Democratization processes and their impact on sustainable peacebuilding in post-conflict society: a comparative case study for Bosnia and Croatia

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1. <u>ABSTRACT</u>

The positive and negative impacts of democratization processes on long-term peacebuilding in post-conflict societies has not yet been studied enough. Through a comparative case studies of two former Yugoslav nations, Croatia and Bosnia, this paper argues that while democratization processes can be good for stability, they must consider the long-term as well as the pre-existing local communities and structures of a society in a post-conflict context, for peacebuilding efforts to be successful in the long term.

2. <u>INTRODUCTION</u>

Long-term peace is the ultimate goal of post-conflict reconstruction. To achieve this, many tools and processes are at the disposition of peace and policy makers. Two of the most prominent processes in post-conflict reconstruction are democratization and peacebuilding. Over the last two decades, these two processes have progressed and adapted to the changing nature of conflicts, and their complexity. As highlighted by Cook and Call (2003) the concepts have become vaster, and they entail broader definitions, concepts, and interpretations. For example, peacebuilding has evolved from simply preventing former foes to fall back into conflict with each other, to "*addressing the root causes of conflict and even fostering development in non-postwar societies*" (Call & Cook, 2003, p. 233). In the same way, democratization's conceptualization has changed in recent years, and highlights the changing perspective of what democracy truly entails for post-conflict societies. While there is a general assumption that democracy is the best governance model for all, there has been many dissents on this. Indeed, many scholars question whether democracy is the best provider of stability and peace in a post-conflict context, as highlighted by Vorrath (2010). Although many argue that democracy is not necessarily the best system, it seems to remain the most efficient for long-term peacebuilding and stability.

There is a gap between the literature on peacebuilding and democratization, and how these concepts function in practice. Democracy and peacebuilding literature is considered lackluster and theoretically unprecise. Call and Cook (2003) highlight the points of convergence and divergence of the literature on both concepts and explain that both need empirical and theoretical expansion on the relationship between democracy and peacebuilding. Indeed, in many of the scholarly work on this, peacebuilding and democratization are regarded as two separate processes, that rarely hinder one another, and are quite complementary.

However, as highlighted by cases such as Afghanistan, democratization and peacebuilding can "clash" and hinder each other, making these processes less efficient, and in some cases, fail (Vorrath, 2010). The literature on these two processes highlights the ambiguity of their relationship in theory and in practice. In theory, both processes are intended on bringing peace, democracy, stability, equality, and prevent a country from relapsing into violent conflict. In practice however, their relationship is much more complex. As mentioned previously, the implementation of democratization processes can hinder the construction of long-term peace. A main example used to depict such instances is the process of fair elections in post-conflict societies that can end up in a recurrence of violence.

While many scholars look at democratization and peacebuilding separately, what is interesting to understand is how democratization can lead to sustainable peacebuilding. Thus comes the following question:

In what ways do democratization processes impact sustainable peacebuilding in post-conflict societies?

The instability and unpredictability of post-conflict societies make democratization and peacebuilding complex processes that necessitate well-thought, and adapted strategies. By looking at how democratization processes impact sustainable peace, this research could bridge the gap between theory and practice and bring insight on what is necessary to ensure efficient democratization, which would then ensure sustainable peacebuilding. What is important to note is that democratization and peacebuilding are highly Westernized. As highlighted by Hippler (2008), since the end of the Cold War, the western world has increasingly brought attention to policies of democratization in *"(formerly) autocratic states, in post-conflict states and in developing countries generally."* (Hippler, 2008, p. 552).

To better understand the complex relationship between democratization and peacebuilding processes, the cases of Bosnia and Croatia will be studied. Understanding how one concept impacts the other, whether it be in a positive or negative way, is imperative to shed better light on post-conflict peaceful reconstruction and stability.

3. **LITERATURE REVIEW**

In the literature on democratization and peacebuilding there are various arguments on the importance of these processes and their capacity to bring peace and democracy to a post-conflict society. There are also criticisms regarding the implementation of democratization and peacebuilding models. While the literature has extended arguments and debates on the role of both concepts, there is a lack of analysis on the impact of democratization processes on the long-term peacebuilding processes in post-conflict situations. In terms of analysis and conclusions, the literature looks at democratization and peacebuilding processes as either the same, or separate tools for long term peace and stability. However, this research will look at how democratization processes impact long-term peacebuilding, which entails that democratization and peacebuilding are two different processes that have to be looked at in different perspectives.

