status suspends the willingness to look to the future since it cannot be predicted with any degree of certainty what will happen in a place that lacks legal status.

5.2.3 Identity within Transculturation

The search for identity as it entwines the conceptual notions of 'people' and 'nation' must distinguish between those who constitute a people comprised of voluntary associations and those who constitute a nation sharing a common moral heritage (Pestieau, 1999). Notions of belonging and acts of identification shape acts of multiple identifications. Yet, if through notions of belonging, one freely associates with religious and cultural associations, how can a multiplicity of subjectivities be negotiated in a pluralist context such as in Kosovo where the desire for independence has created a society in flux?

> The notions of borders would change the mindset of people.
> So I see a lot of people being killed over a piece of land

> because they are so strongly attached but if you say there are vast lands that you can move to…there is no border… that opens the minds of the people and they see across the border, not only within the border...this is that way of thinking and valuing independence. You are more open and you are more in charge of your freedom of movement and building and other things. Or more accepted by the world… (Anesa, Albanian, female).

Opening borders as a means of reducing tensions over the territorialization of space would result in transversing spatial and metaphorical boundaries and becoming unstuck from living between two worlds – the world of the Kosovar Albanian and the Kosovar Serb. The transcultural notion of border crossing has been limited in terms of physical travel as travel documents take the place of official passports allowing ease of travel. This is not to say, however, that the global has not been made local (Appadurai, 1996). A *reorganization of culture in space* (Hannerz, 1997) has effectively increased the permeability of Kosovo as the cultural and social exchanges resulting from an influx of internationals entering Kosovo as employees of (non) governmental organizations has contributed to a local globalization of ideas, experiences and expectations. Diar describes the onslaught of internationals as:

> So, you can freely say that there were twenty years of complete blockage, of complete silence of no movement at all. In 1999 you wanted change. You have internationals. You have here the international community. Kosovo is invaded from internationals. Four hundred different cultures, languages…I don't know how many different races. I don't know how many religions. You come to a place that is just scattered (Albanian, male).

The metaphorical language of invasiveness into a culture and the scattering of peoples clearly exemplify the abrupt entrance rather than gentle flows of globalizing factors. Observing the waves of change about to enter his lived reality, Diar intones uncertainty of and discomfort at the social and cultural newness that he is about to encounter.

The ensuing awareness of the global is evidenced in the diasporic influences on the population as well. A positive economic effect of the forced expulsion and displacement of many Kosovar Albanians by the Serbian authorities in the months leading up to the international intervention was the introduction of Kosovar Albanians into the global workforce (Bell-Fialkoff, 1999). Although reports show that the vast majority of displaced persons returned to Kosovo once international intervention had commenced, a small percentage stayed abroad for economic reasons (OECD, 2003). Brah proposes that "(d)iaspora space is the intersectionality of diaspora, border and dis/location as a point of confluence of economic, political, cultural and psychic processes" (2003, p. 615). Thus, transcultural practices exist at the location where intersectionality takes place – whether actual or metaphorical – as a *confluence of narratives* come together to coalesce and negotiate.

Moving away from narratives that highlighted lived experiences with essentializing identities, other participants' narrative journeys have demonstrated an indication that they have started displaying democratic dispositions and are engaging in constructing transversal and performative identifications within creative spaces. The processual (re)shaping, (re)shifting and (re)conceputalizing of identities that transcend territorial borders and ethno-histories indicate that cultural and social flows contribute to the development of multiple identifications. Although the notion of *democracy* has been accepted in the loosest sense to mean a disposition to act upon and uphold ideals of freedom from oppressive societal or cultural forces, it is a notion that, nonetheless, offers forward movement on the continuum of identity formation. Vjosa, an Albanian female, illustrates the path that democracy has illuminated for her:

> Certainly there is a different vision of life now. Certainly it's influenced by external factors. Before I told you there was a

> limited vision of life and all you can think of was just studying or working in the parallel system...But now there are different opportunities...respect first of all...respecting the views from others and having the freedom of expression.

In Vjosa's interpretation, democracy is equated with respect and freedom brought in from the outside. Intersecting with her personal understandings of democracy, the opportunities that accompany the introduction of democratic ideals permit Vjosa to participate in the construction of a more globalized and democratic identification. Opening or transcending borders underlines processes of creativity and perfomativity that bridge the past and the present (Hoerder et al., 2005). Transcultural identifications flow through discourse and "draw attention to power relations in which identity is embedded" (p. 16) calling into question the agency of these power relations.

Although transculturation implies a personal commitment to engage in pluralities, a willingness to disengage must be accepted as a critical response to transculturated processes. Questioning the commitment of those around her to true democratic change, Sanja stresses:

> I don't consider it [Kosovo] a very democratic place. I think that one thing in a democratic state should be multi-ethnicity and rights for everyone and equality for everyone. That doesn't happen in Kosovo nowadays. People are working in that direction. That's my opinion of it. Not all of them. Not as much as they should. But they are. I think that we are trying to fulfill the standards that the international community have put in front of us (Serbian, female).

The idea that Kosovar Albanians and Kosovar Serbs are passive recipients of democracy implies that commitment to democratic change may be more of a political promise rather than a personal commitment. A willingness to give space to external influences emerges from Sanja's narrative much as it did in Vjosa's. The difference, however, lies in the agency of the individual to accept, modify or reject these external influences as part of one's own

identities. Transcultural identifications, then, may be accepted passively or may be considered, inspected, thought about and its elements adopted, created or rejected if deemed disingenuous to the identity formation of an individual. The possibility exists, though, that any discourse related to the inherent processes underlying multiple acts of identification as pertaining to culture, may form another basis for exclusionary practices in "group formation and mobilization, usually involving ascriptive memberships" (Hannerz, 1997, p. 7). Excluding economic forces from the present discussion, the journey along the narrative continuum must continue so as to redirect the discussion to voluntary memberships in group formation. In short, moving away from the words of discourse, processes of multiple identifications must be positioned in a process of agency – as in civic identification.

