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## External Strategies for Post-Conflict Democratization: Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, and Macedonia

### *Introduction*

Can countries emerge from civil wars as democracies? And, if they can, to what extent and by what means can external actors support this transition? A research project on post-war democratization being hosted by the Free University of Berlin (FUB) is investigating these questions.<sup>1</sup> It focuses on post-conflict environments and examines how external actors can support or hamper democratization. The researchers relied on a qualitative comparative approach, using evidence from nine case studies.<sup>2</sup> This contribution provides an overview of the findings of all nine cases, with a focus on the three South-eastern European states of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, and Macedonia. Compared to the other six cases, these stand out by the fact that two of them (Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo) have hosted very large peace missions of long duration, and all three are in the direct neighbourhood of the European Union. We will, throughout the text, use evidence mainly from those three cases and refer to the overall results from the nine cases to put them into context.

Analyses of these case studies reveals that external democracy promotion in post-conflict states is rarely effective. Three common strategies pursued by external actors were examined, none of which was found to have an observable impact on democratization per se. The three strategies are: peace missions, democratization aid, and neighbourhood effects. While large-scale peace missions are successful at guaranteeing security, they tend to produce hybrid regimes rather than functioning democracies.<sup>3</sup> Similarly, the massive amounts of democratization aid given by bilateral and multilateral donors contribute to building states' capacities, but not democracy. The only strategy that does seem to make a difference in terms of democratization – if only in the South-eastern European states – is that of “neighbourhood effects”, specifically in relation to the prospect of EU integration. Our research finds that the most important factor in explaining successful post-conflict democratization is not the level of external assistance but the internal demand for democracy.

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1 The project website can be found at: <http://aix1.uottawa.ca/~czurcher/czurcher/Transitions.html>.

2 Macedonia, Bosnia, Kosovo, Mozambique, Namibia, Rwanda, Afghanistan, Tajikistan, and Timor-Leste. The project has since gone on to also study Haiti, but the results of that research have not been taken into account here.

3 Cf. Larry Diamond, Thinking about Hybrid Regimes. Elections Without Democracy, in: *Journal of Democracy* 2/2002, pp. 21-35.

### *The Challenges of Post-War Democratic Transition*

Promoting democracy in post-conflict states is not an easy task. Firstly, the process of democratization itself is inherently conflictual: The opening of the domestic political space in the early stages of a democratic transition intensifies the competition between incumbent elites and challengers, while viable mechanisms to regulate political competition are not yet in place. In light of such arguments, scholars focusing on the relationship between war and democracy have argued that the process of democratization itself increases the risk of interstate and civil wars.<sup>4</sup>

Secondly, it is unclear whether external actors can initiate or steer domestic democratization processes, and, if so, how. The means they have used to attempt do so range from classic diplomacy, via foreign aid (with or without political conditionalities), to various forms of direct intervention.<sup>5</sup> But from the perspective of those studying transitions from authoritarianism towards democracy, these transitions are clearly internal processes with not much of a role for external actors and influences.<sup>6</sup>

Thirdly, democratization is even more problematic in countries emerging from civil war. Post-conflict settings may offer special opportunities for democratization where the conflict has broken up vested interests and ended with a change of leadership or altered elite preferences.<sup>7</sup> But post-conflict states usually lack the robust institutional mechanisms necessary to prevent electoral competition from turning into violent competition.<sup>8</sup> Societies emerging from civil war are also often highly polarized and divided, which risks turning elections – one of the major elements of democracy – into a winner-takes-all contest and a competition for the ownership of the state.<sup>9</sup>

4 Cf. Edward D. Mansfield/Jack Snyder, Democratization and the Danger of War, in: *International Security* 1/1995, pp. 5-38; Edward D. Mansfield/Jack Snyder, Democratization and the Danger of War, in: Michael E. Brown (ed.), *Debating the Democratic Peace*, Cambridge, MA, 1996, pp. 301-335; Edward Mansfield/Jack Snyder, Democratic Transitions, Institutional Strength, and War, in: *International Organization* 2/2002, pp. 297-337; Jack Snyder, *From Voting to Violence. Democratization and Nationalist Conflict*, New York 2000; Paul Collier, *Wars, Guns, and Votes: Democracy in Dangerous Places*, New York 2009; Havard Hegre/Tanja Ellingsen/Scott Gates/Nils Peter Gleditsch, Toward a Democratic Peace? Democracy, Political Change, and Civil War, 1816-1992, in: *American Political Science Review* 1/2001, pp. 33-48.

5 Cf. Peter Schraeder, The State of the Art in International Democracy Promotion: Results of Joint European-North American Research Network, in: *Democratization* 2/2003, pp. 21-44.

6 Cf. Charles T. Call/Susan E. Cook, On Democratization and Peacebuilding, in: *Global Governance* 2/2003, pp. 233-246; Guillermo O'Donnell/Philippe C. Schmitter, *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule*, Baltimore 1986; Schraeder, cited above (Note 5).

7 Cf. Lisa Chauvet/David Collier, What Constrains Turnarounds in Fragile States? in: Marianne Beisheim/Gunnar Falke Schuppert (eds), *Staatszerfall und Governance* [State Failure and Governance], Baden-Baden, 2007, pp. 223-235.