Democratization

When it comes to democratization processes, the literature has many conceptualizations and theories to offer. In their work Call and Cook (2003) discuss the "democratic reconstruction model" (Call & Cook, 2003, p. 233) which entails four very positive elements for post-conflict societies. These four elements are: elections, civil society funding, the making of constitution, and the building of state institution. These elements would be put in place to promote democracy, encourage local and popular participation, and it would bring peace and stability to a post-conflict society. However, Call and Cook (2003) offer criticism on peacebuilding and democratization processes, and more specifically on their base of origin. Indeed, in much of the literature on these processes, there is an overall criticism that points to the very Western point of view of peacebuilding and democratization. Call and Cook (2003)

thus ask the question of whether Western-based models of democratization and peacebuilding are necessarily the best models to follow and implement in post-conflict societies. They put forward the simplifying tendencies of these models, and the assumptions that "all good things go together" (Call and Cook, 2003, p. 236). Their conclusions seem to be widely shared in the literature on peacebuilding and democratization processes. Here, the authors suggest that the literature must enhance the conceptual precision of both concepts, and that in practice this precision must be used alongside the multiplicity of models, to implement these processes appropriately. Furthermore, they insist on the importance to consider post-conflict reconstruction through a long-term lens, and that patience is key for success. Finally, Call and Cook (2003) point to a crucial part of democratization and peacebuilding, which is the consideration and integration of local structures and agencies in these processes. The argument of local structures and communities is recurrent in the literature and is widely agreed upon.

Similarly, to Call and Cook's work, Vorrath (2010) argues that conceptual precision needs to be prioritized in the democratization theories, so that it can enhance the practice of the latter. In this article, the author also questions the efficacy and usefulness of the Western-based model of democratization and questions whether it is appropriate. Vorrath (2010) also offers criticism on the assumption that democracy is most efficient and peaceful than any other form of government. Here she highlights that most peacebuilding and democratization processes are based on assumptions like this one, and do not consider using anything other than democratic processes or structures to implement peace and stability. Furthermore, Vorrath (2010) uncovers a particular relationship between democratization and peacebuilding, which shows that one process can be destabilizing for the other, and vice versa. Moreover, she insists on the fact that democratization and peacebuilding are not necessarily conciliable processes, and she exemplifies this through the use of post-conflict elections.

Peacebuilding

In the peacebuilding literature, as mentioned previously, there is a large number of definitions, conceptualizations, models, methods, and ideas. The concept of peacebuilding, similarly to the concept of democratization, lacks theoretical and conceptual precision, as highlighted by the variety of theories and conceptualizations of the topic.

In their work, Barnett et al (2007) discuss the diversity of conceptualization of peacebuilding. They highlight that peacebuilding emerges from various sources, such as international organizations (IOs), the United Nations, and countries themselves. Indeed, they explain that definitions and conceptualizations differ according to an agent's mandate on peacebuilding. In addition to this, Barnett et al (2007) conceptualize peacebuilding themselves in three categories: "stability creation, "restoration of state institutions", and "addressing socio-economic dimensions of conflict" (Barnett et al, 2007, p. 49). The goals of these categories are to develop civil society organizations, a feasible private sector, and design and implement a "culture of peace" (Barnett et al, 2007, p. 50). They insist on the ambiguity of what peacebuilding means to different actors, and what this could entail for the implementation of peacebuilding activities.

Barnett et al (2007) raise issues on ambiguity and the meaning of peacebuilding, and their argument is supported by Lambourne and Herro's (2008) arguments. Indeed, in their work they explain that if peacebuilding is not done through the proper framework, here the United Nations framework, it could lead to a failure or a hinderance of peacebuilding interventions. Alike other literature, they also criticize the very Western-based approach to peacebuilding and democratization and question the validity of that model. They also insist on the importance of local entities, structures, and communities as a major part of the peacebuilding and democratizations processes. They argue that these local agencies must be included and encouraged, so that support for such processes will be higher and lead to a greater chance of

success. Finally, Lambourne and Herro (2008) introduce "Reychler's "theory-practice gap" which represents a lack of clear communication of precise knowledge between all agents involved in post-conflict processes, which then leads to an important handicap to the promotion and coordination of long-term peacebuilding (Lambourne & Herro, 2008, p. 281).

A final concept associated with peacebuilding is reconciliation. In this research it is looked at following the definition of Parent (2011), which is that reconciliation is "*a slogan that symbolizes peace, post-conflict reconstruction and the end of antagonisms.*" (Parent, 2011, p. 379). In her article, the author puts forward the importance to consider another process, which is the healing process. This is based mostly on individual healing and understanding of the trauma of a conflict. Both healing and reconciliation are complementary processes and need to be carefully considered together in order to ensure successful peacebuilding. An issue raised by Parent (2011) is that healing and reconciliation processes are often overlooked in peacebuilding literature, which then impedes on their representation in peacebuilding processes. Healing and reconciliation processes are necessary for long-term peacebuilding as they allow for new security and stability among individuals, groups, and communities, through a better understanding of both sides, which in turn gives long-term peace a higher probability to occur.