5.2.4 Identity within Civic Pluralism

Civic identifications are characterized as voluntary rather than ascriptive or forced. Groups of identifications, or collectives, can be tied together by any socio-cultural characteristic such as ethnicity, religion, or gender. Not supplanting individual identities, civic identifications accept pluralism as a political right to any act of identification. Primarily grounded in geography, voluntary associations form the basis of a civil polity in which the commonality lies in the concept of community (Eberly, 2000). Community is comprised of the "spirit of people" (Elshtain, 2000, p. 101), or democratic dispositions, permitting associations to come together for the purpose of a shared end. In other words, voluntarily associating to the identification of *Kosovar* could simply be a geographical identification or more importantly a civic identification with political needs and ends.

Identifications within civil society – civic identifications – presume an individual choice. Hence, voluntary associations to collectives are not necessarily acts of *democracy* but

democratic dispositions to act, open to democratic social practice. The difference, according to Seligman, is that the concept of a *civil society* is less likely to cause discord in Eastern Europe given the fact that *democracy* has a connotation of political corruption and manipulation; *civil society*, on the other hand, is considered to be neutral and untainted (Seligman, 2002). Anesa's consideration of the international community demonstrates how easily notions of democracy can be pre-empted and manoeuvred:

> We've been living too long on the edge. You have a feeling that you are being wronged by the international community in general not specifically by groups but international politics and personally I see a lot of...there's a struggle about interests...I have this helpless feeling when I come to think of what will happen here in Kosovo that will influence and change the lives of these two million people. It is very much some kind of chess game of these higher forces which create the work-politics in general.

Clearly worrying that identity formation is being manipulated from above rather than heralded from below, Anesa also recognizes that post-socialism adversely affected the ability of Kosovar Albanians and Kosovar Serbs to engage in choice:

> I think people are...maybe it's a characteristic of these socialist countries that they live their lives as they are told to, not the way they like it. They are not used to shaping their lives and building it but constantly being told what to do.

Those research participants who were struggling against perceptions of oppression from the international community were also those who acknowledged the possibility that a *Kosovar* identity is forming and gaining momentum. The civic identification of *Kosovar* must be adhered to voluntarily rather than imposed on the geographic inhabitants of Kosovo. Embracing the view that civil society has a multiplicity of meanings, those who associate with civic identifications due so because civic pluralism offers "significant emancipatory

potential, explanatory power, and practical support to problem solving in both established and emerging democracies" (Edwards, 2004, preface).

As an emerging democracy, Kosovo and its inhabitants are ripe for civic identifications especially if no criteria preclude membership to associations. Uncivil society stands beside other religious or ethno-national identifications thereby giving further credence to the voluntary nature of a civic identification. The question, then, is how can civic identifications contribute to the development of democratic dispositions in those who seek associational membership? Borrowing from Habermas, Edwards suggests a discursive public sphere in which conversations centering on common concerns of freedom, equality and peace can pave the way for the necessary conditions for the creation of a civil society (2004). Taking excerpts from three narratives, I attempt to draw a concise discursive sphere in which the possibility for the creation of a civic identification is examined:

> UNMIK is trying to establish a democratic education obviously with proper plans and programs…they want to be part of one global European education system. I agree with that but again this is all for Albanians only. All the educational changes that are done by UNMIK are for Albanians only. There is no education for Serbs now in Kosovo. Education for Serbs now is completely separate from UNMIK (Tanja, Serbian, female).

Revealing the uncivil nature of establishing democratic educational reforms, Tanja discovers that civic identifications may be voluntary but not necessarily open to all. Transcending the local geographic boundaries, Tanja can willingly associate with the greater European community of educators rather than the local educators in Kosovo. Although speaking from the Kosovar Albanian perspective, Diar supports Tanja's observation when he comments:

> Do you have the environment in Kosovo supportive of change and improvement in education? You don't have a supportive environment. To me – education and everything is

> related to the status of this place. You try to build the system or build the tradition for some work in education that will continue somehow in this part of the world – in Kosovo – but you at the same time have no final status resolved on what will be in the future (Albanian, male).

Whereas Tanja and Diar are sceptical of the role of education in a civil society, Tim is more optimistic as he suggests a return to a co-existent state in which voluntary associations to collectives are respected and permitted:

> It's not only the multicultural society but maybe what we try to do first is have the co-existence. If we have this co-existence in place, it means that we will be able to live with others who are different from us and it doesn't mean that we have to actually like them. But at least we are able to live with them as neighbours. It doesn't mean we have to be good neighbours but at least we can get on – get along with them – with one another (Albanian, male).

Synthesising the discursive space of these narrative excerpts, each line of argument must be respected for what it is – discursive practice about democratic dispositions. In order to gain strength and advocacy, proponents of civil society and its consequent civic identifications encourage "us to focus on insights that lead to more effective action rather than worrying in the abstract about which theory is correct" (Edwards, 2004, p. 72).

Advancing the discursive space to the agency of associational memberships rather than the theorization of those memberships requires giving individuals the means to become active citizens with meaningful civic identifications. Some civil theorists, like Michael Walzer, argue that the nature of civil society reflects a collision between the politics of identity and recognition (2002). In other words, civil society represents the politics of the dispossessed because the dispossessed use religious and ethno-historical identities as reference points. Returning to the narrative excerpts above, both Kosovar Albanian and Kosovar Serb educators would stake claims to being the dispossessed. Following the principles of

voluntary associations, both claims to being part of the dispossessed are valid and justified. Civic identification negates the opposition of stances, for:

> All the groups that constitute civil society occupy a common terrain, across which individuals are free to move...multiple and overlapping memberships help to tie all the groups...together, creating something larger and more encompassing than any of them. This larger entity is still a particular grouping – namely, the civil society of a country, defined (not absolutely) by its state boundaries (p. 35).

The civic identification of *Kosovar* without its legal state boundaries - but with its encompassing terrain– possesses emancipatory potential if its associative members participate actively rather than receive passively.