8 Cf. Roland Paris, *At War's End. Building Peace after Civil Conflict*, Cambridge 2004.

9 Cf. Timothy D. Sisk/Carnegie Commission on Preventing Deadly Conflict, *Power Sharing and International Mediation in Ethnic Conflicts*, Washington, D.C., 1996; Arend Lijphart, *The Politics of Accommodation: Pluralism and Democracy in the Netherlands*, Berkeley 1975, Philip G. Roeder/Donald Rothchild, *Sustainable Peace. Power and Dem-*

And finally, since stability and democracy are sometimes conflicting goals, external democracy promoters are faced with a range of difficult choices if they wish to introduce the latter without risking the renewed outbreak of violent conflict.<sup>10</sup> These include the dilemma of choosing between holding early elections – which might foster instability – and postponing elections – which may hamper the legitimacy of the regime – and the need to balance the desire for efficacy with an acknowledgement that too much international pressure as opposed to full local ownership actually undermines the legitimacy of the very institutions international actors are building.<sup>11</sup>

In any case, the record of democratization after civil war is modest at best. Looking at the overall population of countries that have experienced a civil war since the end of the Second World War and using the Polity IV index as a measurement of democracy, one finds that most war-affected countries do not emerge from war as democracies.<sup>12</sup> Polity scores five years after the end of a civil war are, on average, some 3.1 points higher than five-year averages before the war, but these gains in democracy turn out to be temporary and partly driven by the floor effect of a few outlier cases with very low pre-war democracy scores. When comparing ten-year averages before and after a civil war, one finds that average post-conflict polity scores plunge back to their levels ten years before the war (see Figure 1).

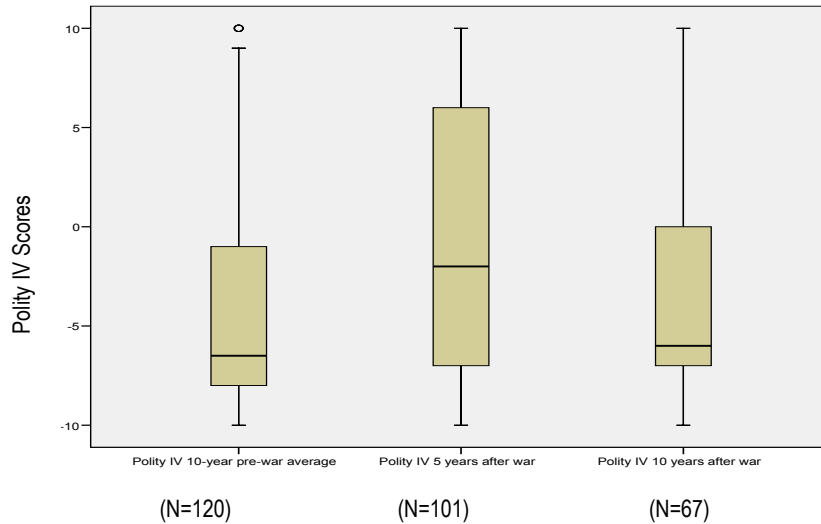
The findings of the post-war democratization project largely confirm these broad trends. While the large variance among the nine cases in terms of democratic qualities urges caution against too broad generalizations, some similarities can be identified: The typical post-war state is characterized by low participation, little or no political competition, weakly institutionalized rule of law, a high dependence on external actors, and a medium to low level of democracy in general. Post-war transition states create a façade of democratic structures, but rarely is there democratic substance behind the appearance. The table below classifies the case studies according to the various indicators of democratic and economic performance (see Table 1). Looking specifically at the three South-eastern European countries, we find that Macedonia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Kosovo are relatively stable five years after the start of the peacebuilding mission, only Macedonia displays a very high Polity IV score; all three are rated as partly free by Freedom House.

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*ocracy after Civil Wars*, Ithaca, NY, 2005; Sid Noel (ed.), *From Power Sharing to Democracy. Post-Conflict Institutions in Ethnically Divided Societies*, Montreal 2005.

- 10 Cf. Anna Jarstad/Timothy D. Sisk, *From War to Democracy: Dilemmas of Peacebuilding*, Cambridge 2008; Paris, cited above (Note 8); Roland Paris, Understanding the “coordination problem” in postwar statebuilding, in: Roland Paris/Timothy D. Sisk (eds), *The Dilemmas of Statebuilding. Confronting the Contradictions of Postwar Peace Operations*, New York 2008, pp. 53-78; Timothy D. Sisk/Andrew Reynolds, *Elections and Conflict Management in Africa*, Washington, DC, 1998.
- 11 Cf. Larry Diamond, Promoting Democracy in Post-Conflict and Failed States: Lessons and Challenges, in: *Taiwan Journal of Democracy* 2/2006, pp. 93-116.
- 12 All data is taken from Michael W. Doyle/Nicholas Sambanis, International Peacebuilding: A Theoretical and Quantitative Analysis, in: *American Political Science Review* 4/2000, pp. 779-801.

Figure 1: Democracy Levels of Conflict Cases before and after the War



What explains the modest outcomes of post-war democratization efforts? External actors have considerable means at their disposal for engaging in post-conflict states: They deploy troops to guarantee stability and civilian staff to assist in reconstruction and institution building, and they bring in financial aid for emergency assistance, for development, and also specifically for democratization. Neighbouring states can also exert influence in many ways, including by offering the prospect of regional integration.

In what follows, the article will examine each of these three strategies in detail and explain why they failed to produce the desired outcome. The last section will argue that the local demand for democracy is more conducive to post-conflict democratization than any external efforts per se.

