Decentralized School Governance and Social Cohesion in a Post-Conflict Society: School Leaders’ Participatory Democratic Accountability in Bosnia and Herzegovina

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Taro Komatsu

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Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to children and youths in post-conflict societies and to those responsible for helping them make a better world to live in.
Abstract

Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) is a post-conflict and divided nation in need of social cohesion. In order to increase trust among different ethnic groups and between civilians and public institutions, a decentralized school governance system has been introduced. This study sought to understand whether and how the internationally driven school-based management (SBM) reform in BiH functions in enhancing schools’ roles of promoting social cohesion. In light of the research purpose, the study focused on school professionals’ participatory democratic accountability (Kogan, 1986), and examined secondary school directors’ perceptions regarding school board influence in social cohesion areas, their interactions with school boards, and their accountability to the school-based governing body. At a broader level, the study sought to contribute to the debate concerning international reform isomorphism.

The study employed a mixed methods approach. A census survey with 294 secondary school directors was conducted to find general patterns in school directors’ perceptions. Concurrently, interviews were conducted with 16 school directors to complement the survey findings as well as answer additional research questions.

The study results show that the SBM reform was not functioning as intended. School boards, supposedly representing the interests of local stakeholders including parents, and school directors did not appear to be actively engaged in the deliberative process to promote social cohesion policies and practices. School boards influence school directors to promote social cohesion, but only in subtle and limited ways. Furthermore, school directors tended to view themselves as independent from the school boards, though, instead, their keen sense of professionalism can be utilized to facilitate local stakeholder participation. These findings indicate that a gap exists between a global reform policy and its implementation even in a post-conflict nation where the international donor community is closely involved. The study calls for donor agencies to attend to the historical, political and economic factors that might affect school-level policy implementers when they recommend educational reforms.
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<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ANOVA</td>
<td>Analysis of Variance</td>
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<tr>
<td>BiH</td>
<td>Bosnia and Herzegovina</td>
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<td>CIE</td>
<td>Comparative and International Education</td>
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<td>EU</td>
<td>European Union</td>
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<td>NGO</td>
<td>Non-Governmental Organization</td>
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<td>OHR</td>
<td>Office of the High Representative</td>
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<tr>
<td>OSCE</td>
<td>Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe</td>
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<tr>
<td>PDA</td>
<td>Participatory Democratic Accountability</td>
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<tr>
<td>PISA</td>
<td>Program for International Student Assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PLC</td>
<td>Professional Learning Communities</td>
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<tr>
<td>PTA</td>
<td>Parent-Teacher Association</td>
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<tr>
<td>SBM</td>
<td>School-based management</td>
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<td>SD</td>
<td>Standard Deviation</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNESCO</td>
<td>United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNESCO IIEP</td>
<td>UNESCO International Institute for Educational Planning</td>
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<td>UNICEF</td>
<td>United Nations Children’s Fund</td>
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Map of BiH

(United Nations, 2007)
1.1. Statement of the problem

On September 1, 2009, 14 years after inter-ethnic conflict ended in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH\(^1\)), the Financial Times newspaper published an article titled “Apartheid in Bosnia-Herzegovina’s Schools” (Norris, 2009), which portrayed the disturbing condition of BiH education that has continued through today. The article was based on the observation of a secondary school in Travnik\(^2\), a town that witnessed intense fighting between Bosniaks and Croats during the 1992-1995 war. This school is a product of the divisive and ethno-politicized educational system that began at the end of the conflict.

The article reported that Bosniak and Croat children were studying in separate parts of the school building and entering the school every morning from different yards separated by a wire fence. “I don’t know much about the pupils in the other school,” says a 15-year-old Bosniak girl in the town. “I don’t have any Croat friends. I’ve never really thought about why we have separate schools; it’s just the way it is.” A Croatian parent was quoted as saying “It’s difficult to talk about the problems we have. Someone is always going to come out of that conversation in a bad light” (Norris, 2009).

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1 BiH is an abbreviation of the title in local official languages in Latin spelling: Bosne i Herzegovine. This expression has been commonly used in donor and scholar papers written in English. This paper adopts this abbreviation.

2 Travnik is located in Central Bosnia Canton, some 100 km west of Sarajevo, the capital city of BiH. According to the pre-war and last census in BiH (1991), Travnik was populated by Bosniaks (45%), Croats (37%), Serbs (11%), and other ethnic groups (7%).
This article vividly illustrates the challenge of developing social cohesion\(^3\) in nations that have undergone internal conflict, and the critical importance of the education governance system in meeting this challenge. In BiH, regional governments\(^4\) dominated by political parties with ethno-centric agendas took responsibility for education after the conflict. Since then, the majority of children are attending school in a segregated environment and learning curriculum based on their ethnic identity. Concerns have been expressed that children will be likely to adopt the “we/they” approach, thus developing intolerance towards others (Kreso, 2008; Torsti, 2009; UNDP, 2007; UNESCO, 2011).

Social cohesion has also been undermined by the civilians’ general perception that public institutions under the control of these regional authorities, including those responsible for education, were partial, discriminatory and non-participatory (United Nations Development Programme [UNDP], 2003).

In response to the post-conflict situation described above, the BiH’s *Framework Law on Primary and Secondary Education*, a plan to reform the BiH education system, was enacted in 2003 with the support of and under pressure from the international community.\(^5\)

The *Framework Law* aims to strengthen autonomous and participatory school governance

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\(^3\) Social cohesion is defined as the density and interplay of the *horizontal trust* relations among social groups and the *vertical trust* relations between government institutions and civilians (adapted from the definitions offered by Chan, To, & Chan (2006) and Smith & Vaux (2003)). More discussion on the definition will be provided in Chapter 2.

\(^4\) “Regional governments” of BiH in this paper refers to the government of the Republic of Srpska (RS), ten cantonal governments within the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (FBiH), and the district government of Brčko. These governments possess highly autonomous authorities over civil affairs, including education. The governance structure of BiH will be explained in Chapter 2.

\(^5\) “International community” here generally refers to 55 nations and agencies comprising the Peace Implementation Council set up in 1995 to facilitate the implementation of the Dayton Peace Agreement.
by shifting the locus of authority over schools from the regional governments to school boards, a school-based governing body including parents and local communities, with representation from diverse ethnic groups in the school community. Symbolic of the decentralization reform was the provision stipulating that public school directors⁶, who were previously appointed by the regional education authorities, were hereafter appointed by the school boards. The reform was intended to ensure the accountability of the school to the community it serves, thereby depoliticizing education affected by ethno-centric politics, improving inter-ethnic relations and forging trust between schools and their communities (Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe [OSCE], 2006a); essentially, this assumes the enhancement of social cohesion. The reform anticipated active local participation and school responsiveness to local demands. To this date, however, little is known as to whether the system reform has brought about substantial changes in school governance that are favorable to the development of social cohesion.

1.2. **The objective**

The objective of this study is to understand whether and how a decentralized system of school governance functions in facilitating social cohesion activities in an ethnically divided, post-conflict society. School-based social cohesion activities include 1) teaching common citizenship principles, 2) socializing children of different backgrounds together, 3) promoting the equality of school access and curriculum, and 4) facilitating negotiation

⁶ In this paper, a “school director” refers to a person who holds the senior management position within a school. In BiH, and in the wider context of Central and Eastern Europe, school leaders, principals or heads are customarily called “school directors” (Goddard, 2004).
among different social groups within a school community (Heyneman, 2003a, 2003b). In order for schools to engage in such activities under a decentralized governance system, it is essential that school professionals exercise what Kogan (1986) termed participatory democratic accountability (PDA). In the context of this study, PDA would presume that school boards, particularly their local stakeholder and lay members such as parents and local community representatives, encourage school directors to promote social cohesion activities, and that school directors respond to the school boards’ demands. PDA also envisages that school directors are actively engaged in consultation and negotiation with these stakeholders, and facilitate the deliberative process. The realization of such school accountability is believed to enhance social cohesion. In light of the research purpose, this study in BiH focused on the school leaders who are the central actors in school governance and accountability, and investigated their perceptions regarding school board influence, their interactions with school boards, and their accountability to the school-based governing body.

In presenting these empirical findings, this study also addressed the important question of the global reform isomorphism and its divergence in practice. Education reform rhetoric in BiH closely replicates other reforms advocated by international donor organizations. Divergence often occurs, however, between global ideas and actual implementation, as the latter is normally affected by the idiosyncratic features of local contexts. This study contributes to the debate by providing empirical evidence of a decentralization reform in the unique context of a post-conflict nation.
1.3. Research questions

Based on a literature review and the analysis of BiH contexts, the following research questions were proposed and addressed in this study.

(1) Do school directors in BiH perceive that school boards influence their decisions to promote social cohesion activities?

(1.1) Do school directors perceive school boards with greater autonomy as more influential than those with relatively less?

(1.2) Do school directors perceive school boards with an ethnically heterogeneous membership as more influential than those with a homogeneous membership?

(2) In what ways, if any, do school boards influence school directors’ decisions to promote social cohesion activities?

(3) Are school directors actively engaged in consultation and negotiation with school boards?

(4) How do school directors view their accountability to school boards?

(5) What are the broader implications of the study findings in regard to the debate concerning education reform isomorphism?

1.4. Significance of the study

This study contributes to an understanding of decentralized school governance as a way to promote social cohesion in a divided and post-conflict society. Governance and
institutional-building are important agendas for post-conflict reconstruction (Kumar, 1997). Scholars and donors have advocated governance reforms as a way to change power relations in favor of building a more democratic and socially cohesive society (Bush & Saltarelli, 2000; Paulson & Rappleye 2007 as cited in Poppema, 2009).

Reflecting this recognition, decentralized and participatory school governance systems have been introduced in a number of transitional nations, including post-apartheid South Africa (Karlsson, 2002), post-conflict Cambodia (Buckland, 2005), Rwanda (Colletta & Cullen, 2000), and former socialist nations in Europe (Radó, 2004). Social cohesion is an important theme in these nations as it is considered to affect economic and social development and nation-building (Kunene, 2009; Ritzen, Wang, & Duthilleul, 2002; Smith & Vaux, 2003; Woolcock & Narayan, 2000). This suggests that an empirical study examining the functions of a decentralized school governance system to promote social cohesion, or activities that are deemed to enhance social cohesion, is warranted.

Despite the importance of the topic, few empirical studies have addressed the relationship between decentralized systems of school governance and social cohesion. Often, decentralization has been seen as a way to increase student academic performance. In the U.S., for example, decentralized school governance in the late 1990s and early 2000s typically embodied the form of school-based management (SBM), and was primarily viewed as a way to raise student achievement (Caldwell, 2005). SBM-relevant research studies in other societies have also often focused on student achievement rather than its implications for social relationships (for example, Caldwell (2005) for Indonesia,

Meanwhile, those studies that did address the relationships between education governance and social cohesion mostly focused on the industrialized nations, rather than post-conflict nations. In these studies, the relationship was discussed in the context of social changes brought about by globalization and the need to accommodate a growing number of immigrants from diverse cultural backgrounds (for example, Beauvais & Jenson, 2002; Chan et al., 2006; Jupp, Nieuwenhuysen, & Dawson, 2007). Post-conflict societies have different realities from these industrialized nations, such as nation building, divisive politics, and intensive international interventions. This study is unique in that it addresses a previously under-explored topic—decentralized school governance and social cohesion in the context of a post-conflict nation.

This study is also unique in terms of its methodology. As McGinn (2008) summarized, previous comparative studies on the relationship between education and social cohesion have mainly utilized cross-national data. The World Bank, for example, claimed that cross-national research demonstrated positive correlations between school autonomy and social cohesion (World Bank, 2002). However, such cross-national research does not yield meaningful insights about how school governance works in relation to social cohesion. Moreover, cross-national studies do not address the specificities of historical, political and social context that are likely to affect the relationship between school governance and social cohesion. This study focused on the particular context of BiH and sought to illuminate the dynamics of key actors’ relationships under
decentralized school governance and their implications for the development of social cohesion.

At a broader level, the study intends to contribute to an important discussion in the field of comparative and international education about the education reform transfer. Decentralized school governance has been a popular reform model supported by many international donors (see Buckland (2005) for the World Bank, Caldwell (2005) for UNESCO, and UNDP (2007)). Scholars have alleged that the diffusion of international models has led to “educational isomorphism” and “the world institutionalization of education” (Meyers & Ramirez, 2000, p. 129). However, such a claim has been challenged by some comparative education scholars such as Anderson-Levitt (2003), Phillips and Ochs (2003), Steiner-Khamsi (2006) and Yang (2007). These scholars pointed out that the actual implementation and local reaction to national policies often manifested in ways that were not originally intended by global reformers. They maintained that local contexts in policy-importing nations, chiefly developing nations, shaped the process and outcomes of these global reforms. Very few, however, have examined the topic in a post-conflict setting. The study addresses this literature gap by examining the education decentralization reform in post-conflict BiH.

As for practical implications, the study is expected to benefit practitioners who are engaged in the reconstruction of war-torn societies. Faced with social tensions after a major conflict, those engaged in post-conflict reconstruction are in need of understanding the role of education in creating a cohesive society. Major international donors have published reports on education and social cohesion (See Bush & Saltarelli (2000) for UNICEF;
Campbell (2001), Colletta & Cullen (2000), and Roberts-Schweitzer, Greaney, & Duer (2006) for the World Bank; Sinclair (2002), and Tawil & Alexandra (2004) for UNESCO); however, these reports did not sufficiently address the issues of school governance and social cohesion. This study may provide a useful reference with which practitioners can evaluate their course of actions in the important area of education reconstruction.

1.5. Underlying assumptions

The study is based on an assumption that social cohesion is a positive state of society characterized by inter-group trust as well as citizens’ trust in public institutions. Social cohesion is considered to contribute to peace and the prevention of violent conflict. One may argue, however, that separate education for children of different ethnic backgrounds is desirable, and indeed necessary, to reinforce their unique identity and to prevent inter-ethnic frictions. Though such an arrangement may be necessary in the immediate aftermath of conflict, this study is based on a belief that long-term stability and development calls for policies that contribute to trust-building across ethnic boundaries as well as the increase of trust in public institutions, or to put it another way, the enhancement of social cohesion.

1.6. Limitations of the study

The present study has limitations in terms of its scope. The study focused on public secondary schools to examine school roles that facilitate social cohesion. Education, however, can affect social cohesion in various ways with its variety of forms and levels.
Even within secondary education, schools’ contributions to social cohesion may possibly extend beyond the areas examined by this study. Moreover, social cohesion itself has multi-faceted dimensions. The inter-group relationships on which this study focuses are limited to ethno-national connections, and particularly among the three dominant ethno-national groups in BiH. Social cohesion might also include socially connected groups such as, class, rural/urban, and gender. The scope of the study was determined based on careful consideration of the BiH context and the feasibility of a single study. It should be recognized, however, that the relationship between school governance and social cohesion encompasses a wide range of dimensions.

In addition, the generalizability of study findings to other societies requires caution. The study focuses on the specific national context of BiH. The findings of this case study may not be automatically applicable to other post-conflict societies. As the causes and nature of conflicts vary, so does the post-conflict environment that affects education governance and social cohesion. Therefore, the application of the study findings to other post-conflict contexts would require careful consideration of each society’s unique conditions.

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7 In this paper, the term “ethno-national” is used to refer to the peoples in BiH. In local terms, “national groups” are commonly used to refer to ethnic groups. However, the term “national” creates confusion in English as it is often equated with statehood, while use of the term “ethnic” ignores the political aspiration of each group for statehood (Levy, 2009).
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Introduction

In this chapter, relevant bodies of literature are reviewed. The purpose of this literature review is to place the study within the larger framework of studies concerning the relationship between education governance and social cohesion. This chapter makes a tentative claim that decentralized school governance has the potential to enhance social cohesion in BiH by empowering school-level stakeholders to influence school directors’ decisions, and indicates the lack of empirical evidence demonstrating that the decentralized system has indeed been functioning as intended.

The literature review is divided into two main sections. The first section discusses a theoretical perspective for this study, drawing from theories concerning social cohesion and participatory school governance. This section first defines social cohesion and schools’ contributions to social cohesion with a reference to the post-conflict context. Then, it discusses the theoretical underpinnings of decentralized school governance, and describes school-based management as its most popular form. Subsequently, the section introduces the notion of school professionals’ participatory democratic accountability as a guiding perspective to examine the functioning of decentralized school governance as a tool to
promote social cohesion. The central role of school leaders\textsuperscript{8} in school management and accountability is highlighted, underpinning the study rationale for focusing on their perceptions. The last part of this section touches upon the notion of international reform isomorphism, and situates the research topic in a broader debate concerning convergence and divergence of global reforms.

The second section describes the BiH context. The section provides a brief overview of the nation’s historical background and its present situation as characterized by the lack of social trust and the divisive education systems, which are further eroding social cohesion. Then, the school-based management (SBM) reform will be discussed in detail with a focus on the relationship between school directors and school boards. Some comparisons are made with the self-management system in the former Yugoslavia in order to seek insights into the present reform. At the end of this chapter, a brief summary of the literature review will be presented.

The bodies of literature covered in this chapter were drawn from multiple fields of social science since the topics of education governance and social cohesion necessarily involve interdisciplinary analysis. The chapter comprises a diverse range of studies, including both academic and practitioner research, as well as both quantitative and qualitative studies. The theoretical section was written with contributions from political and sociological theories as well as organizational studies; these fields provide conceptual

\textsuperscript{8} A “school leader” refers to a school professional who holds the senior management position in a school. The paper uses the expression “school directors” when it is specifically referring to school leaders in BiH.
understanding of the relationship between education governance and social cohesion. As for the section on the BiH context, an effort was made to include literature written by authors from BiH or the Balkan region in order to incorporate emic perspectives into the analysis.

Meanwhile, for strategic reasons, the review excluded certain bodies of literature that may nonetheless relate to the research topic. Most notably, the reviewed literature in the theoretical section did not include works conducted from the perspective of economics. This discipline often provides important sources of information for studies dealing with education governance and administration; however, the present study did not cover literature from this field since its main focuses are the political and social dimensions of school governance.

2.2. **Theoretical perspective**

2.2.1. **Social cohesion and education**

*Definition of social cohesion*

Social cohesion is built on trust which shapes human relationships essential to the development of a society. Scholars generally agree that trust is the fundamental nature of social cohesion (Colenso, 2005; Colletta & Cullen, 2000; Ritzen et al., 2002). Trust refers to reciprocal relations between two parties based on expectation and obligation (Coleman,
Trust enables human beings to cooperate in economic activities and affects the general well-being of a nation (Fukuyama, 1995). In post-conflict societies, strong distrust against the former enemy group is not likely to be easily replaced by a high level of trust. Still, many would agree that some degree of trust is considered necessary for a society to function.

In this study, social cohesion is defined as the density and interplay of the horizontal trust relations between social groups and the vertical trust relations between government institutions and civilians (adapted from the definitions offered by Chan et al., 2006 and Smith & Vaux, 2003). This definition is useful as it specifies two concrete dimensions of social cohesion, namely horizontal and vertical, and the fundamental element of social cohesion, that is trust. The study is based on the assumption that social cohesiveness requires both horizontal and vertical trust.

In advancing the understanding of social cohesion’s vertical and horizontal dimensions, social capital theory offers a useful analytical lens. Initially introduced by Bourdieu (1984), then developed further by seminal scholars such as Coleman (1988) and Putnam (1993; 2000), social capital captures the notion of trust existing in a society. While Bourdieu and Coleman discussed social capital as a benefit to individuals, it was Putnam who expanded the concept to include its benefits to a society (Field, 2003). He used two types of social capital, vertical and horizontal, to explain the functioning of society based on trust relations.
In his study on Italian society, Putnam found more mutual interrelationships between the government and civil society in the northern region than in the south. Northern Italy’s history is characterized by guilds and self-regulating governance, which has contributed to the high level of vertical social capital. In contrast, the southern part of Italy has a history of aristocracy. Civilians have traditionally distrusted the government that imposed its unitary policy practices on the population. Putnam concluded that the higher level of socio-economic development in northern Italy could be explained by its history of vertical trust relations between the governing and the governed (Putnam, 1993).

A particular contribution of social capital theory to the understanding of social cohesion is found in its distinction between bonding and bridging trust in horizontal relations. Putnam (2000) referred to bonding social capital as intra-trust within a homogenous group, and bridging as inter-trust across different social groups. He contended that bridging social capital was essential to the development of civil society. During an ethnic conflict, bonding social capital tends to be reinforced at the expense of bridging social capital (Colletta & Cullen, 2000). Then, it can be inferred that social cohesion in post-conflict contexts necessitates an increase in horizontal bridging and vertical social capital (Colletta & Cullen, 2000; McGinn, 2008). Indeed, Belloni (2001) asserts, in reference to BiH, that “vertical relations of dependency and authority” and “horizontal relations of reciprocity and cooperation” are considered prerequisite to the emergence of a tolerant and multi-ethnic civil society in the nation (p. 168).
Finally, the linkage between community and national cohesion should be briefly discussed and clarified. The present study assumes that a high level of horizontal trust, in particular bridging trust, in a heterogeneous community contributes positively to the development of national cohesion. Secondary schools are the focus of this study since their activities could affect social cohesion not only within a heterogeneous school community, but also in a region or the nation by creating a bridge between multiple communities. As for vertical trust, the increased trust in schools, which is one of the most familiar public services for many civilians, potentially encourages the public to view the governments in a more favorable light and become more actively engaged in the improvement of their services. Ultimately, increased horizontal and vertical trust at the local level is likely to create a favorable condition for the establishment and strengthening of inter-ethnic and integrated institutions operating at the state level, which can thus enhance national cohesion and nation building.

*The relationship between education and social cohesion*

Education is considered to affect social cohesion in various ways. Positively, education can build and sustain social relations that contribute towards social cohesion by shaping individuals’ attitudes towards other groups and their society (Bannon, 2006; Roberts-Schweitzer et al., 2006; Smith, 2003). In this aspect, scholars have argued that education is an important policy instrument to promote respect for human rights (Salmi, 2006) and to develop norms and values favorable to cooperation with others (Green &
Preston, 2001; Green, Preston, & Janmaat, 2006). Also, equitable educational access and achievement are beneficial to the development of social cohesion. This claim has been supported by Green et al. (2006) who found, in their cross-national analysis of educational gaps, that less variance in literacy levels was associated with higher levels of trust in a country.

However, education can negatively affect social cohesion as well. Many examples can be drawn from conflict areas to illustrate this point. In Rwanda, schools taught biased and often violent content prior to the 1994 genocide. Children learned how to count the number of bodies they would kill (Rutayisire, 2007). A very similar lesson was practiced in Afghanistan’s schools in the 1980s (Spink, 2005). In the former Yugoslavia, the textbooks described the use of violence as a legitimate means to solve problems (Hopken, 1997). These violent messages were not necessarily meant to turn its citizens against each other, but may have helped internal conflicts to become violent when they occurred.

Moreover, discriminatory educational policies often fuel the resentment of one particular group against another and result in a military conflict. In Sri Lanka, the Tamil uprising against the Sinhalese dominant government was said to be a response to the school curriculum that ignored the Tamil culture (Salmi, 2006). In Kosovo, the imposition of a Serbian curriculum on the Albanian population led to the complete withdrawal of Albanian teachers and students from the schools and the beginning of a “parallel system” where Albanians conducted their own teaching in private homes, furthering the division in the society (Nelles, 2005).
Ultimately, education’s potential to contribute to social cohesion may be affected by the form of its governance. Biased teaching and discriminatory policies, both of which diminish vertical and horizontal trust in a society, are often the results of exclusive and non-participatory governance that favors a particular social group at the expense of others. In this context, McGinn (2008) argues that effective institutions are attentive to the needs of a wide range of segments in a society, thus encouraging social cohesion and, in turn, are reinforced by social cohesion. Before discussing a form of school governance to address social cohesion, however, the schools’ roles in facilitating social cohesion should be clearly identified.

_Schools’ social cohesion roles_

School governance reforms to address social cohesion are based on the functionalist belief that schools can contribute to the enhancement of social cohesion. Emile Durkheim is arguably the first scholar to discuss how schools contribute to social cohesion. Durkheim asserted that schooling was an important instrument for building “organic solidarity” by helping individuals to understand the complex structure of society and their roles, and by providing them with the skills and values required for participating in society. Organic solidarity refers to mutual dependence between members of a society, which differs from mechanic solidarity that is limited to relations between similar people (McGinn, 2008). However, Durkheim essentially conceptualized social cohesion based on a homogenous nation-state (Green et al., 2006).
Later, Stephan Heyneman, a contemporary scholar actively engaged in this field, discussed school contributions to social cohesion in multi-cultural and post-conflict contexts. Heyneman advanced his argument about school roles in facilitating social cohesion based on the notion of social contracts. Social contracts refer to a willingness to fulfill civic responsibilities and participate in public affairs. People are more likely to adhere to these contracts when they share the same norms and expectations (Heyneman, 2003a, 2003b). As such, the concept of social contract is closely associated with trust, as trust denotes reciprocal relations based on expectation and obligation. Schools, when properly managed, can help reinforce social contracts or trust between different social groups and between public institutions and civilians. In the following paragraphs, four different conceptual roles that schools may play in facilitating social cohesion are discussed, based on Heyneman’s propositions.

First, schools contribute to social cohesion by teaching citizenship that includes common rules and principles for all. Similar to Durkheim’s argument, Heyneman asserts that schools need to teach the complexity of social issues and the “rules of the game,” referring to the social and legal principles, rights and responsibilities of political leaders and citizens, and the consequences of not observing these rules (Heyneman, 2003a, 2003b). Citizenship education that teaches such content is considered to be particularly important in post-conflict contexts; students are expected to understand the constitutional arrangements and national laws that form the basis of their new society (Sinclair, 2002).
Sharing citizenship principles can also help build a sense of solidarity beyond a local community or different social groups, thereby increasing horizontal trust.

It is worth noting that citizenship education in ethnically-divided and post-conflict nations such as BiH is likely to differ from patriotic education, a traditional form of civic education in other parts of the world. In a divided society, any hint of patriotism aiming to unite citizens would be met with strong suspicion as an attempt by a particular social group to assimilate all the others. In Northern Ireland, for example, a patriotic model of citizenship based on British or Irish loyalty cannot be accepted in schools because of the tensions between the Protestant and Catholic residents (Smith, 2003). In a post-conflict environment, therefore, teaching common principles rather than patriotism is a more accepted form of citizenship education. This type of citizenship education may be characterized as democratic citizenship education (Guzina, 2007) whose primary purpose is to develop loyalty to a democratic constitution, rather than allegiance to a particular national culture or symbol.

Secondly, schools are expected to provide students with opportunities to socialize with those of different backgrounds. Heyneman asserts that the socialization of citizens from different origins is a crucial process, allowing them to acknowledge and respect each other. According to Heyneman, the socialization process can decrease the distance between citizens, and thereby strengthen social contracts (Heyneman, 2003a, 2003b). Similar to the teaching of citizenship principles, the schools’ role of socializing students is considered to increase horizontal trust.
In addition to Heyneman, many other scholars have recognized the socialization role of schools. Such a school role has been supported by the contact theory, initially proposed by Allport (1954) and later developed by Pettigrow (1998). These scholars found a reduction of prejudice in racially mixed schools in the U.S. due to socialization at school.\(^9\) Integrated schools in other parts of the world have shown similar results, including Sri Lanka (Sri Lanka Ministry of Education, 2008), Northern Ireland (Hayes & McAllister, 2009; McGlynn, 2004), Australia (Babacan, 2007) and Canada (Niens & Chastenay, 2008). Addressing school issues in post-conflict areas, the recent Education for All Global Monitoring Report (United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization [UNESCO], 2011) declared: “Whatever their cultural difference, faith, language or wider household background, all children stand to gain from sharing an education, and a place of learning, with people who are different” (p. 246).

