

## SCIENTIFIC WORK REVIEW

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**UDK: 316.321.7(053.6)**

Doi: 10.7251/SHTEN1402036C

### **SOCIAL-EXPERIENTIAL INDICATORS OF DEMOCRATIC ORIENTATIONS AMONG THE ADOLESCENTS DURING THE CRISIS**

#### **Abstract**

*This Paper is a part of a more comprehensive empirical research of value orientations of adolescents during crisis, in which democratic orientation was analyzed along with some other orientations in the field of social life of young people (Yugoslav, Bosnian, autocratic, and demographic orientations, as well as orientation towards privacy and contemporary education). The analyzed socio-experiential indicators of democratic orientation are the following: gender, social background, general academic achievement, education level of father and mother, material conditions, national and confessional identity, and others. The sample consisted of 252 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup>-year secondary school pupils in Mostar on the eve of the Civil War in Herzegovina and 252 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup>-year secondary school pupils in Trebinje immediately after the end of the War. The following two test instruments were applied: questionnaire assessing attitudes of subjects and standardized scale of democratic orientation of Likert's type. Results of this research have shown that democratic orientation during crisis is rather low in the young generation. Its indicators can be traced in social background, national identity and time perspective. Those who belong to lower social status are more democratic oriented. Muslims occupy the first place according to their democratic orientation, whereas the Croats, Serbs and Yugoslavs follow next. As expected, the number of democratic oriented persons is higher before than after the war.*

**Key words:** *adolescents, socio-experiential characteristics, attitudes, democracy, crisis.*

#### **1. INTRODUCTION**

*Democracy is the worst form of government, apart from all the others.*  
[Winston Churchill]

*No society can be forced to democracy,  
it is not a gift but a gain and retain for all time.  
It has to be a daily fight and defend her.*  
[Heinz Galinski]

The original Greek meaning of democracy (*demos* - the people and *krateo* - governments) means as well as *the rule of the people* historically been understood differently and in practice achieved. Democracy has been developed in Europe, first in the Greek city-states as a direct and immediate democracy. The ancient Greeks from their democracy, the people, need all the slaves, as if they do not belong to the people. Modern democracy has been grown from the first Calvinist beliefs of the 17th century, especially in Scotland, England and the Netherlands, where a municipality has emerged as the bearer of religious and political life according to the teachings of the Enlightenment, especially by his observation of freedom and equality for all, and by the normative significance of rational thinking individual state and society. As a basis appeared Rousseau's teachings about the *sovereignty of the people* as an indivisible and inalienable right of the people. The first modern democratic state was the United States. In Europe, the first time in the French Revolution established the state on democratic principles

The main problem of democracy is the gap between individual freedom and its attachment to the whole (state or society). Individual freedom linked to this political arrangement is limit but on the other hand arrangement is realization of freedom. Freedom without attachment would lead to the right fist. The assumption of *rule* is based on the understanding that the people who rule himself free as opposed to the rule of a few powerful people over subordinates. Abraham Lincoln was the 16th President of the United States says: "Its legitimacy democracy on the assumption of sovereignty of the people. National sovereignty implies political and social equality.

Next prerequisite of democracy is *equality of all citizens*. It was debated about what should be understood under the term gender equality and how far can you go without jeopardizing freedom. That for which there is no debate is equality of citizens before the law. There must be no special rights or special courts which have jurisdiction only for certain classes or groups. The rule of law must provide equal opportunities for all, prevent danger if the social and economic conditions are too unequal. Critics here introduce a new argument that attempts to establish a broad and complete equality, because it does not take into account the natural diversity of people, or that full equality can only be made by undemocratic means.

In a democracy, government is entrusted in general, equal, free, secret and direct elections, and then only for a limited time. The selection corresponds to democratic principles only if the election was a choice between alternatives. Pure certificate or decision on the proposal for a single yes or no would be the right choice because there would be a choice between the different proposals.

Freedom of thought, diversity of opinion, freedom of information, protection of minorities and free opposition are prerequisites for democratic elections. Consequently, democracy stands between anarchy and dictatorial rule. It offers as much freedom as much as they can offer as many rows as necessary. It lives by understanding citizens that are binding rules. This belief of citizens that thrived for centuries in traditionally democratic countries such as

the USA or England, or that, as in Germany resulted from the negative experiences with anti-democratic ideologies and governing systems, denotes the notion of political culture.