Table 1: Classification of Cases under Study

	Namibia	Macedonia	Timor-Leste	Mozambique	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Afghanistan	Kosovo	Tajikistan	Rwanda
Time period – five years after intervention start	1989-1993	2001-2005	1999-2003	1992-1996	1996-2000	2002-2006	1999-2003	1997-2001 <sup>1</sup>	1993-1997
Freedom in the World score <sup>2</sup>	2.5	3	3	3.5	4.5	5	5	6	6.5
Polity IV score <sup>3</sup>	6	9	6	6	-66 (foreign interruption)	-66 (foreign interruption)	no data	-1	-6
Stability <sup>4</sup>	1	2	3	2	2	5	3	2	4
Real GDP per capita, year of intervention start <sup>5</sup>	2,595	1,941	404	226	1,039	234	743	195	442
Peacekeeping troops, peak strength <sup>6</sup>	4,439	3,500	6,281	6,625	54,000	33,250	40,000	25,636 <sup>7</sup>	5,200
Peacekeeping troops per 1000 inhabitants	3.0	1.7	7.2	0.5	15.5	2.7	21.1	4.0	0.9
Intrusiveness of intervention <sup>8</sup>	Low	Low	High	Low	High	High	High	Low	Low
Aid per capita <sup>9</sup>	143	122	168	77	312	76	271	4 <sup>10</sup>	86
Democracy aid <sup>8</sup>	No data	44	66	No data	7	No data	52	1	3
	Democratic				Hybrid			Autocratic	

- 1 The UN Mission in Tajikistan (UNMOT) started in December 1994, and there was a substantial number of CIS peacekeeping forces in the country. However, substantial peacebuilding activities took off only after a peace agreement had been signed in June 1997.
- 2 Freedom in the World; measured in the fifth year after intervention start; <http://www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=25&year=2008>.
- 3 Polity IV Annual Time-Series 1800-2007; measured in the fifth year after the intervention start; Integrated Network for Societal Conflict Research at <http://www.systemicpeace.org/inscr/inscr.htm>.
- 4 Scale from 1 (stable) to 5 (relapse into war); combined score based on cases study assessments, UCDP conflict intensity levels, COSIMO conflict intensity scores, and the Political Terror Scale; measured in the fifth year after the start of intervention.
- 5 Data from the UN Statistics Division, National Accounts Main Aggregates Database. The data provided there is in current prices in US\$. We converted it to 2006 constant US\$ for comparability with the aid data.
- 6 Data provided by the case study authors.
- 7 CIS/PKF. UNMOT: only observers.
- 8 Data taken from the case studies. "Intrusiveness" is a composite variable with dichotomous values. It is based on the formal and informal competencies that the external actors took on in executing their mandate, such as whether they assumed some or most legislative power for a certain time, whether they decisively shaped the new constitution and/or the legal codex, whether they assumed some or most of the executive powers, whether they decisively shaped economic policies, and whether they participated in executive policing.
- 9 Data provided by the case study authors; five year post-war averages; in 2006 constant US\$ per capita.
- 10 Aid data for Tajikistan refers to the nine main donors only.

*The Impact of Peacebuilding*

The results of our research suggest that peacebuilding missions generally do not achieve the kind of societal change that would transform a post-conflict state into a model democracy. Although it can be shown that peace missions have become bigger, longer lasting, and more expensive over the last twenty years, the policy assumption that more is always better seems not to be warranted.<sup>13</sup> While robust and heavy-footprint peace missions are successful at guaranteeing security and preventing a relapse into war, the nine case studies reveal that bigger missions do not in fact lead to more democracy, but most often produce hybrid regimes.

Table 2: *Outcome and Level of External Support*

	Stable and democratic (Polity IV score 6 or higher)	Stable and undemocratic	Unstable and undemocratic
High external support	East Timor	Bosnia and Herzegovina Kosovo	Afghanistan
Low external support	Namibia Macedonia Mozambique	Tajikistan Rwanda	

Three of the four most democratic post-war polities – Namibia, Macedonia, and Mozambique – received light-footprint missions (the mission in Timor-Leste was substantially more intrusive; see Table 2 above). These cases show that targeted, tailor-made support by a moderate peacebuilding mission can provide the extra fuel needed to keep a peace process going. This, however, seems to be largely independent of the policies pursued by the peacebuilders, but rather to depend on internal factors. In Macedonia, for instance, the peacebuilders never assumed executive power. The task of the military missions and later European police forces was to monitor, mentor, and advise Macedonian state institutions, and domestic sovereignty was never suspended. However, the Ohrid Framework Agreement and EU accession process provided a stringent framework for reforming Macedonian state institutions. NATO, the OSCE, and the EU facilitated and monitored the implementation of the Ohrid Framework Agreement. Because its implementation

13 Cf. Nora Roehner, *Mission Intrusiveness and Democratic Outcomes*. APSA 2009 Toronto Meeting Paper, Toronto 2009; available at: [http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract\\_id=1451595](http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=1451595).

effectively became linked to the fulfilment of the Copenhagen Criteria, as required for EU accession, the incentives for implementing the agreement were high. It should also be noted that democratic structures were already in place in Macedonia before the conflict, and the Ohrid Agreement merely made them more inclusive.