4. __THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK__

Based on the literature on peacebuilding and democratization processes, as well as the many criticisms expressed on them, this research will focus on two hypotheses:

H_1: *If democratization processes are not originally implemented for long-term action, it is likely that sustainable peacebuilding will fail*

H_2: *The taking into consideration of pre-existing local communities and structures in the democratization process has a positive impact on the success rate of long-term peacebuilding*

The first hypothesis (H_1) is based on the numerous sources of literature expressing a lack of willingness for commitment. For example, Call and Cook (2003) state that there is a general unwillingness of the international community to commit resources, and plan peacebuilding and democratization activities on the long-term. Time commitment is an issue in the literature and has proven to be a considerable impediment to peaceful transitions as highlighted in Bosnia. In his article, Jung (2012) uses the first Bosnian elections, which took place only nine months after the signing of the Dayton Accords. He explains that the elections were rushed because of time commitment, more specifically the IFOR forces obligatory withdrawal after a year. Further in his article, he explains that peace in Bosnia is not self-sustaining and has to be supported by the international community. With this in mind, the first hypothesis (H_1) will be used to analyse the relationship between time-commitment of the democratization processes and the impact it has on sustainable peacebuilding in post-conflict societies.

The second hypothesis (H_2) is also based on the numerous recommendations made in the literature on peacebuilding and democratization. Indeed, there seems to be a widely accepted argument, which is the importance of incorporating local structures and communities in democratization processes, as well as peacebuilding activities. In the case of Croatia for

example, Grittersova (2013) argues that while the external intervention of international actors played a major role in implementing democracy, prosperity, and peace, the "*'bottom-up' democratic support of civil society and democratic institutions.*" (Grittersova, 2013, p. 6) played a very important role in getting Croatia to the democratic and peaceful situation it is in today. On the other hand, in Bosnia, the inclusion of local communities and structures, as well as civil society has not been done properly. Thus, Hippler (2008) suggests that international intervention must focus on "*support for indigenous development of peace and democracy.*" (Hippler, 2008, p. 561). He uses the case of Bosnia, alongside others, to highlight that this is a condition that must not be overlooked, as it could lead to a more efficient democratization and sustainable peacebuilding. Thus, the second hypothesis (H_2) will look at the relation between the integration of local structures in democratization processes and the success and longevity of peacebuilding. In other words, if democratization processes do not consider the pre-existing local communities and structures, it is likely that long-term peacebuilding will fail.

Conceptualization and codes

Democratization refers to the promotion of democracy in post-conflict society. In this research, democratization, coded "democratization" (DEM) will be looked at based on four categories, outlined in Tilly's (2000) article: "*breadth*" (BRDTH), "*equality*" (EQLTY) , "*consultation*" (CONSLTN) and "*protection*" (PROTECTN), which define a regime as democratic if "*it maintains broad citizenship, equal citizenship, binding consultation of citizens at large with respect to governmental activities and personnel, as well as protection of citizens from arbitrary action by governmental agents.*" (Tilly, 2000, p. 4). The data on democratization found within the sources previously mentioned will be looked at according to these four concepts.

In the literature on democratization and peacebuilding it is widely known that peacebuilding has various meanings and definitions. There is no general consensus on what peacebuilding means, which is a common critique of scholars on the topic. Peacebuilding lacks "*conceptual and terminological precision*" (Labonte, 2003, p. 261), which hinders its application in real situations. One definition that seems to be used by many scholars is Boutros Boutros-Ghali's 1992 Agenda for Peace definition. According to him peacebuilding is the "*action to identify and support structures which will tend to strengthen and solidify peace in order to avoid a relapse into conflict*" (Lambourne & Herro, 2008, p. 277). In this research, peacebuilding will be defined according to Boutros-Ghali's definition. However, peacebuilding will be conceptualized according to the United Nations' 2006 inventory of the term which categorizes peacebuilding in seven divisions: "*security* (SEC) *and public order* (PO)*; justice* (JUST) *and reconciliation* (RCONLT)*; governance* (GOV) *and participation* (PRCPTN)*; and socio-economic well-being*. (SOCECOWB)" (Lambourne & Herro, 2008, p. 277). In addition to peacebuilding, it is important to explain what sustainability entails. In much of the literature, critiques on peacebuilding activities target the short-term mindset of external actors and peacebuilders. Thus, this research is looking at peacebuilding as a long-term process, that is maintained over time.