5.2.5 Civic Identification as Democratic Process

Taking up the recognition of identifications as social status as opposed to existential theorizations, Nancy Fraser infuses the political into the efficacy of civil society in post-conflict. Attempting to accommodate the complexities of multiple acts of identification, Fraser delineates two strands of thought when rethinking the politics of recognition: problems of displacement and problems of reification (2000).

A tenuous balance is crafted in post-conflict situations when one possesses fluid, transcultural and globalized identities and tries to advance them to civic identifications within the political realm. The problem of displacement occurs when rapid globalization exacerbates economic inequalities between civic participants. Associational memberships, although protected and encouraged, generate competing claims for political recognition. In the Kosovo context, for example, civic identifications could still exist alongside ethno-national identities thus serving less to supplement transcultural interactions, and instead "marginalize, eclipse and displace them" (Fraser, 2000, p.1). As a result, the second issue of

rethinking recognition surfaces – the problem of reification. If issues of displacement are not rectified through democratic institutional-building and legal frameworks, group memberships as connected to cultural struggles risk returning to pre-transcultural states of being and encourage separatist, intolerant and hierarchical attitudes. What then, could be done to prevent the problematics that Fraser has identified? The answer to problems of inequality because of a politics of recognition can be found within the distribution of responsibility in civil society (Walzer, 2002).

Walzer proposes two lines of argument for a distribution of responsibility that are interconnected rather than separate. To begin with, individual men and women must take responsibility for their own acts of identifications as well as for joining in voluntary association. By laying claim to this responsibility, individuals acting as a group with a common civic identification can strengthen their numbers and make mutually beneficial decisions. At the same time, responsibility for egalitarian, or socially democratic, actions at the state-level, through education for example, would ensure equal redistribution of resources. In terms of processual identity-building among Kosovar Albanians and Kosovar Serbs, civic identification in its truest sense must commit to voluntary associations for all its individual members. A commitment to voluntary association would necessarily include women, as integral to association.

5.2.5.1 Gendered Civic Identifications as Responsible Civic Identifications

Always in some sense related to the transformative process, the articulation of muted voices and challenging biases, feminist processes are inherently pluralist and thrive within civil society (Phillips, 2002). Female gender identifications do not presuppose a voluntary association since most women cannot hide the fact that they are women and not men.

However, the sense of voluntariness can be attributed to the agency of associational memberships and the willingness to take responsibility for a civic identification that is often polarized along male-female claims. The discursive public sphere of civic identifications should not be assumed to be one dominant sphere. Instead, several spheres as they intersect, transverse and expand or contract describe the aim of civic identifications. As such, Fraser argues for a multiplicity of subaltern counter-discourses to counter the dangers of displacement and reification in a politics of recognition (2000). She argues that by mobilizing through voluntary associations, collectives can influence individual public opinion and state-building and that "movements struggling for recognition increasingly look beyond the territorial state" (p. 72). Therefore, reconstituting collective memberships builds a transcultural/national collective that may or may not have had the strength for political agency previously.

> Conflicts can both empower and disempower women, since women can be at the same time included in practice and yet excluded ideologically, or they may be both victims and agents of change – though they often have no effective choice in these matters (Afshar, 2004, p. 2).

Under the umbrella of civic identifications, women *do* have a choice to make responsible, meaningful and effective choices that influence their identities as individuals and their associations to the gendered collective.

In ethnic conflicts, ethno-national movements demand of women to put aside their gender as a primary identification and supplant it with that of the ethnic or national identification. Albanian women, as an example, are first Albanian and then women. Their biological contribution to the reproduction of the nation is secondary to the reproduction of pure ethnic offspring. In her study of Kosovar women, Mertus found that prior to the ethnic

conflict, Kosovar women identified with the nation first since their primary role was to bear sons to fight against *the other* (1999). Once the son had been borne, only then would a few women begin to explore their own gendered identities. Day and Thompson counter-propose that "even *in extremis*, choices could be made, confirming that it is impossible to define a single female perspective on the nation, or an unambiguous stance for women to adopt towards national conflicts" (2004, p. 126). Flipping between which came first – the gender or the nation – is a scenario that hints at marginalization and essentialism. Conceptualizing a civic identification as a gendered attachment and engagement from the onset advances the argument that women in post-conflict situations can voluntarily associate to both identifications concurrently as opposed to sequentially. Transformative gender identities seek to create transcultural/national social forces with political agency rather than with biological passivity. Mertus argues that the impact of ethno-history on identifications undermines the growth of a civil society in which the relationships between gender and nation can be re-negotiated because international and globalizing forces suppress the development of gendered civic identifications (1996).

Looking back to the narrative paths, the female narrators contradict the idea that internationalization and globalization adversely affect the re-negotiation of gendered and ethnic identifications:

> What do I do in the classroom? Now I feel that OK I worked at school until the last year [before the NATO campaign] but I also was involved in a lot of happenings. I attended different trainings. I tried to help in different programs. I couldn't do a lot of volunteer work which I wish I could but the conditions wouldn't permit it. I learned about human rights, trafficking, gender equality, domestic violence, different forms of abuse, and about education…We went through the difficult times of conflict but it brought a change. It brought all of these different opportunities which I don't

> regret. I would regret it if we missed it (Anesa, Albanian, female).

Although Anesa had already contributed to the Albanian movement by giving birth to sons, she was engaged in educational practice and volunteer work; however, the conflict itself opened up opportunities for additional training and exposure to ideas and theories that she now finds invaluable. The conflict, however devastating, ruptured the preconceived notions of gender and nation and created a public discursive space in which Anesa could voluntarily partake in multiple acts of identification, each act complementary not supplementary. Prior to the conflict, the conception of women, sons and daughters, and family with respect to the state were limited by traditional gender roles. The subsequent conflict and opportunity for education helped to reconceptualize these roles for women in Kosovo as they negotiated their identities within a civil society.