Very comprehensive, heavy-footprint missions were deployed in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Office of the High Representative (OHR) exercised executive and legislative powers. 54,000 troops supported the mission, and an estimated 22 billion US dollars had been spent by 2000.<sup>14</sup> In Kosovo, UNMIK took on the complete range of state functions, the mission was supported by 50,000 troops, and an estimated three billion US dollars in official development assistance (ODA) was spent.<sup>15</sup> The track record of these highly intrusive, high-cost missions is mixed. With the exception of Afghanistan, the large missions in our sample brought an end to large-scale violence, although instances of small-scale violence in Kosovo prompted the peacebuilders to adjust their agenda. But despite these achievements with regard to security, none of these states is a self-sustaining liberal democracy. In both Kosovo and Bosnia and Herzegovina, the massive engagement of the international community over many years may have pushed the countries from violent conflict back to stability, but the regimes seem to be locked in hybridity, because the international community has assumed administrative control, leaving little space for further democratization. Furthermore, “ethnicized” politics are an obstacle to progress, as are corruption, a weak legislature, and organized crime.

The case studies also reveal that peacebuilders are rarely prepared to use the considerable leverage they have, because they are faced with a trade-off between stability and democracy. Peacebuilders are often willing to compromise on their noble goals and settle for an outcome that leaves the immediate post-war status quo largely intact. This may perpetuate a non-democratic mode of governance.<sup>16</sup> They do this because they have to produce a secure and stable environment and because they are highly dependent on domestic actors whose co-operation is essential for the smooth and stable implementation of the many peacebuilding projects. This explains why peacebuilders embark upon peacebuilding missions with noble visions of liberal, multiethnic, and democratic societies but may quickly be willing to compromise and settle for far less ambitious goals. In Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo, the peacebuilders’ vision of a democratic and multiethnic polity

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14 Cf. Kristie Evenson, Bosnia and Herzegovina: Statebuilding and Democratization in the Time of Ethnic-Politics and International Oversight, in: *Taiwan Journal of Democracy* 1/2009, pp. 127-162; available at: <http://www.tfd.org.tw/docs/dj0501/093-126-Kristie D. Evenson.pdf>.

15 Cf. Jens Narten, Assessing Kosovo’s Postwar Democratization: Between External Imposition and Self-Government, in: *Taiwan Journal of Democracy* 1/2009, pp. 127-162; available at: <http://www.tfd.org.tw/docs/dj0501/127-162-Jens Narten.pdf>.

16 Cf. Michael Barnett/Christoph Zürcher, The peacebuilders contract. How external statebuilding reinforces weak statehood, in: Paris/Sisk, cited above (Note 10), pp. 23-52.

soon proved to be unfeasible. The tremendous resources that they brought to Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo were not enough to overcome the main obstacle to a democratic peace: ethnic politics. The ethnic parties in Bosnia and Herzegovina continued to treat their territory as a fiefdom and were unwilling to defer authority to the central government. In Kosovo, the riots of March 2004 prompted the international community to grant Kosovo independence, thereby abandoning the “standards before status” doctrine, which foresaw that Kosovo would receive more autonomy as it progressed in providing good governance. In both countries, the peacebuilders continue to support de facto ethnic separation.

The case studies thus suggest that peacebuilders seem not to be successful at pushing the regimes towards moderate or high levels of democracy, even with large and intrusive peace missions. The barriers posed by external tutelage and the limited willingness of the interveners to use their leverage effectively when faced with domestic opposition appear to account for this outcome. This was certainly the case in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo. Macedonia serves as a good example of a modest and targeted peace mission that provided additional support for a democratization process that was already ongoing.

### *Democratization Aid*

Similarly to peace missions, foreign aid does not seem to have a large impact on democratization. Aid appears to be important for building state capacities, but one cannot detect a direct effect on democratization in the nine case studies, and Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, and Macedonia are no exception in that respect. Additionally, despite the fact that many countries are highly aid dependent, democratic conditionality is rarely applied. In most of the nine cases that the project investigated, aid accounted for around 30 per cent or more of gross national income (GNI) in at least the first years following the conflict.<sup>17</sup> In most cases, however, this was not used by donors to tie aid to democratic reforms.

Figures 2 and 3 below provide an overview of average aid levels five years after each conflict ended, one based on data gathered by the project and the second on OECD-DAC data for comparison.<sup>18</sup>

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17 Cf. Rachel Hayman/Carrie Manning, *Fostering Stability or Democracy? Aid for democracy promotion in post-conflict countries*. Paper prepared for the American Political Studies Association Annual Meeting, Toronto, 2009; available at: [http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract\\_id=1451594](http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=1451594). These numbers are based on the World Bank Development Indicators (WDI).

18 The tables present the five-year averages of external aid. The data is taken from the case studies. The UN Mission in Tajikistan (UNMOT) opened in December 1994. However, substantive peacebuilding activities took off only after a peace agreement had been signed in June 1997. For that mission, therefore, 1997 was chosen as the starting year. All aid data is in 2007 constant U.S. dollars. Differences compared to the data presented in previ-



Of the nine cases, overall aid levels were highest in Bosnia and Herzegovina, East Timor<sup>19</sup> and Kosovo. The amount of aid earmarked for democratization has typically not been large, although the share of democracy aid has been growing over time – a trend that might be driven more by fashions within the development community rather than proven effectiveness.

Fifteen years after the intervention, Bosnia and Herzegovina is a hybrid regime despite the massive amounts of aid spent. Most resources were initially focused on reconstruction, humanitarian aid, and reviving the economy. Only later did the focus shift to institution building, and from there to aid for democratization. The level of democracy aid per capita was moderate until 2003 (between seven and 14 US dollars in most years). While overall aid decreased, democracy aid increased drastically after 2002 to 22 US dollars per capita in 2003, 36 dollars in 2004, and 28 in 2005.<sup>20</sup> Bosnia and Herzegovina is the only case in which aid conditionality was a key component of the international community's policies: Some aid programmes were made conditional on compliance with the Dayton Agreement, while, most significantly, the US made any international financial institution (IFI) decisions dependent on cooperation with the process of war crimes prosecution. Overall, conditionality has been most effective as a punitive rather than an incentivizing tool.