The thing that we should understand today by the concept of democracy, of what constitutes its essence, it is unclear despite the very widespread use of the term. We believe that democracy is something that has to do with individual freedom and the rule of the people, but we are not sure whether and how this concept of democracy can be realized today. The thing that is today referred in the world as democracy and democratic has too many meanings that are sometimes contradictory. This ambiguity is largely associated with the fact that next to each other using different interpreters of democracy and their definitions are not paying attention to the fact that they originate from different times and different social orders and making no distinction between the core of democratic thinking and its achievements in different time periods and social systems.

What, then, democracy has the formula that sounds nice: Is democracy government of the people, and derives from the people? Are there people from which is derived all power in general chance to make political decisions competently? Or to recall another favorite (liberal) definition by which democracy is the rule of public opinion, with what (public opinion) to be created in the process of rational discussion. Is our public more generally reasonable for argument or just emotionally agitated and react? What is public opinion that the politicians should orient? Are these results of democracy or opinions and comments posted by parties and unions should be represented in large print, radio and television, or to those who sit in front of TV?

Equal freedom for all citizens is a constant demand of democracy. Today's the scope of the classical definition of democracy can be assessed by how much the current concrete form of democracy in the definition can be enabled and respected. Can the historical emergence of democracy still be ideal, will have to be decided on the basis of how many the basic values of democracy are fulfilled, vice versa.

Democracy starts from a certain image of man. People should be free, that is. to educate their personality and develop it according to their own decisions. Behind it is whether Christian or ideological-humanistic assertion - that every man has his dignity that makes him distinctive, and thus it differs him from the animals. Translated to the political vocabulary it means, that every power and rule should find its limits in the untouchable dignity of each individual. Power and authority in principle need control and limitations, and therefore must be based on the fact that they are accepted by those who are their subordinates, as the unlimited possibilities of use of dignity and freedom could hurt the individual. For each, a particular authority of state and power should serve the purpose of achieving and securing options and opportunities for all members of the community to lead free and dignified human life.

Freedom in fact is nothing abstract but concrete means of personal freedom (personal plan of life, freedom of religion and conscience. Freedom of choice of occupation, the free option of organizing private life, freely dispose of their own property, freedom and inviolability of the home, freedom of postal and telephone traffic. Freedom means insurance against arbitrary arrest and it is conducted to guarantee state legal proceedings before a court,

as well as control information, which the state collects about the individual. This includes the right to freedom of expression, freedom of the press, freedom of assembly and association, the right to equal participation in political education in the community. All rights of which are mentioned here only a few, must be a prerequisite of political education community. The core of these freedoms, the dignity of man is not given to each individual country, but its guarantee is recognized as an inalienable and inviolable right of each. To ensure the dignity of every human being is the meaning of a democratic constitution. What still needs to be noted is that the rights and freedoms of the individual cannot be spent absolutely; they must find their limits in their freedoms and rights of another individual. Only when it is faced with this kind of image of man, the will of democracy can be presented. Democratic can be called the community that recognize human dignity as the last and first values of the individual aims to provide all citizens in the same way ensure the freedom to develop their personality and is responsible for arranging their own lives, and create the social conditions that make it possible. Democracy is not the sum of the formal procedures prescribed, but its content is determined by the objective, the greatest possible measure of freedom, which is to achieve specific historical and social conditions, developing responsibility and social justice.

Democracy puts the existence of the individual above what in any case that cannot be placed on the ballot. Only on this basis of common beliefs is introduced the principle of majority rule on the regulation of political everyday life. Thus democracy is not a value-neutral process planning, but a political form that is directed towards developing value (Besson and Jasper, 1990). (<http://www.dadalos.org/Serbia/demokratie/Grundkurs1/material/lexikon.htm>)

It remains an open question how democracy is achieved and in later systems, and what does the term implies today. In the present circumstances of our democrats is autocrat of former totalitarian regime disguised in new attire, the so-called *People's Democracy*, which was actually the rule of the party bureaucracy. Today, our *young democracy* has already produced a strong enough *political elites* who are staging strong power and authority (violence) against political opponents and citizens.

Subscale of orientation democracy we constructed before the first multiparty elections and just proclaimed *rights and freedoms of man and citizen* in Bosnia and Herzegovina. This, of course, reduces its value with respect to contemporary circumstances *developed democracy*.