As all the female participants have a university education, are multilingual and have experience teaching in classrooms as well as working on various educational projects, they are an elite representation of females in Kosovo. Their narratives, it must be emphasized, reflect agency of voice and a commitment to a civil society. Dita states:

> I try to present Kosovo...wherever I go, if I travel regionally or to other countries...I haven't had the chance to go but in the future I would present it like we are a state. OK, geographically, politically, it doesn't matter where we are. Yes, all the people who live in Kosovo would present a nation (Albanian, female).

It can be interpreted that a *nation* in Dita's sense is not the nation created by ethnic or religious similarities but on a plurality of voices, a multiplicity of identities and civic identifications. The inclusive nature of her language is reminiscent of an individual engaging in transcultural processes. She has yet to cross physical borders but her commitment to

being a *Kosovar* reflects inclusivity and agency. This negotiation of (re)shaping and (re)shifting identities is demonstrated by Tanja's willingness to voluntarily associate with what she considers to be the best aspects around her:

> I have to suppress my Serbian identity completely. You see I prefer to do my Masters in English and Albanian. That would be a kind of combination. I don't want to melt into Albanian completely. Perhaps English is like a medium. I can do some things in English but I don't lose my identity completely and become Albanian completely. At least I'm half-Serbian, half-Albanian and there's a part of me that is English language (Serbian, female).

Choosing bits and pieces around her, Tanja epitomizes the civic identification of a *Kosovar,* with its creative transcultural nature. Neither here not there but not stuck in between the two margins, Tanja shows agency and performativity in her identity-building. She chooses to abandon one ethnic identification in favour of a partial ethnic identification (i.e. Serbian), an adopted ethnic identification (i.e. Albanian) and a transcultural identification (i.e. English) while not suppressing her female identity.

Focusing on the impact she can have in education, Sanja muses about her commitment to making change within education:

> If I would have the possibility, I would like to stay in touch with education all the time. I just think that there are not enough people who are willing to work – who think that something better can be done – who are positive thinkers in a way. So I don't know only a few of them who would be willing to work with me. But I would like to work because everything happens in school so when you want to change something in society – let's say being more democratic – it has to be done in schools (Sanja, Serbian, female).

Schools are places where women are empowered to transcend their experiences in conflict zones and engage in transformative processes aimed at bringing about democratic dispositions. Cynthia Cockburn describes these dispositions as "the way we cross the space

between us, the choices we make about speaking, listening, waiting, acting, deciding" (in Giles, 2003, p. 5) – the process of peace-building. Transcultural/national feminist practices have been exemplified in this discussion not for divisive purposes but to emphasize how gendered identification can indeed be an important and influential part of a civic identification. To speak about civil society without conceptualizing the role of the feminine is to speak about a place disarticulated and disengaged from its discursive potential.

5.3 Concluding Thoughts

For the purposes of this discussion, the narrative journeys of the Kosovar Albanians and Kosovar Serbs have come to an end. This is not to say that the journeys of identity formation and negotiation are over, but that the journeys must continue along a continuum that no longer has a lens of interpretation aimed at it. It is difficult to ascertain where a journey begins and ends. The best that an interpreter of narrative journeys can accomplish is to enter at some point along the continuum and look back and wonder where the journey originated, look at the present and wonder whether the journey is in flux and look to the future and wonder how far the journey will continue. Along the way, theorizations were made in order to give meaning to the lived experiences of the participants. Their voices and their narratives explained the how of the experience but necessarily the why. I have struggled equally with the why but understand that it is only an interpretation not necessarily a truth.

CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSION

> You stand on the immovable rock. The world around you crumbles into the abyss. You drink the water of life, drawn from the mouths of those who breathe with you. Each morning they come to witness your rebirth. Like this poem. It won't be long before an avalanche silences it. But a thousand echoes will spring up in its place. For the love flowing through your veins is the seed, the blossom, and the fruit (Debeljak, 1999b, p. 23).

The cyclical nature of life and death is punctuated by moments of tragedy and collapse as well as rebirth and renewal. Once more borrowing from the poetic language of Debeljak, I draw inspiration from the allusion to growth and restoration of balance. As the history of human civilization has demonstrated countless times, periods of conflict and war will eventually be followed by moments of tenable truce, quiet peace and restoration. Such has been the political and social cycle in Kosovo. Having emerged from conflict within the past decade, Kosovars have been negotiating a reality in which political stability is synonymous with recognition as an independent state. Although the final status has yet to be resolved at the time of this writing, the evolutionary nature of identity formation has continued in the post-conflict situation. *Multiple Acts of Identification among Educators in a Post-Conflict Situation: Evidence from Kosovo* has attempted to bring greater understanding and conceptualization of the processes inherent in developing identifications that not only allude to the past but offer possibilities for the future.

6.1 Summary of Findings

Drawing upon the personal and interpretive journeys of ten participants, this study examined the possibility that multiple acts of identifications not only exist but contribute to the future of democratization in education. Believing that the process of democratization is first and foremost embedded in the view of *the self,* I made a theoretical assumption that it is from the

position of *self* and its subsequent multiple identifications that a personal commitment to democracy could emerge. Inquiring into the lived experiences of both Kosovar Albanians and Kosovar Serb educators, examining how multiple acts of identification contribute to the understanding of identity formation within intricate political and social situations, and understanding how these processes of identity formation interweave with both individual and collective associations have been the primary objectives of this study.

Unwilling to ascribe preconceived identities to the participants, I allowed the narrative journeys of the participants to reveal the intrinsic complexities of identity formation and development. What these narrative journeys revealed is that acts of identifications are multiple, performative, gendered and largely transcultural. Whether unconcealed or suppressed, ethnic and historical cleavages remain and continue to infuse lived realities of the participants. The physical introduction of an international community in post-conflict Kosovo in addition to the metaphorical transbordered journeys of the imaginary have played roles in the emergence of a civic identification in the educators interviewed. Living in the present while simultaneously gazing to the future has opened a discursive space in which the *Kosovar* as a civic and inclusive identification is taking political and social precedence.