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ous versions are due to changes in the available OECD data, and the conversion of all data from 2006 to 2007 constant U.S. Dollars. Table 1 refers to data collected by the case study authors. Here, data for Mozambique refers only to the years from 1992-1994. Data on democracy aid for Rwanda refers only to the years from 1995-1997. Aid data for Tajikistan refers to the nine main donors only. Data for Timor-Leste refers to 2000-2003, and data for that country for the years 2000-2002 includes only funds channelled via the UN administration. Table 2 reports data provided by the Aid Activity database of the OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC), which is available at: [http://www.oecd.org/document/0/0,2340,en\\_2649\\_34447\\_37679488\\_1\\_1\\_1\\_1,00.html](http://www.oecd.org/document/0/0,2340,en_2649_34447_37679488_1_1_1_1,00.html). No DAC data is available for years prior to 1995. For Mozambique, therefore, data refers only to the years 1995 and 1996, and for Rwanda to 1995-1997. For both, aid figures per capita are based on population data provided by the World Population Prospects, 2008 Revision, Population Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat; available at: <http://esa.un.org/unpp>. Democracy aid includes the following sub-categories: 1) Elections and the political process, 2) Rule of law, accountability, anti-corruption, human rights, and minority rights, 3) Institutional infrastructure, 4) Civil society, media, civic education, empowerment, and 5) Civil-military relations, disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR), security sector reform. Other categories refers to any aid that was not classified by the project as either emergency aid or democracy aid.

19 The aid data collected on East Timor by the project unfortunately includes only funds channelled via the UN administration for 2000-2002. The overall amount is thus likely to be somewhat higher.

20 This and the following paragraphs refer to the aid data collected by the project.

Figure 2. Aid per capita, average for the first five years after conflict, project data

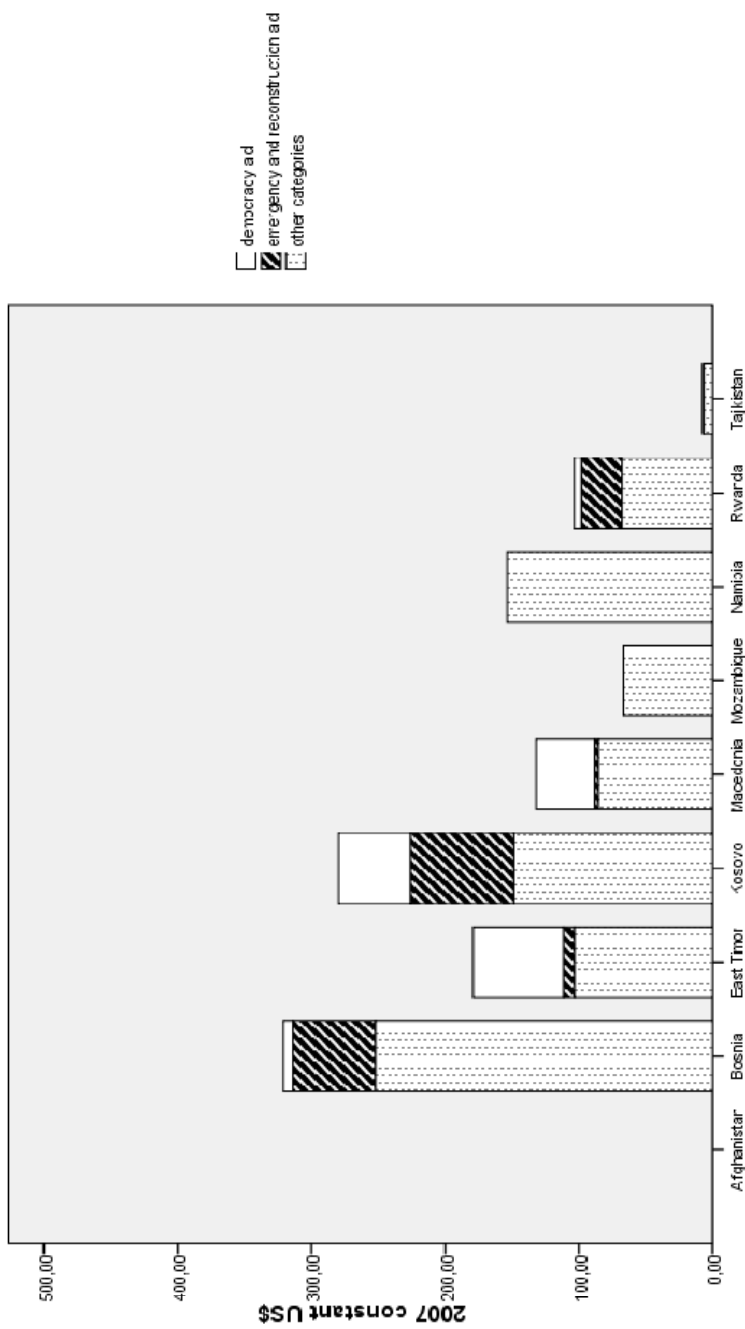
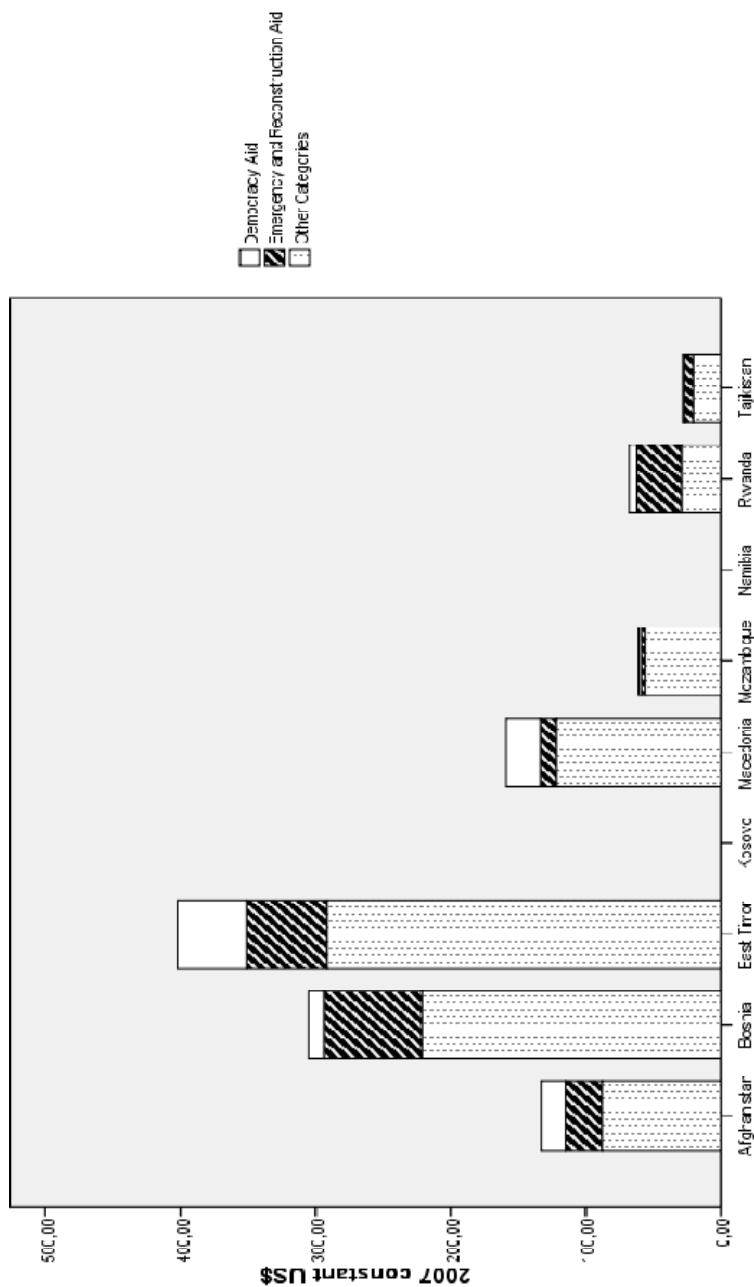


