

Abstract

Title: Nurturing democratic competence:

A three-part sociological study of Bosnian young people's political socialization

Written in Swedish, summary in English, 293 pages

Author: Mirzet Tursunovic

Doctoral dissertation

Department of Sociology, Göteborg University

Box 720, SE 405 30 Göteborg, Sweden

ISSN 1650-4313

ISBN 91-974437-7-8

Göteborg 2004

This thesis concerns a group of Bosnian teenagers in Gothenburg and how they deal with what are for them new socio-cultural patterns marked by both risks and possibilities. The thesis' three empirical case-studies covering the influence of school, family and mass media are connected in an embracing purpose to outline a picture of Bosnian young people nurturing democracy and these three socialization agents' role in this context. Focus group interviews and a questionnaire were the main data gathering methods. A questionnaire was completed by 76 students about their socio-cultural conditions and how they saw their prospects for influencing those conditions, in both their immediate environment and society as a whole. Roughly 20 young people constituted 14 focus groups, which were observed during three sessions where one topic at a time (school, family, mass media) was covered.

Schools teach the fundamentals of democratic theory relatively successfully, but deal less well with the task of providing students with the necessary resources to question the concept of democracy. The school *has* the potential to act as a social arena where people with a variety of cultural backgrounds and ethnic standpoints are brought together in ways that would be difficult in the world outside. Those socio-cultural conditions under which many Bosnian families live partly undermine the role of the family as a political socialization agent because the generational transfer of values associated with the political domain is relatively modest. However, the democratic milieu and democratic structures within family circles work fairly well. Bosnian young people are of the opinion that the mass media in general is important for them in many ways. Mass media products can provide the basis for a social intercourse between family members, transcending boundaries between generations that would otherwise be difficult to cross. In such dialogues young people develop their communicative competence and can therefore participate more easily in democratic processes within a variety of arenas in society.

Keywords: Bosnian young people, political socialization, democracy, immigrants, multiculturalism, focus groups, school, family, mass media