## 2. MATERIAL AND METHOD

In this paper are observed some socio-psychological sources of democratic orientation of adolescents in a time of social crisis. These are the following sources: gender, social background, general school achievement, educational attainment father, mother's level of education, material conditions, nationality, religion, origin of religion, membership in political parties and time perspective. The study was conducted on a sample of 252 students from the third and fourth year of high school in Mostar just before the start of war and 252 students of the third and fourth year of high school from Trebinje immediately after the end of the Civil War. The study has the following battery of instruments: a questionnaire on attitudes of

respondents and standardized scale democratic orientation Likert type. We constructed subscale of democratic value orientations just before the start of the Civil War from a somewhat broader definition of democracy as the rule of the people when democracy has again given birth in the territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Representative claims from these subscales are *permitted public gatherings and strikes; In political life is allowed to freely associating party*. For the purpose of data analysis are statistical procedures -  $2\chi$  test and contingency coefficient (S).

### 3. RESULTS

Tables 1 to 11 show the results of crossing certain socio-psychological indicators of democratic orientation of adolescents who have been calculated statistical parameters.

In Table 1 the results are crossed results of democratic orientation and gender of the respondents. No differences were found at a level of .05. Most of them are average democratically oriented, then those who are low, and finally those who are highly democratically oriented.

**Table 1.** Gender and democratic orientation

SEX		DEMOCRATIC ORIENTATION			Σ
		String	Median	High	
FEMALE	f	65	116	75	256
	%	25,4	45,3	29,3	100
MALE	f	72	106	70	248
	%	29,00	42,70	28,20	100
Σ		137	222	145	504

$2\chi = 0.85$ ;  $C = 0.04$ ;  $df = 2$ ;  $p = .65$ , the difference was statistically significant at the .05.

Table 2 shows the relation between social origin and democratic orientation. It is evident that these two variables are in statistically significant correlation.

**Table 2.** The social origins and democratic orientation

SOCIAL-BACKGROUND		DEMOCRATIC ORIENTATION			Σ
		String	Median	High	
Lower status	f	96	178	102	376
	%	25,50	47,30	27,10	100
Higher status	f	41	44	43	128
	%	32,00	34,40	33,60	100
Σ		137	222	145	504

$2\chi = 6.51$ ;  $C = 0.11$ ;  $df = 2$ ;  $p = .03$ , the difference is statistically significant at the .05.

Table 3 shows the ratio of general school success and democratic orientation of adolescents. And these two variables are in statistically significant correlation.

**Table 3.** The overall school success and democratic orientation

GENERAL TRAINING SUCCESS		DEMOCRATIC ORIENTATION			Σ
		String	Median	High	
Above average	f	28	22	19	69
	%	40,60	31,90	27,50	100
Average and under average	f	109	200	126	435
	%	25,10	46,00	29,00	100
Σ		137	222	145	504

$2\chi = 8.00$ ;  $C = 0.12$ ;  $df = 2$ ;  $p = .01$ , the difference is statistically significant at the .05.

The following tables (4, 5 and 6) in which they are placed in relation father's level of education, level of education of mothers and material conditions, on the one hand, and democratic orientation, on the other hand, no significant correlation.

**Table 4.** Educational attainment father and democratic orientation

FATHERS EDUCATION		DEMOCRATIC ORIENTATION			Σ
		String	Median	High	
Basic	f	19	33	19	71
	%	26,80	46,50	26,80	100
Median	f	58	121	69	248
	%	23,40	48,80	27,80	100
High	f	33	37	23	93
	%	35,50	39,80	24,70	100
Higher and scientific Degree	f	27	31	34	92
	%	29,30	33,70	37,00	100
Σ		137	222	145	504

$2\chi = 10.66$ ;  $C = 0.14$ ;  $df = 6$ ;  $p = .09$ , the difference was statistically significant at the .05.

**Table 5.** Educational attainment of mother and democratic orientation

MOTHERS EDUCATION		DEMOCRATIC ORIENTATION			Σ
		String	Median	High	
Basic	f	41	74	44	159
	%	25,80	46,50	27,70	100
Median	f	65	111	72	248
	%	26,20	44,80	29,00	100
Higher and scientific Degree	f	31	37	29	97
	%	32,00	38,10	29,90	100
Σ		137	222	145	504

$2\chi = 2.14$ ;  $C = 0.06$ ;  $df = 4$ ;  $p = .70$ , the difference was statistically significant at the .05.