Figure 3: Aid per Capita, Average for the first Five Years after Conflict, OECD-DAC data



Aid per capita in Kosovo in the first five years was almost as high as in Bosnia and Herzegovina (280 US dollars per capita on average, compared to 321 in Bosnia and Herzegovina). As the level of emergency and humanitarian aid – and with them overall aid – decreased from 2002 onwards, democracy aid started to play a larger role within the aid portfolio. The overall amount of democracy aid decreased after 2002 as well, but in relation to overall aid, democracy aid accounted for below 20 per cent until 2002 and then gradually increased to 42 per cent in 2005. Conditionality was applied in Kosovo in very general terms in the form of the “standards before status” policy, which included an extensive list of criteria to be fulfilled before a decision would be made on Kosovo’s final status. This policy was formulated in 2002 and dropped in the aftermath of the 2004 riots, as it had led to increased elite and public resistance at that time.<sup>21</sup>

The overall level of aid to Macedonia was moderate at an average of 132 US dollars per capita in the first five years. At an average of 36 per cent, democracy aid accounted for a large share of overall aid. This, however, also reflects the relatively low level of emergency and reconstruction aid after a fortunately very short and largely bloodless conflict. Since Ohrid, the main focus of external aid has been on strengthening state capacity, and the EU pre-accession programmes have become the main sources of funding. Aid conditionality in Macedonia mainly comes in the form of EU conditionality, which included the implementation of components of the Ohrid Framework Agreement.<sup>22</sup>

In summary, we find that aid plays an important role in rebuilding state capacities but seems to have little impact on democracy. It seems that peacebuilders are reluctant to use the leverage of aid dependence to push for reform.

### *Neighbourhood Effects*<sup>23</sup>

The nine case studies do not reveal a clear pattern of how neighbourhood factors affect either peace or democracy. Regional influences are important in many cases, especially in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Macedonia, and Kosovo. The conflicts in South-eastern Europe that occurred as part of the break-up of Yugoslavia were all inter-related and thus need to be seen in a regional con-

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21 Cf. Narten, cited above (Note 15), p. 144.

22 Cf. Tome Sandevski, *External Democracy Promotion in Post-Conflict Zones: Evidence from Case Studies: Macedonia*, 2008; available at: [http://aix1.uottawa.ca/~czurcher/czurcher/Transitions\\_files/Final%20Report%20Macedonia.pdf](http://aix1.uottawa.ca/~czurcher/czurcher/Transitions_files/Final%20Report%20Macedonia.pdf).