The third role of schools in enhancing social cohesion is that they increase community trust in public institutions by demonstrating equality and fairness in their practices. Heyneman (2003a, 2003b) stresses the importance of providing equal opportunity for all students. Equal opportunity includes not only the enrolment in schools,

\(^9\) The contact theory is said to be sustained when interacting groups share common goals and equal status, cooperate and enjoy support from authority (Allport, 1954). In addition, continual contacts are often necessary (Pettigrow, 1998). Still, many studies have supported the contact hypothesis, even in situations lacking these key conditions (Pettigrow, 1998).
but also both formal and hidden\(^{10}\) curriculum, and pedagogy acceptable to all social groups attending the schools. Fairness is associated with transparency and with a lack of corruption. Schools’ attempts to reduce corruption in the school staff appointments, budget management and grading of students can increase perceived fairness, and thereby increase vertical trust.

Finally, schools serve as a place of adjudication where different interests within school communities are negotiated and incorporated through school-based bodies such as school boards and parent-teacher associations (PTA). Schools are expected to encompass a wide range of interests, viewpoints and expectations from their school-level stakeholders. Heyneman cites the teaching of local history in the U.S. as an example to illustrate the importance of an adjudication process. He explains that, while civil rights can be seen as a struggle for minority rights in the American South, its movements included both whites and minorities. Teaching such multiple points of view is an important role of schools in enhancing social cohesion (Heyneman, 2003a, 2003b).

The adjudication process potentially increases both vertical and horizontal trust. Public institutions providing an adjudication process for an inclusive governance body are more likely to increase trust from a diverse range of the population than those with an exclusive decision-making venue. At the same time, learning content encompassing

\(^{10}\) “Hidden curriculum” includes school culture and interactions between teachers and students that reflect the dominant norms of the school. It is based on the belief that students’ learning process is affected not only by what they learn through the formal curriculum but also through the teachers’ assumptions and the social context in which the interaction between the teachers and learners take place (Snyder, 1973).
multiple views as a result of adjudication could increase horizontal trust. In addition, the interaction among the key stakeholders can positively contribute to the enhancement of vertical and horizontal trust. Contact theory would support the notion that the interactive process among members such as school professionals and local stakeholders can lead to the reduction of bias toward others and develop confidence among these members.

Among different types of schools, public secondary schools play a particularly important role in advancing social cohesion through the aforementioned activities. Compared to primary schools, secondary schools often serve multiple communities in a wider catchment area, thus more likely to draw students from different ethnic backgrounds. Compared to the tertiary education institutes, secondary schools serve greater numbers of youths, thereby making a potentially larger impact on social cohesion at the national level. Moreover, it is often at the secondary level that citizenship education is introduced. Due to these characteristics, secondary schools are said to offer a useful platform for examining the critical issue of social cohesion (Lauglo & McLean, 1985). It should be added that secondary school children in BiH are arguably the most vulnerable to “various forms of indoctrination and manipulation into adulthood” (UNDP, 2003, p. 78), further accentuating the vital importance of secondary schools in promoting social cohesion in the country.
2.2.2. **Decentralized school governance**

The decentralization reform in BiH presumes that such a system reform would result in the enhancement of school engagement in the social cohesion areas outlined above. This sub-section discusses theories and key features of decentralized school governance. Then, the following sub-section examines school leaders’ participatory democratic accountability as a central tenet of the decentralized governance system. These two sub-sections will illuminate the underlying assumptions of the SBM reform in BiH to enhance school roles in facilitating social cohesion, and point to the areas that need to be investigated by empirical research.

Decentralizing public services has been a popular policy in post-conflict and plural societies. In El Salvador, for example, decentralization reform began during the last years of the conflict in the late 1980s (Cuellar-Marchelli, 2003). In Cambodia, a new commune committee system was set up as the government was shifting to decentralized governance (Buckland, 2005). Similarly, the Rwandan government initiated an inclusive community-driven approach to development based on the concepts of participation in their attempt to forge links between different factions of society (Colletta & Cullen, 2000).

The decentralization of education governance in post-conflict nations normally occurs within the framework of these wider reform attempts, often with the intent to depoliticize education previously affected by divisive politics and to improve government-civilian and inter-group relations. Referring to post-conflict contexts, Smith and Vaux (2003) argue that decentralized school governance can “provide better protection
against political and ideological abuse, patronage and corruption” (p. 26). Burde (2004) adds that community participation in schools has been regarded as an effective mechanism to restructure the social fabric and mend social networks. These arguments show that decentralized school governance in post-conflict nations may be seen as a way to develop participatory decision-making and social cohesion, as much as or more than a way to increase student academic achievement, as often observed in other nations.

One of the reasons why decentralization seems to have become a normative reform agenda in post-conflict nations appears to be its inherent democratic nature. Decentralization symbolizes power-sharing among key stakeholders and increases participation and inclusivity, which are the hallmarks of democracy (Davies, 2002). Referring to the education reform phenomenon in the former Yugoslav republics (including BiH), the former Slovenian education minister, Pavel Zgaga, noted that, “decentralization of the educational systems of traditional democracies are considered a normal step toward strengthening democratic governance and social cohesion” (Zgaga, 2004). As this comment illustrates, decentralization of education governance has been linked to democracy, which is considered to increase social cohesion in pluralistic nations in transition.

Fundamentally, the linkage between decentralized school governance and democracy is articulated by the notion of deliberative democracy. Deliberative democracy essentially refers to a form of governance where civilians participate in a decision-making process in public affairs. In such a process, the participants are expected to listen and attend
to each other’s opinions, and after due consideration, come to a consensus that benefits the whole community (Fung & Wright, 2003). This form of democratic governance is considered to complement the deficiencies of representational politics that often end up providing the maximum advantages to a particular constituent group (Fung & Wright, 2003). For this reason, deliberative democracy has been referred to as “voice-centered” rather than “vote-centered” (FranklinePierce University, n.d.).

In addition, deliberative, or direct, democracy is said to increase the legitimacy of decisions made by a governing body because of citizens’ direct participation in the decision-making process. In this context, the question of “who participates” is important, and indeed vital, to deliberative democracy (Fung & Wright, 2003). This is particularly so in a pluralistic community where residents are presumed to have different interests. These diverse interests are negotiated during a deliberative process, which will not only increase the legitimacy of a final decision but also develop mutual respect between participating citizens (Gutmann, 1995). In short, decentralized and participatory governance is characterized by its autonomy, inclusiveness, and deliberative processes.

School based management (SBM)

Originating in the U.S., school-based management (SBM) is a popular system of decentralized school governance that embodies deliberative democracy. SBM is commonly implemented as a structural reform that involves the redistribution of decision-making power over schools from government bureaucracies to the school-level
decision-making bodies (De Grauwe, 2005). In this arrangement, local stakeholders perform key tasks relating to school governance in combination with school-based leadership, replacing the dominance of bureaucratic elites (Walker & Dimmock, 2002).

In the context of SBM, therefore, local stakeholders are supposedly the key players in influencing school policies and practices. Generally speaking, stakeholders are defined as a group of people who influence the practices of an organization through direct pressure or by conveying information (Henriques & Sadorsky, 1999). Parents are regarded as particularly important local stakeholders in the school decision-making process since they represent and express the needs of the children (Fullan, 2007). Under the SBM arrangement, school boards often provide the most effective platform through which parents and local community representatives can influence schools, since it is often designated as the ultimate governing body for determining school policies and practices.

School boards enable lay people, such as parents and local community residents, to consign their demands to school management. Such an arrangement is rooted in a belief that education should not only be controlled by professionals (Bereday, 1964). This belief is reflected in school professionals’ accountability under decentralized governance, as explained later. Normally, however, school boards also include school teachers so that the teachers’ detailed knowledge of the school can be utilized to improve school management (Leithwood & Menzies, 1998). In some cases, school boards may include school

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11 A school board may be called a school council, or school management committee. In this paper, the term school board is used for general discussion concerning SBM since this is a commonly used expression in BiH.
administrators as well (World Bank, 2008). In BiH, however, school directors were not included at the time of this research. School directors were not supposed to influence school board decisions; it was the school boards that were invested with the authority to call on school directors to act on their behalf.

As SBM becomes a global trend, its forms have become diversified. The precise mechanism of SBM varies, reflecting the reformers’ objectives as well as the political and social backgrounds of each society where it occurs (Dimmock, 2002; Gamage & Pacharapimon, 2004; Gibton, Sabar, & Goldring, 2000). The World Bank (2008) categorizes SBM programs based on the degree of autonomy, namely the extent to which decision-making is devolved to the local level. At one end of the spectrum, a very strong SBM program is characterized as school-level stakeholders having “full” or “almost full control” of schools, including the decision to create a new public school. At the opposite end of the spectrum, a weak SBM program is characterized as lacking autonomy to make any administrative and curricular decisions.

The SBM reform in BiH, as will be described in the next section, can be categorized as “strong” or “somewhat strong” according to the World Bank categorization. This type of SBM system provides school boards with a high degree of autonomy over budget and staffing. The World Bank (2008) observed that a strong version of SBM reforms had occurred in post-conflict and post-disaster nations in Latin America, such as El Salvador, Nicaragua, and Honduras. The organization speculates that strong SBM programs in these nations may be explained by the possibility that communities, forced by calamity, come
together as a group to cooperate to deliver basic services. Such an observation may also explain the success of SBM after major upheavals in other parts of the world, such as the active community participation in school management in post-colonial South Korea (Kang, 2002).

It should be noted, however, that SBM systems, even in their stronger versions, may not necessarily diminish the role of governmental actors, such as ministries of education. Depending on the design of the SBM and its organizational culture, these government actors may retain significant degrees of power to influence school policies and practices through, for example, government representation on school boards. Such a critical view of decentralization was expressed by Weiler (1990), who viewed policies as a political utility. According to Weiler, governments introduce decentralization reforms to increase their legitimacy and diffuse conflicts, rather than to redistribute power aimed at improving public services. Such motives of policy-makers may result in the superficial implementation of SBM reforms when the autonomy of school-level governing bodies is not fully realized.

Furthermore, decentralized school governance may even require the support of governments. The SBM system in itself does not guarantee that citizens possess the necessary skills and will actively participate in the collective decision-making process. Central government offices could inform citizens of participation opportunities and provide them with training in effective deliberation (Fung, 2003). A longitudinal study (1998-2001) of SBM in South Africa found that parents’ participation improved as the
education authorities addressed the capacity development of community members. The community members then increased their understanding of, and trust in, the governance process (Karlsson, 2002). It can be said, however, that government commitment to facilitate the deliberative process is constrained by how far the governments are willing to redistribute their power, as well as their other political calculations.

Effects of SBM

Empirical evidence of the effectiveness of SBM has been mixed, in part due to the variety of scopes and methodologies utilized. Previous evaluative studies of SBM can be categorized into two groups. Those in the first category attempted to determine the effects of SBM in achieving the stated objectives, such as raising student academic achievement. The other group of studies investigated issues around the participation of local stakeholders. In both categories, the evidence is contradictory. All these studies, however, have some relevance to the present study, though very few of them explicitly examined decentralized school governance in relation to social cohesion.

Many studies examined the effectiveness of SBM in improving student achievement. In Indonesia, for example, dramatic improvements in the rates of student attendance and test results were noted within 12 months of implementing an SBM project (Caldwell, 2005). In Papua New Guinea, India and Nicaragua, parent participation in school management was found to reduce teacher absenteeism (World Bank, 2008). In El Salvador, community-managed schools reduced student absences due to teacher absences,
leading to speculation that the reduction of student absences would positively affect student achievement (Jimenez & Sawada, 1998).

In post-conflict contexts, SBM is frequently seen as a strategy to bring about a complete change in the way the system works by increasing citizen participation. Echoing the earlier discussion on SBM in post-conflict nations, raising student academic performance is not explicitly stated as an objective of SBM; this may be understandable considering that post-conflict nations typically lack an adequate teaching environment, learning materials and national standard systems. Rather, SBM in these societies tends to be introduced for the purpose of and evaluated for its effectiveness in facilitating citizen participation. To illustrate this point, the UNESCO IIEP commended SBM reforms in Libya, Afghanistan and Cambodia as successful cases by stressing that PTAs and community-based school management bodies mediated and monitored education provision at the local level (UNESCO, 2011).

In addition, SBM in post-conflict nations is often expected to depoliticize education. It has been pointed out that depoliticization of education occurs as a result of citizen participation and leads to the improvement of school efficiency and effectiveness. The following quote from the World Bank shows such a positive assessment of SBM in post-conflict societies.

_As civil society becomes more conscious of the importance of education, communities are taking greater interest in the school system and pressing for improvements. Education systems have become less politicized as stakeholders_
increasingly focus on quality improvements and expanding the systems’ reach. ... The three countries [referring to post conflict El Salvador, Guatemala, Nicaragua] embarked on education reforms to depoliticize education, enhance parental involvement, and regain and improve enrollment and efficiency levels. (World Bank, 2003, pp. 18-19)

By contrast, other studies have challenged the premise of SBM to improve school management and effectiveness. Some critiques have questioned the underlying supposition of SBM that local communities are capable of overseeing schools better than governments. For example, Chapman and his colleagues observed that local communities in Botswana were unable to demonstrate their clear understanding of school effectiveness and of their options to improve schools (Chapman, Barcikowski, Sowah, Gyamera, & Woode, 2002). Karlsson (2002) similarly noted that the capacity deficits of school-based governing members were hampering the functioning of SBM in post-apartheid South Africa.

Other critiques pointed out the lack of civilian participation, while acknowledging some progress. For example, a review by Leithwood and Menzies (1998) of 83 empirical studies, mostly in the U.S. and other industrialized nations, found very little evidence of parent involvement under SBM. Despite the low degree of parental participation, however, they concluded that SBM reduced psychological distance between parents and schools, and increased the parents’ awareness that schools are able to respond to their demands. In the U.S., only resource-rich residents were believed to participate because of the energy
and time required for deliberating. However, Fung and Wright (2003) found that poor communities did participate in SBM in Chicago, challenging such a general assumption.

Some other scholars argued that SBM may invite excessive influence from local political elites. An illustration can be found in a Chicago school system where some members of the local communities dominated school councils to advance their political gains, leading to the eventual abolishment of the SBM experiment (Cook, 2007 as cited in World Bank, 2008). With reference to post-conflict situations, Smith and Vaux (2003) warned against SBM on the ground that partisan politics tended to become apparent in such contexts. Politicization of local school governance can lead to greater inequities (Bamberger, 2000: De Grauwe, 2005).

Some scholars have cautioned against SBM with a reference to inter-group relations. Gipton (2000), for example, asks how alienation and segregation can be avoided when local communities and ethnic groups insist on teaching their individual cultures at schools. In post-conflict societies, community participation can exacerbate social divisions as a result of uneven administration of services and hate-based education (Burde, 2004). A similar concern was expressed by observers when the former Yugoslavia experimented with the self-management system, as explained later in this chapter.

Importantly, studies have noted that school leaders, who are crucial actors in school administrations, were partially responsible for non-functioning SBM systems. Karlsson (2002) found that school principals in South Africa dominated SBM meetings and decision-making. Karlsson attributed this phenomenon to the principals’ advantageous
positions of power within schools; their power was fortified by their higher level of education than most of the community members and their easier access to information provided by education authorities. In other developing nations, school leaders have been characterized for their autocratic styles of school management (Oplatka, 2004). Such a characteristic of school leaders was found to be typical in Eastern and South Eastern Europe where BiH is located (Catana, 2003 as cited in Goddard, 2004).

As shown, evidence and arguments around the effects of SBM are not very consistent. This may not be very surprising, given the multiple purposes and the complexity of SBM systems. None of these studies, however, explicitly and comprehensively studied school roles in facilitating social cohesion under SBM in the post-conflict context where the need for social cohesion is extensive. Building on the existing studies of SBM, this case study of BiH seeks to fill a gap in the literature by focusing on school leaders’ accountability to local stakeholders for the promotion of social cohesion activities in a post-conflict society.

2.2.3. Participatory democratic accountability (PDA)

The present research study has been chiefly informed by Maurice Kogan’s theory of participatory democratic accountability which describes supposed relations between school professionals and local stakeholders under decentralized school governance (1986). Accountability refers to the individual’s responsibility for his/her performance in accordance with the expectations of the particular role (Rowbottom, 1977). Stakeholders
can exert their influence on a school professional’s decisions when the individual receives and recognizes the stakeholders’ demand for a specific action; s/he also believes that the demand falls within the realm of the position’s expected roles so it is his/her duty to meet this demand. SBM as a policy strategy to promote social cohesion is based on an assumption that school professionals perceive local stakeholders’ influence on their decisions to promote social cohesion activities. Such a premise is fundamentally rooted in a notion associated with participatory governance— that school professionals are fulfilling participatory democratic accountability (PDA).

PDA describes a school’s accountability to its service recipients whereby local stakeholders play a crucial role in the decision-making process. In the words of Kogan (1986), “the participative models express the rights of those affected to participate in educational decision making” (p. 92). PDA is closely associated with pluralism and collective policies through a continuing process of negotiation (Kogan, 1986). Therefore, the model is considered to be suitable for a diverse society where different interests exist within a school community or a wider region. These differences need to be negotiated and compromise sought.

Fundamentally, PDA carries two sets of principles which are considered to contribute to an increase in both vertical and horizontal trust. First, the values of
community, rather than expertise and efficiency, need to be reflected in collective decision-making. Second, an emphasis is placed upon participation and consultation among all key stakeholders (Kogan, 1986). As school professionals value local stakeholder participation and incorporate their opinions into school management, community residents are likely to increase their trust in schools, contributing to the building of vertical trust. As school officials facilitate dialogue, consultation, and negotiation between different social groups in a school community, horizontal trust may be developed, even between those who would otherwise rarely meet outside schools. In this way, school-based decision making can lead to social capital in schools and communities (Driscoll & Kerchner, 1999 as cited in Opfer & Denmark, 2001). These PDA principles resonate with Heyneman's proposition that school roles promote social cohesion by offering the adjudication process to local community stakeholders.

Decentralized school governance that embodies the two sets of PDA principles is assumed to possess the following three characteristics in terms of the relationship between school professionals and local stakeholders. First, an autonomous school-based governing body representing local stakeholders of diverse groups actively participates in school governance by proposing ideas and alternatives to school professionals. Second, school professionals value participatory school governance and respond to the wishes and demands of the school-based governing body. Third, school professionals are engaged in

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12 PDA envisions that school professionals respect local values. The SBM reform in BiH presumed that local stakeholders would appreciate and support social cohesion. The findings of this study, as later discussed, indeed seemed to generally uphold this assumption.
consultation and negotiation with the members of the school-based governing body, attending to different opinions concerning school policies and practices. Research questions in the study were formulated to investigate whether these assumptions about decentralized school governance derived from the PDA principles are realized in ways that promote social cohesion.

*School leaders’ role, perception and values*

Among school professionals, school leaders play a key role in the promotion of social cohesion activities and school accountability. It has been argued that school leaders play a crucial role in developing social relations and values conducive to the development of social cohesion. Scholars contend that social capital building within schools and the larger community are crucial tasks for school leaders (Bryk & Schneider, 2002; Caldwell, 2005). In Sri Lanka, school leaders are explicitly tasked to create an environment conducive to social cohesion through curricular and extra-curricular activities (Sri Lanka Ministry of Education, 2008). In BiH, it has been stressed that school directors should play a key role in promoting and implementing democratic values that respect diversity and the active participation of school community members (OSCE, 2008).

For decades, school leaders have been regarded as central to school governance and management (Chapman, 2008; Fullan, 2007; Heck, 2002; Marks & Nance, 2007). School leaders often provide leadership, or at least influence, in the pedagogical process, school management, school-government relations and school-community relations (Chapman,
These areas of school leadership responsibilities have important implications for the school mechanisms essential to social cohesion, namely teaching common citizenship principles, socializing children of different backgrounds, practicing equality and fairness, and providing a community with the adjudication process to negotiate their differences. Their wide range of school management responsibilities, as well as their critical roles in linking schools and their external stakeholders (Firestone, 1989; Firestone & Louis, 1999; Fullan, 2007) suggest that school leaders are main actors in school accountability (Brown, 1990). The study in BiH focused on school directors as they are at the forefront of school accountability, and their decisions and behavior are crucial to the school’s social cohesion roles.

Under the system of SBM, school leaders’ roles are likely to become important in advancing social cohesion, since they need to deal with local stakeholders more substantially than under traditional and bureaucratic governance systems. PDA predicates that school leaders actively engage themselves in deliberation with community residents (Fung & Wright, 2003). In the process of deliberation, school leaders may foster an environment that welcomes the participation of local stakeholders from different backgrounds (Open Society Institute, n.d.). Local participation would be enhanced when school directors are able to be facilitative, rather than directive, in the decision-making process (Goddard, 2004).

In assessing school leaders’ PDA, their perception of their relationship with local stakeholders can provide valuable information. School leaders’ perception matters.
because the reality of school governance cannot be understood only by reading relevant legislations and regulations that define the formal arrangement of the system; rather, meaningful insights can be gained from the perceptions of the actors themselves situated in the center of a system. Astiz and her colleagues confirm this by underscoring the importance of understanding the school leaders’ views in comprehending the complexity of educational governance (Astiz, Wiseman, & Baker, 2002). Fullan (2007) further asserts that “an understanding of what reality is from the point of view of people within the role is an essential starting point for constructing a practical theory of the meaning and results of change attempts” (p. 155).

Indeed, studies from around the world have examined SBM based on the perceptions of school leaders, indicating the soundness of such an approach. For example, Gibton et al. (2000) investigated the perceptions of school principals in Israel under SBM and found that they did not feel that their schools belonged to the community, suggesting the possible gap between the school principals’ “mindmap” and the official map. Opfer and Denmark (2001), meanwhile, examined school principal perceptions in the U.S. state of Georgia from an interpretive perspective to understand the relationship between schools and school boards. More recently, Mizel (2009) studied Arab school principals’ self-assessment of accountability implementation in Israel, and discovered that their accountability was affected by cultural contexts.

Studies have also examined school leaders’ perceptions of stakeholder influence, one of the key topics also investigated in this study. In the U.S., the Department of
Education conducted the 1999-2000 Schools and Staffing Survey asking school principals to assess the influence of various stakeholders on decisions concerning school staffing, budget and curriculum (U.S. Department of Education, n.d.). Some parts of the survey results were later used by Marks and Nance (2007) to analyze correlations between leadership roles and stakeholders’ influence, across the states with varying degrees of control over school policies. Internationally, a questionnaire developed by the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) asked school leaders around the world to assess the influence exerted by different bodies, such as regional authorities, the school’s governing board, parents, teachers and students, on their managerial decisions. Results of this international survey were used to assess the actual degrees of decentralization (Baker, LeTendre, Astiz & Wiseman, 2005).

Finally, understanding school leaders’ own values is another crucial step in comprehending the actual functioning of a system of decentralized school governance. Fowler (2009) stresses that policy implementers’ values are important since a policy failure may occur when its implementers possess values that might not be compatible with those underlying the new policy. Facing a new policy or reform based on unfamiliar ideas, implementers attempt to carry it out anyway, but may do so superficially (Fowler, 2009). Fowler’s citation of Spillane (2000) aptly describes such a process.

*Therefore, when faced with a new situation, people naturally draw on their already formed schemas to interpret it. As they do so, they are likely to seize on aspects of the new situation that resemble their past experiences and to overlook aspects of it*
which do not readily fit into their preexisting schemas. They are especially likely to focus on superficial or concrete aspects of the new experience, while overlooking its deeper and less obvious components.

(Spillane, 2000 as cited in Fowler, 2009, p. 279)

The quotation above indicates that understanding policy implementers’ values can help assess whether and how a reform introduced by external actors operates in a specific local context. The importance of understanding the site managers’ values has been recognized by other scholars as well. For example, Bottery (1999) argues that, while ideas may be global, the “actual practice of management is context-bound, mediated by the beliefs, values and aspirations of the managers and the managed” (p. 303). In school management studies, it is critical to understand school leaders’ values as much as their actions themselves, since their morals and beliefs likely influence or even determine their actions (Goddard, 2004). Marks and Nance (2007) and Pitter (1988 as cited in Heck, 2002) have similarly pointed out the importance of understanding school leaders’ values. The prevalence of literature that stresses the importance of school leaders’ perceptions of stakeholder influence and their own values suggests that such studies are an important scholarly effort to understand school governance under SBM.

2.2.4. International reform isomorphism

At a broader level, this research study speaks to an important debate in the field of comparative and international education (CIE) concerning cross-border educational
policy transfer and the isomorphism of educational governance. The SBM reform in BiH was introduced by international organizations that support decentralization around the world. As such, the SBM reform, as expressed in BiH national legislation and policy documents, appears to resemble decentralization reform rhetoric used elsewhere. A closer look at its implementation, however, may reveal a different picture from the one envisioned by international reformers. This sub-section describes the debate in the CIE field and shows how this study may contribute to the discussion.

In recent decades, international donors have promoted SBM as a way to address the educational needs of developing nations and post-conflict societies. International donors assert that SBM can promote broader participation and reflect the voices of civil society in the decision-making process, thereby improving school effectiveness (Buckland, 2005; Caldwell, 2005; UNDP, 2007). The Dakar Framework for Action, an influential policy guideline to advance Education for All, calls on governments around the world to “develop responsive, participatory and accountable systems of educational governance and management” (UNESCO, 2000, p. 9). As an illustrative example of donor support for SBM, the World Bank loaned 23% of its basic education funds to aid SBM reforms during the years 2000-2006 (World Bank, 2008). Decentralization and participation have been common educational themes in many of the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers assisted by the World Bank (UNESCO, 2011). Clearly, SBM continues to be a popular education reform prescription around the world.
Among aid-recipient nations, post-conflict nations are especially likely to follow global reform agendas for a few significant reasons. First, international donors actively intervene in the domestic policies of these nations. In particular, regional agencies have direct stakes in preventing the recurrence of a violent conflict so as to avoid its spread in the region. The international donor community also tends to view post-conflict periods as a “window of opportunity” to introduce democratic forms of governance (Pigozzi, 1999; World Bank, 2003) as people are believed to be open to new ideas and institutions are still being formed. Second, international donors have the leverage to influence reform agendas in these nations through their aid since these nations are often heavily dependent on external funds for their reconstruction. Third, post-conflict nations may be under direct international supervision, which makes it an opportune time for these nations to adopt and implement global education models. Additionally, as in the case of BiH, the nation’s aspiration to join the European Union (EU) provides strong incentives to the country’s policy leaders to accept reform plans recommended by European regional agencies such as the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the Council of Europe and the European Commissions.