**Table 6. Material conditions and democratic orientation**

PHYSICAL REQUIREMENTS		DEMOCRATIC ORIENTATION			Σ
		String	Median	High	
Very good	f	38	71	46	155
	%	24,50	45,80	29,70	100
Good	f	72	107	76	255
	%	28,20	42,00	29,80	100
Weak	f	27	44	23	94
	%	28,70	46,80	24,50	100
Σ		137	222	145	504

$2\chi = 1.85$ ;  $C = 0.06$ ;  $df = 4$ ;  $p = .76$ , the difference was statistically significant at the .05.

Table No. 7 shows a significant relationship between the national origin of adolescents and democratic orientation

**Table 7. Ethnicity and democratic orientatio**

ETHNICITY		DEMOCRATIC ORIENTATION			Σ
		String	Median	High	
Muslim	f	11	56	27	94
	%	11,70	59,60	28,70	100
Serb	f	96	119	84	299
	%	32,10	39,80	28,10	100
Croat	f	15	36	19	70
	%	21,40	51,40	27,10	100
Yugoslav	f	15	11	15	41
	%	36,60	26,80	36,60	100
Σ		137	222	145	504

$2\chi = 24.11$   $C = 0.21$ ;  $df = 6$ ;  $p = .00$ , the difference is statistically significant at the .01.

Table 8 does not show not significant associations between religion (religious affiliation) and democratic.

**Table 8. Religion and democratic orientation**

RELIGION		DEMOCRATIC ORIENTATION			Σ
		String	Median	High	
I m not a believer	f	19	27	22	68
	%	27,90	39,70	32,40	100
Islamic	f	13	43	23	79
	%	16,50	54,40	29,10	100
Orthodox	f	90	115	79	284
	%	31,70	40,50	27,80	100
Catholic	f	15	37	21	73
	%	20,50	50,70	28,80	100
Σ		137	222	145	504

$2\chi = 10.82$ ;  $C = 0.14$ ;  $df = 6$ ;  $p = .09$ , the difference was statistically significant at the .05.

Table 9 shows the mixture between religiosity of sources (when you influenced to believe in God?) and democratic orientation. There was no significant correlation.

**Table 9.** Source of religion and democratic orientation

SOURCE OF RELIGION		DEMOCRATIC ORIENTATION			Σ
		String	Median	High	
Family	f	35	61	27	123
	%	28,50	49,60	22,00	100
Religious institutes	f	9	12	9	30
	%	30,00	40,00	30,00	100
I have learned	f	37	75	61	173
	%	21,40	43,40	35,30	100
Man inherits the belief	f	36	43	24	103
	%	35,00	41,70	23,30	100
I am not a believer	f	20	31	24	75
	%	26,70	41,30	32,00	100
Σ		137	222	145	504

$2\chi = 11.71$ ;  $C = 0.15$ ;  $df = 8$ ;  $p = .16$ , the difference was statistically significant at the .05.

Table 10 shows the crossing results between the variables in the political parties and democratic orientation. There was no significant correlation between these variables.

**Table 10.** Membership in political parties and democratic orientation

MEMBERSHIP IN POLITICAL STR.		DEMOCRATIC ORIENTATION			Σ
		Low	Median	High	
Yes	f	6	21	9	36
	%	16,70	58,30	25,00	100
No	f	119	189	131	439
	%	27,10	43,10	29,80	100
I dont want to reply	f	12	12	5	29
	%	41,40	41,40	17,20	100
Σ		137	222	145	504

$2\chi = 7.12$ ;  $C = 0.11$ ;  $df = 4$ ;  $p = .12$ , the difference was statistically significant at 0.5.

Table 11 shows the results of crossing variables named "time perspective" (respondents before the war, the respondents after the war) and democratic. Among these variables we found significant correlation.

**Table 11.** Time perspective and democratic orientation

WEATHER OUTLOOK		DEMOCRATIC ORIENTATION			$\Sigma$
		String	Median	High	
Before the war	f	52	120	80	252
	%	20,60	47,60	31,70	100
After the war	f	85	102	65	252
	%	33,70	40,50	25,80	100
$\Sigma$		137	222	145	504

$2\chi = 10,96$ ;  $C = 0,14$ ;  $df = 2$ ;  $p = .00$ , the difference is statistically significant at the .01.

