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## **PERSONAL VIEW OF “THROUGH THE WINDOW: KINSHIP & ELOPEMENT IN BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA” BY KEITH DOUBT**

**Sociology of Bosnia and Herzegovina** has always been challenging topic, not only because of a recent war history that her citizens have still considered as painful issue but also for its cultural background. It seems that, placed at the heart of Balkan, gathering a bit of its neighbors' habits, values, life philosophy, belonging to everybody but still staying specifically alone although surrounded by others, Bosnia and Herzegovina represents umbilical string to understanding social, cultural and historical streams at the Region.

The book “**Through the Window: Kinship & Elopement in Bosnia-Herzegovina**” by **Keith Doubt - sociologist, teacher, writer and friend of Bosnia and Herzegovina** – is additional contribution to more comprehensive understanding of the country. The Book has been published by Central European University Press (Budapest – New York, 2014) and promoted at International University of Sarajevo in November 2014. Let me introduce a personal view of the book from the perspective of adult education teacher and psychologist.

From the perspective of a local person who reads Keith Doubt's books, I can say that his devotion to B&H reality have never been hypocritical. Although always considered as a friend of the country, he provides **sharp observations and conclusions** that have not been gentle. Doubt's review has brought a new light to topics which were often difficult and often avoided in B&H discussion. Let me remind a potential reader that he wrote a book “Sociology after Bosnia” at the time when it was extremely difficult to get out from the picture of war-suffering where those who suffered directly in a small country often were not capable to consider the suffering of the others - wide world. Therefore the author put some “logos” in usual stories on B&H giving **a new perspective of looking at the reality**.

I consider the new Doubt's book as the reading with the same effect. From the very beginning, **the book title** provides understanding that a window is a space through which one can see something from a space inside as well as

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from an outside world. Window gives the possibility to look at reality out of one's small inner being, it gives the opportunity for widening perspectives, recognition of new challenges and coping with choices.

Coming from the field of adult education, dealing with the problem of adolescents' maturity for example, I can just say that windows are extremely important point for **entering the world of adulthood**. Combining this with an issue of decision making and responsibility in gender context one can see a new educational path in human development.

At the same time a window is "a whole" through which one can jump out and run-away for at least two reasons: escape or fun. No matter on purpose the one should be extremely careful in taking this action because it can be hurting. In this dangerous situation a person needs help. It is always much easier to survive in new circumstances having a company or support. When we are children this support indubitably comes from our kinship but the process of personal growth cannot be completed if we are not ready for escape from our **orientation family to the new space of procreation**. Peers are extremely important in this process. Speaking about elopement the author touches "escape with somebody" as "run-away from something" but with a compensation of **love and/or belonging as a basic human need**.

Therefore the author gives **new space for an old discussion with adolescents in schools or high schools/universities as well as with parents and teachers on taboos of growing up**, breaking walls of tradition and overcome personal limitations. Using a **biography in research methodology approach** he let us possibility to overcome dichotomies "good-bad" in evaluation of human behavior, transferring them to polarities which are acceptable in spite of differences.

Another challenging issue for me was **the issue of language itself**. This is not just a comparative study on anthropological phenomena such as elopement, kinship, friendship or "best-man-ship/made-of-honor-ship" but it provides thoughts on words meaning and meta-meaning. While in **Anglo-Saxon culture/language** we are getting married both sides ("to marry" also could have the meaning of "being surprised" what can further mean "to have fun together" or "to be interesting and surprising to each other" no matter on male-female identity), in **Slavic culture/language** a bride would "give" herself to this mutual life ("udala se") while the groom would "take on" a wife as a coat (for example: "obuci se" and "oženi se"). Although etymologists and linguists most probably would not take this direction in their discussions, **the art of teaching gives additional possibility to dig through the personal**

**meanings**, tracking metaphors which can help young people feel their growing with all senses.

The third thought I have had while I was reading this book has more broad perspective where **phenomenon as elopement overcomes personal borders and becomes a national way of coping**. If historically Balkan was the place of different local and foreign rulers, sultans and empires fighting for power, probably **a girl elopement can be considered as a metaphor for national elopement** in our everyday political reality. Women's economic independence today probably lessened elopements in traditional sense of escape from parents to another family connected with personal choice, but we can always ask ourselves about our country/B&H society independency and maturity in making choices and decisions in global world today. Therefore I see this book as practical and interesting reading in **political socialization** process in B&H.

Absolutely sure that these **three issues are not the only which can be recognized in the book** that has been set in motion by pushing it into the readers' stream I would like to thank the author for giving us possibility to feel less strange in our own country by traveling with him through his new title.