The popularity of SBM reforms around the world appears to support institutionalist theories of isomorphism. From the perspective of organizational theory, institutionalism generally explains that organizations conform to mainstream models to increase their legitimacy (Dimaggio & Powel, 1983). Neo-institutionalism extended this idea, explaining how nations adopt international norms (Boyle, McMorris, & Gomez, 2002),
and arguing that education around the world looks increasingly similar because policy-makers see the adoption of global models as the only legitimized option (Dimmock, 2002; Meyer & Ramirez, 2000).

Neo-institutionalism departs from the traditional approach to policy study that situates nation-states as central to policy-making. Meyer and Ramirez (2000), two of the leading scholars of neo-institutionalism, argue against functionalism that assumes a unique education system in each and every nation-state. Instead, they argue that a network of international organizations prescribes the best educational responses to problems in policy-importing nations. These organizations represent a “more direct and organized mechanism for diffusion” (p. 118). According to this thesis, national governments around the world are conforming to the same set of standards presented by the international organizations.

Although neo-institutionalism has an appeal in terms of describing and explaining education homogenization around the world, critics have pointed out a great deal of variation when it comes to policy implementation. Drawing on Cuban’s distinction between “policy talk,” “policy action” and “policy implementation” (Cuban, 1998 as cited in Steiner-Khamsi, 2006), Steiner-Khamsi (2006) maintains that global convergence only occurs at the level of policy talk and very rarely at the level of implementation. This claim has been shared by some other comparative education scholars (for example, Anderson-Levitt, 2003; Rui, 2007).
Indeed, various case studies have indicated that national and local actors actually resist global reform models. For example, teachers and inspectors in Guinea resisted the opportunity to gain greater autonomy which global reforms often attempted to increase (Anderson-Levitt, 2003). In other cases, global models were combined with local norms and practices, and internalized (Phillips & Ochs, 2003). In short, nation-states are not adopting global models “mechanistically,” as their education systems are likely to be affected by “economic resources, policy-making processes, and national values” (Fowler, 1995, p. 94). This points to a critique by Anderson-Levitt (2003) that neo-institutionalism theory addresses only the “official models” or policy statements, but fails to examine their implementation.

Post-conflict nations such as BiH present a unique opportunity to examine the extent of education reform isomorphism. As the next section describes, BiH possess the characteristics of post-conflict nations described earlier, from the country’s dependency on external financial support to the regional actors’ close involvement in national reconstruction and the tight international supervision. Adding to them is the national aspiration to join the EU and citizen support for social cohesion, all of which would lead one to speculate that the SBM reform in BiH may have been implemented in a way that closely reflects the original intention of the global reform model. This study in BiH tested the premise of SBM, and by doing so, showed the extent to which the global idea of decentralized school governance has been implemented in the case of a post-conflict society.
2.3. **BiH context**

This second part of the literature review explains the context of BiH with a reference to social cohesion, the education system, and school governance reform in the country. An account of the context is important in case studies since it illuminates the complexity of the phenomenon under study (Merriam, 2009; Stake, 1995; Yin, 2009). Understanding the SBM reform in BiH would demand that investigators place the reform within the complex web of intersecting historical, social and political forces affecting social cohesion and education governance in the society. An emerging picture from the following analysis of the BiH context is that building vertical and horizontal trust has been a challenge for the society, and that the education governance system is a critical factor in how social cohesion is fostered.

2.3.1. **Background**

BiH is located in the western part of the Balkan Peninsula of South East Europe. Neighboring countries are Croatia to the north, west and south, Serbia to the east and Montenegro to the southeast. The three dominant ethno-national groups in the country are Bosniaks (Muslims), Serbs (Orthodox Christians) and Croats (Catholics), estimated to account for 43.7%, 31%, and 17.3% of the present population of 3.8 million, respectively (OSCE, n.d.b). They share a Slavic heritage but are divided by their religious affiliations. Notably, none of these ethno-national groups has been the absolute majority during the history of BiH. Tension among the three groups has always existed, especially when
politicians have exploited the differences to their advantage. Notwithstanding, the society has also enjoyed periods of peaceful coexistence in the past.

BiH has long been a multi-cultural and multi-ethnic society. South Slavs immigrated to the Balkans during the sixth and seventh centuries, and many of them later adopted Christianity. Some of them also converted to Islam during the 400 years of the Ottoman occupation. In addition to the three major groups, there are said to be seventeen ethnic minorities within BiH including Albanians, Hungarians, Jews and Romas (OSCE, n.d.b). The official languages are Bosnian, Serbian and Croatian, and these include two alphabets: Latin and Cyrillic. Although spoken expressions of the three languages are almost identical and used to be noted as one system of language called ‘Serbo-Croatian,’ the leaders of these ethno-national groups often insist on the distinctiveness of their languages.

Historically, BiH has long dealt with the challenge of social cohesion. The Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, in which BiH was one of the constituent republics, was born in 1943 with a promise of coexistence between different ethno-national groups under the socialist-communist ideology. Under the leadership of a charismatic partisan leader Josip Broz Tito, the autonomy of the six constituent republics, namely BiH, Croatia, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Slovenia, was respected. The system of autonomy guaranteed the language and religious diversity within Yugoslavia.

In the early 1990s, Yugoslavia became engulfed in a series of internal ethnic conflicts. The breakup of Yugoslavia reflected a change in its geopolitical position. Yugoslavia maintained its status within the Non-Aligned Movement, distancing itself from
the Soviet Union and receiving aid from the West. With the cold war over and less Western aid being received, the country entered an era of uncertainty. Ethno-nationalism was rising. The introduction of a multi-party system in 1990 resulted in the election of ethno-nationalistic leaders in the constituent republics of Yugoslavia, paving the way for military conflicts among different ethno-national groups.

The violent conflict was particularly severe in BiH where there was no absolute ethnic majority. When the republics of Slovenia and Croatia declared separation from Yugoslavia, Bosniak leaders in BiH followed suit. This ignited a violent military confrontation between the three major ethno-national groups and involved many civilians. The Bosnian conflict lasted three years, from 1992 to 1995, resulting in more than 100,000 deaths and the displacement of half the population (Bakke, Cao, O’Loughlin, & Ward, 2009). BiH became a sovereign state in 1995 with the Dayton agreement mediated by the international community.

The present governing system of BiH is multi-layered, reflecting the complexity of the ethno-national composition within the society, the consequences of the 1992-1995 war and the subsequent international interventions. The Dayton agreement was based on democratic principles, but it sanctioned the ethno-national divisions (Guzina, 2007). After the war, the country was initially divided into the two “entities,” namely the Bosniak - Croat Federation of BiH (FBiH) covering 51% of the territory and the Serb-dominant Republica Srpska (RS) covering the rest. Later, Brčko, an autonomous district, was added and has been under the direct supervision of international (U.S.) administrators. FBiH is

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further divided into 10 cantons, mostly along ethno-national lines. Five cantons are Bosniak majority areas, three cantons are Croat majority areas, and the remaining two are fairly mixed. This institutional arrangement is said to have perpetuated and reinforced ethno-national divisions in politics (Simonsen, 2005).

A striking feature of the governance structure of BiH, as also seen in other post-conflict societies such as Kosovo and East Timor, is the high degree of international intervention in domestic affairs, reflecting the post-cold war form of international peace-keeping operations. At the conclusion of the 1992-1995 war, the Office of High Representative (OHR) was set up by the United Nations to supervise and monitor a wide range of civil society activities. Among the extensive authorities of the OHR is the power to enforce necessary laws and regulations stemming from the Dayton Agreement and to dismiss locally elected figures that it judges as subversive to the principles laid out in the Agreement. The mandate of the OHR was repeatedly extended as the international community was not satisfied with the extent of democratic progress in the country.

This extensive influence from international agencies can be clearly observed in the education sector. In 2002, the OHR delegated its education mandate to the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). Since then, the OSCE has coordinated

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13 The five Bosniak-majority cantons are Una-Sana, Zenica-Doboj, Tuzla, Bosnian Podrinje and Sarajevo. The three Croat-majority cantons are Posavina, West Herzegovina, and Canton 10. The mixed cantons are Central Bosnia and Herzegovina-Neretva. All cantons are mixed to some extent. The five Bosniak-majority cantons include Croat-majority municipalities (Council of Europe, 1999; Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD], 2001).

14 The fragmented system has also created a huge government apparatus. Presently, there are 14 parliaments, 5 presidents, 13 prime ministers and 700 MPs for a population of mere four million (Lowen, 2010).
efforts to reform the education sector in BiH (Du Pont, 2005; OSCE, n.d.b) and been able to exert considerable influence on education reforms with the backing of the OHR. Concerned with the politicization of education and the perceived lack of social trust in BiH society, the OSCE declared that ‘the overriding objective of education reform in BiH is to depoliticize the education sector’ (OSCE, 2006, p. 36).

2.3.2. Social cohesion

BiH is an illustrative case of a post-conflict nation with inter-ethnic tensions lingering long after the end of a civil war. Since the global cold war ended two decades ago, the nature of violent conflict has largely changed; war is now fought mostly between groups within a country, rather than between countries of different ideologies. According to Huntington (1997), a conflict between people of different faiths and civilizations tends to linger and persist long after the conclusion of a formal agreement between the leaders of warring parties. Indeed, BiH has been characterized as in a state of “frozen conflict” (Perry, 2009). This condition has been the most notable in the political arena. As an illustrating point, the latest state-level government was not formed until 14-months after the general election in October 2010 due to the intransient ethno-national politics.  

Studies have suggested that the level of trust in post-conflict BiH is generally low.

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15 The disagreement persisted among the three ethno-national groups about the allocation of state-level ministers.
Based on the findings of a survey and focus-group interviews, one study concluded that “social trust is virtually non-existent” in the post-conflict BiH society (Oxford Research International/UNDP, 2007, p. 17). A more recent study showed that only about 10% of respondents felt that most people could be trusted, “an unusually low level of social trust compared to other countries in the region” (UNDP, 2009, p. 19). The researchers of this study noted a downward trend for general trust in all areas of BiH.

Reflecting the nature of the recent war, inter-ethnic relations continue to be an important aspect of trust in BiH. A qualitative case study in Mostar, a town where Bosniaks and Croats fought ferociously during the recent war, discovered an uneasy relationship between the two ethno-national groups (Corkalo et al., 2004). Prior to the war, people in the town had a custom of inviting others for coffee. “Let’s have coffee” did not necessarily mean that coffee would be served; it was an invitation for friendly conversation. Ethnographic studies in the town revealed that the local custom of invitation between different ethno-national groups virtually disappeared after the war. The researchers concluded that a vital element of inter-ethnic relationships is the rebuilding of trust.

Another indication of the lack of inter-ethnic trust in BiH is that people have continued to vote for those who represent their ethnicity, except for a brief period in the aftermath of the conflict. Observing this trend, Simonsen (2005) noted that “underlying an individual’s choice to vote in ethnic terms are both a fundamental lack of trust and an expectation that someone from his or her own group will represent his or her interests better than someone from a different group” (p. 300). Such a mentality indicates the
general lack of trust in the society. It also indicates a limitation of representative
democracy in BiH to promote social cohesion, as vividly illustrated by the long-delayed
formation of a state-level government in recent years.

It is important to note, however, that inter-group sentiment in BiH is intricate and
multifaceted. The study conducted by Håkansson and Sjöholm (2007) confirmed that
people in ethnically heterogeneous regions generally had lower levels of trust than people
in ethnically homogenous regions. However, the same study reported that the number of
people expressing outright distrust of other ethno-national groups was small. Indeed, the
UNDP report in 2009 found that BiH citizens believed the most significant level of social
tension was between rich and poor (88%), rather than between different ethno-nationalities
(79%). Furthermore, people tended to distrust not just other ethno-national groups, but
anyone outside their personal connections (UNDP, 2009). These findings suggest that
social division in BiH may not be simply characterized as inter-ethnic hatred; in fact, the
general public has shown their willingness to cooperate across different ethno-national
groups, as explained later.

Social cohesion in BiH has been eroded by the lack of vertical trust as well. Studies
conducted in previous years have consistently shown the lack of public trust in government
institutions. For example, a study commissioned by UNDP highlighted citizens’ distrust
toward government institutions. A survey involving 1000 civil servants, 500 citizens and
500 business community members showed, regardless of their ethnic affiliations, that
these citizens perceived governments to be partial, discriminatory and non-participatory (UNDP, 2003).

Furthermore, the allegedly high level of corruption in the national and sub-national governments makes the public faith in public institutions even weaker. The level of corruption in BiH is said to be the highest in Europe (Transparency International, 2009). Personal and family connections, called štela in Bosnian, are regarded by the majority of citizens as essential for access to basic social services (UNDP, 2009). Clearly, the lack of vertical trust is an issue in the development of social cohesion in BiH.

Importantly, the lack of horizontal trust and vertical trust reinforce each other, resulting in further erosion of social cohesion. The lack of citizens’ trust in public institutions as far as exercising fair practices and offering deliberative processes can make the citizens view with skepticism any attempt by these institutions to promote common citizenship and inter-ethnic activities. Conversely, the lack of inter-group trust can make it difficult for public institutions to be engaged in fair and deliberative practices in the first place. The SBM reform in BiH is expected to change such a negative spiral and turn the interplay between horizontal and vertical trust into a relationship of mutual reinforcement favoring social cohesion.
2.3.3. **Education system and social cohesion**

In BiH, formal education starts with 8 to 9 years of compulsory primary education, followed by secondary education for 4 years in a gymnasium\(^\text{16}\), teacher training school, art, religious, or technical schools, or 3 years at vocational schools\(^\text{17}\), then higher education (OECD, 2001). The gross enrollment rate for 2008 was 109% for primary schools and 90% for secondary schools (UNESCO Institute of Statistics, 2008).\(^\text{18}\) The relatively high education achievements reflect the socialist legacy of the country.

Reflecting the divisive politics after the war, the education governance system is highly fragmented along ethno-national lines, making the development of social cohesion a considerable challenge. Primary education is managed by municipalities, while secondary and higher education are administered either by FBiH cantons, the RS entity government or the Brčko district. Currently, 13 regional authorities of education are present in the country: two entity (FBiH and RS) ministries, ten canton ministries and the Brčko district department of education, each having its own budget. These authorities

\(^{16}\) A gymnasium in BiH refers to a secondary school that offers college preparatory education. It prepares students to enter a higher education institute for advanced academic study.

\(^{17}\) It is said that these 3-year programs now include almost 75% of secondary school students (Duilović, 2004).

\(^{18}\) Gross enrolment rates include the number of over-aged children in a specific level of education. Net enrolment rates for primary and secondary education respectively are not available in BiH. For both primary and secondary education, the gender gap in the net enrolment is negligible (1 to 2% difference). While the primary school enrolment rate has been steady since the 1990s, the secondary school enrolment has increased from around 70% to the present rate close to 90% (United Nations Children’s Fund [UNICEF], 2008), indicating the increasing significance of the impact of secondary schools in BiH society.
have extensive jurisdiction over education in their responsible localities, and their management is often influenced by ethno-nationalistic politics. The regional education authorities operated as highly centralized administrations within their respective boundaries (Duilović, 2004), at least until the introduction of the SBM reform.

The influence of ethno-national politics can be detected in the ethnocentric expressions found within the so-called “national group of subjects” including language, literature, history, geography and arts (Kolouh-Westin, 2004; Kreso, 2008; Slowinski, 1998; Torsti, 2007, 2009) and possibly in other subjects (U.S. Department of State, 2005). For example, more than 50% of the history textbooks used in Croat-dominant primary schools referred to the struggles of Croats, while only 3% discussed the commonalities among different ethno-national groups in BiH. Similar tendencies were found in schools with other ethno-national majorities (Baranovicé, 2001).

Moreover, the ethno-national politics physically divides children. Some “multi-ethnic” public schools are so-called “two schools under one roof;” these are often found where two ethno-national groups of children share the same building but follow different curricula (Kreso, 2008). The school that appeared in the Financial Times article described in the Introduction of this paper is one of these “two schools under one roof.” In 2008, there were 56 schools with such an arrangement in BiH (Kreso, 2008). The

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19 The jurisdiction of FBiH cantonal governments over education is guaranteed by the Washington agreement signed in 1994. The FBiH federal ministry of education does not have substantial power over education in the entity, as the cantons are responsible for the service. The two “mixed” cantons are openly partitioned along Bosniak and Croat lines, with one being a Minister while the other being a deputy minister, without much coordination between them (Council of Europe, 1999; OECD, 2001).
organization Save the Children estimates that 62,500 pupils go to such divided schools (Norris, 2009). These schools, predominantly found in FBiH, are structured so teachers and pupils in the two groups have minimal contact with each other. These schools have been characterized as “the most vivid example of segregation in schools in BiH” (OSCE, n.d.a).

An overview of the post-war education system in BiH indicates that social cohesion roles within schooling have been limited. The effect of ethno-national politics on education is clear. It was once alleged that education had become a “hostage of potential ethno-nationalism” (OECD, 2001, p. 11) with possible consequences for further erosion of social trust. Against this backdrop, the SBM reform was introduced in 2003 to reduce the ethno-politicization of education and to enhance the school roles of promoting social cohesion. In the following, this sub-section discusses the four previously identified school roles in social cohesion in the context of BiH, namely (1) teaching of common citizenship, (2) socializing children of different backgrounds together, (3) practicing fairness and equality, and (4) adjudicating differences within a community. By doing so, the paper provides the detailed background behind the SBM reform, and illuminates the issues that the SBM reform was intended to address.

Teaching common civic principles, an important mechanism to develop horizontal trust, started with the introduction of a citizenship education subject in schools in 2003. Supported by U.S.-based organizations and the Council of Europe, a new citizenship education curriculum, “Human Rights and Democracy,” was introduced across the
country as a common mandatory subject. The subject was introduced in the third year of all secondary schools (Duilović, 2004). The content of the subject significantly departed from the previous Marxist education and instead followed the Western liberal democratic principles such as the rule of law and human rights as enshrined in the BiH constitution. By teaching common democratic principles and hoping to “develop awareness of commitment to the State of BiH” (BiH Government, 2003, p. 2), citizenship education potentially enhances horizontal trust, particularly bridging social capital. This logic was supported by Adila Kreso (1999), a faculty member at Sarajevo University, a leading academic institute in BiH, who argued for the promotion of values such as justice, equality and human dignity to unify all cultures in BiH and to promote social cohesion.

The introduction of this common citizenship education subject in the formal curriculum does not ensure, however, that children are taught the subject as intended. For example, citizenship teachers in BiH, many of whom formerly taught Marxist and Yugoslav civic education that stressed civil defense, may not be delivering citizenship education fully in accordance with the democratic values that the subject espouses. In such a case, close monitoring and assistance by school-level stakeholders could ensure that the new BiH citizenship principles are appropriately taught. These school-level stakeholders, including school directors, parents and local community members, may also support

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20 The BiH constitution follows such principles as: “Bosnia and Herzegovina shall be a democratic state, which shall operate under the rule of law and with free and democratic elections” (Article 1, Paragraph 2 “Democratic Principles” as cited in Office of High Representative [OHR], 1995).
citizenship education through extra-curricular activities such as youth debate forums and national day celebrations.

With regard to the socialization of children, the reality of segregated schooling elucidates the need to provide children with opportunities to interact and learn about each other. The public schools in BiH are predominantly mono-ethnic (Council of Europe, 2005). As previously mentioned, some of multi-ethnic public schools use the arrangement of “two schools under one roof.” Hromadžić (2008) conducted ethnographic research in one of these schools in Mostar, FBiH and found that some Bosniak and Croat students communicated between classes, but they did not fully trust their peers who belonged to a different ethno-national group. Another study on inter-ethnic relations in Mostar concluded that school segregation may lead to detrimental consequences, considering the complete ethno-national division in the urban space, leaving no possibility for children to socialize after school (Corkalo et al., 2004).

Still, there have been some instances of shared activities organized by a school or in cooperation with other schools. Often, these activities were initiated by international donors or non-governmental organizations (NGO). In the aforementioned town of Mostar, the Japanese International Cooperation Agency (JICA), one of major international donors in BiH, established a computer class within the premises of a gymnasium characterized as “two schools under one roof.” The computer class has been providing a rare opportunity for both Bosniak and Croat students of the school to learn together in the same classroom. In Tuzla, another town in FBiH, the local NGO “Bolje Sutra” organized cultural and art
activities in a school yard, inviting children from all ethno-national backgrounds in the neighborhood and from RS (Salines, 2006). The NGO’s activities were meant to socialize children in a non-political environment. Coordinators of the programs in Mostar and Tuzla unequivocally confided that the parents’ agreement and school directors’ support were instrumental to the realization of the programs.21

When it comes to equality and fairness, schools in BiH do not appear to have performed well. As an illustration, schools often do not offer the teaching of a national group of subjects for minority students, despite the fact that the law guarantees its provision (OSCE, n.d.a). Equality of access and curriculum are closely related to each other when the exclusive curriculum based on the ethos of the dominant group can discourage minority children in the community from attending the school. Such discriminatory practices can erode the trust of the minority population towards public institutions.

Corruption, relating to fairness, is another issue that can lower public trust in schools. As previously mentioned, corruption is a widespread phenomenon in BiH and the education sector is no exception (UNDP, 2009). A research study showed that over 65% of surveyed parents and pupils confirmed the presence of corruption; 90% were related to materials such as bribes for better grades, while 10% were non-material such as štela or personal connections (International Council of Voluntary Agencies, 2005).

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21 This information comes from the author’s previous research conducted in Tuzla (2006) and in Mostar (2008).
Another study also confirmed that paying bribes is perceived by the BiH public as necessary to receive a good education (OSCE, 2006b). Clearly, corruption is a major impediment to the building of vertical trust.

Lastly, schools in BiH did not seem to play an active role in adjudicating different interests within their school communities when the school authority rested fully with the governments. Prior to the introduction of SBM, school-based bodies that included local community members did exist, but were heavily dominated by government representatives.\(^{22}\) The system was “enmeshed in a complicated system of consultation and bargaining, overshadowed and directed by central political imperatives and ideologies” (OSCE, 2006a, p. 7). The lack of opportunity for local stakeholders to reflect their concerns and mediate their differences in school policies and practices may not have contributed to the building of vertical and horizontal trust.

2.3.4. SBM reform

The SBM reform in BiH was a structural reorganization aiming to enhance schools’ social cohesion roles. Duilović (2004) describes the first period of education reforms in BiH as a “basic education paradigm” based on essential human rights that stressed the removal of all forms of segregation and discrimination. She did not view such a paradigm as “real education reform and modernization” (p. 22). According to Duilović, real

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\(^{22}\) In Central Bosnia canton, for example, a “school steering board” was designated as the managing body of the school before. The steering board was composed of six members, four government representatives, one school staff and one parent (OSCE, 2006a). This contrasts with the present system which includes more representation from local and lay stakeholders.
education reforms call for structural changes in the system and adoption of a new management style involving all stakeholders, including local communities. Several years after the war ended, education reconstruction in BiH began to focus on the issue of governance which had increasingly come to be recognized as critical to social cohesion and peace-building in the society.

The education governance reform principles in BiH are laid out in two BiH state-level documents: the 2002 Education Reform policy paper and the 2003 Framework Law on Primary and Secondary Education (hereafter, Framework Law). These two documents, drafted with the assistance of mostly European agencies coordinated by the OSCE, define the school governance system in BiH. The Education Reform paper first declares that education needs to be depoliticized, then states that BiH education is governed by the notion of democratic and participatory school management (Government of BiH, 2002). Following the Education Reform paper, the Framework Law stipulates that the school benefits from autonomy whereby the school director is responsible for school management and the pedagogical process, and a school board representing the local school community oversees school policy. The Framework Law then established school boards “with the aim of increasing civic-government links and promoting a sense of local ownership” (OSCE, 2006a). In essence, the SBM reform envisioned by these two documents was intended to reduce ethno-nationalistic influence in education and enhance social cohesion from the bottom-up.
The education governance principles that were laid out in the Education Reform paper and the *Framework Law* closely follow global models, or more precisely, “European standards,” which suggest isomorphism in governance reforms. The Preamble of the Education Reform paper states that “we encourage everyone involved in the process of education reform to show how, together, we can move Bosnia and Herzegovina, and its young people, decisively towards the highest *European standards* [emphasis added].” (p. 14). The SBM reform was meant to follow European organizational standards and norms (OSCE, 2006a). The adoption of the *Framework Law* that aimed to establish SBM was indeed necessary for BiH political leaders as it was one of the post-accession commitments to the Council of Europe (OSCE, n.d.a), which was a first step towards the country’s eventual entry into the EU. The failure to adopt the *Framework Law* would have made BiH lose its credibility in the eyes of the European community.

*School boards*

At the core of the *Framework Law* provisions is the establishment of school boards as the primary decision-making bodies for governing schools. The school board is responsible for determining and implementing school policy, monitoring the implementation of policies and ensuring that school resources are used rationally (OSCE, 2006a). The roles of school boards are defined to achieve the purpose of the SBM reform, as the school board represents “the interest in promoting a decentralized, democratic school management body capable of decision-making – a body that would ensure
appropriate accountability measures and would bridge the community and education officials” (OSCE, 2006a, p. 14). As such, school boards were expected to have an effect on school accountability in favor of social cohesion.

The Framework Law ensures that the school board membership reflects the democratic and deliberative principles of school autonomy and inclusiveness. Article 51 of the Framework Law establishes that “the school board members\(^{23}\) are elected from school staff, school founder, local community and parents, in accordance with legally proscribed procedure, and based on principle of equal representation of all structures’ representatives. … The composition of the school board must reflect the national\(^{24}\) structure of students and parents, school staff and local community, as it is recorded at a relevant time, in principle according to the census of BiH population from 1991” (Government of BiH, 2003, p. 15). The use of the 1991 BiH census as a basis for the school board composition reflects the drafters’ intent to encourage school boards to include ethno-national minority representatives and thereby facilitate the return of the displaced population to the ethnically cleansed areas.\(^{25}\)

The school board is intended to include parent and teacher representatives who are normally chosen from relative structures within a school. The Framework Law mandated

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\(^{23}\) In order to reduce political influence in school board work, the Framework Law prohibits the monetary remuneration of school board members, which was previously a common practice. This decision was made so that “instead of consisting of people motivated by financial gain, school boards should be constituted by individuals motivated by a sense of civic duty and responsibility” (OSCE, 2006a, p. 48).

\(^{24}\) This should be read as “ethno-national.”

\(^{25}\) “Ethnically cleansed areas” in the context of BiH generally refer to the locations where an ethno-national group(s) of former residents were driven out by force during the 1992-1995 war.
that the school create a parents’ council, in addition to the existing teachers’ council. The members of a parents’ council are all appointed by the parents of students. The parent council selects a parent representative(s) to sit on the school board, often with some criteria established by regional by-laws such as the possession of a secondary education diploma. A teachers’ council is composed of teachers working in the school, and they choose the teacher representatives for the school board.

However, the government authorities\textsuperscript{26} can still influence school board work by their official representation as a founder of the school. Typically, government representatives were chosen by open competition, just as the other school board members. However, the field data collected for this study suggest that they were often selected based on their political affiliation with the ruling party. These representatives may be personnel working in schools, or in government offices. As school board decisions are made based on majority voting, the number of founders’ (government) representatives is a very important indicator of the school board autonomy and has implications for its work (OSCE, 2006a).