Kosovar, as a civic identification encompassing but not supplanting other acts of identifications, advances democratic dispositions in both the political and social realm. In other words, the fate of Kosovo as an internationally recognized state hinges on the standards before status principle instituted by UNMIK and the international community (*Kosovo status: Delay is risky*, 2006). It also presupposes a belief that a Kosovar state with an emerging civil society in which plural groups come together voluntarily exists. The existence

of such a state need not be ingrained in the collective memory of its inhabitants but instead supported within civil society and its institutions – primarily within educational institutions. Although the scope of this study was not to analyse or propose modifications to extant frameworks and institutions within Kosovo, an attempt can be made to deliberate on the effects of a civic identification on the commitment of educators to further democratization within educational institutions and projects.

6.2 Practical Implications of a Kosovar Identification

Recognizing the historical power of education to cultivate ethno-national sentiments in the young (Smith, 1991) is a primary consideration when engaging in change. Change within education in Kosovo has had mixed results in that great successes have been noted and celebrated among the Kosovar Albanian population but limited impact has taken place within the Serbian enclaves (G. Anderson & Wenderoth, 2007). The role of identity and the process of engaging in multiple acts of identification bring to the forefront the tensions that still exist within the ethno-national context in Kosovo. Therefore, identity formation as a political and educational consideration in democracy building is integral to the professional context of education in a civil society.

6.2.1 Implications for Teacher Education and Professional Development

One of the fundamental ways that education contributes to the process of democratization is through the teaching of democratic principles and critical thinking skills. Recent reports indicate that the introduction and incorporation of new teaching methodologies contribute to democracy building (G. Anderson & Wenderoth, 2007; Pupovci, Hyseni, & Salihaj, 2001) while other research indicates that discussions about democracy and justice are taking place in classrooms across Kosovo (Hughson, 2003). The long-term impact of international

projects on creating democratic institutions in post-conflict societies has been questioned in that recent findings have revealed that once international financial aid is removed, continued effects on democracy-building may be limited (deZeeuw, 2005). Moving beyond the meso- and macro-levels of institutional building, I suggest a return to the micro level of the individual for it is the commitment of the individual that directly impacts the commitment of the community. Although showing evidence of the positive impact of creating a discursive space in which educators and students can negotiate the meanings, interpretations and realities of living in a democratic space, the role of identity formation is relegated to a binary opposition of ethnicities when dealt with at project levels. Disregarding the collective memory of a community and the lived experiences of the individuals limits the discursive space in that "memories of wartime atrocities...are embedded in the psyche of individuals and, through the process of retelling and memorialization, are deposited – often, in distorted ways, into the collective memory of a community" (Stover & Weinstein, 2004, p. 331). Therefore, credence must be given to these memories and to these experiences at all times. Those who choose to educate or participate in educational practices must be aware of their own memories. A civil society, precipitated by civic identifications, permits the perspective of the individual as well as the collective. The civic identification of being a Kosovar, in effect, allows for the discursive space in which all perspectives are respected as valid contributions to the development of a democratic space within a civil society.

Based on the findings of this study, it is recommended that:

- Democracy building take place within a civil society whereby voluntary associations to the civic identification of *Kosovar* are supported, honoured and encouraged;

- The civic identification of *Kosovar* be addressed and taught in school curricula in conjunction with multiple histories of the region itself; and that
- The recognition of political differences and cultural heterogeneity contribute to the development of a civil society in which the negotiation of differences becomes the core shared civic culture.

Each recommendation is discussed in turn, to provide some level of explanation and general direction.

6.2.1.1 Building a Civil Society

The role of educators in a post-conflict transitional society should be focused on first acknowledging that a civic identification has been created and is being voluntarily adhered to a means to building democracy and inclusion in the civic sphere. This acknowledgement must be moved into teacher training programs and directly into classroom conversations by way of discursive practice. Emphasizing the fact that multiple identifications are healthy and logical evolutions of the self and that they are situated in historical and lived experiences promotes a framework of identity formation that encompasses various group identifications.

Learning for a democratic citizenry ensures continuous discussion that impacts the identity formation of the young especially as they move toward a more transcultural and integrated Europe. Civil society initiatives have been adopted and are in the process of development in the neighbouring country of Croatia which is also emerging from the effects of ethnic conflict. Key principles being incorporated in the field of education there encompass the areas of self-awareness, identity and personal responsibility; cultural pluralism and intercultural dialogue; democracy and civil society; peace and non-violent resolution, and

interdependency of the society, culture and nature (Spajic-Vrkas, 2003). Identity and self-awareness as key principles are the foundation upon which other processes can evolve and take root. A transcultural civic identification with its inherent voluntary associations and respect for a negotiation of differences are tantamount to the development of an inclusive educational sphere in which educators and institutions must recognize the divisiveness of *the other* while engaging the unity of the *Kosovar*.

6.2.1.2 Civic Identification and the Curriculum

The second recommendation emerging from this study is that the teaching of a civic identification be ensconced within curricular design and practice. Not supplanting the historical tendencies to teach about ethnicity and religion, a civic identification simply furthers the discussion of self and encourages the understanding and promotion of an identification infused with greater political and transformative power. Engaging students, educators and educational institutions in an inclusive discursive space in which they can choose to voluntarily associate together as *Kosovars* does not negate the lived experience of the individual. Civil society by nature permits a politics of difference but imbues it with a politics of recognition. Learning to speak as *Kosovars* is akin to learning "about democratic citizenship to understand and subsequently practice democratic principles such as the protection of minorities by majorities, social justice, citizen rights and responsibilities, [and] fundamental freedoms" (Print & Coleman, 2003, p. 142). For those research participants who already identify themselves as having a *Kosovar* identification, a shared civic culture based on mutual associations and beliefs about Kosovo has been established.