23 Large parts of this section are based on an analysis by Kristie Evenson, *External Democracy Promotion in Post-Conflict Zones: Bosnia*, 2010; available at: [http://aix1.uottawa.ca/~czurcher/czurcher/Transitions\\_files/Final%20Report%20Bosnia.pdf](http://aix1.uottawa.ca/~czurcher/czurcher/Transitions_files/Final%20Report%20Bosnia.pdf). This paper is part of the research project at the Free University of Berlin and examines the effects of neighbourhood factors on the interaction of peacebuilders and domestic elites in the nine cases.

text. Neighbouring states therefore continue to be important in the post-conflict period. In contrast to the other cases in the analysis, regional integration processes, in the form of EU integration, did play a role in the three Balkan states that were studied. Within the framework of the “Stabilization and Association Process” that was launched in 1999 specifically for the countries of the Western Balkans, the EU slowly started to take over as a lead agency, and conditionality attached to the process of qualifying for EU accession started to replace (or was intended to replace) the imposition of reform. The prospect of EU accession greatly facilitated reforms in Macedonia, while the picture is more mixed with respect to Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo.

Macedonia provides the clearest example of how prospective EU membership may have a positive impact on democratization. EU integration was seen by elites and the public as highly beneficial because of the economic opportunities and the security guarantees it offers. Macedonia implemented a process of decentralization and public sector reform that aimed at improving the capacity and democratic quality of state institutions and was supported by international aid as a move towards meeting the Copenhagen Criteria. As a result, the EU granted Macedonia the status of candidate country in late 2005.<sup>24</sup> In Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo, standards and approaches previously attached to peacebuilding and stabilization were only later incorporated into the EU strategy, when the focus shifted from post-war stabilization to European integration. The issue of EU integration dominates the political discussion and has arguably influenced elite preferences to some degree. However, the effects of EU conditionality have been less clear-cut. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, from 2002 onwards, two parallel processes took place: First, the EU slowly started to take over as the lead agency for peace implementation (a process that is still not completed),<sup>25</sup> and, second, EU integration started to be used as a means to overcome the overly complex political structure created at Dayton. This approach has shown some results on the formal level (a Stabilization and Association Agreement was signed in 2008), yet no substantive progress appears to have been made.<sup>26</sup> In Kosovo, the prospects of EU membership and NATO co-operation were attractive and did

24 Cf. Sandevski, cited above (Note 22), pp. 2-3.

25 The OHR has also fulfilled the role of EU Special Representative (EUSR) since 2002. In 2003, the UN-led police mission was transferred to the EU, as was the NATO-led military mission in December 2004. The full transition of OHR to the EUSR is still subject to major debate and political struggles. Cf. ICG, *Bosnia's Dual Crisis*, Sarajevo 2009; available at: <http://www.crisisgroup.org/en/regions/europe/balkans/bosnia-herzegovina/b057-bosnias-dual-crisis.aspx>; ICG, *Bosnia's Incomplete Transition: Between Dayton and Europe*, Sarajevo 2009; available at: <http://www.crisisgroup.org/en/regions/europe/balkans/bosnia-herzegovina/198-bosnias-incomplete-transition-between-dayton-and-europe.aspx>; Stefano Recchia, *Beyond international trusteeship: EU peacebuilding in Bosnia and Herzegovina*, Paris 2007.

26 Cf. ICG, *Bosnia's Incomplete Transition*, cited above (Note 25) Vedran Džihčić, *Dilemmata im Prozess der "Europäisierung" Bosniens* [Dilemmas in the Bosnian “Europeanization” Process], Geneva 2007; available at: [http://www.ceis-eu.org/publications/working\\_papers/2007/ceis\\_wps\\_no1.pdf](http://www.ceis-eu.org/publications/working_papers/2007/ceis_wps_no1.pdf).

serve as an incentive for democratization to the domestic elites. However, the EU's policy of making democratic standards a condition for the prospective EU integration of Kosovo and, potentially, Serbia was only effective in the case of the Kosovo Albanians. The prospect of EU membership could not overcome ethnic segregation in post-war Kosovo.

#### *Local Demand for Democracy and Adaptation Costs*

Of greater significance than any external factors in explaining the outcome of post-conflict democratization processes is local demand for democratization, both on the part of the domestic elites and among the general population. In the past, scholars and practitioners have by and large assumed that it is the lack of local capacities – economic and social difficulties – that hinder the emergence of democracy. But lack of capacity need not be the only explanation for democratic failures. Analysis has revealed that the constraining factor is political will (or motivation) rather than capacity (or structure). Democratization stands a better chance when there is real demand for it among the elites and the population, and when the adaptation costs for the regime are low.

The underlying assumption of this thesis is that local elites in post-war countries might not want democracy for a number of reasons and would thus have to bear the costs of adapting to the new system. For one thing, introducing democratic principles endangers the grip on power of the militarily strongest party, as it may well lose in elections what was won in battle. Moreover, liberal peace brings with it norms and rules of good governance that restrict the ability to arbitrarily reign, extort, and expropriate, while also jeopardizing the gains of war. Finally, democratic procedures and good governance threaten patron-client networks, which are the very foundation of authority of most regimes in post-conflict states.

The evidence from the sample suggests that there are two situations in which adaptation costs are atypically low and demand for democracy atypically high. The first is in the context of a war for independence, when democracy comes bundled with independence. Elites and populations as a whole are prepared to accept the adaptation costs of democracy because they desire independence. Struggles for independence tend to build high elite coherence and considerable popular support for the leadership. Both are prerequisites for state-building processes and increase the chances of there being a successful democratization process. When elites enjoy widespread support from the population, this further reduces the costs of a democratic transition because elites can safely assume that they will prevail in elections. Second, the adaptation costs of introducing democracy are also low when democracy offers a way out of a destructive stalemate. If the parties to a war are convinced that neither can win on the battlefield, they might be inclined to accept the costs

that are associated with the adoption of democratic ground rules. By contrast, adaptation costs are high and demand low if previous experiences with democracy were unsuccessful, if there are deep divisions between different groups, and if democracy does not offer a solution to the pressing needs of either elite or population, but rather threatens the survival of a regime that is dependent on its capacity to rule by patronage.