With regard to the ethno-national inclusiveness of school board membership, complications exist. In one ethnically mixed municipality, a dispute occurred between two ethno-national groups as to whether the ethnic balance in school board membership should reflect the pre-war census or the present reality (OSCE, 2006a). As explained, the

\textsuperscript{26} The term "government authorities" here refers to both regional and municipal governments. Generally, both governments are controlled by the same ethno-national political party. In ethnically mixed regions, however, a regional education authority is headed by one ethno-national political party, while some municipalities in the region are led by a party belonging to another ethno-national group.
Framework Law states that the pre-war census should be a principle reference point for the determination of a school board’s ethnic composition. However, in some areas where the ethnic composition has been completely changed as a consequence of the war, this provision may not be realistic, creating an awkward situation such as the one described above. Still, it has also been reported that the spirit of the Framework Law was observed in some communities where the majority of school board members came from a presently dominant ethnic group, but the school boards nonetheless included one or two representatives of a pre-war majority ethnic group who were recently returning to the communities (OSCE, 2006a).

School director accountability

Presumably, school boards determine school policies and effectuate their decisions through the appointment of school directors.27 Under the decentralized school governance system introduced by the Framework Law, the appointment of school directors is regarded as the most important task of school boards, along with approving school budgets and addressing personnel issues (OSCE, 2006a). This provision is a significant departure from the previous system where directors were appointed by the responsible ministers of education; under such an appointment system, school directors were compelled to conform to the agenda set by the cantonal and entity governments (U.S. Department of State, 2005).

27 According to Article 15 of the Framework Law, “the director for each public school is appointed by the school board, in the proceedings that are envisaged by the Entity’s, Cantonal and Brčko District of BiH laws and School’s Rules” (Government of BiH, 2003, p. 15).
The SBM reform was introduced to change this accountability system. Local stakeholders were expected to work to depoliticize education and enhance social cohesion by appointing school directors who would then perform key social cohesion tasks by using participatory democratic accountability, as previously discussed in this chapter.

Importantly, whether school directors fulfill PDA hinges upon not only school board members’ active engagement in decision-making, but also on the school directors’ own understanding and appreciation of their responsibility towards the school board. Empirical studies on BiH school leadership that help answer this question are rare. One exception is a study on school leadership in Eastern and South Eastern Europe, which indicated that school directors in this region are known to possess authoritarian leadership characteristics. This is because they were trained in non-participative and ruled societies where authorities decide for others who are perceived to be less important, less valued, or less able (Catana, 2003 as cited in Goddard, 2004). In view of Fowler’s assertion that a mere change in the accountability system does not guarantee that concerned actors behave according to their expected roles (Fowler, 2009), an empirical study is needed to investigate the actual relationship between school directors and school boards in BiH under an SBM system.

Rationale for SBM reform

In BiH, some contextual factors are considered to facilitate SBM in favor of social cohesion. As discussed previously, school governance and social cohesion are
context-specific phenomenon. Therefore, the relationship between decentralized school governance and social cohesion are likely to be affected by local contextual factors. The following analysis of inter-ethnic relationships at the grassroots level and civilians’ attitudes towards public institutions led this study to put forward the hypothesis that school boards, especially those with autonomous and heterogeneous character, encourage school directors to promote social cohesion activities.

First, the general public appears to be supportive of inter-ethnic reconciliation and cooperation, an indication that they are more likely than the ethno-nationalist politicians and their administrations to be engaged in the processes that contribute to developing the horizontal dimension of social cohesion. As an illustration of this, surveys conducted during the last decade have consistently shown that BiH people were generally willing to cooperate with those of other ethno-national backgrounds (O’Loughlin, 2010; Whitt, 2003), in spite of the fact that they tended to vote along ethnic lines during elections. Whitt and Wilson (2007) also found in their experimental studies that Bosnians retained a sense of fairness towards other ethnic groups. Inter-ethnic businesses, where people from diverse groups work together, is also on the rise while politics remains divided (Simonsen, 2005).

Another indication of the public support for social cohesion is that the majority of them endorse a common curriculum for all children, though variations exist among ethno-national groups: 91% of Bosniaks, 64% of Croats and 53% of Serbs (OSCE, 2006b).

The public posture towards inter-ethnic reconciliation around schools is notable, particularly in the context of the return process. Supported by international aid that
provides housing and livelihood, some of the displaced people have returned to the ethnically cleansed areas (Perry, 2009). Initially, some schools were reportedly reluctant to accept returning children belonging to an ethno-national group different from the majority group in the schools (U.S. Department of State, 2005). Still, more recent cases show conciliatory and pragmatic approaches taken by both parents and school managers to accommodate returning children. For example, in Foča, a small town in the RS entity, returning Bosniak children went to a Serb-majority school. As there was no Bosniak teacher in the school, the parents accepted Serb teachers to teach both general and ethno-national (Bosniak) subjects (Bozic, 2006). During my 2006 field study in Srebrenica in the RS entity, I found a case where a Serb director offered to exempt Bosniak children from attending a history class when it dealt with the recent war from a perspective that might offend them.

It seems that there has been a chasm between political elites and the public regarding their willingness to cooperate across ethno-national groups, which provides a rationale for introducing SBM as a way to develop horizontal trust. Observers noted that the present ethno-based BiH governing system is a product of the “assumption of transience” held by the international community and influenced by the rhetoric of ethno-nationalistic politicians (Simonsen, 2005). This implies that the present fragmented and divisive governing system may not represent the general will of the public. Indeed, the majority of BiH citizens, across all ethno-national groups, believe that the presently fragmented system of entity and cantonal governance is not functional (Marius, 2006;
Tuathail, O’Loughlin, & Djipa, 2006). They are said to be disappointed with the role of education authorities in reform efforts (OSCE, 2006b), and to demand urgent changes in education in accordance with European standards (Duilović, 2004).

Furthermore, the public perception of government unfairness provides another basis for introducing SBM in BiH. As noted previously, education is viewed as one of the most corrupt services in the country. Indeed, education was ranked the third most corrupt service among 11 fields, following employment and police (UNDP, 2009). The lack of vertical trust presents a major challenge for social cohesion in BiH. SBM can be seen as one way to change the civic perception of public institutions, and encourage partnership between civilians and public institutions to improve learning experiences for children.

Lastly, the influence of factional and divisive politics in local school governance should be discussed. Literature on SBM systems from other parts of the world suggests that politicization of education indeed occurred at the grass-roots level (Hanson, 1998; Mukundan, 2003). Then, the question seems to be: at which level is excessive politicization of education more likely to occur? The answer may well be conditional to local contexts. In the U.S., Spring (2005) found that local political battles were less significant in influencing school policy and practices than those at the state and federal level. Considering the excessive ethno-politicization of educational policy-making at the regional level, one may speculate that the effects of local politics on the educational process in BiH are, at worse, no more than those of regional politics.
2.3.5. Historical perspective

This sub-section discusses the self-management system in the former Yugoslavia and places the SBM reform in BiH in historical perspective; historical context may provide meaningful insights into the understanding of the nation’s current decentralized school governance. Decentralized school governance is not an entirely new phenomenon in the history of BiH. Prior to the war, BiH was governed by a decentralized system. Under the leadership of Yugoslav President Tito, a socialist style “self-management system” was implemented. The self-management system is principally an economic policy “based on direct participation in local decision-making by all members of the communes and the transfer of power from the central federal government to socio-political communities, basic organizations of associated labor and local communities” (Tomiak, 1985, p. 47).

The introduction of this self-management system was intended not only to promote economic development, but also to reduce ethno-nationalist influence in the Yugoslav society. Edvard Kardelj (1960), a Yugoslav communist leader and chief architect of the self-management system, claimed that the system would lead to a “cultural merger of the Yugoslav peoples” (as cited in Sekulić, Massey, & Hodson, 1994, p. 54). He believed that this system would replace national-ethnic loyalties with working-class solidarity since

\[28\] It is said that there were three distinctive characteristics of socialist education systems in Central and South East European nations after the World War II: they are the Soviet (centralized), the Yugoslavian (decentralized) and the Albanian (isolated) systems (Zgaga, 2004)
self-managed enterprises provided people with venues to voice their opinions (Cohen & Warwick, 1983; Sekulić et al., 1994).

Schools were no exception to the self-governance system in Yugoslavia; they enjoyed a semi-autonomous status. The 1974 constitution of Yugoslavia stipulated that “each school is an independent, self-managing community of working people whose activity is deemed to be of social interest for society” (Tomiak, 1985, p. 49). The school collectives, comprised of school staff and community members, regulated employment issues, drew up syllabi and curricula, and nominated the school director (Tomiak, 1985). As a result of the self-governance system, different school curricula were created in the Yugoslav republics (Kolouh-Westin, 2002).

Whether the Yugoslav self-management system contributed to social cohesion is debatable. The system was introduced as a way to achieve equality and harmony among different ethno-national groups (Arnhold, Bekker, Kersh, McLeish, & Philips, 1998; Friedman, 1997). However, the same system was also criticized as having contributed to the divisions in society. This self-management system created further disparities among the republics (Arnhold, et al. 1998), promoted ethno-based politics at all levels and led to the end of the socialist federation (Friedman, 1997). Tomiak (1985) noted that self-management led to the reflection of local considerations in schools and eventually to the “weakening of internal cohesion in the ethnically highly differentiated society” (p. 52). The system also suffered from the diffusion of responsibility, lengthy consensus-building
processes, weak incentives and accountability, parochialism and lack of transparency (Council of Europe, 1999).

Some further points merit noting in regard to the Yugoslav self-management system. First, the claimed effects of the self-management system on differentiated curriculum and polarization in the former Yugoslavia seem to address the level of republics, rather than schools. In fact, this argument can be applied to the present fragmentation of education policies observed in the regional system of BiH. Second, the schools under the Yugoslav self-management system may not have enjoyed autonomy as understood in the context of this study. Tomiak (1985) pointed out that school self-management in the socialist era did not involve civil society in significant ways. Mojzes (1997) added that self-management was implemented when civilians did not have meaningful political and civil rights. It has been further pointed out that pre-war school boards functioned as mere rubber stamps for the decisions made by the communist party (OSCE, 2006a). Lastly, it is said that the Yugoslav self-management system did not adequately address the issue of accountability. Collective responsibility as advocated during the communist era actually meant that no one was responsible (Duilović, 2004).

In contrast to the Yugoslav self-management system, the SBM system in BiH today encourages more substantial participation of civilians in school governance, and ensures that school boards represent different ethno-national groups in heterogeneous communities. Unlike the previous era, the BiH constitution explicitly guarantees citizens’ basic democratic rights and its implementation is monitored by international agencies.
The present study asked whether school boards in the new reality of post-conflict and post-socialist BiH are actively engaged in the promotion of social cohesion activities. As for the question of accountability, the present SBM system makes it clear that school directors are primarily accountable to school boards. Whether school directors indeed respect this accountability to school boards is, however, an empirical question, which this research also addresses.

2.3.6. Present evidence of SBM in BiH

Some past studies have provided evidence relating to the SBM reform in BiH; though these studies are largely limited to a description of implementation issues and individual cases, they provide some useful insights. In 2006, the OSCE examined the SBM reform implementation process, and found that the reform had not been fully implemented as envisioned in some parts of the country. The report described a considerable variance among school boards in terms of the degree of their autonomy and the ethnic inclusiveness of their membership. Such variance may be due to different interpretations of the Framework Law and “the lack of comprehensive legislation, legal guidance and subsequent training on how this guidance is to be implemented” (p. 27). The report noted that government authorities in some regions maintained their power by ensuring their strong presence on school boards (OSCE, 2006a). It should be added that
government authorities could also exert their influence through paying school staff salaries and approving annual school plans.\textsuperscript{29}

Some success with SBM has also been noted, however, in the autonomous Brčko district, where SBM reform is being actively implemented. At one school in the district, a school director took the risk of integrating Bosniak and Serb children; the same school director was later re-elected by the local residents to continue his role as head of the school (Davies, 2004). Integrated schools have also emerged in other areas of Brčko. While some residents in Brčko expressed initial anxiety towards such schools, the grass-roots public discussions on this issue were said to have calmed their concerns (Karnavas, 2003).\textsuperscript{30} Another relevant study noted that parents in BiH participated in school meetings at a rate slightly higher than in other countries in South-East Europe (Open Society Institute, n.d.). While the 2006 OSCE study and other studies discussed here provide useful insights into SBM reform in BiH, none of them explicitly examined the functioning of decentralized school governance in relation to social cohesion in the country. This research study fills the research gap and provides understanding of the implications of post-conflict SBM reforms as a way to promote social cohesion.

2.4. Summary of the literature review

\textsuperscript{29} Personal communication with an OSCE staff (2.15.2011).
\textsuperscript{30} Brčko has been administered under the leadership of U.S. Americans. Strong leadership of administrators and a participatory process at the grassroots level might have contributed to the success of such experiences.
The first part of the literature review in this chapter discussed the theoretical background and debates concerning social cohesion, decentralized school governance and school leaders’ accountability under SBM. Social cohesion has two dimensions: horizontal trust between different social groups and vertical trust between civilians and public institutions. Under a system of decentralized school governance, schools are expected to contribute to the development of these two dimensions of trust when the following assumptions about school leaders’ PDA are met: 1) school leaders perceive that an autonomous and inclusive school-based governing body actively influences their decisions regarding the promotion of teaching common citizenship principles, socializing children of different backgrounds together, practicing fairness and equality, and offering the adjudication process to community residents; 2) school leaders are engaged in consultation and negotiation with the body’s members continuously and attend to the diverse interests in the school community; and 3) school leaders view their primary responsibility as meeting the board’s requests. In assessing these assumptions, school leaders’ perceptions of their relationship with local stakeholders can provide useful information.

The theoretical part of the literature review then positioned the study in the broader debate on international reform isomorphism. While neo-institutionalists claim that education reforms are increasingly similar around the world since they are promoted by the same network of international organizations, such a claim has been challenged by evidence from developing nations showing a divergence in processes and outcomes. Few
studies, however, examined the isomorphism claim in a post-conflict context. This study intends to contribute to the debate within this context.

Next, the chapter reviewed literature concerning the historical, political and social context of BiH education. The literature demonstrated that the development of social cohesion has been a challenge for the society, and that the education governance system has been a critical factor in the level of social cohesion. Considering the dominance of ethno-nationalistic politics in regional governments and the public dissatisfaction with these governments as well as their general support of social cohesion, SBM may provide a possible process for promoting social cohesion in BiH by establishing an autonomous and inclusive school governing body, thus changing the accountability system in school governance.

Based on the literature review, the following research questions and hypotheses were formulated for this study. Each research question corresponds to assumptions concerning school directors’ PDA as outlined above. Research question (1) and its two sub-questions were designed to examine the first assumption about school board influence. Question (2) also addressed the first assumption, but more specifically by examining the nature of school board influence. Question (3) responds to the second assumption about the process of interaction between school directors and school board members. Research question (4) examines the third assumption about school directors’ values concerning their accountability. Lastly, research question (5) addresses the broad theme of this study—the international reform isomorphism. It should be noted that
research question (1) and its sub-questions are accompanied by hypotheses that SBM as a system reform facilitates social cohesion.

(1) Do school directors in BiH perceive that school boards influence their decisions to promote social cohesion activities?
*Hypothesis:* School directors perceive that school boards influence their decisions to promote social cohesion activities.

(1.1) Do school directors perceive school boards with greater autonomy as more influential than those with relatively less?
*Hypothesis:* School directors perceive that school boards with greater autonomy are more influential.

(1.2) Do school directors perceive school boards with an ethnically heterogeneous membership as more influential than those with a homogeneous membership?
*Hypothesis:* School directors perceive that school boards with an ethnically heterogeneous membership are more influential, particularly regarding their decisions to promote activities that aim to improve inter-ethnic relationships.

(2) In what ways, if any, do school boards influence school directors’ decisions to promote social cohesion activities?

(3) Are school directors actively engaged in consultation and negotiation with school boards?
(4) How do school directors view their accountability to school boards?

(5) What are the broader implications of the study findings in regard to the debate concerning education reform isomorphism?
3.1. Introduction

The purpose of this study is to understand whether and how a system of decentralized school governance functions in facilitating social cohesion activities in a post-conflict society. For this purpose, the study focused on school directors’ participatory democratic accountability and examined their perceptions of school board influence and their interactions with school boards as well as accountability to the school board. The study chose Bosnia and Herzegovina for a case study since the country has been implementing school-based management to enhance social cohesion.

This chapter describes the research design and methodology employed to investigate the research topic. The chapter is divided into eight sub-sections: the study design, sample selection, instrumentation, data collection, data analysis, validity, limitations and ethical considerations. Validity issues are discussed throughout the chapter, in addition to the corresponding sub-section.

3.2. Design of the study

3.2.1. Case study

In this research, a case study approach was adopted as the methodological framework. Case studies are bounded by time and place (Creswell, 1998); in the case of
this study, the post-conflict BiH state was the bounded unit. By situating a research topic in a bounded unit, researchers can examine issues while attending to various forces affecting them, including social, political and historical. Since social cohesion (Chan et al., 2006; Green et al., 2006) and education governance (Dimmock, 2002) are both considered to be contextually affected phenomena, focusing on a particular national setting, namely post-conflict BiH, can yield meaningful insights into the relationship between decentralized school governance and social cohesion.

BiH was chosen as the case because of its potential to offer useful insights into the research topic. BiH is a post-conflict nation that has recently undergone inter-ethnic strife, resulting in the erosion of horizontal trust between ethno-national groups and vertical trust between civilians and public institutions. Guided and supervised by international agencies, an SBM reform has been introduced to address such social divisions. Local stakeholders, who are expected to be involved in the reform’s school governance process, generally appear to be supportive of social cohesion. These conditions render BiH an interesting and appropriate case to investigate the implications of a decentralized school governance system to enhance social cohesion, and to provide information that can contribute to the discussion around the international isomorphism of educational reforms.

In addition, BiH was selected because of my familiarity with the country and the wider Balkan region. In case studies, a case can be selected for its possibility to offer the greatest learning. Such a possibility includes the accessibility of a case (Stake, 2005). I have been involved in the Balkan region for more than 10 years in various capacities.
related to the field of education, including regional education officer in the UN Mission in Kosovo (between 2000-2002) assisting school-level reforms and policy coordination, education officer in the UNESCO field office in Sarajevo, BiH (in 2003) facilitating inter-ministry cooperation in the education sector, and university researcher in the area of education and social cohesion in post-conflict nations including BiH (between 2003-2009). These experiences provided me with additional insights and access in carrying out this study.

3.2.2. Methods

In order to collect the empirical data, mixed methods were employed. A case study design suits this data-collection strategy as it allows the researcher to use multiple sources of information (Creswell, 1998). Mixed methods are considered to be useful to increase the validity of findings as well as to examine different dimensions of a phenomenon under investigation (Creswell, 2009). This study concurrently employed a census survey and individual interviews to collect data so that their findings were complementary and different research questions were answered.

As one of the principle data-collection tools, a questionnaire survey was used to answer research question (1) that asked whether school directors perceived school board influence on their decisions to enhance social cohesion activities. The collected data were also analyzed to seek statistical significance regarding the relations between school board characteristics, namely their autonomy and inclusiveness, and the degree of their influence,
thereby answering sub-questions (1.1) and (1.2) that asked whether the supposed features of decentralized school governance embodied by the SBM reform could enhance social cohesion activities.

Concurrent with the survey, interviews with 16 school directors, selected by two different sampling methods, were conducted to collect information to supplement the survey findings. The interviews also contributed to answering research question (2) that inquired about the nature of school board influence, question (3) that investigated the interaction between school directors and school boards, and question (4) that asked for school directors’ view regarding their accountability towards school boards. Individual interviews, as opposed to group interviews, were chosen because the interview contained potentially sensitive questions. The participants were requested to complete the survey questionnaire prior to the interview so as to avoid the possibility that the interview might affect their responses to the survey, as well as to help them prepare for the interview.

A mixed-methods strategy is said to increase the validity of a research study by counterbalancing the deficiency of a single strategy (Thurmond, 2001) and increasing the interpretive potentials (Denzin, 1970 as cited in Thurmond, 2001). In the context of this study, a survey was useful to determine general patterns, but had to be complemented by interviews for deeper analysis. As an illustration of this point, it was not possible to include all the necessary questions in the survey that probe complex issues because of the inherent limitation of the size and length of the questionnaire sheet; it is well known that response rates tend to decrease as the number of questions increases (Dillman, Smyth, &
Christian, 2009). Moreover, instructions, questions and statements in a survey need to be expressed in a simple form to ease the burden of respondents to complete it. This limited the researchers’ ability to investigate a topic deeply, especially when the questions asked for answers that potentially involved complexity, such as respondents’ perceptions. Lastly, interviews provided additional opportunities to clarify a respondent’s intent when answering a survey question and investigated the research topic from various dimensions that could not be accomplished by a single survey.

In employing quantitative and qualitative methods, the study anticipated and prepared for possible divergence in their findings. Such divergence does not necessarily invalidate one method or the other, however. In fact, divergence can be an opportunity for further understanding of the issue under investigation. Jick (1979) elaborates on this possibility as follows: “In seeking explanations for divergent results, the researcher may uncover unexpected results or unseen contextual factors. … Where divergent results emerge, alternative, and likely more complex, explanations are generated” (p. 608). The present study adopted this position when analyzing the data collected by the survey and interviews.
3.3. Sample selection

3.3.1. Sampling for survey

Due to a relatively small study population (N=294), a decision was made to conduct a census survey with all public secondary school directors in BiH. Efforts were made to increase the response rate so as to maximize the variations within the sample population in terms of the degrees of autonomy and the ethno-national composition of school boards. Survey questionnaires were sent to 291 secondary school addresses provided by the regional authorities (FBiH 10 cantons, RS and Brčko), excluding 3 schools that participated in a pilot-study. In some cases, “two schools under one roof” had two school directors and two school boards. Such a case was treated as two independent schools, and as such, the questionnaire was distributed to both directors. In total, 159 surveys were returned, out of which 150 surveys were judged valid. The valid response rate was approximately 51.5%. All regions in BiH were represented in the survey, thus the coverage error was not considered significant. Table 1 summarizes the regional distribution of valid responses.

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31 The procedure to determine the validity of responses will be explained later (3.6.1)
Table 1

Regional distribution of survey responses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>No. of schools</th>
<th>No. of returns</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Una-Sana canton</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>65.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zenica-Doboj canton</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>67.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuzla canton</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>60.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bosnian Podrinje canton</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>66.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sarajevo</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>48.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Posavina canton</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>50.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Herzegovina canton</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>57.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canton 10</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>50.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Bosnia canton</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>60.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Herzegovina-Neretva canton</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>25.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Republika Srpska</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>42.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brčko district</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>291</strong></td>
<td><strong>150</strong></td>
<td><strong>51.5</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. The regions are listed in the order of their characteristics. The first five of them are Bosniak-majority FBiH cantons. The following three are Croat-majority FBiH cantons. The next two are mixed cantons in FBiH. Republika Srpska is the other BiH entity. Brčko is an autonomous district.

Herzegovina-Neretva canton recorded the lowest response rate of all the regions.

Several reasons for this can be deduced. The canton is one of the two ethnically mixed cantons in FBiH. The delicate inter-ethnic relations in the region might have discouraged
certain school directors from participating in a study dealing with social cohesion. However, this explanation does not hold strong against the relatively high response rate (60%) from the Central Bosnia canton, another mixed canton. Other plausible explanations include: a BiH state-wide workshop for school directors was held in the canton during the survey implementation period, possibly preoccupying the region’s school directors in preparing to host the workshop; and some school directors may have been informed that I visited other school directors in the region and expected me to interview and collect the survey from them also.

As an attempt to help determine the degree of non-response error, the ethnic balance of respondents was examined since it is important that all ethnic voices are reflected in this study. Among the survey respondents, Bosniaks were represented at 57.3% (n=86), Serbs at 24.7% (n=37) and Croats at 15.3% (n=23). This roughly corresponds to the ethnic composition of the BiH population since they constitute 43.7%, 31%, 17.3%, respectively (OSCE, n.d.b). Overall, Bosniaks are somewhat over-represented and Serbs are somewhat under-represented, however.

The Bosniak-majority cantons, with the exception of Sarajevo, returned the survey at rates consistently higher than Croat and Serb majority regions. This may suggest that the Bosniaks, the majority ethno-national group in BiH, are more comfortable with

32 A non-response error occurs when a significant number of people in the survey sample did not respond to the questionnaire and have different characteristics from those who did respond, and when these characteristics are important to the study (Dillman et al., 2009)
33 Three respondents from Sarajevo answered “Bosnian” which refers to their BiH citizenship. One respondent belonged to an ethnic group other than the three dominant ethno-national groups.
participating in studies that discuss social cohesion than the other two groups. Sarajevo was an exception, possibly because its education minister was being replaced at the time of survey implementation, creating a vacuum of authority and some confusion in education administration.\(^{34}\)

The slightly lower rate of returns from the Serb population was expected. The RS entity, where the majority of Serb school directors work, was the second lowest in terms of response rate. In recent years, the ruling Serb ethno-national party of the RS has threatened to separate from the BiH state.\(^{35}\) This political climate may have affected school directors’ decisions to participate in this study which treated the BiH state as a unit of analysis and used Sarajevo, the capital city of BiH with a Bosniak majority of residents, as a research operation base. Still, the inter-group response error is likely to be minimum; it is considered that there would not be significant differences between the collected responses and the responses that would have been provided by non-participant Serb directors, since all RS school directors received a copy of the RS government approval letter and thus were assured of the authority’s support for this research.

\(^{34}\) The fact that the letter of research approval from the Sarajevo canton came considerably later than those from the other regional authorities is indicative of this authority vacuum.

\(^{35}\) The latest such move was a decision by the RS parliament (February 10, 2010) that challenged the Dayton Agreement by making it easier to hold a referendum within the RS entity on BiH statehood issues.
3.3.2. Sampling for interview

Both criterion and random sampling methods were utilized in order to identify 20 potential interviewees. The criterion method was used to increase the diversity of the sample population (Mertens, 1998), while the random sampling method was employed to reduce bias in participant selection. Interviewees were chosen from different parts of BiH to ensure the representation of various regions and communities. Random sampling was conducted by using Microsoft Excel (version 14).

The selection procedure was as follows. First, contacts were made with 7 pre-selected school directors. These school directors were recommended by the OSCE for their potential to contribute to the research topic and their willingness to cooperate. The remaining 13 participants were randomly selected, taking into consideration that all regions should be represented and that a balance of heterogeneous and homogenous regions was ensured. They were then contacted to determine their willingness and availability. A back-up list of potential participants was also prepared following the same sampling procedure, in case those originally chosen might decline to participate.

\[\text{\textsuperscript{36}}\] OSCE was informed of the intent of my research prior to their selection of potential participants. These school directors were selected from those who had participated in various workshops organized by the agency.

\[\text{\textsuperscript{37}}\] Initially, it was planned that school directors would be selected based on their school boards’ autonomy level. This was not realized since I could not obtain sufficient and reliable information prior to the selection of potential interview participants that would help determine each region’s school board autonomy level. It turns out that, as Table 2 shows, regions were equally represented in terms of the two levels of school board autonomy as determined by the information that survey respondents provided.
Eventually, 16 directors\textsuperscript{38} were interviewed, including 4 recommended by the OSCE. All 12 regions, except Canton 10\textsuperscript{39}, were represented by at least one interviewee. The profile of interview participants is documented in Table 2.