6.2.1.3 Negotiating Difference

Sharing a common civic culture assumes an intersection of interconnected experiences of the past, present and future. Living and sharing territorial space implies an interconnectedness that will never be disengaged or divided. Continually grasping onto ethno-historical and ethno-national cleavages serves to maintain the tension between Kosovar Serbs and Kosovar Albanians but it does not supersede the fact that both groups dwell in a shared civic space. Globalizing forces and international pressure have created a situation in which ethnic tensions are no longer dichotomous nor looked upon favourably. Individual convictions and beliefs notwithstanding, a shared civic culture must be inculcated within schools. Perhaps sharing a common school property and holding classes at the same time is not yet an educational principle for all ethnic groups in Kosovo, but in the public sphere, a shared civic culture may be the only effective political tool that all Kosovars have to secure their political, economic and social future. In the realm of education, learner-centered teaching methodologies have been implemented in pre-service and in-service teaching programs; teachers are undergoing continual professional development most often led by their peers; and educators are encountering new ideas and knowledge from working with the international community. These developments in education are leading factors in the formation of a civic identification in that they are taking place in the public sphere of education and they are infused with principles of democracy building. Those in education and training must feature self-awareness as "prerequisite to positive relationship building and appropriate action" (Jordan, 2004, p. 140). Such transformative and transcultural practices serve to move across [in]visible divisive boundaries and instead coalesce in a discursive shared civic culture.

6.3 Concluding Thoughts

Multiple Acts of Identification among Educators in a Post-Conflict Situation: Evidence from Kosovo has been a personal journey for the research participants who agreed to share their narrative experiences and expose themselves to interpretation. As the interpreter of these experiences, I have participated in my own personal journey, one which challenged my own assumptions, beliefs and perspectives of a region of the world that is often referred to in light of its conflictual past. The disintegration of the former Yugoslavia has been studied, researched and analysed extensively. International aid projects have come and gone and some have left remarkable imprints on the minds and actions of the local peoples. Those from the outside who become involved in educational projects in post-conflict situations often remark anecdotally about the effects such work has had on them on a personal or professional level. Subsequent investigations into the efficacy and effectiveness of educational projects in post-conflict situations reveal mixed results. Short-term projects tend to be designed for high impact short-term results whereas projects that invest in a region over an extensive period of time report systemic deep-rooted changes. Moving beyond the analytical aspects of counting, describing and detailing results lies a human aspect that is rarely considered or fully understood. After leaving Kosovo in a professional capacity, many conversations followed with colleagues both near and far about this human aspect of education. Emerging from these conversations is an innate desire and longing to be at peace, to be respected and to be recognized. Such struggles will continue from the inside and from the outside of the individual and group, but what will remain is the image that one day our voices will join the chorus of the *thousand echoes* springing up each day to *witness the rebirth.*

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APPENDIX A: CERTIFICATION OF INSTITUTIONAL ETHICS REVIEW

UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY

MEMO

CONJOINT FACULTIES RESEARCH ETHICS BOARD
c/o Research Services
Room 602 Earth Science
Telephone: (403) 220-3782
Fax: (403) 289 0693
Email: pievans@ucalgary.ca
Monday, March 14, 2005

To: **Ana-Marija Petrunic**
Education, Faculty of

From: Dr. Janice P. Dickin, Chair
Conjoint Faculties Research Ethics Board (CFREB)

Re: **Certification of Institutional Ethics Review:** Cultural Hybridity Among Educators in a Post-Conflict Situation: Evidence From Kosovo

The above named research protocol has been granted ethical approval by the Conjoint Faculties Research Ethics Board for the University of Calgary.

Enclosed are the original, and one copy, of a signed **Certification of Institutional Ethics Review**. Please make note of the conditions stated on the Certification. A copy has been sent to your supervisor as well as to the Chair of your Department/Faculty Research Ethics Committee. In the event the research is funded, you should notify the sponsor of the research and provide them with a copy for their records. The Conjoint Faculties Research Ethics Board will retain a copy of the clearance on your file.

Please note, an annual/progress/final report must be filed with the CFREB twelve months from the date on your ethics clearance. A form for this purpose has been created, and may be found on the "Ethics" website, http://www.ucalgary.ca/UofC/research/html/ethics/reports.html

In closing let me take this opportunity to wish you the best of luck in your research endeavor.

Sincerely,

Patricia Evans
Executive Secretary for:
Janice Dickin, Ph.D., LL.B., Faculty of Communication and Culture and
Chair, Conjoint Faculties Research Ethics Board

Enclosures(2)
cc: Chair, Department/Faculty Research Ethics Committee
Supervisor: Yvonne M. Hebert

UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY

CERTIFICATION OF INSTITUTIONAL ETHICS REVIEW

This is to certify that the Conjoint Faculties Research Ethics Board at the University of Calgary has examined the following research proposal and found the proposed research involving human subjects to be in accordance with University of Calgary Guidelines and the Tri-Council Policy Statement on *"Ethical Conduct in Research Using Human Subjects"*. This form and accompanying letter constitute the Certification of Institutional Ethics Review.

File no:	**4308**
Applicant(s):	**Ana-Marija Petrunic**
Department:	**Education, Faculty of**
Project Title:	**Cultural Hybridity Among Educators in a Post-Conflict Situation: Evidence From Kosovo**
Sponsor (if applicable):	

Restrictions:

This Certification is subject to the following conditions:

1. Approval is granted only for the project and purposes described in the application.
2. Any modifications to the authorized protocol must be submitted to the Chair, Conjoint Faculties Research Ethics Board for approval.
3. A progress report must be submitted 12 months from the date of this Certification, and should provide the expected completion date for the project.
4. Written notification must be sent to the Board when the project is complete or terminated.

Janice Dickin, Ph.D, LL.B,
Chair
Conjoint Faculties Research Ethics Board

1 March 2005
Date:

Distribution: (1) Applicant, (2) Supervisor (if applicable), (3) Chair, Department/Faculty Research Ethics Committee, (4) Sponsor, (5) Conjoint Faculties Research Ethics Board (6) Research Services.

APPENDIX B: DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF PARTICIPANTS

Demographic Profile Form

Thank you for your interest in this research project. The information you provide on this form will facilitate the selection of participants in terms of gender, experience, age, and ethnicity.
You may either print this form or fill it out as a Word document and return it to me in person or email it to ampetrun@ucalgary.ca.