The democratic champions of the sample – Namibia, Timor-Leste, Mozambique, and Macedonia – show high elite and popular demand for democracy as well as low adaptation costs, whereas neither elites nor populations demanded democracy in Afghanistan, Tajikistan, Rwanda, or Bosnia and Herzegovina. Only the hybrid regime of Kosovo, where there was strong local demand for democracy coupled with independence, diverges from this pattern.

In Kosovo, demand for democracy was derivative of local demands for independence. With the ultimate objective of independence, the Kosovo-Albanian national elites unanimously and vigorously pushed for an acceleration of the transfer of powers from the UNMIK administration to national institutions. International actors initially attempted to repel local demands for independence by pursuing a strategy of maximum intrusiveness, but were later forced to give in to the demands of the increasingly frustrated Kosovo Albanians in order to secure stability and relative peace in Kosovo. Apart from these momentary security pressures, the national elites generally demonstrated a compliant attitude towards the international presence and a collective willingness to take part in the democratization process in exchange for independence. However, independence was a Kosovo-Albanian project, as was the democratization process attached to it. The Serb minority in Kosovo boycotted the independence and democratization process, but it was too weak to effectively veto it, even with considerable support from Belgrade. Kosovo Serbs remain largely excluded from the political process, which severely limits the quality of democracy.

The main issue for the elites of all parties to the Bosnian war was ethnicity, not democracy. Consequently, the ethnicity-based system that was part of the Dayton Peace Agreement was acceptable, as it guaranteed the positions of those ethnicity-based parties that dominated during the war. The power-sharing guarantees that were attached to “democracy” lowered adaptation costs considerably. Among elites, there was thus a substantial interest in *limiting* democratic competition, as exemplified by the enormous difficulties of “moving beyond Dayton” by reforming the ethnicity-based constitutional principles. The role of the international community in some ways actually worked against local interest in democracy. With the OHR as a last-stop executive, it was often far more rational for domestic political actors to leave unpopular decisions for the international community. While opportunities for participation and competition technically exist, there are few incentives to use them. The ethnicity-based system that largely entrenched the dominant pos-

ition of the wartime elites, and the overruling power of the “internationals” significantly impeded initiatives to use these democratic spaces. Additionally, the existence of the Bosnian state itself was the result of a compromise, and of substantial international pressure. Identification with the Bosnian state as a whole remains low.

Finally, in the case of Macedonia, the Ohrid Agreement that ended the armed conflict between the Albanian rebels and the Macedonian security forces set the groundwork for improving the rights of ethnic Albanians, especially with regard to language policy, education, and communal self-government. This required some concessions from the Macedonian majority. But because many Ohrid provisions were part of the EU accession process anyway, which was the strategic objective of both Macedonians and Albanians, the adaptation costs for the regime were relatively low.

Despite the often praised virtues of democracy for the people, the research found that the post-war democratic process is rarely accompanied by mass mobilization. This is perhaps not surprising – the population in war-affected countries is first and foremost preoccupied with survival. Participation in politics is not high on their agenda. Mass mobilization occasionally flares up around “founding” elections (for example, Afghanistan’s first presidential elections) or in the context of a struggle for independence (for example, around Kosovo’s parliamentary elections in 2004 and 2007). In general, however, public participation in the political process is very low. This is not so much a result of limitations actively being imposed on political spaces, but rather of a population having other priorities, of weak civil society foundations, and of a largely disconnected and marginalized rural population. The only countries that actively and massively limit political participation are Tajikistan and Rwanda. These overall low participation rates are in contrast with the high participation rates usually associated with democratic transitions in countries without violent conflict.

### *Conclusion*

Over the last 20 years, external actors have increasingly invested in post-conflict democratization. This contribution has presented findings of the research project on post-conflict democratization hosted by the Free University of Berlin and concludes that the strategies applied by external actors for initiating and fostering democracy after civil war are generally not very effective. Peacebuilding missions, even those that are highly intrusive and bring in massive resources and manpower, are successful at building security and preventing a renewed outbreak of war, but they are not conducive to democratization. Likewise, the large amounts of aid that flow into post-conflict societies do not bring about fully fledged democracies, although they do to some extent contribute to (re)building state institutions. Neighbourhood factors



may matter, but only under exceptional circumstances: One positive effect that could be detected is the facilitation of democratic reforms in Macedonia and, to some extent, also in Kosovo and Bosnia and Herzegovina by the prospect of EU integration.

Despite external assistance for democratization, all nine cases under study were characterized by generally medium to low levels of democracy, low participation, little or no political competition, weakly institutionalized rule of law, and a high overall dependence on external actors. Those post-conflict states that were put under external tutelage came out as hybrid regimes, like Kosovo and Bosnia and Herzegovina, where the main issue of ethnic separation remains unresolved. In the light of the empirical evidence, we are tempted to conclude that external democratization strategies have little effect when there is no domestic demand for democracy. Commitment to democracy by the population and the domestic elites, who have to adapt to democratic rules and norms, seems to be the key factor in explaining successful post-conflict democratization processes.