Table 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>FBiH Bos \textsuperscript{a}</td>
<td>FBiH Cro \textsuperscript{a}</td>
<td>FBiH Mix \textsuperscript{a}</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years of experience</td>
<td>0-4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5-8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Over 8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School board autonomy</td>
<td>Higher</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lower</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School board heterogeneity</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\textit{Note.} N=16.

\textsuperscript{a}Bos: Bosniak-majority cantons, Cro: Croat-majority cantons, Mix: ethnically mixed cantons

\textsuperscript{38} Some directors who had agreed to participate in the study became unavailable at the last minute, making it difficult to contact alternative interviewees and obtain their agreement to participate.

\textsuperscript{39} A potential participant from Canton 10 agreed to be interviewed but became unavailable at the last minute.
3.4. **Instrumentation**

3.4.1. **Survey questionnaire**

The survey questionnaire was developed to collect data which would assess the extent of school board influence that school directors perceived on their decisions to implement social cohesion activities. The survey instrument was a self-administered paper questionnaire. The survey, formatted as a B-5 size booklet and in the three official languages of BiH, contained a cover page explaining the purpose of the study, followed by the survey questions. The survey was sent to all potential participants along with a consent statement letter. The questionnaire items were constructed based on existing empirical studies as well as my contextual knowledge gained from previous field experience in BiH and in the Balkans. The questionnaire was designed to be completed within 30 minutes.

The questionnaire was developed in English first, then translated into the three official language versions, namely Bosnian, Serbian and Croatian. Efforts were made to ensure the accuracy and adequacy of translation. The questionnaire was translated by professionals who were familiar with the BiH school context, then was back-translated by others (Mertens, 1998). Any discrepancies with the original version were discussed and resolved. Back translation has been used by other studies to increase the validity of

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40 Translators were identified both in the USA and BiH. All translators, including those who back-translated, had either an official certificate in translation between English and BiH local languages or extensive experience in translation. All of them had a university bachelor’s degree or above.
translation. For example, Mizel (2009) used this method to translate a questionnaire originally prepared in Hebrew into Arabic, then back-translated the document in order to verify that the correct meaning of the statements contained in the questionnaire had been retained in the translated version.

The instrument contained 14 closed-ended question items to be answered with Likert-scales or in multiple choices and an open-ended question asking for additional comments or information about school board influence. The survey questions were divided into two parts: (I) school director’s perceptions of school board influence on his/her decisions in key areas of social cohesion, and (II) basic information about the school board, school and respondent him/herself. A sample of the survey questionnaire and consent statement is available in Appendix A.

Part I is the central part of the survey questionnaire. It asked respondents to read a statement and assess it on a Likert-type scale ranging from “strongly agree,” “agree,” “disagree” to “strongly disagree.” The respondents were asked whether school boards encouraged them to promote social cohesion-related policies and practices as discussed in the literature review of this paper, and whether they felt they must respond to such requests. In this way, the study sought to assess the perceived degree of influence in two dimensions. The question items were arranged beginning with the less controversial, such as the facilitation of school board meetings, to the more controversial, ending with the

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41 The literature review identified four areas of social cohesion activities. In the survey, school fairness and equality was assessed in two items: the equality of school access and curriculum, and reduction of corruption. Thus, there were five items in total included in the questionnaire.

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promotion of citizenship education. At the end of Part I, space was provided for additional comments regarding the school board requests and the school director’s responsiveness.

The questionnaire was also used to obtain information about school board autonomy and its membership. Part II contained questions pertaining to the school board composition, including the presence of government representatives and the heterogeneity of the membership. In addition, Part II included a question concerning the school director appointment process, in order to assess the degree of government involvement in this school board task. Respondents were given four choices to answer this question. Those who answered “other” were solicited to specify the appointment process. The responses to the questions in Part II were used to determine the degree of school board autonomy across regions and the heterogeneity of school board membership; they constituted the independent variables for statistical analysis.

In the context of this study, four types of validity threats may be associated with the use of a survey instrument: content validity threat, central tendency bias, acquiescence bias and social desirability. The content validity threat occurs when the items do not

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42 Citizenship education was deemed a potentially sensitive topic as some ethno-national groups may view it as a step towards a stronger state, eroding their autonomous status.
43 The information concerning the school board composition that the survey respondents provided was difficult to verify as there was no archival data available to the author. This can be a validity threat, though it is considered that the respondents did not have particular reasons to provide false or erroneous information on these items. An OSCE staff also confirmed the general accuracy of school directors’ reporting.
44 The information about the school director appointment process was later cross-checked with the regional by-laws (as of 2006) stipulating this matter.
measure the content they are intended to measure (Creswell, 2009). In creating these survey items, the principles of good item writing are used, such as using plain language and avoiding double-barrel expressions (Dillman et al., 2009). Central tendency bias is associated with the use of the Likert-scale and occurs when respondents try to avoid using extreme response categories (Gingery, 2009). This threat was countered by using a four-level scale and excluding a neutral option. Acquiescence bias refers to respondents’ tendency to agree with the statements as presented (Krosnick, Narayan, & Smith, 1996 as cited in Mertens, 1998). Later in this sub-section, a measure used to counteract the threat of acquiescence bias will be explained. Lastly, social desirability bias occurs when the respondents try to portray themselves, events or phenomena in a more favorable light (Dillman et al., 2009). Attempts were made to reduce this threat by careful wording of the instructions and question items so as not to nuance the social desirability or the particular ideological stance of the researcher (Dillman et al., 2009). Assurance of anonymity and confidentiality are also considered to reduce this type of bias.

Among all the validity threats to the survey, social desirability needed particular attention in BiH, as precarious job availability, party politics and lack of trust in authorities’ fairness could make respondents feel insecure and may encourage them to follow “official lines,” avoiding any risks of losing their livelihoods. Another cause of concern regarding the social desirability threat comes from the nation’s socialist legacy. Many of the present school directors in BiH worked for or were educated under the socialist regime prior to the 1992-1995 conflict. During that period, it is said that school discussions of controversial
issues relating to ethnicity were avoided altogether, and that the abstract idealism of ethnic
harmony was taught instead (Kovac-Cerovic, 1998). This raised suspicion about the
potential presence of social desirability bias that might affect school directors’ responses.

In order to deal with the validity threats to the survey instrument as well as to
evaluate survey administration procedures, a two-phase pilot study was conducted prior to
the actual survey implementation (Creswell, 2009; Dillman et al., 2009). First, cognitive
or “think-aloud” interviews were conducted. The cognitive interview is considered to be
effective in examining the extent to which the survey instrument adequately captures
respondents’ experiences (Desimone & Le Floch, 2004; Willis, 2004). Typically,
individuals who come from the study population or are familiar with the study participants’
contexts are asked to state aloud their interpretation of the survey questions while they are
completing the questionnaire in front of the researcher. For this study, two cognitive
interviews were conducted with persons from the Balkan region who were involved in
school affairs, both of whom were known from my previous field work.

Second, a small-scale survey was administered with the instrument in order to
further assess the adequacy of the question items as well as to note any impediments that
could occur during the process of survey implementation. It was intended that the pilot
survey would be conducted with five secondary school directors in BiH. The potential
participants were chosen by a stratified sampling method so that different regions would
be represented. Within the duration of the pilot-study, three school directors returned the
survey. One of the pilot survey respondents, who had also been identified as a potential
interviewee, was subsequently visited and interviewed to further assess the adequacy of the instrument. All pilot-survey participants were excluded from the actual survey group.

Results of the pilot study indicated that two validity threats, acquiescence bias and social desirability, may have occurred. Survey results showed that the participants had a tendency to agree with the statements affirming that school boards influenced their decisions. Yet, when a pilot-survey respondent was asked during the interview whether any discussions took place with the school board on pertinent matters, the respondent admitted that such discussions had never taken place nor did she recall any specific incidents that could illustrate such influence. This raised suspicion that the pilot study participants may not have been reflecting the reality of school boards’ influence when they responded to the survey questionnaire.

In order to counter the validity threats associated with acquiescence bias and social desirability bias, two modifications were made to the survey before it was distributed to the study population. First, the bolded word “actively” was added to all the statements describing the school boards’ influence. The survey respondents were then asked to assess whether their school boards actively encouraged them to promote each of the social cohesion activities. It was judged that this modification might make the statements less likely to encourage agreement, therefore reducing acquiescence bias. Second, a new sentence was added in the instruction section that urged study participants to reflect on the reality as they perceived it rather than the ideal that reformers may desire.
These two steps, in addition to the assurance of anonymity and confidentiality, were considered to lessen the two types of biases that could affect participants’ responses.

3.4.2. Interview protocol

A semi-structured interview protocol was developed to ensure consistency in the interview process. These data were used to complement the survey findings, as well as to comprehend the interaction between school directors and their school boards, and school directors’ perspectives on accountability. In addition, the protocol included questions designed to better understand the school board member profiles and school director appointment procedures; this information was used to determine the adequacy of the school board autonomy measurements initially considered for statistical analysis. The length of the protocol took into consideration the time required for translation.

As an interview method, semi-structured interviews are useful when interviewers wish to ensure that important issues are covered while retaining flexibility in responding to emerging issues (Mertens, 1998). This interview technique allowed me to explore and understand school directors’ views with regard to their relationship with school boards and their accountability towards them more fully than rigid structured interviews. In view of this purpose, most questions were constructed as open-ended, and designed to solicit concrete examples (Mertens, 1998). The protocol can be found in Appendix B.

The protocol contained five key questions. First, interviewees were asked how they understood the role of school boards in school governance generally and more
specifically in relation to the social cohesion areas investigated by the survey. This question was intended mainly to supplement the survey results on research question (1), while also addressing research question (4) about school directors’ views regarding their accountability. Regarding the first purpose, this question was asked to determine the areas for which school boards are generally responsible, thereby gaining a sense of the extent to which they address the social cohesion activities explored in this study. Such information would help us comprehend why school boards are actively or passively engaged in these social cohesion activities. As for the second purpose, the question was meant to gain insights into school directors’ views on their accountability to school boards. School directors’ own understanding of the significance of school boards can help illuminate their views regarding school director accountability, and subsequently their willingness to fulfill PDA.

Second, interviewees were asked whether they perceived school board influence in the social cohesion areas more or less than before the introduction of the present school board system. This interview question was intended to provide complementary information for the survey results on research sub-question (1.1). Sub-question (1.1) inquires whether school board autonomy affects their influence on school directors’ decisions. The SBM reform aimed to increase school board autonomy, thereby enabling the school board to influence school directors to promote social cohesion. This interview question aimed to assess whether the SBM reform, introduced by the Framework Law in
2003,\textsuperscript{45} has indeed made any significant changes regarding the extent of school board influence by comparing pre- and post-reform school governance. It turned out, however, that the majority of the school director interviewees (68.8\%) were appointed to their present positions after the SBM reform was introduced. Therefore, the interview question was only applicable to five interviewees.

Third, interviewees were asked whether and how the heterogeneity of school board membership affected the way they worked. This interview question was intended to complement the survey results on research sub-question (1.2). Sub-question (1.2) inquired as to whether the ethnic inclusiveness of school boards, a supposed feature of decentralized school governance, positively affects the way they participate in school governance. The question was posed only to the ten school directors working with heterogeneous school boards.

Fourth, interviewees were asked to describe how school boards actually influenced or encouraged them to promote social cohesion activities. This interview question primarily addressed research questions (2) and (3), while also serving to triangulate the survey findings that school directors perceived school board influence. The interview question was designed to understand the scope and extent of school board engagement in social cohesion policies and practices, and assess whether school directors respected a

\textsuperscript{45} As previously mentioned, the actual introduction of SBM varied according to the regions. The reform was introduced in each region with the adoption of their by-laws.
PDA value by being engaged in consultation and negotiation when the school boards were expressing their wishes and requests.

Lastly, interviewees were asked why they felt they must respond to school board requests generally and more specifically in relation to the social cohesion areas. This interview question addresses research question (4). This interview question was intended to elucidate school directors’ views on their accountability to local stakeholders. It was hoped that the interview responses would help understand the accountability contexts that may have affected school directors’ sense of obligation to meet school board requests, and school directors’ potentiality to achieve PDA.

The possible validity threats associated with interviews in the context of this study are social desirability and faulty memory (Bradburn, 1983 as cited in Fontana & Frey, 2005). Steps recommended by Mertens (1998) for the conduct of personal interviews, including careful wording of questions, an explanation of the purpose of the interview, and the assurance of confidentiality, could reduce social desirability effects in interviews. To address this threat, the introductory explanation of the interview’s purpose stressed that the interview would not aim to evaluate their performance or experience. The confidentiality of responses was clearly communicated to the participants by the consent form. As for faulty memory, sufficient time was provided to help the interviewees recall specific incidents. The interviewees were also reminded that they could provide additional details later by phone.
3.5. Data collection procedures

Since the study population came from all regions of BiH, it was necessary to obtain permission from the twelve regional education authorities, namely, ten cantonal ministries of education in the FBiH entity, the ministry of education in the RS entity, and the department of education in the Brčko district. A request letter written in the appropriate local language was sent by mail, and to expedite the approval process, also by fax. In addition, the state-level ministry of civil affairs and the FBiH ministry of education and science were notified of the research. Within approximately one month, approvals from all the authorities were obtained.\(^{46}\) Table 3 presents the major activities of the research process around the data collection.

\(^{46}\) One month was rather short, considering the number of authorities that had to be contacted. I thank a local assistant who facilitated the process by contacting each authority numerous times by telephone.
Table 3

*The research process*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time frame</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>April-May</td>
<td>Preparing the data-collection instruments and identifying research assistants and translators</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>Obtaining research approvals from BiH authorities and the IRB (See Appendix C).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Identifying potential interview participants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June-July</td>
<td>Administarting the survey with a local assistant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>Conducting interviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Conducting necessary follow-ups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aug.-Sept.</td>
<td>Performing data management and analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>Discussing the field experience with the advisor</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.5.1. **Survey procedure**

After obtaining the necessary approvals from BiH education authorities, potential survey participants were contacted numerous times. Multiple contacts with potential participants are said to increase the survey response rate (Dillman et al., 2009). First, a pre-notice letter describing the purpose of the survey and explaining the importance of participation were sent a week before the distribution of the survey. Then the survey questionnaire was mailed to all secondary school directors by post. Questionnaires were sent a second time to those who did not return them before the deadline to further
encourage them to participate in the study. Lastly, a post-card was sent to everyone in the study population, thanking them for their participation and notifying them of the final deadline for accepting survey returns. In total, 159 school directors returned the survey. All the returned surveys were received in a P.O. box especially created for this study in the Sarajevo central post office. A local assistant was hired to facilitate the mailing of the letters and questionnaires.

In order to increase further the response rate, a few additional measures were taken. A small gift of appreciation (a ball-point pen) was enclosed along with the questionnaire to help establish trust with the participants, thereby encouraging them to return it (Dillman et. al., 2009).47 Study participants were also informed of the approvals from their respective regional education authorities as well as approvals from the Institutional Review Board of the University of Minnesota. A copy of the BiH authority approvals was attached to the survey as proof of the authority support. Another measure to increase the response rate was the provision of language choices in completing the survey. As noted earlier, the three dominant ethno-national groups in BiH use languages that are mutually intelligible. However, their leaders have often insisted on the distinctiveness of each language since such a distinction could serve as a demarcation of group identities. Considering the sensitivity around this language issue, it was decided that three official language versions (Bosnian Latin, Serbian Cyrillic and Croatian Latin) of the

47 Dillman et al. (2009) argue that providing a token of appreciation in advance (before returning a survey) increases study subjects’ trust in the researcher, thereby motivating them to participate in the study.
questionnaire would be prepared and mailed to every potential participant to provide options for language preference.\footnote{For the purpose of administrative convenience, however, other documents of communication including the pre-notice letter, reminder post-card and consent documents were prepared in one "integrated" version in the Latin alphabet that combined elements of all three languages.}

An additional measure to encourage school directors’ participation was the assurance of response anonymity, although two people did know the identities of the respondents, as explained here. The questionnaire itself did not ask for personally identifiable information such as the names and addresses of respondents and their schools. However, every enclosed return envelope was marked with an ID number prior to the mailing of the questionnaire. The ID numbers were later used to identify those who had not returned the survey and to send them a reminder. The ID numbers were also used to identify the geographic patterns of survey responses. Only the research assistant and I had access to the data that matched the ID numbers with the individual schools.

In conducting the survey, the pilot survey provided useful information regarding the implementation process and, more generally, the condition of BiH society. First, some of the surveys reached the destinations rather late, especially when they needed to cross the FBiH-RS entity borders. For example, one survey mailed from Sarajevo in FBiH, arrived at a school in RS two weeks later. It was also discovered that FBiH and RS had different postage rates for domestic mail. Another survey sent to a school director in FBiH was initially lost, though recovered later. The experience with the pilot survey
helped adjust the survey implementation plan as well as anticipate the possibility of surveys not reaching their destinations, possibly lowering the response rate.

Despite these complex implementation issues, however, the survey response rate turned out to be generally satisfactory. The first round of survey mailing resulted in 129 returns. After the second round of survey mailing and the sending of reminder postcards, an additional 30 returns were received. The fact that more than half of the study population returned the surveys can be attributed to the multiple strategies used to encourage their participation.

3.5.2. Interview procedure

Concurrent with the survey implementation, interviews were conducted with 16 secondary school directors from different parts of BiH. Prior to the interviews, participants were asked to fill out the survey questionnaire. By receiving their surveys before the interviews, it was then possible to formulate interview questions based on the interviewee’s responses in the survey. For example, one interviewee strongly agreed that the school board actively encouraged her to promote the equality of school access and curriculum, while merely agreeing as to the school board’s encouragement in all other areas. In this case, the interview questions focused around the issue of school access and curriculum, and asked the interviewee how the school board’s encouragement indeed occurred in this area and why the interviewee felt the need to respond to the school board’s request. All interviewees were asked to complete a survey just before their interviews. If
interviewees had mailed a survey prior to coming to their interviews, the newly completed questionnaire was used only for the purpose of the interview; the mailed survey was used for the statistical analysis.\(^{49}\)

All the interviews were conducted in a similar fashion following the standard interview procedure and the study protocol to maintain consistency and quality. Most interviews were conducted in a hotel room in Sarajevo to ensure an environment free of interruptions.\(^{50}\) Interviews lasted one hour and a half on average, two hours at maximum.

I interviewed all participants in English and was accompanied by a professional interpreter familiar with school governance issues in BiH.\(^{51}\) This same interpreter translated every interview to ensure consistency in interpretation (Squires, 2008). During the interview, notes were taken. In addition, an audio-recorder was used with the agreement of the interviewee. The recorded interviews were later translated and transcribed word by word in English in order to produce accurate accounts of the conversations.\(^{52}\) The translation and

\(^{49}\) The two surveys completed by the same individuals were later compared and found to be generally consistent. This indicated that the survey instrument was more or less internally consistent.

\(^{50}\) Out of 16 interviews, 11 of them were conducted in Sarajevo. Transportation expenses were covered when interviewees travelled from outside Sarajevo. In addition, overnight accommodation was provided to those from remote areas. For the other interviews, I travelled to their locations and conducted interviews in their school offices, as per their requests or because of my wish to understand the school and community environment.

\(^{51}\) Considering the importance of his/her role in this study, the interpreter was selected based on the following three criteria, in addition to some familiarity with school issues in BiH: court-certified, a graduate degree in interpretation, and more than ten years of experience.

\(^{52}\) Out of 16 interviews conducted, 12 of them were translated and transcribed by a local translator. I transcribed the first interview to assess audio quality and interview conditions. I also transcribed two other interviews, assisted by my notes as the audio quality was poor. In these three cases, interpreted words were transcribed. One other interview was conducted in English on the phone with a school director capable of expressing himself in English, thus I transcribed the whole conversation. In this interview, a Skype phone connection was used to call the director at school and record the interview.
the transcription were done by different people, so that the accuracy of the interpretation was also checked.

Typically, the interviews started with a brief summary of the interview’s purpose, the interviewer’s credentials, and the nature of the information needed. At the onset of each interview, the participants were asked to verify the school board membership and to provide a detailed account of the school director appointment process. Throughout each interview, a cordial, non-threatening and trusting environment was maintained so as to allow the interviewee to express his/her opinions freely. During each interview, member checking was constantly conducted by restating or rephrasing the salient information obtained (Bredeson, 1993) and asking the participants to determine its accuracy. Each question was repeated in multiple interviews until a pattern of responses was discerned.53 At the end of each interview, the participants were told about the data usage, reimbursed transportation expenses, and offered a small gift (a ball-point pen) and lunch as a token of appreciation. The interviews were followed by a phone call thanking each interviewee again and clarifying any questions that remained.

53 In principle, a pattern is recognized as such when more than half of the interviewees who were asked the same question responded in a similar way.
3.6. Data analysis procedures

3.6.1. Survey data analysis

First, all the survey returns were examined to determine their inclusion in data analysis. The following criteria were used to exclude responses: 1) those surveys that were missing information about the ethno-national backgrounds of school board members, as this data were important to this study,\textsuperscript{54} 2) those surveys that were returned from schools with a special status and character, such as schools for special needs children or religious schools that have a particular school governance arrangement different from other public secondary schools,\textsuperscript{55} and 3) those surveys that skipped more than 2 items asking about school board encouragement, or more than 2 items regarding school directors’ responses to school board requests, both essential elements of the study. Altogether, 9 returns were excluded from the data analysis.

All the responses were processed upon receipt of the surveys and put into a data sheet in a manner that ensured their anonymity and the accuracy of data entry. All the data contained in the surveys were entered into an Excel spreadsheet by a local assistant who had experience in data-management. Each survey was recorded in the spreadsheet with an ID to protect anonymity of the responses. The assistant marked any irregularities found in the returned surveys on the data sheet so that the information could be

\textsuperscript{54} Those responses that missed information about the school board stakeholder representation (to determine school board autonomy) were included in the analysis as their school locations (regions) provided information about this.

\textsuperscript{55} Such characteristics were unknown to us prior to the distribution of surveys.
cross-checked later with the actual surveys. Once all the data entries were completed, a third person verified the accuracy of all the data entries by comparing information in the data sheet with actual surveys. Finally, I conducted random checks on the data entry.

The survey data were analyzed first by producing and examining frequency tables and descriptive statistics tables for the purpose of finding general patterns in school directors’ perceptions of school board influence. These tables are meant to help answer research question (1) that asked whether school directors perceived the influence of school boards on their decisions to promote social cohesion activities, and research question (4) that asked about school directors’ view regarding their accountability to school boards. The frequency tables include the percentage distribution of responses across five different items of school contributions to social cohesion as well as responses concerning the general influence of school boards and school directors’ agreement with school board decisions. The descriptive statistics tables, on the other hand, showed the number of responses, means and standard deviations across the items listed in the frequency table. The descriptive tables indicate where school directors perceived school board influence the most or the least, and offered insights into the relationship between school directors and school boards.

Next, the data were processed using the SPSS statistical analysis program (version 19). Two-way, between-subjects ANOVA tests were conducted in order to answer the research sub-questions (1.1) and (1.2) that asked whether the autonomy of school boards and the heterogeneity of school board membership affected the level of school board
influence perceived by school directors. Independent variables were school board autonomy and the heterogeneity of membership. The dependent variable was the level of school boards’ influence across five social cohesion activities, as perceived by school directors and noted on the Likert-scale. As for the responses to open-ended questions, a procedure similar to the analysis of interview data were applied, as explained next. The ANOVA results and mean comparisons of Likert-scale scores among the four groups, namely, the higher autonomy group, lower autonomy group, heterogeneous group and homogeneous group, were used to draw conclusions concerning the effect of school board characteristics on the degree of perceived school board influence.

The two levels of each independent variable, namely school board heterogeneity and autonomy, were determined based on each one’s specific nature. The ethnic heterogeneity or homogeneity of the school boards’ composition was determined based on individual survey data since such a school board characteristic varies from school to school even within the same region. School boards were judged as heterogeneous when members represented more than one of the dominant ethno-national groups.

The level of school board autonomy was determined based on their regions, since schools in each region follow the same regional legal framework. The level of school board autonomy was established on the basis of whether school board member representation reflected the essence of decentralized and participatory school governance. Article 51 of the Framework Law regulated that “the school board members are elected

56 The correlation between the two independent variables was not examined in this study.
from school staff, school founder, local community and parents, … based on the principle of *equal* [emphasis added] representation of all structures’ representatives” (BiH Government, 2003). Despite this provision, some governments have installed their members on school boards to tip the balance in their favor. Therefore, the school boards’ autonomy, or lack thereof, was assessed based on the extent of the governments’ representation on a school board.\(^{57}\) School board autonomy was defined as higher if the membership consisted of equal or fewer government representatives than local stakeholder members. Lower school board autonomy was defined as more government representatives than local stakeholders on a school board. A similar measurement was previously used by Walker (2002) when she was assessing the degree of participatory decision-making under an SBM system in New Jersey.

In order to determine school board member representation of different stakeholder groups in each region, information was drawn from official legal documents and later verified by the survey data. School board member representation was regulated by regional by-laws published in the official gazette. For this study, a translated version of these by-laws compiled by the OSCE (2006a) was used. During cross-checking, survey data concerning school board members was found to be generally consistent with the

\(^{57}\) Initially, it was planned that the involvement of government authorities in the school director appointment process would be used as one of the determinants of school board autonomy. However, the survey and interview data suggested that the school director appointment process was fairly complicated; it was difficult to determine the comparative degree of regional governments’ involvement in the process. In some regions, a special selection committee was set up composed of representatives from school boards and regional and/or municipal authorities. One survey respondent even declared: “According to the current regulations concerning directors’ election, it is not clear whose word is final.” Thus this construct was not used for the analysis.
provisions of these by-laws. In case there was a discrepancy between regional by-laws and a dominant pattern in the survey data, the latter was respected as it was likely to reflect the reality or a more recent legal framework.\textsuperscript{58} Efforts were made to obtain the updated legal documents in all regions, but this was not achieved within the timeframe of the field stay. Table 4 shows the school board composition in all 12 regions of BiH.

Table 4

\textit{School board member composition in 12 regions}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>R\textsuperscript{a}1</th>
<th>R2</th>
<th>R3</th>
<th>R4</th>
<th>R5</th>
<th>R6</th>
<th>R7</th>
<th>R8</th>
<th>R9</th>
<th>R10</th>
<th>R11</th>
<th>R12</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Regional authority</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Municipality</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local community</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\textit{Note}. \textsuperscript{a}R indicates a region.

Several points should be made concerning the classification of school board autonomy. First, local stakeholder representation was determined by the presence of lay members, namely parents and local community representatives. Secondly, government

\textsuperscript{58} In one canton, for example, local community representatives were often not included in school boards according to the survey responses, though its regional by-law (as of 2006) regulated it otherwise.
representation included regional authorities and municipalities. In most regions of BiH, the regional government and municipal governments were run by the same ethno-national political parties. Municipal representation, when added to the regional authority’s, strengthens government influence on a school board and erodes the spirit of decentralized school governance as envisioned by the Framework Law (OSCE, 2006a). Study participants also tended to view both regional education authorities and municipalities as “governments” that exerted political influence in school governance.