PERSONAL INFORMATION:

Name (Family name, First name):

Birthdate:

Gender:

Ethnicity:

Languages spoken:

Mailing Address:

Work phone:

Home phone:

Cell phone:

EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND:

Highest level of education:

Degree awarded, if any:

Year degree awarded:

Specialization:

TEACHING EXPERIENCE:

Are you teaching in the school system now? If yes, where?

Have you ever taught in the school system? If yes, where did you teach and for what duration?

WORK EXPERIENCE:

If you are involved in an educational project, please describe your duties and responsibilities.

Thank you for filling out this form. I will be in touch with about your participation in the study after I have received the completed form.

APPENDIX C: SCRIPT FOR PRESENTATION OF PROJECT TO PARTICIPANTS

Script for Presentation to Participants

(to be included on the audiotape of every interview)

Thank you for answering my letter of invitation to participate in this study. The purpose of the study was outlined in the letter of invitation so I feel comfortable that you are familiar with the aims and objectives. To emphasize again, I am interested in studying the relationship between identity formation and the democratization of education as it relates to the theory of cultural hybridity. More specifically, I would like to know how your lived experiences influence your notion of democracy in education.

As a selected participant of this study, you have a story to tell. The story may begin in the past and move towards the present or the story may start with your experiences in education. Whichever path you choose to take, you are the storyteller and I am your audience. Later I will transcribe your words and ask you to review them to ensure that I have not misinterpreted or misheard them. When I have interviewed all of the participants, I will assemble my findings and draw conclusions based on the themes I found.

Please tell your story and narrate your experience however you feel is most comfortable and effective for you. I may interrupt you at times to ask some clarifying questions or request examples or to bring you back to the topic being discussed if I feel you are moving off track.

Your participation is voluntary and you have the right to withdraw your consent at any time before, during or after the interview has been completed. If this is the case, then I will withdraw your data and destroy it completely.

Are you ready to begin?

APPENDIX D: LETTER OF INVITATION

A Letter of Invitation

You are invited to participate in an educational study this winter looking into the experiences and realities of those involved in education in Kosovo.

Whether you are a teacher or teacher trainer working within the school system of Kosovo or whether you are involved in educational project work, this study hopes to gain a better understanding of your cultural reality.

The purpose of this study is to examine whether a different sense of reality is experienced while trying to work on issues of democracy in education.

Only those who are engaged in educational work will be able to participate and since the participant group is small, it is the duty of the researcher to choose a sample of participants who most fulfill the research criteria.

As a volunteer participant, you will be asked to –

- Participate in an interview of approximately one hour at a location of your choice
- Provide feedback and comments on the findings of the interview
- Engage in further discussion about emerging themes

As a university researcher, I will -

- Maintain your confidentiality and anonymity
- Create a warm and friendly atmosphere
- Ensure that you have the opportunity to speak about only those experiences you feel most comfortable with

If you are interested in finding out more about this study or volunteering as a participant, please email me at ampetrun@ucalgary.ca.I will respond to you with a summary of the project, consent form and a demographic profile. The researcher is Ana-Marija Petrunic, Graduate Division of Educational Research, University of Calgary.

APPENDIX E: SUMMARY OF PROJECT

Summary of Project

Name: **Ana-Marija Petrunic**

Project Title: Cultural Hybridity among Educators in a Post-Conflict Situation: Evidence from Kosovo

Summary:

In the modern world, identity is associated with social categories such as race, gender, generation or sexual orientation. Two views of identity prevail. Modernists hold that identity is a stable idea concerned with creation, with becoming what is expected. Identity is the objectified – that which is seen and constructed by others. In other words, identity in a modern world is stable but problematic in that it yearns for a construct that it can identify. However, if identity were to be seen as a dynamic and flexible construct, whereby multiple identities are expected, then identities would result in an awareness of subjectivities (Bhabha, 1994). In a postmodern world, identities can be changed and manipulated as often as the subject determines it is needed. Postmodern identities are layered upon differences that overlap each other as opposed to the search for similarities and homogeneity.

Cultural hybridity is characterized by its fluid nature and negotiation of differences but it is important to recognize the role of subjectivity. To offer a cliché, one person's reality is not necessarily another's and therefore the emergence of any community based on evolving cultural hybridities cannot be assumed to be harmonious and positive by default, yet can be assumed to affect the democratic spaces of membership in the larger community.

Past conflicts notwithstanding, an assumption can be made about notions of inclusivity in other societies such as Kosovo. Kosovar society could be shaped into a multicultural society regardless of the possible threat that ethnic minority groups may still pose to its national cohesiveness. Ethnic stability has been temporarily achieved because of the presence of international agencies and peacekeeping forces although ethnic peace and tolerance continue to be goals not achievements. In order to understand the notion of cultural hybridity and its effects on minority group rights and identity formation, I propose to examine the lived experiences of Kosovar Albanians and Kosovar Serbs who are involved in educational practices and who have experienced oppressive forces in the last decade. Engaging in one-hour open-ended interviews and focusing on the identity formation and

narratives of these individuals will offer insight into the realities of inclusivity in a post-conflict society and whether *multicultural education as social movement* is possible.

My specific objectives are:

1. to inquire into the lived experiences of Kosovar Serbs and Albanians who may have experienced the roles of the oppressor or the oppressed but who are actively participating in the democratization of education
2. to examine how cultural hybridity theory and realities as they relate to identify formation may influence the commitment to collective rights when individual identities are culturally complex and overlapping

I am interested in interviewing six to twelve individuals who feel that they have experience *living between two worlds* and who are committed to democracy as social justice. Interviews would take place in a location chosen by the participant – a location that is comfortable and safe. Initially the interviews would last for approximately an hour unless the participant feels a need to continue as is comfortable with an extension of time. Participants will be residing in Kosovo at the time of the interview and will have resided there for the last five years and would consider themselves to be citizens of UNMIK Kosovo, Serbia-Montenegro.