Table 12 shows the results of a transparent connection between the observed empirical indicators of socio-democratic orientation and adolescents. It is evident that the social origin, nationality, religion, religiosity source and time perspective of the respondents are significantly correlated with democratic orientation, while other variables did not show such a tendency.

**Table 12.** Socio-experiential indicators and democratic orientation

SOCIO-EXPERIENTIAL INDICATORS	DEMOCRATIC ORIENTATION			
	df	$\chi^2$	C	p
Sex	2	0,85	0,04	.65
Social background	2	6,51	0,11	<b>.03</b>
The overall school success	2	8,00	0,12	<b>.05</b>
Educational attainment father	6	10,66	0,14	.09
Educational level of mother	4	2,14	0,06	.70
Material conditions	4	1,85	0,06	.76
Nationality	6	24,11	0,21	<b>.00</b>
Religion	6	10,82	0,14	.09
Source religiosity	8	11,71	0,15	.16
Membership in polit. page.	4	7,12	0,11	.12
Time perspective	2	10,96	0,14	<b>.00</b>

#### 4. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Eleven observed sources of democratic orientation among the adolescents in a time of social crisis showed that these four states are significantly correlated with democratic orientation, while the other seven did not show such a tendency. Social background of the respondents is significantly correlated with democratic orientation. Respondents of lower social status are significantly higher and medium democratically oriented (74.4%) compared to those who belong

to a higher social status (68.0%). The overall success in school subjects was also significantly correlated with democratic orientation. Among those who have average and below-average general success in school are many democratically oriented (75.0%) compared to those with above-average general school success (69.4%). An interesting finding concerning the relationship of ethnicity and democratic orientation of the respondents are discovered. Mostly high and medium democratically oriented are Muslims (88.3%), followed by Croats (78.5%), Serbs (67.9%) and to the (un) expected last place are Yugoslavs (63.4%). Opposites are visible by comparing these results with the results of autocratic orientation (Cokorilo, 2010). Only the Serbs are at the first place concerning the autocracy and at last concerning the democracy. Such consistency is visible among the Croats who were in both orientations in third place, even not for Muslims who are autocracies when it comes to the second, and when it comes to democracy in the first place, even not with the Yugoslavs who are in both orientations in fourth place. The time is also shown as a significant factor in democratic orientation. Before the many were higher and medium democratically oriented (79.3%), compared to the postwar situation (66.3%). Here, of course should concern the fact that in the postwar sample are only members of Serbian nationality. However, we will not do the mistake if we claim that war affects the "reduction" of democracy considering that many decisions must be made in a manner that is not democratic in order to more efficient functioning of the military-police system based on hierarchical subordination-autocratic. We believe that the democratic orientation should be viewed differently with respect to the observed two times. In times of crisis we should mention the need of people to reduce the democratic orientation in terms of protecting people whose vital social and individual interests are threatened. In a stable weather it is necessary to build critical awareness and fiercely fight for democratic rights at all levels of social organization, especially in political organizing, organizing in small social groups (family, school, corporate, sports groups, etc.). It remains an open question what is the outcome of this struggle despite the fact that the democratic orientation has a long-term tradition of civilization from ancient times until today. It was created as a result of man's desire to ensure a dignified life for the inevitable social community, as opposed to parallel thirst off individuals or groups for absolute and lasting domination, primarily in the political sphere and other areas of human organization.

Finally, Table 12 summarizes the results of the interconnectedness of the observed socio-primeval sources, on the one hand and democratic orientation of adolescents, on the other hand. We should also mention once again the empirical facts that show that the democratic orientation is poorly widespread among Serbs in comparison with Muslims and Croats. Add to this widespread autocratic orientation of the Serbian ethnicity (Cokorilo, 2010), that's enough reason for interpreting the collective troubles that accompany this nation for centuries. Sources and anti-democratic orientation of pro autocratic Serbs seems to lie primarily in the socio-historical circumstances: five centuries of tyranny and slavery to the Turks, long-lasting liberation and world wars, long totalitarian political regimes and traditional patriarchal family relations. Each of these individually and in joint collaboration affects the socialization of young people who are not even aware of how much this traditional perspective obscures the democratic orientation in which today can be emotionally and intellectually stronger and more durable to be stared at.

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