Following the criteria described above, school boards in 4 regions (R1-R4) were classified as belonging in the higher autonomy group, while those in the other 8 regions (R5-R12) were categorized as a lower autonomy group. It should be noted that region R5 was originally classified as a higher autonomy group, but later reclassified as a lower autonomy group because survey comments clearly indicated that the regional ministry interfered with the selection of a teacher member, which was suspected to have altered the membership balance in favor of the government. R5 was also one of three regions that initially resisted modifying their by-laws to reflect the SBM reform and were later forced to comply by the OHR.

Finally, additional voluntary comments in the survey were analyzed following the same procedure applied to the analysis of interview data. Comments regarding the school directors’ relationship with school boards provided insights into how school directors

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59 Exceptions existed in ethnically mixed cantons. In these cases, regional authorities normally had more power over education than municipalities.
perceived their accountability to school boards. Supplementary information provided by respondents regarding the school director appointment process helped determine the inadequacy of using the process to assess school board autonomy. It should be noted that some respondents described excessive involvement of governments in the appointment process; interestingly, these comments came from the regions classified as lower school board autonomy groups, supporting the classification method described above.60

3.6.2. Interview data analysis

The interview data were analyzed following the steps recommended by Creswell (2009). First, the raw data were organized according to each area of inquiry. Second, all the data were read through to gain an overall sense of the information. General thoughts and ideas about what the data represented were recorded in margins. Third, the data were coded according to contexts, processes, activities and relationship/social structure (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992 as cited in Creswell, 2009). In addition, codes were used for surprising and unusual information. Fourth, a description of themes was generated based on the nature and frequency of data codes. The fifth step involved detailed discussion of the identified themes. A narrative passage was used to convey the findings of the analysis. Finally, the data were interpreted alongside the survey findings. The data analysis process was not necessarily a linear process but rather interactive, as each stage was interrelated to the other.

60 The following comments came from regions whose school boards were categorized as lower autonomy: “A lot of politics is involved in election and appointment of school directors”; “I consider that a school board should appoint a director but not politics [a ruling political party]”; “In practice, the minister chooses directors and abuses his/her position. He wants ‘party’ schools.”
(Creswell, 2009). For example, analysis occurred even during the data collection process. While interviewing, I reflected on impressions, relationships, patterns, and commonalities (Mertens, 1998).

3.7. Validity

Validity threats were always present during the data collection, and dealt with when they were suspected during this process as well as throughout the entire research process. Validity threats specific to the survey and interview method have already been addressed in detail in their respective sub-sections. In addition, I used “reflectivity” (Wellington, 2010) to further increase the validity of the study findings. Reflectivity refers to continuous self-reflection on the entire process from the design of research, data collection and analysis, and presentation of research findings. A similar proposal has been made by Peshkin (1988) that researchers should seek their subjectivity and monitor their biases throughout the research process. To this end, the use of doctoral seminars, peer-group reviews and faculty mentoring were useful and actively utilized.

3.8. Limitations

This study has three major limitations associated with the research design. First, the study did not examine whether BiH school directors actually implemented social cohesion activities. The study assumed that school directors implemented them in one way or another, as a direct or indirect result of school board influence. Establishing a
clear causal relationship between school board influence and school director actions may be difficult, however. Second, this study did not address the dynamics of school board member interactions. The heterogeneity of school board members does not in itself ensure that all voices are heard and counted in their discussions. Third, the autonomy of school boards was assessed based on only one category, that is, the presence of government representative(s) within the school board membership. The actual degree of autonomy that school boards enjoyed or did not enjoy may need to be studied more closely. The second and third limitations may be addressed, for example, by a qualitative case study of selected school boards. These limitations notwithstanding, it is believed that the information collected by this study provided useful insights into the functioning of a decentralized system of school governance in facilitating social cohesion activities in BiH.

3.9. Ethical considerations

Major ethical issues in this study concern the protection of participant rights. In the politically-charged environment of BiH, protecting the rights of study participants is important. During the data collection and analysis, a series of steps were taken, mostly conventional ones used by researchers dealing with human subjects, to honor participants’ rights to the anonymity and confidentiality of their responses and to inform them of their rights. Prior to data collection, this study was reviewed by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of the University of Minnesota. During the data collection, participants were asked
to read a consent statement for the questionnaire, or read and sign an interview consent form, before agreeing to participate in the study (Creswell, 2009). A consent statement was attached to the survey questionnaire, specifying that the researcher honors anonymity and protects the confidentiality of responses. The interview consent form guaranteed the confidentiality of interview data. During the phase of interview data analysis, the author used codes for individual names and places to protect their identities (Creswell, 2009).

In addition, all the collected data were treated in a confidential manner. All records of this study were kept private and inaccessible to other people. All the data stored in a computer and transmitted on-line were password-protected. The research assistants signed an agreement with me to keep all the personal information relating to this research confidential. The collected information will be used only for the dissertation and other academic purposes. The treatment of obtained data were clearly and explicitly communicated to all the study participants.
CHAPTER FOUR: PRESENTATION OF THE RESULTS

4.1. Introduction

In this chapter, the results of the research are presented. First, survey results are shown in the following order: frequency of responses and descriptive statistics, ANOVA test outcomes, and open remarks. Then, interview results are presented according to each interview question. The interview results are cross-referenced with the results of the survey, where appropriate. The chapter concludes by discussing the effects of social desirability on participants’ responses, since social desirability appeared to be present during the data collection despite the measures taken to reduce it; thus, it is important to recognize it and discuss its implications.

4.2. Survey results

4.2.1. Frequency tables and descriptive statistics

Frequency tables show that school directors generally perceived that school boards did influence their decisions to promote social cohesion activities. The majority of school directors strongly agreed or agreed that school boards actively encouraged them to implement social cohesion activities and that they felt obliged to meet their requests related to all five social cohesion activities. The distribution of school directors’
responses on school board encouragement and their responsiveness to board requests are presented in Table 5 and 6.

Table 5

*Distribution of responses on school board encouragement*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Facilitate the organization of school board meetings</td>
<td>17.3%</td>
<td>58.7%</td>
<td>20.0%</td>
<td>4.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Promote the equality of access &amp; curriculum</td>
<td>51.7%</td>
<td>32.9%</td>
<td>12.1%</td>
<td>3.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Reduce corruption</td>
<td>26.9%</td>
<td>44.8%</td>
<td>20.0%</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Socialize children of different ethnic groups</td>
<td>34.9%</td>
<td>42.3%</td>
<td>17.4%</td>
<td>5.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Promote the teaching of common citizenship principles</td>
<td>29.3%</td>
<td>45.3%</td>
<td>20.7%</td>
<td>4.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* N=150. Percentage values in some rows do not add up to 100% as each value is rounded off.
Table 6

Distribution of responses on school director responsiveness

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I feel I must respond to the school board’s request to …</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Facilitate the organization of school board meetings</td>
<td>25.8%</td>
<td>70.0%</td>
<td>3.3%</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Promote the equality of access &amp; curriculum</td>
<td>58.7%</td>
<td>38.1%</td>
<td>3.2%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Reduce corruption</td>
<td>43.0%</td>
<td>51.4%</td>
<td>5.6%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Socialize children of different ethnic groups</td>
<td>47.5%</td>
<td>49.2%</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Promote the teaching of common citizenship principles</td>
<td>41.4%</td>
<td>55.2%</td>
<td>2.6%</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Percentage values in some rows do not add up to 100% as each value is rounded off.

While this result appears to support the premise that a decentralized system promotes social cohesion, such a conclusion requires caution. As explained later, the results of ANOVA tests on the relationship between key features of participatory governance and perceived school board influence do not strongly corroborate the decentralization premise. Moreover, the results of the interviews revealed that school boards’ encouragement was somewhat passive; rather than proposing ideas and alternatives, school boards’ contributions appeared to be limited to supporting the initiatives proposed or taken by school directors.
Descriptive statistics show that school directors most strongly perceived school board influence in promoting the equality of school access and curriculum. The lowest mean score, indicating respondents with the strongest agreement, was recorded in this item in terms of both school board encouragement \((Mean = 1.67)\) and school directors’ responsiveness to the board request \((Mean = 1.44)\). The frequency tables presented previously also showed that more than a half of respondents expressed their strong agreement that school boards influenced their decisions in this area, bolstering this finding.

Meanwhile, school directors were least likely to think that school boards influenced their decisions to facilitate the organization of school board meetings. The highest mean score, indicating the weakest agreement, was recorded in this item in terms of both school board encouragement \((Mean = 2.11)\) and school directors’ responsiveness to the board request \((Mean = 1.79)\). Respondents tended to share the same assessment of school board influence in this area, indicated by the smallest standard deviations \((SD = 0.72\) in encouragement and \(0.53\) in responsiveness). Table 7 and 8 present descriptive statistics which yield information regarding the comparative strength of the school board influence felt by school directors across the five areas of social cohesion activities.
Table 7

*Descriptive statistics on school board encouragement*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>N.</th>
<th>Mean*</th>
<th>SD*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The school board actively encourages me to…</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilitate the organization of school board meetings</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>2.11</td>
<td>0.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promote the equality of access &amp; curriculum</td>
<td>149</td>
<td>1.67</td>
<td>0.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reduce corruption</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>2.10</td>
<td>0.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Socialize children of different ethnic groups</td>
<td>149</td>
<td>1.93</td>
<td>0.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promote the teaching of common citizenship principles</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>2.01</td>
<td>0.83</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* *a* Means and Standard Deviation (SD) were calculated based on the following scores: 1= strongly agree, 2= agree, 3= disagree, 4= strongly disagree.

Table 8

*Descriptive statistics on school director responsiveness*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>N.</th>
<th>Mean*</th>
<th>SD*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I feel I must respond to the school board’s request to…</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilitate the organization of school board meetings</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>1.79</td>
<td>0.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promote the equality of access &amp; curriculum</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>1.44</td>
<td>0.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reduce corruption</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>1.63</td>
<td>0.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Socialize children of different ethnic groups</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>1.57</td>
<td>0.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promote the teaching of common citizenship principles</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>1.63</td>
<td>0.58</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* *a* Means and Standard Deviation (SD) were calculated based on the following scores: 1= strongly agree, 2= agree, 3= disagree, 4= strongly disagree.
The survey results indicated that school directors did not necessarily believe that they needed to be accountable to school boards. Respondents tended to select positive choices somewhat less when they were asked about school boards’ general influence than when they were asked about their agreement with school board decisions. In other words, school directors may agree with school board decisions, but might not necessarily translate the decisions into concrete actions, or not want to admit that they were always subject to the will of school boards. This may be indicative of school directors’ sense of independence from school boards. Tables 9 and 10 show the percentage distribution of school directors’ responses regarding the general relationship with school boards, followed by Table 11 presenting a descriptive statistics summary.

Table 9  
**School boards’ general influence**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Strong Influence</th>
<th>Some Influence</th>
<th>Little Influence</th>
<th>No Influence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Generally speaking, how much influence does the school board have on your decisions in running the school?</td>
<td>46.0%</td>
<td>40.7%</td>
<td>10.7%</td>
<td>2.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* N=150. Percentage values do not add up to 100% as each value is rounded off.

Table 10  
**School directors’ agreement with school board decisions**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Always</th>
<th>Often</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Rarely</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2. Generally speaking, do you agree with the decisions of school board?</td>
<td>47.3%</td>
<td>50.0%</td>
<td>2.7%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* N=150.
Table 11

The relationship between school directors and boards

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question item</th>
<th>N.</th>
<th>Mean&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
<th>SD&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Perceiving school board influence in general</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>1.70</td>
<td>0.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Agreeing with school board decisions in general</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>1.55</td>
<td>0.55</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. <sup>a</sup>Means and Standard Deviation (SD) were calculated based on the following scores: 1= strongly agree, 2= agree, 3= disagree, 4= strongly disagree.

4.2.2. ANOVA tests

The ANOVA tests generally found that the autonomy and ethnic heterogeneity of school boards did not affect the level of their influence on school directors’ decisions to promote social cohesion.<sup>61</sup> The following summarizes the key findings from the ANOVA tests.

1. Higher and lower autonomy groups of school boards did not differ significantly regarding their encouragement in promoting social cohesion except in the area of facilitating the organization of school board meetings (p<.05).

2. Higher and lower autonomy groups of school boards did not differ significantly regarding school directors’ responsiveness to their requests to promote social cohesion in all areas.

3. Heterogeneous and homogeneous groups of school boards did not differ significantly regarding their encouragement and school directors’ responsiveness to their requests

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<sup>61</sup> Necessary test assumptions were checked and found to be satisfied.
to promote social cohesion in areas concerning inter-ethnic relations, namely the promotion of school access and curriculum, socializing of children, and teaching of common citizenship principles.

Tables 12 and 13 present the results of the ANOVA tests.

Table 12

ANOVA results regarding school board encouragement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Summary of Squares</th>
<th>df.</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The school board actively encourages me to…</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilitate the organization of school board meetings</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Autonomy</td>
<td>2.656</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.656</td>
<td>5.168</td>
<td>.024*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inclusiveness</td>
<td>.342</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.342</td>
<td>.665</td>
<td>.416</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promote the equality of access &amp; curriculum</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Autonomy</td>
<td>1.053</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.053</td>
<td>1.568</td>
<td>.213</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inclusiveness</td>
<td>.452</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.452</td>
<td>.673</td>
<td>.413</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reduce corruption</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Autonomy</td>
<td>.771</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.771</td>
<td>.959</td>
<td>.329</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inclusiveness</td>
<td>.329</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.329</td>
<td>.409</td>
<td>.524</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Socialize children of different ethnic groups</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
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<td>2.716</td>
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</tr>
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<td>.059</td>
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</table>

Note. *p<.05
Table 13

ANOVA results regarding school director responsiveness

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Summary of Squares</th>
<th>df.</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
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<tr>
<td>I feel I must respond to the school board’s request to …</td>
<td></td>
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<td>Facilitate the organization of school board meetings</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<td>.000</td>
<td>.001</td>
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</tr>
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<td>Autonomy</td>
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<td>.027</td>
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<td>.563</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Autonomy</td>
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<td>.157</td>
<td>.459</td>
<td>.499</td>
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<td>.001</td>
<td>.003</td>
<td>.953</td>
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</table>
Tables 14 and 15 show estimated marginal means of survey response scores for each survey item. The means of the higher and lower autonomy groups of school boards are compared (Table 14), as well as the heterogeneous and homogeneous groups of school boards (Table 15). These two tables provide insights into the comparative strength of school board influence between two levels of each independent variable in all survey items. The following summarizes key findings from the two tables.

1. The mean score of the lower autonomy group is lower than that of the higher autonomy group regarding the facilitation of the organization of school board meetings, both in terms of school board encouragement and school directors’ responsiveness to the board requests. This finding indicates that school boards with more government representatives than local stakeholders tended to influence school directors more in this area.

2. The mean scores of the lower autonomy group are lower than those of the higher autonomy group regarding school board encouragement in all the other areas. There is no clear pattern, however, in terms of how school board autonomy might relate to school director responsiveness to board requests.

3. There is no clear pattern in terms of how the ethnic inclusivity of school boards might relate to school board influence in the areas addressing inter-ethnic relations, namely promoting equality of school access and curriculum, socializing children of different backgrounds, and teaching common citizenship principles.
Table 14

*Estimated marginal means: school board autonomy*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question/Item</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Error</th>
<th>95% Confidence Interval</th>
<th>Lower Bound</th>
<th>Upper Bound</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Generally speaking, how much influence does the school board have on your decisions in running the school?</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Higher autonomy</td>
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<tr>
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<td>.078</td>
<td>1.500</td>
<td>1.807</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Generally speaking, do you agree with the decisions of school board?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher autonomy</td>
<td>1.602</td>
<td>.115</td>
<td>1.375</td>
<td>1.829</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>.056</td>
<td>1.405</td>
<td>1.624</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>The school board actively encourages me to…</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilitate the organization of school board meetings</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher autonomy</td>
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<td>.150</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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</table>
Table 14 continued.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question/Item</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Error</th>
<th>95% Confidence Interval</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Lower Bound Upper Bound</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel I must respond to the school board’s request to …</td>
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Table 15

*Estimated marginal means: school board heterogeneity*

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<th>Std. Error</th>
<th>95% Confidence Interval</th>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>The school board actively encourages me to…</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>2.355</td>
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<tr>
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</tr>
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</tbody>
</table>
4.2.3. Open remarks

The survey contained a section that asked for additional comments regarding school board requests or encouragement, and school directors’ responsiveness to these requests. These remarks were coded, then organized according to themes; interestingly, these themes were identical to those that emerged in the interview data. Therefore, the analysis of open remarks will be presented in combination with interview results in the following section.

4.3. Interview results

In this section, the results of interviews with 16 school directors are presented. The findings are organized according to the interview questions, since these questions roughly demarcate the groups of themes and correspond to the order of the research questions. The interview results are illustrated with narratives that capture the essence of interviewee responses as well as quotes that illustrate the main points identified.\(^62\) An explicit reference to the research questions of this study is linked to each result.

Some salient points were identified during the course of analysis and are briefly summarized here. Interview data generally showed that school directors did not perceive school boards as initiators that actively and effectively influenced school directors to implement social cohesion activities. This finding somewhat contradicts the survey

\(^62\) Upon presenting quotes, some of them were slightly modified from the original transcripts for clarity.
results. In fact, school directors appeared to perceive themselves as the primary actors in school governance, the idea-creators. Nevertheless, it is important to point out that school boards seem to play a significant role as a formal governing body when supporting school directors’ initiatives to promote social cohesion activities; they give legitimacy to the school directors’ actions. Lastly, interview data suggest that, despite the countermeasures taken, social desirability may still have affected participants’ responses in both the survey and the interviews.

4.3.1. Interview question 1

How do you understand the role of the school board in school governance generally and more specifically in relation to the areas mentioned in the survey?

Interview data generally indicated that school boards were not actively engaged in the social cohesion activities, somewhat contradicting the survey results. School directors considered school boards’ roles largely limited to three tasks: appointing school staff, drafting an annual school plan and producing a student enrolment plan. These limited, albeit important, school board roles are somewhat incongruent with the broader tasks as proposed by the Framework Law, which states: “the school board is responsible for determination and implementation of school policy, general management of school work and efficient use of material and personnel resources” (Government of BiH, 2003, Article 51).
It should be mentioned, however, that some school directors reported initiatives taken by school boards beyond the aforementioned three areas. For example, some school boards proposed that the school directors award well-behaved or high-performing students. In other cases, school boards requested that school directors send a letter to NGOs to request funds to repair school buildings or to petition the municipality to allocate funds for heating. These examples do not directly relate to social cohesion, but suggest a wider range of venues beyond the perceived three areas through which school boards can encourage school directors to facilitate social cohesion.

Overall, interview data indicate that most social cohesion activities were initiated by the school directors themselves. The majority of school director interviewees believed that they were chiefly responsible for deciding to put social cohesion issues investigated by this study on the agenda of school management. School boards were consulted only when there were budgetary implications for a proposed activity. In other cases, school directors reported to school boards only after the completion of activities in order to receive their feedback.

When school directors initiated social cohesion activities, school boards played the role of supporting school directors’ decisions and action. Although school boards rarely seemed to take initiatives on their own, their supporting roles should not be underestimated. A school board, after all, has the status of the key school governing body. In addition, school boards under SBM have the authority to determine the allocation of a significant portion of the school budget. Pro-active school directors often turned to school
boards for their support, whether budgetary or simply moral, for initiatives to improve the schooling experience for children. The following comment is illustrative of this point. This discussion will be revisited in sub-section 4.3.4 when discussing the nature of school board influence in more detail.

When I suggest something and ask the means to be approved, I ask that from the school board. Let’s say, if it is some sum that is significant, that goes beyond my authority. I go to the school board and let them decide to have a cover from the school board for those money transactions.

With regard to school directors’ understanding of the significance of school boards, interviewees were divided in their opinions. Those who recognized the importance of the school board pointed out the value of local inputs, the advantage of local stakeholder involvement and their monitoring role. These views are represented by the following comments.

Parents should have more powers, not only about electing this or that person, but also about managing the school, about spending money, and... about creating better conditions, etc. Parents know these things better than those who are not involved in the process. According to me, parents have the most influence.
[Two other interviewees made similar comments.]

If there were no school board, some school directors would go to an extreme. There should be some ‘hats’ ['higher authority'] to have control of all that. ...
Anyway, the school board confirms very important decisions, like accepting the annual work plan, preparing for enrollment of the first class, and school personnel employment. These are important decisions. I cannot do anything without their voting. These decisions would have to pass their ‘filter.’

[Three other interviewees made a similar comment about the school boards’ “filtering” role.]

The school board is a governing body - it has many competences in compliance with the secondary school law. Coordination between the director and school board members is exceptionally important and it should constantly be improved. [This is a quote from a survey respondent.]

On the other hand, those critical of the school boards pointed to their lack of professional knowledge. School directors highly valued professionalism. Such an attitude was evident when they remarked that it was often teacher councils, rather than school boards, that provided substantial input into school governance. Many interviewees and a few survey respondents commented that teacher councils played an important role in shaping both curricular and extra-curricular activities. New ideas often came from the teacher councils or teacher representatives within the school boards. Some even suggested that a school board should include more teacher representatives. The following quote is representative of these views.

We had instances where the school board didn’t understand the decisions made by the teacher council. Because the teacher council is one of the main expertise bodies
of the school, I consider that the school board should accept the council’s decisions. Teacher council is the most qualified body of the school.

School directors’ undervaluing of layperson control seems to have led to their critique of school boards not being able to make substantial contributions to school governance. Several interviewees made comments such as: the school board has a big role in drawing up an annual school plan, but such a plan is only on paper; the school board is a second-grade body. Maybe they [school board members] are narrow-minded, but I have to accept it; school boards are more like a governing body existing only as a formality [the last comment was made by a survey respondent].

Meanwhile, some interviewees denied that local stakeholder representatives lacked professional knowledge and motivation to participate in school governance. In fact, the quality of school board work varied, depending on their members. These study participants recognized the important roles that school boards played in improving the schooling experience for children. However, they expressed dissatisfaction with current or previous school board members as lacking abilities to execute their expected tasks. This suggests a need for the training of school board members.

Other interviewees attributed school boards’ passive participation to the lack of compensation. These interviewees implied that school board members were not motivated because their work was voluntary. This voluntary nature of school board work is regulated by the Framework Law for the purpose of avoiding “politicization, nepotism and inappropriate appointments” (OSCE, 2006a, p.15). Whether the school directors’
assessment regarding school board compensation is substantiated or not, their perception that school board members are unmotivated in their work might lead to the school directors’ undermining the importance of school boards in school governance. The following quote expresses this point.

*Before, they [school board members] were paid 150 KM, and it was, in my opinion, positive. … It would be just that they should be paid at least 100 KM. They have not been paid for school board work for the past 7-8 years. Now it is purely… School board members are like amateurs, no money, nothing. They work voluntarily, purely voluntarily.*

4.3.2. Interview question 2

Do you perceive school board influence in the areas mentioned in the survey more or less than before the introduction of the present school board system? Why?

Five interviewees, who were appointed to the present positions after the introduction of the SBM reform, generally agreed that they did not perceive significant changes in the relationship between school directors and school boards as a result of the SBM reform. One of the interviewees, from a higher autonomous school board group, mentioned positive changes, as the second quote below shows. However, the mentioned changes seem to relate to the increased awareness of school board members about their

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63 KM represents convertible mark, the BiH local currency. KM is tied to the Euro; 1Euro equals to roughly 1.96KM. At the exchange rate in December, 2011, 150KM has a value of 97.6USD.
roles, rather than as a result of the change in the system. Within the group of five interviewees, three came from the regions classified as having lower autonomous school boards, and this may skew the interview results. Additional sampling from higher autonomy boards may have produced different results.

_I think that school board influence has always been the same, approximately always the same. I think there has not been any change._

_[This interviewee comes from a school with a lower autonomous school board.]

_Interviewee: There are differences. Let’s say, some 10 years ago, we can say freely now, the school board was ‘superficial.’_

_Interviewer: What do you mean by ‘superficial’?_

_Interviewee: In early days, the school board members didn’t know what their roles were. They did not perform their tasks because of their ignorance and the fact that the reform was introduced inappropriately. Now it is 2011. It shouldn’t look that way any longer, and it doesn’t look that way. ... And I consider that the school board now has a significant role._

_[This interviewee comes from school with a higher autonomous school board.]

4.3.3. **Interview question 3**

_In your view, does the heterogeneity of school board membership affect the way you work? How?_

Interview data showed that school directors generally did not believe that the heterogeneity of school board membership mattered in terms of their influence to
promote social cohesion activities. Their opinions are congruent with the result of the ANOVA tests that found no statistical significance between school board heterogeneity and homogeneity in regard to school board influence. The following comments generally illustrate the interviewees’ views on this matter.

*I personally wouldn’t agree that a school board needs to be heterogeneous to be effective in promoting social cohesion activities. This is my personal stand. I wouldn’t agree that we have to follow this ethnic ratio every time. People should be appointed according to their abilities, not according to their ethnicity.*

*At this moment, we don’t have a [ethno-national] member on the school board. Such a member would represent a minority [ethno-national] group in the student population. The school board in fact asked the teachers’ council to nominate a [ethno-national group] to represent teachers on the school board, but they did not want to do so. They just wanted somebody to represent them, whatever ethnic background he/she has.*

*Interviewee: The ethnic quota in the school board membership is written exactly in school regulations. If we have over 10% of children from a particular ethno-national group in the student population, the 6th member of the school board needs to be chosen from the group, or an existing member needs to be replaced. It is regulated precisely.*

*Interviewer: But the school board currently includes one member from a minority group, though the group constitutes less than 10% of the student population.*

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64 The interviewee referred to a particular ethno-national group of students in that school. However, the author replaced the name with the general term to protect interviewee anonymity.
Interviewee: It is less, but it is not a disputable matter, not at all. Even I expect that [an individual name: a school board member from the minority ethno-national group] is going to be a future school director. That is not an issue.

Interviewee: Do you think that the heterogeneity of the school board, as it is presently, matters in the way they interact with you?

Interviewer: No... the school board has no influence on me, regardless of its member composition. Let’s say, in the previous school board system, there was a ratio of three ethno-national groups. This absolutely didn’t change anything. On the contrary, I care to have the board members of best quality. The ethnicity doesn’t play any role in our school.

Some interviewees, however, acknowledged the benefit of ethnic balance in the school board membership when schools were multi-ethnic.

The school board chose me as a school director since I had no “ethnic issue.” My profile possibly suited them for this integrated school, having such a blend. And they can be a “controller” of my legitimacy or the legality of my decisions. [This interviewee’s wife belongs to an ethno-national group different from his.]