Participants will be invited to discuss their lived experiences, their stories and their interpretations of the cultural context of education in Kosovo and the democratization and cultural context of education.

This project will build understanding of the influences of identity formation in post-conflict and post-communist societies – a topic that has not been researched extensively. The findings would be of interest to proponents of citizenship theory, multicultural theory, educational policy makers and international educators who are working in the areas of minority group rights, pluralism and social justice.

APPENDIX F: CONSENT FORM

UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY

CONSENT FORM

Research Project Title:
Cultural Hybridity among Educators in a Post-Conflict Situation: Evidence from Kosovo

Researcher:
Ana-Marija Petrunic
Graduate Student, Faculty of Education, Graduate Department of Educational Research
403.235.3481
ampetrun@ucalgary.ca

Supervisor:
Dr. Yvonne Hébert
Professor, Faculty of Education, Graduate Department of Educational Research
403.220.7361
yvonne.hébert@ucalgary.ca

The consent form, a copy of which has been given to you, is only part of the process of informed consent. If you want more details about something mentioned here, or information not included here, you should feel free to ask. Please take the time to read this carefully and to understand any accompanying information.The University of Calgary Conjoint Faculties Research Ethics Board has approved this research study.

Purpose of this Study:

This research study draws upon the experiences and realities of those involved in education in Kosovo. Whether a teacher or teacher trainer working within the school system of Kosovo or in educational project work, this study hopes to gain a better understanding of your cultural reality. The purpose of this study is to examine whether a different sense of reality is experienced while trying to work on issues of democracy in education.

The researcher will then analyze the data for common emerging themes and a convergence of patterns to examine the relationship between identity formation and the democratization of education as it relates to the theory of cultural hybridity – specifically, how your lived experiences influence your notion of democracy in education.

What Type of Personal Information Will Be Collected?

If you are interested in this study, you will be asked to fill in a demographic profile form, which asks you to provide summary information such as your educational background, teaching experience, work experience, gender, ethnicity and age.

There are several options for you to consider if you decide to take part in this research. You can choose all, some or none of them. Please put a check mark on the corresponding line(s) that grants me your permission to:

I grant permission to be audio-taped *Yes* ___ *No* ___

I wish to remain anonymous *Yes* ___ *No* ___

I wish to remain anonymous, but you may refer to me by a pseudonym *Yes* ___ *No* ___

The pseudonym I choose for myself is: _____

I wish to receive a copy of the summary of findings *Yes* ___ *No* ___

What Will You Be Asked To Do?

If selected for the study, you will be asked to:

- Participate in an open-ended audio-taped interview of approximately one hour at a location of your choice and comfort; your confidentiality and anonymity will be respected
- Provide feedback and comments on the findings of the interview
- Engage in further discussion about emerging themes, if necessary

During the interview, you will have the freedom to narrate your story however you deem most relevant and effective. The researcher may interrupt at times to ask some clarifying questions or request examples or to bring you back to the topic being discussed, but otherwise the interruptions will be minimal. The researcher will audio-record the interview and will also take notes as the interview proceeds.

Your participation is voluntary. If you wish to withdraw your consent, you may do so at any time and all your data will be withdrawn and destroyed.

Are there Risks or Benefits If I Participate?

The researcher foresees minimal risk to participants. Confidentiality and anonymity will be respected and you control the choice of location for the interview. Participation in the interview is voluntary. You are encouraged to speak only about those experiences you feel most comfortable with.

If during the interview, you become upset, distressed or disturbed, the tape recorder will immediately be turned off and you will be asked if you wish to continue the interview at a later time. Should you so choose, the interview may continue. If not, the researcher will intervene by suggesting another time before ending the interview. If the situation should recur when the interview resumes, the same procedure will be followed. If need be, you will be referred to an appropriate community-based organization or non-governmental organization equipped to assist you with the effect of memories of the conflict. The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe Mission in Kosovo (OSCE) as well as the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) will be able to refer you to the appropriate organization based in Kosovo at no cost to you.

Since you are involved in the democratization of education in Kosovo, this study will afford you the chance to reflect on the practices that guide your work and how your lived experiences contribute to the development of an inclusive pluralistic society.

What Happens to the Information Provided?

All audio recordings and transcripts made from them will be kept in a locked cabinet at the home address of the researcher while in Prishtina, Kosovo. While in Canada, the researcher will keep all audio recordings and transcripts made from them locked in a filing cabinet at her home address. Only the researcher, who is bound by the conditions of the ethics approval of this study to protect confidentiality of all participants, will have access to this data.

None of the personal information will be made available in any published results. Participants will be asked to choose a pseudonym. Every effort will be made to eliminate any markers that may identify the participants involved if their quotations are used from the interviews. All quotations will be anonymous.

Signature for Written Consent

Your signature on this form indicates that you 1) understand to your satisfaction the information provided to you about your participation in this research project, and 2) agree to participate as a research subject.

In no way does this waive your legal rights nor release the investigators, sponsors, or involved institutions form their legal and professional responsibilities. You are free to

withdraw from this research project at any time. You should feel free to ask for clarification or new information throughout your participation.

Participant's Name: (please print)

_____

Participant's Signature:

_____

Researcher's Name: (please print)

_____

Researcher's Signature:

_____

Questions or Concerns

If you have any further questions or want clarification regarding this research and/or your participation, please contact:

Ana-Marija Petrunic

Faculty of Education, Graduate Department of Educational Research

403.235.3481 ampetrun@ucalgary.ca and

Dr. Yvonne Hébert

Faculty of Education, Graduate Department of Educational Research

403.220.7361 yvonne.Hébert@ucalgary.ca

If you have any concerns about the way you have been treated as a participant, please contact Patricia Evans, Associate Director, Research Services Office, University of Calgary at 403.220.3782; email plevans@ucalgary.ca.

A copy of this consent form has been given to you to keep for your records and reference. The investigator has kept a copy of the consent form.