It is the only formula for equality. Participation on all levels of the three ethno-national groups... And our unified former country Yugoslaviafunctioned for decades that way, on this ethnic parity. ... Yes, it does cost more, all that multiplied by three, and those numerous ministries, that would be enough for the whole world.
Interview responses overall suggest that school board inclusivity did not make a significant difference regarding the extent of school board influence; rather, it may have provided added legitimacy to school directors’ decisions relating to social cohesion policies and practices. In some multi-ethnic communities of BiH, the ethnic balance of school boards became contentious. In Stolac (FBiH), for example, Bosniak and Croat communities disagreed about the school board composition. While Bosniaks returning to the town after the conflict insisted that the school board membership reflect the pre-war census that established the Bosniak majority in the community, Croats favored the use of the current ethnic structure (OSCE, 2006a). In a community where such tension exists, ethnic balance on the school board apparently has implications for the legitimacy of the school board and its approval of school director decisions and actions in such sensitive areas as social cohesion policies and practices.

4.3.4. Interview question 4

According to the questionnaire you just filled out, you strongly agreed that the school board actively encouraged you to promote/facilitate __________. How did the school board actually influence/encourage you? Please give concrete examples.

When responding to this inquiry, some interviewees offered examples that illustrated school boards’ influence on school management decisions. In the area of promoting equality of access and curriculum, school boards ensured equal access for
children of different backgrounds when drafting the student enrolment plan and submitting it to the school directors every year. This is an important task undertaken by school boards, as indicated by the survey result showing that school boards’ influence was the most strongly perceived in this area. Also, some school directors of integrated schools pointed out that school boards encouraged them to provide a safe learning environment for all children, so that children, regardless of their ethnic background, would feel safe coming to school. In the area of socializing children, school boards ensured that each class had a mixture of children from different backgrounds when they approved the enrolment plan. The following quote illustrates these school directors’ responses.

The school board promotes, through the school director, a secure environment for all students regardless of their ethnicity, so the students would feel safe. When the school is enrolling students, the school board analyzes the enrolment situation. We (the school board through the school director) make sure that classes have the equal number of children of different ethno-national backgrounds, so as not to create an ethnically segregated class.

[This school used to have the “two schools under one roof” arrangement, but the school management and curriculum have been integrated for several years now.]

Most interviewees, however, were unable to provide concrete examples that illustrated school boards’ influence or encouragement. None of the interviewees were able to provide examples that clearly illustrated a school board’s encouragement in the areas of facilitating the organization of school board meetings, reducing corruption within
the school, and teaching common citizenship principles. Often, interviewees admitted that discussions between school directors and school board members on social cohesion activities did not even take place. The following quotes illustrate a typical conversation on this matter during the interview.

*Interviewer:* You responded in the survey that the school board actively encouraged you to promote the equality of access & curriculum. Can you recall some examples to illustrate this?

*Respondent A:* The school board gives me a broader authority to organize the school as I see appropriate. ... I don’t feel a burden from the school board.

*Interviewer:* Now can you describe how the school board encouraged you to promote the socializing of children of different backgrounds? Can you recall any discussion you had with the school board on this issue?

*Respondent B:* There are work regulations of the school board, and there should not be, how can I say it, any discrimination.

*The interviewer:* I’m simply asking whether there has been discussion or not.

*Respondent B:* No, no.

Three different explanations are possible with regard to the interviewees’ inability to provide concrete examples. First, school directors’ responses may have been affected by social desirability, which may have persuaded study participants to choose the options indicating that the school board influenced their decisions as the SBM reform envisioned. The effects of social desirability on the participants’ responses will be discussed extensively at the end of this section. Second, survey choices may have been
misinterpreted. Two interviewees explained that disagreeing with a statement about school board influence meant to them that the school boards exerted *negative* influence on social cohesion activities. Overall, however, respondents generally seemed to have interpreted the “disagree” and “strongly disagree” choices as less influence, rather than negative influence, from school boards.

The third explanation, which seems to account most accurately for the majority of responses, is that the school board influence process was subtle, therefore school directors found it difficult to describe it concretely. The aforementioned examples of school board encouragement already indicate that the actual influence process occurred rather informally. When school boards proposed ideas about social cohesion activities, they did not do so by submitting a formal request to school directors. Rather, school directors felt influence or encouragement while they were discussing these with school board members during meetings. Such processes of interaction between school directors and school boards can be characterized as consultative, at least partially reflecting the value of school leaders’ PDA. The following quote illustrates school board encouragement and the consultation process in which school directors were engaged.

*I feel school board influence generally through meetings that I attend regularly, by listening to what they say. Those discussions influence my decisions. There are some decisions that I cannot make, so I seek their opinions and approvals. My final decisions are products of the climate in school board meetings that I attend. We all resonate that way.*
Such a subtle encouragement process is generally consistent with the earlier finding on the school board role of supporting school directors’ initiatives. In an environment where inter-ethnic relationships are delicate, school directors who want to engage in social cohesion activities may find the school board support valuable. As noted previously, school board support, be it moral or financial, counts, as they are designated as the ultimate governing body under the current SBM system. When school boards represent the interests of wide education constituencies, they can provide necessary legitimacy to school directors’ efforts to facilitate social cohesion activities, some of which may be perceived as politically sensitive. The following remarks illustrate school directors’ perceptions of such school board support.

*We had inter-regional socializing of students. The school board made the decision after my suggestion, concerning the choice of the students who would participate. After the event, I submitted a report to the school board. ... There were a lot of comments from the school board members on the report. ... The socializing event was assessed positively, but with some suggestions for improvement. [The interviewee described a one-week event where participants included 15 students from each of 7 municipalities on both sides of the FBiH-RS entity borders. The event was initiated by a local NGO.]*

*When it is a BiH state holiday or other holidays which need to be celebrated, then the school board suggests we have a special history lesson [concerning these holidays] or some kind of celebrations. ... The school board gives some funds to logistically help or to invite guests. In that way, I think the school board is helpful. ... I ask them for such support.*
In the beginning when the integration started, there were accidents. Two students had a fight, a Croat with a Bosniak, because one cheers Zrinski and another Velež [both are football teams from a town: the former Croatian, the latter Bosniak]. And then, we jointly, together with the school board, we invited the parents and told them that the two students were learning in the same school, they would not need to fight, they can be fans of both groups, there’s no need for that kind of rivalry.

When the joint parents’ council [under the “two schools under one roof” arrangement] was formed, I needed assistance from the school board to have a joint meeting with parents to convince them that the joint body was needed for this school.

It should be added that the school board responsibility for the school budget gives extra weight to their supportive roles, as the following comment by an interviewee illustrates.

I can do some activities on my own, but when some extensive preparations are needed, I often need a school board decision because we need more people to take part and we need money. I consider it is better to have a decision from the school board.
4.3.5. Interview question 5

What makes you feel you must respond to school board requests generally and more specifically in relation to the areas mentioned in the survey?

Interview data indicates that school directors were not keenly and actively exercising PDA so as to reflect local stakeholders’ wishes in school management. An interviewee observed as follows: ‘Well, I must respond to the requests of the school board, as long as they comply with the law.’ Several survey respondents made similar comments. The responses of this nature could be interpreted to mean that school directors responded to school board requests only in areas where they judged that the relevant regulations clearly mandated them to do so.

Some study participants admitted that, despite the SBM reform, the government authorities still retained significant power, which appeared to affect school director accountability. Some school directors openly admitted that the regional ministries of education were the ultimate authorities, and that school-level actors, including school boards, needed to be accountable to them. In some cases, school directors wanted the governments to play an even more active role. It is suspected that these views may make school directors less inclined to be responsive to school board demands. The following

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65 It appeared that school rules and regulations, issued by schools but guided by the regional education authorities, mentioned specific areas, such as school staff employment, as school board mandates.
comments, made by those in the regions classified as the lower school board autonomy group, illustrate government authorities’ influence on school governance.

[Responding to the interviewee’s prompt that asked whether the school director needed approval from the school board to conduct extra-curricular activities that involved inter-ethnic socialization], Yes, I needed an approval from the school board for the sake of [being accountable to] the ministry of education. Only for that. The ministry of education has to be familiar... The school board is directly responsible to the ministry of education for its deeds.

I consider that the communication channel between the ministry and directors should be better. So the ministry could have a stronger role and come to better conclusions/solutions.

Active participation of school boards in governing schools is greatly limited by the ministry. The ministry often makes obstructions against the authority of the school boards.

[This is a quote from a survey respondent.]

A striking trend that emerged in the interview responses was school directors’ sense of independence. Although some school directors recognized the school boards’ “filtering” role to monitor and review school directors’ decisions, the interviewees’ and survey respondents’ comments showed that school directors had a strong sense of autonomy from school boards in running their schools. The following comments are representative of such an attitude.
The school board should cooperate with the director and it shouldn’t be a ‘supervising body.’

The legal responsibility of directors is the highest, at least in our canton. What decisions would be made by the school board and if they are problematic or not highly depend on the director.

The director is a highly educated and moral person as well as an autonomous individual. ... So school directors do not need to always answer to the school boards. School board members don’t have influence on me. I’m not a kid.

Some study participants even expressed discomfort with the notion that they may be influenced by somebody else, as demonstrated by the following quotes.

The way the survey questions were asked,... I am not dictated by the school board to behave like this or like that.

The kind of decisions the school board makes highly depends on what the school director presents to the school board. ... I tried to do my part of the duties in my domain. The school board should do their part in their domain. Neither I would influence the school board nor would I allow the school board to influence my work.

I am influencing them, not the other way around.
My decisions are not a result of school board influence. They are mine. I often suggest agendas for school board meetings. I propose them together with the chairperson of the school board. ... Actually, I initiate those decisions.

A sense of independence from the school governing body does not necessarily mean that school directors ignore school boards altogether. School directors’ accountability to school boards seemed to take place mostly in the form of informing and reporting to the school boards about activities school directors foresee or have already performed. Indeed, many interviewees perceived this information sharing as an important aspect of the relationship between school boards and themselves. They saw school boards as a channel, in addition to parent councils, through which they could communicate with parents who had an important stake in school activities. The following quotes illustrate this point.

In those meetings, I was often asked to provide details about those materials [concerning school policies and practices]. Then, the board members gave comments. Then, we had voting. So I have cooperation with the school board.

As a school director, I am not eligible to vote in school board meetings. But I inform the board members about particular projects, their goals, work involved, our interest in them, benefits to our children, and what these projects will mean to us, school staff and me.

It is important that parents are involved. They are not well-informed or misinformed. With the school board, they are better informed.
In the process of informing and reporting, school directors received feedback from school board members. Such a communication process implies, as pointed out earlier, that school directors were addressing the second principle of PDA, that is, consultation with service recipients. In fact, most interviewees described such a process. This point is illustrated by the following comment.

_I think information sharing should occur. More people always know better than a single person does. Sometimes you get an interesting suggestion. Then a conversation can lead you in another direction. Sometimes you get satisfaction that you made a right decision when you get a confirmation from the school board._

4.4. **Effects of social desirability**

Social desirability was a major concern during the implementation of this study. During interviews, the possible presence of social desirability in participants’ responses was noted, despite countermeasures including careful wording of questions, an explanation of the research purpose, and the assurance of confidentiality to the interviewees. Furthermore, interviewees’ explanations about their responses to survey items led me to suspect that social desirability may have affected their survey responses as well, despite the revisions in the survey instrument after the pilot study. Since social desirability has important implications for the interpretation of the results, it merits further discussion here.
In this study, the effects of social desirability were suspected when participants were portraying their relationship with school boards in such abstract terms as “harmonious” or asserting that their schools never had any issues with social cohesion. Such school director remarks may reflect their honest opinions, but it is prudent to be cautious when interpreting the data, given that there are some possible reasons to suspect the presence of social desirability in the context of this study. The following remarks are representative of those that appear to show participants’ attempts to portray the relationship with school boards in a socially desirable way.

*School board members are professionals. We openly discuss school issues. We never had any problems. We have harmonious relationships.*

*The school board talks and agrees about everything with the school management [school director]. Opinions and decisions are not forced. Everything is done in accordance with the law.*

*[This is a quote from a survey respondent.]*

From the perspective of social desirability, the participants’ portrayal of a harmonious relationship with school boards possibly reflects their efforts to present positive images of their schools and communities. Such a tendency may have indeed become more acute since the SBM reform designated school directors more directly responsible for school management and outcomes. Indeed, a study in the U.S. reported that school principals working under SBM were likely to present positive impressions
regarding their schools and local communities to researchers since they were major spokespersons and representatives of their schools and communities (Portin et al, 1998, as cited in Opfer & Denmark, 2001). It is indicative of this school leaders’ attitude that, when asked about the item on corruption, many interviewees were quick to deny the possibility that corruption existed in their schools.

Since school directors in BiH are typically from the local communities, their sense of responsibility to protect the interests and images of their schools and local communities is considered to be strong. Such a sense of duty can positively contribute to the enhancement of school roles in facilitating social cohesion. On the other hand, the excessive display of strong leadership may be a reflection of their attitude to undervalue the roles and work of lay board members. The interview data does not conclusively support either possibility and many school directors may exhibit both dimensions.

Another reason to suspect the presence of social desirability relates to the BiH pre-war history. During this study, possible social desirability effects were particularly noted when participants were alluding to inter-ethnic relations. The quotes below might reflect the socialist legacy of “unity and brotherhood” that downplayed the differences between ethnic groups. The comments were made by interviewees who were working in multi-ethnic schools.66

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A school’s multi-ethnicity was judged here by the heterogeneity of its school board membership.
We generally don’t have to talk about the socialization of different ethnic children because it is most normal. This is not questioned and this is not a subject I discuss with the school board. We live that way and those questions are not asked.

[Responding to the interviewer’s question about the school board’s encouragement process with regard to the promotion of the ethnic equality] Since I am coming from a multi-ethnic town, we do not have a problem with the equality of people. So we do not have a problem with protecting the rights for all ethnic groups.

As previously mentioned, discussion on ethnic relations during the socialist era was considered a taboo as the communist leaders attempted to unify the nation’s diverse ethnic groups under the slogan of “unity and brotherhood.” The memory of the inter-ethnic war in the early 1990s may have further exacerbated the tendency among some citizens to downplay their ethnic identity and to avoid relevant discussion altogether. Such a tendency can be noted in survey comments such as: “One of the hardest questions when filling in such surveys is sorting children according to ethnicities;” “Questions about different ethnicities are unnecessary in our school because we do not observe students and employees that way.” The general tendency to avoid discussing ethnic issues and the social desirability of ethnic harmony inherited from the socialist era appeared to make it difficult, if not impossible, to obtain any honest and open responses from study participants on matters relating to inter-ethnic relations.

The image of an idealized relationship between school directors and school boards as well as between different ethno-national groups might have encouraged some
participants to choose survey options indicating the school boards’ active encouragement and the school directors’ responding to the board requests, even when they may not have perceived school board influence at all. By choosing “strongly disagree” or “disagree,” they might have feared they would betray social desirability. The following comment made by an interviewee points to this possibility. The interviewee agreed to most of the statements regarding school board influence.

*I answered the way I should and I think how my moral education and my upbringing should tell me. ... They apply to my working place. And I think, if I answered differently in any way in those four categories, I would consider myself to be inappropriate and not belonging to this society.*

It should be added, however, that the interviewee’s comment above was not representative of the majority opinions among interviewees; most of them described school board encouragement, though it was rather subtle and informal. Still, it is significant to recognize the possible presence of social desirability. Importantly, it would not have been possible to note whether and how social desirability might have affected survey responses, nor would it have been possible to understand the nature of school board influence, if the study had relied only on the survey to assess school directors’ perceptions. The divergence of results between the two methods led the study to attend to social desirability issues which provided another insight into school governance and social cohesion in BiH society.
5.1. Summary of findings

The purpose of this study was to understand the functioning of a decentralized school governance system in fostering social cohesion in a divided and post-conflict society. The SBM reform in BiH presumed that school directors fulfill their participatory democratic accountability (PDA) to promote social cohesion activities. Overall, the present study did not find compelling evidence that the SBM system was functioning as such. The following presents an overview of study findings that correspond to the research questions (1) through (4).

Research question (1) inquired whether school directors perceived that school boards influenced their decisions to promote social cohesion. Although the survey found that school boards actively influenced school directors to promote social cohesion, interview data suggested that the school boards’ participation was not as active as the survey results showed. Indeed, responding to the research question (2) that asked how school boards influenced school directors’ decisions, the study found that school board encouragement was largely subtle and informal, and occurred in limited areas.

Sub-research questions (1.1) and (2.2) asked whether the autonomy of school boards and the heterogeneity of school board membership mattered in their influence to promote social cohesion. Statistical tests showed that school board autonomy from government authorities and ethnic inclusivity of school board membership did not
generally affect the level of school board influence perceived by school directors, suggesting that strengthening local representation on school boards and/or ensuring the heterogeneity of their membership in itself does not necessarily enhance the schools’ role of promoting social cohesion.

In addition, this study inquired about the process of interaction between school directors and school boards, as well as school directors’ view regarding their accountability to school boards. Research question (3) asked whether school directors engaged in consultation and negotiation with school board members. The study found that school directors were engaged in consultation with board members, but perhaps little in negotiation. Research question (4) asked whether school directors viewed their accountability primarily to school boards which supposedly represent local stakeholders’ interests. The study found that school directors often perceived themselves as independent decision-makers, which may potentially undermine the spirit of participatory governance.

5.2. Discussion of results

In the following sub-sections, key findings of this study are explored further. The study essentially examined three assumptions of school leaders’ PDA that were considered to enhance the schools’ role of facilitating social cohesion. Under a decentralized system, schools are expected to contribute to the development of horizontal trust between different social groups and vertical trust between civilians and public institutions, when: 1) school leaders perceive that an autonomous and inclusive
school-based governing body influences their decisions to promote social cohesion activities; 2) school leaders are continuously engaged in consultation with the body’s members and negotiation with them by attending to and accommodating the diverse interests in the school community; and 3) school leaders view that responding to the board’s requests is their primary responsibility as a school manager. The three sub-sections below discuss whether these assumptions are being met.

5.2.1. School board influence

Research findings indicated that school boards were not actively engaged in school governance. Study participants’ responses concerning school board meetings are illustrative of this point. School board meetings are the most common opportunities for local stakeholders to express their opinions and requests. Yet, survey data indicated that school boards were the least likely to influence school directors to facilitate the organization of school board meetings. The survey data also showed that school boards were the most likely to influence school directors to promote equality concerning school access and curriculum; however, the interviews indicated that, in these areas, school boards were simply following school regulations and ethnic quotas for tasks such as drafting student enrolment plans.

The study showed that government representatives seemed to play an instrumental role in school boards’ influence on school director decisions. When school boards did request that school directors facilitate the organization of meetings, these requests appear
to have been initiated by government representatives rather than local stakeholder members. The statistical test indeed found that school boards with higher government participation encouraged more actively school directors to facilitate the organization of school board meetings than those with lower government participation. Quantitative analysis also showed that school board request was perceived to be consistently higher in the lower autonomy group than in the higher autonomy group across all the social cohesion areas. Interview data confirmed that school board meetings were often organized at the initiative of school board chairpersons who tended to be government representatives. School board chairpersons often decide, along with school directors, when the next board meeting will take place and what its meeting agenda will be.

The study, however, does not negate or undermine the roles that school boards, particularly local stakeholders, play in improving general school quality. In addition to the narrowly defined mandate areas, namely the employment of school staff and the drafting of the annual school plan and student enrolment plan, school directors turned to school boards for knowledge and expertise in such areas as vocational education. Furthermore, school directors acknowledged that school boards provide an additional communication channel with parents to inform them of school issues. These tasks may not make a direct impact on social cohesion, but they can improve general school management and its supporting environment.

Importantly, the study findings indicate that school boards are generally supportive of school endeavors to promote social cohesion. No data collected by this study showed
evidence that school boards acted otherwise. Though school boards did not necessarily take initiatives and actively encourage school directors, they offered informal support to the directors’ efforts to implement social cohesion activities. The school boards’ general support for social cohesion concurs with the polls showing citizens’ support for inter-ethnic cooperation and dissatisfaction with their governments. This finding suggests that decentralized and participatory school governance still has the potential to contribute to the development of social cohesion in BiH.

Most notably, school boards’ support for social cohesion includes activities meant to build horizontal trust. The study found no evidence that school boards, whether they were homogeneous or heterogeneous, opposed activities meant to enhance inter-ethnic trust, such as the socialization of children and the teaching of citizenship principles. This suggests that SBM in BiH is not dividing communities, regions or the nation, as feared by some scholars of decentralization effects on social cohesion. While the ethnic inclusivity of school board membership itself was not found to be significant in regard to their influence on school directors, the inclusivity provided an important legitimacy to school directors’ decisions and actions to improve inter-group relations. It should be added that politicization of school boards, another fear associated with decentralized governance, did seem to occur in some cases, especially during the election of board members. However, politicization in this case mostly meant the struggle to secure jobs for party affiliates, rather than attempts to further divide children along ethnic lines.
School boards’ passive support for social cohesion points to the possibility that more empowerment in the form of specialized training, especially of the local stakeholder members, could increase their engagement in school governance and further promote social cohesion. Training for school board members does not necessarily need to cover detailed pedagogical and curriculum issues, often suggested as a way to improve student academic performance in other decentralization contexts (exact approaches have been contested, however67). In the context of this study, training could focus on increasing their understanding of general school management, including budget handling, and the improvement of generic deliberation skills. These types of knowledge and skills are most relevant to school boards’ work in relation to social cohesion, and can also be used to improve the general conditions in children’s learning environment. With proper training, school boards could play an important role in countering the present downward trend of both horizontal and vertical trust.68

5.2.2. Participation process

Research question (3) in this study inquired whether school directors engaged in consultation and negotiation with school board members continuously and facilitated an adjudication process. Research findings showed that school directors were engaged in a

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67 Even professionals, including scholars and practitioners, do not have a strong consensus on school effectiveness to improve students’ performance (Chapman et al., 2002)

68 In order to further encourage their active participation, compensatory fees to school board members may be provided to cover their expenses to attend school board meetings, while retaining the voluntary nature of their work.
consultation process to some extent. School directors recognized that they were influenced by school boards through meetings where they listened to the board members’ opinions. Many interview participants agreed that school boards provided important opportunities to share information about school activities with local stakeholders, and acknowledged the merit of receiving feedback and affirmation from the school-governing body about their plans and actions, as well as the need to explain their ideas and decisions to the board’s members.

On the other hand, study data indicated that school directors were not actively engaged in negotiation with school board members. Negotiation implies the existence of different opinions among participants and efforts to seek a compromise. The interviewees’ descriptions of the interaction between school directors and school boards did not imply such an adjudication process. This may be due to the social desirability effect discussed earlier. Other explanations are that school board members do not wish to discuss controversial issues or that they do not have significantly different opinions on school issues in regard to the social cohesion areas investigated. Notably, the study did not find strong evidence suggesting that school boards with ethnically heterogeneous members were engaged in a serious debate on whether and how inter-ethnic activities should take place. This point will be revisited in the section discussing theoretical implications of this study.
5.2.3. **View of accountability**

Research question (4) in this study was meant to generate useful insights into constraints and potentials regarding the school directors’ achievability of PDA. The results basically showed that, while some school directors indeed appreciated the spirit of participatory school governance, most of them downplayed the significance of school boards and instead displayed the image of their strong leadership. Such an attitude on the part of school directors may prevent them from reflecting the boards’ demands on school management and from facilitating a genuine consultation and negotiation process whereby the board members can freely express their opinions, knowing they will be considered.

The school directors’ sense of autonomy and strong leadership possibly came from the pre-war system and the present politically-charged environment. Arguably, active civil society did not exist during the pre-war BiH. Expert knowledge was most highly valued in the decision-making process. This “elite worship hangover” may reflect certain school directors’ understanding of the school board as simply a form of teachers’ council (OSCE, 2006a, p. 33). Another factor derives from the post-conflict environment characterized by political turmoil and impasse. The deadlock in the political scene at both regional and state levels may have contributed to the school directors’ sense of the need for strong leadership to manage schools as normally as possible.

In addition, the decentralization reform is possibly and ironically contributing to the school directors’ own perception of strong and autonomous leadership. With the
Introduction of SBM along with the general reduction in the government’s role and increased community participation, school directors’ sense of autonomy and need to be a leader to “guide” lay board members may have been heightened. It is also possible to speculate that the pre-war Yugoslav self-management system may have left behind school leadership models that favor independent school directors without necessarily enhancing the meaningful participation of community stakeholders, as discussed in Chapter 2.

At one extreme, school directors’ perception of strong leadership could lead to the dictatorial control of school governance and difficulty in accepting school boards’ ideas and requests. Indeed, it has been reported that some school directors “hijacked” school board sessions by insisting on specific courses of discussion (OSCE, 2006a). As previously mentioned, some school directors customarily determined school board agendas in cooperation with school board chairpersons. Agenda-setting is a powerful tool to “produce a text designed to limit the scope of a discussion at a meeting” (Fowler, 2009, p.33). Such an act of control could potentially reduce the likelihood that school directors fulfill their PDA and, more broadly, erode the spirit of decentralized and participatory school governance based on the ideal of deliberative democracy.

On the other hand, BiH school directors’ sense of professionalism and mentorship could place them in a new school leader role as a facilitator of school board capacity development so as to enable its members to participate in school governance more actively. Interview data indicated that school directors often saw themselves as ‘mentors’ for lay members of school boards. Since lay members by definition do not possess...
detailed knowledge of school functions, they need inputs from school professionals in order to make informed decisions. School directors could facilitate this process by a systematic and/or on-the-job training for these board members. Such a leadership role, however, would require school directors to redefine the professionalism expected in their positions.

Ultimately, school directors may realize that the deliberative process can benefit them. Deliberative democracy, by virtue of direct participation, can increase the legitimacy of decisions (Fung & Wright, 2003). Kogan (1986) argued that legitimacy was not permanently guaranteed by voting, and that PDA would provide continued or even increased legitimacy to those elected. Applying this argument to the study context, there is no guarantee that school directors’ legitimacy will remain stable once they are elected by school boards; school directors need to constantly maintain their legitimacy to successfully execute their tasks. As legitimacy represents trust between public officials and civilians, school directors’ efforts to increase their legitimacy can not only help facilitate their work as a school manager, but also ultimately contribute to social cohesion.

5.3. Implications for theory

The study contributes to theoretical development concerning the relationship between decentralized school governance and social cohesion, as well as the broader theme of international reform isomorphism. First, the present study invites a fresh look at
the theory of participatory democratic accountability (PDA) and the school role of promoting social cohesion. Kogan’s (1986) theory of PDA and Heyneman’s (2003a, 2003b) discussion of the school role in adjudicating differences are based on the notion of a deliberative process where important differences are expressed openly and mediated. This study described a situation in BiH where former enemy groups similarly supported school efforts to promote social cohesion. While divisive politics are played out at the regional and national levels, the local population seems less inclined to discuss differences among them. This may be due to the legacy of the pre-war socialist era or the bitter experience of the war that divided them. In such a case, school directors’ PDA, at least presently, may focus on the facilitation of dialogue and consultation between school board members, rather than highlighting and mediating their differences.

Secondly, this study contributes to the theoretical debate concerning international isomorphism of education reforms, as addressed by the research question (5). The SBM reform featured in the Education Reform policy paper and the Framework Law, which correspond to “policy rhetoric” and “policy actions” respectively, as expressed by Cuban (1998 as cited in Steiner-Khamisi, 2006), were planned in accordance with “European standards” of democracy which value local autonomy and diversity. In this aspect, the SBM reform phenomenon appears to support the neo-institutionalists’ claim that

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69 I observed during my previous studies that Bosnian civilians tended to downplay their ethno-national differences. This tendency was particularly notable among Bosniaks, but observed among others as well. I recall one instance where I was advised by local informants not to include a question asking ethnicities when conducting a survey with school students, as some students may refuse to be identified with ethnicity.
education reforms are converging across national boundaries. Indeed, the reform adoption process in post-conflict BiH, with its intensive international support and supervision, truly embodies the notion that a nation in the globalized world does not develop its policies independent from the “international political arena” (Fowler, 1995, p. 90).70

When it comes to policy implementation, however, study findings suggest the limitation of reform convergence.71 At first glance, the international community’s intense involvement in the domestic affairs, the national aspiration to join the EU which provides incentives to follow European governance standards, and citizen support for social cohesion suggest the realization of the SBM reform in accordance with its intention. The study showed, however, that the externally-imported idea of civic participation is likely to face considerable challenges when it is introduced in post-conflict contexts. First, poverty and damaged infrastructure as a consequence of war would not encourage the emergence and growth of civic volunteerism. A number of school directors pointed out the lack of compensation and infrastructure as the main factors inhibiting school boards’ activism.

Moreover, policy leaders and school administrators may resist the reform implementation. Some regional governments in BiH, while their political representatives signed the Framework Law, also ensured their strong representation on school boards. Such an attitude of BiH authorities can be explained by Weiler’s (1990) political utility

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70 Fowler (1995) used this term to argue that nations draw the same set of ideas from multi-national organizations and corporations to formulate their educational policies.

71 It is possible that global ideas have not been implemented as intended in many other nations, as some comparative education scholars have shown.
theory that authorities adopt a global reform not because they truly believe in the reform but because they want to increase their legitimacy, as discussed in Chapter 2. Furthermore, school-level reform implementers may possess values inherited from pre-war training that are not compatible with the ethos of new reforms. In BiH, school directors’ value of professionalism gives priority to expertise, rather than to lay control. The responses of BiH authorities and school directors to the school governance reform indicate that policy implementation gaps are likely to occur when the internationally-driven policies implicate depoliticization and participation that would promise to change the existing power balance. In short, the present findings seem to be consistent with other research that found gaps between an internationally popular reform agenda and its practices; this study illuminated difficulties in implementing a global reform in a specific post-conflict context.

5.4. Implications for policy

In the challenging post-conflict environment, the availability of effective and viable policy options appear to be rather limited. Any measures to facilitate the SBM reform implementation in BiH, and presumably in other similarly divided post-conflict societies, need to take into account the legacy of pre-war systems, post-conflict social and economic conditions, and divisive politics. This sub-section discusses a policy measure that addresses school directors, since they are the focus of this study and their role is critical to the SBM reform.
Effective measures can be found from among conventional policy options after due consideration of their feasibility in current BiH conditions. According to McDonnell and Elmore (1987) and McDonnell (1994), there are five major policy instruments in the field of public administration: system change, mandates, inducements, persuasion, and capacity building (as cited in Fowler, 2009). A system change has occurred in BiH, albeit in imperfect forms in many of the regions; the primary authority to govern schools has been transferred to school boards. The next three instruments, namely mandates, inducements and persuasion, to encourage or oblige school directors to implement PDA are essentially short-term in nature and can produce immediate results. These policy instruments, however, could quickly destabilize the status-quo balance of power in school governance which still preserves the influence of government authorities; therefore, the regional governments may not accept such policy instruments.

Meanwhile, capacity-building is a policy option aiming to bring about long-term changes to the way a system works. Despite their government leaders’ ethnocentric rhetoric, the present study did not find evidence of regional governments’ outright obstruction of school social cohesion activities; some may have even engaged in the promotion of these activities. This may be due to the fact that school boards have not so far demanded immediate changes in formal curriculum, textbooks, pedagogy and the fundamental school management structure. Changes in these areas are likely to be noticed by the public, which may threaten government leaders’ short-term interests—essentially, the chance to win the next election by using ethno-nationalistic rhetoric. In contrast,
low-profile and incremental changes in school activities in favor of social cohesion may not be seen as grave threats to these governments’ interests. Social cohesion, after all, is a long-term process. The political feasibility and long-term need for social cohesion development call for a strategic focus on school directors’ capacity building.

In view of this study’s outcome, a policy or program addressing school directors’ capacity building should provide them with opportunities to reevaluate their own values. The present study showed that BiH school directors tended to view themselves as autonomous leaders. This predisposition of school directors could undermine the fulfillment of their PDA. School directors’ reexamination of their own roles in light of the new governing system should be a first step towards appropriately functioning decentralized school governance. This, in fact, responds to Fowler’s (2009) call to attend to policy implementers’ values and the need for measures to address them, as noted in Chapter 2.

The process through which school directors re-examine their values would necessarily involve the reflection and monitoring of their norms and assumptions. Such a process could be facilitated by a professional training program or by peer exchange opportunities. For example, BiH school directors may be provided an opportunity similar to the professional learning communities (PLC) program suggested by Goddard (2004), which was proposed for school directors in Kosovo. The program emphasizes school leaders’ reflection on their own values, rather than focusing solely on the acquisition of knowledge and skills to improve school management. A similar training concept has been
proposed by Johnson (2003). According to Johnson, education leadership programs should encourage trainees to re-examine taken-for-granted concepts such as “democracy, justice, the democratic society, marginalization, structured silence, inclusion-exclusion, and the role of education in realizing or obstructing the realization of our normative visions” (p. 59).

Alternatively, the self-reflection process could occur within a more informal yet sustained structure. It is said that school-level implementers are able to understand underlying concepts of a new policy when they discuss the policy with their professional peers (Fowler, 2009). Such a peer community space is important as it allows professional dialogue and exchange to occur (Goddard, 2004). Ideally, this space should be provided and supported by an established structure. In BiH, such a structure is just emerging. In 2011, a state-level professional association was created for secondary school directors as well as for primary school directors. These associations were established for the purpose of building school directors’ capacity by offering opportunities to exchange ideas and experience (OSCE, n.d.c). With proper planning and sustained support, these professional bodies can offer an effective venue for school directors to be engaged in professional dialogues with regard to their roles and accountability under decentralized school governance. As BiH secondary school directors were found to value professionalism highly, their new professional association could be effectively utilized to motivate school directors to engage in redefining professionalism.
In facilitating the values-examination process further, this paper proposes that school directors be the primary actors responsible for training school board members. Leithwood and Menzies (1998) found that SBM in the U.S. had a greater impact on schools when school principals facilitated the work of school-governing bodies by developing the board members’ capacities (as cited in Walker, 2002). Considering the BiH school boards’ limited participation in school governance, these school directors could play an important role in facilitating their engagement and deliberation. In fact, this opportunity may also benefit school directors themselves. Fowler (2009) argues that school-level implementers, such as school leaders and teachers, should be engaged in both teaching and learning. They can internalize newly learned ideas by reflecting them in the process of teaching them to others. BiH school directors could deepen their understanding of shared school governance if they themselves are responsible for the training of school board members.

It should be recognized, however, that capacity building has its own limitations. Because it is a long-term investment, political support may dissipate before sufficient capacity is built (Fowler, 2009). Given the volatile and unpredictable conditions of domestic politics in BiH, the sustained engagement of international actors may be necessary. These international actors, be they donors or practitioner associations, can provide both content and moral support to professional development programs or opportunities so that the capacity-building process can continue. Whether the SBM reform, initially introduced by the international donor and supervisory/monitory
community, ends up being simply “policy-talk” and “policy actions (legislations),” or brings about substantive transformation in education governance in favor of social cohesion may depend on the commitment of those who introduced the idea in the first place.

5.5. Suggestions for future research

The findings of this study point to areas of further investigation in order to understand more fully how a system of decentralized school governance functions in promoting social cohesion activities. Case studies are said to suggest complexities for further investigation (Stake, 2005). Indeed, this study, having adopted a case study approach to understand empirically the complex relationship between decentralized school governance and social cohesion in the post-conflict context, highlighted methodological challenges to be tackled and opened up new areas to be explored. In this sub-section, three possibilities for future research are proposed; the first one concerns methodological improvement, while the remaining two suggest substantive areas for further exploration.

The present study demonstrated the difficulty in capturing human perceptions and views in an environment where social desirability is strongly suspected to affect participants’ responses. In this study, the survey assessment of school directors’ general perceptions on school board influence was critical to answering one of the research questions. However, interview results indicated the presence of social desirability, and/or
central tendency bias, in the survey responses. One way to increase the validity of a future survey study is to prepare two different surveys, one with positive and the other with negative statements, and compare their results.\textsuperscript{72} Alternatively, the survey questionnaire may be redesigned in light of this study experience in order to better capture school directors’ experience. In this case, each statement in the survey items could be constructed more critically and concretely.\textsuperscript{73}

As for the areas of further exploration, a future research study could closely examine school boards. The present study focused on school directors as they are considered to be a central actor in school management and accountability. However, relying on the data only from school directors, however crucial they are, is likely to lead to a partial picture of a wider issue. One suggestion, previously mentioned in sub-section 3.8, is to conduct an in-depth case study of multiple school boards to better understand their member profiles and the dynamics of interaction among them and with the school directors. This kind of study could provide useful information that can supplement and triangulate the findings of this study.

The other intriguing and crucial area that future research may address is the effect of decentralized school governance on civilian voting behavior. Social cohesion at the

\textsuperscript{72} In fact, this was given consideration at the time of planning; however, it was decided to forsake this option for two reasons. First, there existed the risk of making mistakes in data entry by dealing with multiple sets of surveys which already existed in three language versions. Second, there was concern that the use of negative statements might confuse participants. In retrospect, however, preparation of another set of questionnaires with an alternative formulation of questions might have been desirable, given the prevalence of responses seemingly affected by social desirability and/or acquiescence bias.

\textsuperscript{73} For example, a statement could explicitly mention “activity” such as: Has the school board taken any action to encourage you to promote the socialization of different ethnic children?”
regional and national levels would be strengthened if elected politicians would work constructively in favor of social cohesion. For example, they may agree to strengthen the functions of inclusive and integrated institutions, such as the BiH state-level Education Agency that has been created to coordinate the education sector in the country. Such politicians may also actively support the strengthening of school roles that promote social cohesion at the grass-roots level. Will the experience of more active participation in school governance, whether through school boards or any other channels such as PTAs, affect citizens’ voting behavior in such a way that they are more likely to choose politicians with civic values rather than ethno-nationalist inclinations? This topic is beyond the scope of this study, but very much worth investigating.

5.6. Conclusion

This study identified both theoretical and contextual justifications for the introduction of the SBM reform to enhance social cohesion in BiH society, but found little evidence that the reform was being realized as intended. School directors do not appear to be fulfilling their participatory democratic accountability, as suggested by the data showing the lack of active engagement by both local stakeholders and school directors in the deliberation process, as well as school directors’ self-image of autonomous leadership. Still, the study indicated some potentialities of decentralized school governance by pointing out that school boards seemed to be supportive of social
cohesion activities, and that the school directors’ sense of professionalism could be used to increase the schools’ roles in enhancing social cohesion.

The “frozen conflict,” as post-conflict BiH was once depicted, needs to be resolved with an increase in horizontal and vertical trust. Decentralized school governance has the potential to contribute to the development of social cohesion, but only in a limited way. The SBM reform needs to be linked to other efforts to build or rebuild trust relationships in all segments of the society. In neglecting such a need, the present young generation, who are the future leaders of the society, will take for granted segregation and ethnocentric ideas which the global society is increasingly unwilling to accept. The remark made by a girl early in this paper is a sober reminder of this risk: “I’ve never really thought about why we have separate schools; it’s just the way it is.” Efforts must begin where they are feasible; decentralized school governance is just one such potential effort, but may be an important step forward.
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SCHOOL DIRECTOR QUESTIONNAIRE
PERCEPTION ON SCHOOL BOARDS’ INFLUENCE

Summer 2011

Dear Director:

Who is conducting this survey?
This survey is conducted by Taro Komatsu (Japanese), Department of Organizational Leadership, Policy and Development at the University of Minnesota.

What is the purpose?
The purpose of this survey is to obtain information about school boards’ influence on school directors’ decisions in selected areas of school policies and practices.

Why should you participate in the survey?
Your contribution is meaningful because it helps to clarify the reality of school governance. This survey has been approved by the Institutional Review Board of the University of Minnesota and the ministry of education in your area. Your responses will be anonymous and kept confidential.

How do I complete the questionnaire?
There are 3 language versions. Please choose one. Please complete the questionnaire by yourself, as it asks school director’s perception. Please use a pencil or ball-point pen (You may wish to use an enclosed pent!). Please answer ALL questions.

Where should you mail your completed questionnaire?
Please return your completed questionnaire in the enclosed envelope.

~ Thank you very much for your contribution! ~
PART I. INFLUENCE FROM SCHOOL BOARDS

This section asks you to assess the level of influence the school board has on your decisions in different areas of school policies and practices. Please choose your one best answer by marking (X) in that box. Please note that you are asked to assess the reality of the influence, rather than the ideal influence. For the questions 2 - 6, please read the statement and choose the answer that best matches your judgment.

1. Generally speaking, how much influence does the school board have on your decisions in running the school?

   1. Strong influence
   2. Some influence
   3. Little influence
   4. No influence

2. The school board actively encourages me to facilitate the organization of school board meetings.

   1. Strongly agree
   2. Agree
   3. Disagree
   4. Strongly disagree

If “strongly agree” or “agree,” please answer question 2.1. Otherwise, please skip to question 3.
2.1. I feel I must respond to the school boards’ request to facilitate the organization of school board meetings.

1 [ ] Strongly agree
2 [ ] Agree
3 [ ] Disagree
4 [ ] Strongly disagree

3. The school board **actively** encourages me to promote the equality of school access and curriculum for all children, regardless of their ethno-national identity.

1 [ ] Strongly agree
2 [ ] Agree
3 [ ] Disagree
4 [ ] Strongly disagree

If “**strongly agree**” or “**agree**,” please answer question 3.1. Otherwise, please skip to question 4.

3.1. I feel I must respond to the school board’s request to promote the equality of school access and curriculum for all children, regardless of their ethno-national identity.

1 [ ] Strongly agree
2 [ ] Agree
3 [ ] Disagree
4 [ ] Strongly disagree
4. The school board **actively** encourages me to reduce corruption within the school.

1. [ ] Strongly agree
2. [ ] Agree
3. [ ] Disagree
4. [ ] Strongly disagree

If “strongly agree” or “agree,” please answer question 4.1. Otherwise, please skip to question 5.

4.1. I feel I must respond to the school board’s request to reduce corruption within the school.

1. [ ] Strongly agree
2. [ ] Agree
3. [ ] Disagree
4. [ ] Strongly disagree

5. The school board **actively** encourages me to promote activities to socialize children of diverse ethno-national groups, particularly the three constituent groups (Bosniaks, Serbs and Croats).

1. [ ] Strongly agree
2. [ ] Agree
3. [ ] Disagree
4. [ ] Strongly disagree

If “strongly agree” or “agree,” please answer question 5.1. Otherwise, please skip to question 6.
5.1. I feel I must respond to the school board’s request to promote activities to socialize children of diverse ethno-national groups, particularly the three constituent groups (Bosniaks, Serbs and Croats).

1. Strongly agree
2. Agree
3. Disagree
4. Strongly disagree

6. The school board actively encourages me to promote the teaching of common citizenship principles as found in the BiH constitution.

1. Strongly agree
2. Agree
3. Disagree
4. Strongly disagree

If “strongly agree” or “agree,” please answer question 6.1. Otherwise, please skip to question 7.

6.1. I feel I must respond to the school board’s request to promote the teaching of common citizenship principles as found in the BiH constitution.

1. Strongly agree
2. Agree
3. Disagree
4. Strongly disagree
7. Generally speaking, do you agree with the decisions of school boards?

1 □ Always
2 □ Often
3 □ Sometimes
4 □ Rarely

8. Do you have additional comments regarding the school board’s requests and your response in the areas mentioned above? Please write them in the box below.

PART II. BASIC INFORMATION

Thank you very much for answering the questions on the previous pages. This section asks you to provide basic information about yourself, school board and school.

9. What is your gender? Please mark (X) in one box.

□ Male   □ Female

10. What is your nationality (ethnicity)? Please mark (X) in as many boxes as needed.

□ Bosniak   □ Serb   □ Croat

□ Other: Please specify. ____________________________
11. How were you elected to your current school director position? Please mark (X) in one box.

☐ Chosen and approved by the school board
☐ Chosen by the school board and approved by the ministry of education
☐ Chosen and approved by the ministry of education
☐ Other: Please specify.

12. What is the composition of the school board at your school? Please insert the number of members in each category in appropriate boxes.

☐ Ministry of Education
☐ Municipality
☐ Local community
☐ Parents
☐ School staff
☐ Total
13. What is the ethno-national composition of the school board at your school? Please indicate the **number** of members in appropriate boxes.

- [ ] Bosniaks
- [ ] Serbs
- [ ] Croats
- [ ] Others
- [ ] Total

14. What is the number of students (at your school) for each ethno-national group? Please insert the **numbers** in appropriate boxes. If the data is not available, please provide the approximate number.

- [ ] Bosniaks
- [ ] Serbs
- [ ] Croats
- [ ] Others
- [ ] Total

15. Is your school public (state-owned) or private? Please mark (X) in one box.

- [ ] Public
- [ ] Private

This is the end of the questionnaire. **Thank you very much** for your important contribution to the survey. Please kindly return your completed questionnaire in the enclosed envelope by June 3, 2011. I would like to wish you the best for your endeavor to offer quality learning experiences to the children in BiH your school!
Survey consent statement

You are invited to complete a survey concerning the influence of school boards on school directors’ management decisions in Bosnia and Herzegovina. I ask that you read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to complete the survey.

This study is being conducted by: Taro Komatsu, Department of Organizational Leadership, Policy and Development, University of Minnesota.

Background Information:

The purpose of this survey is to understand the influence of school boards on school directors’ decisions. The questionnaire asks BiH school directors to assess school boards’ influence in selected areas of school policies and practices in BiH. The collected data will be utilized to assess the extent of school boards’ influence.

Procedures:

Your participation to this study is voluntary. If you agree to participate, you will be asked to complete a short survey. The survey should take about 15-30 minutes.

Risks and Benefits of Being in the Study:

The study has no known risks. There are also no immediate or expected benefits.

Confidentiality:

The records of this study will be kept private. Your responses will be anonymous and confidential. The collected data will be used for the purpose of statistical analysis only. Only computer processed and aggregated data at the level of BiH will be made available to those authorities that request a final report of the research outcome.

Contacts and Questions:

The researcher conducting this study is Taro Komatsu. If you have questions, you are encouraged to contact my research assistant Mirando Krstić by cell phone at 063 700-579 or me by email at komat006@umn.edu (contact address: 1056 27th Avenue SE, Minneapolis, MN 55414, USA; Tel: 1 612 963 3293) or my advisor Dr. David Chapman by email at chapm026@umn.edu (Tel: 1 612 626 8728).
If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher(s), you are encouraged to contact the Research Subjects’ Advocate Line, D528 Mayo, 420 Delaware St. Southeast, Minneapolis, Minnesota 55455 (Tel: 1 612 625 1650).
I. Introduction

First of all, I would like to thank you for your participation to this study. My name is Taro Komatsu. I am a Ph.D. student in the Department of Organizational Leadership, Policy and Development at the University of Minnesota, USA. I am in BiH to conduct a research study on school governance. The purpose of this interview is to examine the influence of school boards on your decisions that may affect inter-group and school-community relations.

You were selected as a possible participant because you have been identified as someone with a great deal to share about school governance in BiH. Please keep in mind that my study does not aim to evaluate your performance or experience. Participation in this study is voluntary; you may withdraw at any time, or decline to answer any questions. All records from this study will be kept confidential so your name and location will never be used. Only the researcher will have access to the records.

Please read the consent form. If you agree to participate in this study, please sign two copies and keep one for your records. I will keep one for myself. In preparation for the interview, I would like you to fill out a survey questionnaire. If you have done it, please let me know so that I will use it only for the interview purpose.

II. Questions

Basic information

1. How long have you been a school director of your school?
2. Were you a teacher in the same school? How long?
3. Could you describe how you were appointed to the present position?
4. Could you describe the school board member composition? Where do they come from?
School boards’ influence

1. How do you understand the role of the school board in school governance generally and more specifically in relation to the areas mentioned in the survey? (1 & 2)*

2. Do you perceive school board influence in the areas mentioned in the survey more, or less than before the introduction of the present school board system? Why? (1.1)

3. In your view, does the heterogeneity of school board membership affect the way you work? How? (1.2)

4. According to the questionnaire you just filled out, you strongly agreed that the school board actively encouraged you to promote/facilitate __________. How did the school board actually influence/encourage you? Please give concrete examples. (2 & 3)

5. What makes you feel you must respond to school board requests generally and more specifically in relation to the areas mentioned in the survey? (4)

* The number in the parenthesis indicates the corresponding or relevant research question

III. Closing

This is the end of the interview. I would like to briefly summarize our conversation today and ask you to tell me if it is accurate. When I conduct analysis, I will remove your name and specific locational information from the data. You can contact me or my assistant later if you have any questions or additional information. Our contact addresses are listed on the consent form. Thank you very much for your cooperation and participation today.
Appendix B-2

Interview consent form

You are invited to be in a research study of school boards’ influence on school directors’ decisions in Bosnia and Herzegovina. You were selected as a possible participant because you have been identified as someone who has a great deal to share about school management in BiH. I ask that you read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to be in the study.

This study is being conducted by: Taro Komatsu, Department of Organizational Leadership, Policy and Development, University of Minnesota.

Background Information:

The purpose of this interview is to understand the influence of school boards on school directors’ decisions in selected areas of school policies and practices in BiH. The collected data will be utilized to assess the extent and nature of school boards’ influence.

Procedures:

If you agree to be in this study, I would ask you to participate in an interview; the interview will take approximately 1.5 to 2 hours, depending on your responses. The interview will be audio-taped.

Risks and Benefits of Being in the Study:

The study has no known risks. There are also no immediate or expected benefits.

Confidentiality:

All records of this study will be kept private. Research records will be kept securely by the researcher; only the researcher will have access to the records. Tape recordings of interviews and fieldnotes will also be kept securely, accessible only to the researcher. Tapes will be destroyed after successful transcription.

In any sort of report I might publish, I will not include information that will make it possible to identify you as a subject.

Voluntary Nature of the Study:
Your participation to this study is voluntary. If you decide to participate, you are free to withdraw at any time.

**Contacts and Questions:**

The researcher conducting this study is Taro Komatsu. If you have questions, you are encouraged to contact my research assistant Mirando Krstić by cell phone at 063 700-579 or me by email at komat006@umn.edu (contact address: 1056 27th Avenue SE, Minneapolis, MN 55414, USA; Tel: Tel: 1 612 963 3293) or my advisor Dr. David Chapman by email at chapm026@umn.edu (Tel: 1 612 626 8728).

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher(s), you are encouraged to contact the Research Subjects’ Advocate Line, D528 Mayo, 420 Delaware St. Southeast, Minneapolis, Minnesota 55455; (612) 625-1650.

*You will be given a copy of this form to keep for your records.*

**Statement of Consent:**

I have read the above information. I have received answers to my questions. I consent to participate in the study.

Signature ________________________________________________

Date ________________

Signature of Investigator _____________________________________

Date ________________
Appendix C-1

A sample BiH authority approval (Tuzla canton)

Bosna i Hercegovina
Federacija Bosne i Hercegovine
Tuzlanski Kanton
Ministarstvo obrazovanja, nauke, znanosti, kulture i športa

Broj: TBU-9674-1/11
Tuzla, 1. 12. 2011. godine

Ministarstvo obrazovanja, nauke, kulture i športa Tuzlanskog kantona na osnovu članova 8. i 23. Zakona o ministarstvima i drugim organima uprave Tuzlanskog kantona ("Službene novine TK", broj: 17/03. 3/01. 12/03 i 10/05) rješavajući za zahtjev Taro Konatsu, u predmetu davanja saglasnosti za provođenje istraživačke studije o školama, daje

SAGLASNOST

Usvaja se zahtjev Taro Konatsu i daje saglasnost za provođenje istraživačke studije koja istražuje odnose između direktora škola i školskih odbora u školama na području Tuzlanskog kantona.
Sve aktivnosti u vezi sa realizacijom projekta potrebno je planirati sa menadžmentom škola izvan nastavnog procesa.

OBRAZLOŽENJE

taro Konatsu obratio se Ministarstvu obrazovanja, nauke, kulture i športa zahtjevom za davanje saglasnosti za provođenje istraživačke studije u školama na području Tuzlanskog kantona.

Cilj istraživanja je istraživanje odnosa između direktora škola i školskih odbora, te kako ovaj odnos utječe na politiku i praksu škole. Istraživačka studija će se provesti u svrhu izrade doktorske disertacije.

Ministarstvo je razmotrilo zahtjev i odlučilo da se istom može udovoljiti, zbog čega je odlučeno kao u izreći.

DOSTAVLJENO:

Ix Imenovanom
Ix Evidencijsi
Ix Arhivi
AJ/AJ

MINISTAR

Prof. dr. Nada Avdibašić Vukadinović

Statute 2. 75000 Tuzla Bosna i Hercegovina Tel: +387 35 281 246; fax: +387 35 281 340; email: monkefs@tkeim.ba

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Translation of the sample BiH authority approval (Tuzla canton)

On the basis from Article 8 and 23 of the Law concerning ministries and other governing bodies of the Tuzla Canton (“Official Gazette of the TK”, number: 17/00, 3/01, 12/03 and 10/05), the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport of the Tuzla Canton gives its approval for the project in concern.

The request submitted by Mr. Taro Komatsu has been accepted. He is authorized to conduct a research study about relationships between school directors and school boards in the Tuzla Canton area. All the activities connected to the realization of the project need to be planned with the schools so that the teaching process will not be affected.

Minister
Appendix D

University of Minnesota IRB approval

Date: 05/16/2011

To: Taro, Komatsu (komat006@umn.edu)

From: irb@umn.edu

Subject: #STUDYNBR# - PI #PILASTNAME# - IRB - Exempt Study Notification

TO : chapm026@umn.edu, komat006@umn.edu,

The IRB: Human Subjects Committee determined that the referenced study is exempt from review under federal guidelines 45 CFR Part 46.101(b) category #2 SURVEYS/INTERVIEWS; STANDARDIZED EDUCATIONAL TESTS; OBSERVATION OF PUBLIC BEHAVIOR.

Study Number: 1105E99558

Principal Investigator: Taro Komatsu

Title(s): Decentralized School Governance and Social Cohesion: School Leaders' Perception of School Boards’ Influence in Bosnia and Herzegovina

This e-mail confirmation is your official University of Minnesota RSPP notification of exemption from full committee review. You will not receive a hard copy or letter.

This secure electronic notification between password protected authentications has been deemed by the University of Minnesota to constitute a legal signature.

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Upon receipt of this email, you may begin your research. If you have questions, please call the IRB office at (612) 626-5654.

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