5. <u>RESEARCH DESIGN</u>

For this research, and in order to answer the research question, and test the theory and hypotheses mentioned above, a comparative case study seems to be the most suitable research design. Using a comparative case study to answer the research question will allow for an observation of the relation between the Independent Variable (IV), which is "democratization processes", and the Dependent Variable (DV), which is "sustainable peacebuilding". The aim of this research is to conduct an analysis on the relation between these two variables and understand how one impacts the other in a particular setting, here: post-conflict societies. For this research, two cases will be selected based on the Yugoslav wars that took place between 1991 and 2001. These conflicts were chosen as they still have repercussions for the former members states of this nation, and they have very interesting instances of external intervention leading to democratization and peacebuilding processes.

Methodology

The research will be based on the Most Different System Design (MDSD), which aims at choosing two cases that vary widely, but converge on a particular variable, here: democratization processes. For the case selection, the Nations in Transit Index (NTI), and the Global Peace Index (GPI) were used. The NTI looks at the evolution of democracy within nations, and the GPI estimates the level of peace in countries, ranging from 1 being the most peaceful, to 5 being the most violent. When looking at the now Western Balkans countries, or former Yugoslav nations, most are democratic and peaceful to a certain extent. For this research, the cases will be selected based on which country has one of the highest levels of democratization and peacebuilding levels, and which has one of the lowest. Here Bosnia and Herzegovina will be used as the nation with the lowest level of peace and democratization, and Croatia will be used as the country with the highest levels. In 2021, Bosnia scored 1,970 in the

Global Peace Index, and Croatia scored 1,480. In comparison, other former Yugoslav nations such as Macedonia and Montenegro scored 1,744 and 1,847 respectively on the GPI. Furthermore, on the Nations in Transit Index, Croatia has seen a decline in its democracy score of -0.04 between 2017 and 2021, and Bosnia's democracy score has decreased of -0.11 in the same period.

In this research, textual analysis will be used as the method of analysis, as it seems the most useful way of answering the question and hypotheses. Indeed, as highlighted by Byrne (2001), textual analysis allows for the use of hermeneutics, which entails "finding meanings in written words" (Byrne, 2001, p. 968). Within textual analysis, this research will use qualitative content analysis with coding, and a coding frame. For a qualitative research interpretation is important and using textual analysis will allow the discovery of multiple meanings within one source. In this research, primary sources such as scholarly journal articles, research-based essays, government reports, NGO statements, or speeches, will be used.

Source selection

When it comes to the sources analyzed in this research, they are mainly primary sources, found through trustworthy search tools. The sources can be considered diverse within their category. Indeed, this research will use a variety of primary sources which diverge in their structure. Through the Leiden University catalogue, and the google scholar search tools, the sources were randomly selected based on their relevance to the research question and concepts. For example, certain articles and indexes were selected based on their focus on Croatia and Bosnia, which are the two case studies of this research. In terms of data collection, this research will be using various primary sources, such as speeches, government reports, statement, or research-based scholarly journal article. Each text will be analyzed and used to find information

and data that will contribute to the comparison of the two case studies, as well as answering the research question and hypotheses.

6. ANALYSIS

Bosnia and Herzegovina

Democratization processes

Democratization processes are key parts of a country's post-conflict reconstruction. It allows for more stability, security, and ultimately peace in the war-torn society. As mentioned above, four categories will be looked at for democratization: breadth, equality, consultation, and protection. Good indicators for these categories would be, free and fair elections, a strong civil society, security, and equal opportunities.

One of the wars that marked the period of the Yugoslav Wars, is the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina, which took place between 1992 and 1995. The Bosnian war was the "*bloodiest war on Yugoslav territory*", (Džihić & Segert, 2012, p. 242) lasting three years. The onset of the war was caused by independence claims from ethnic communities within Bosnia, which led to a revolt of the Serb population in 1992. As highlighted by the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) Bosnian Serbs were supported by the Yugoslav army, which led to a repression of the non-Serb population. The two other ethnic communities, Bosnian Croats, and Bosnian Muslims, also fought for their independence and their territory, which further deepened the violence of the conflict.

In 1995, the conflict ended after a "*forceful*" NATO intervention (Sobel, 1998, p. 250) and with the signing of the General Framework for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina (GFAP), which aimed at restoring peace and stability to the war-torn country. After this framework was signed, a multitude of efforts, policies, and actions were put in place by various actors to implement Bosnia's transition to a democratic regime. Despite great efforts, Bosnia has failed to reach a consolidated level of democracy. Indeed, it can be considered as a "*hybrid regime*",

which entail a very low level of consolidated democracy, and mixed elements of an authoritarian regime (Džihić & Segert, 2012, p. 241).

After the end of the war, one of the main tools used to rapidly start Bosnia's transition to democracy was elections. In 1996, under the pressure of starting peace processes in Bosnia, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) held elections which resulted in a government divided between the three ethno-nationalistic elite groups (Manning, 2004). According to Manning (2004), the OSCE was "*ill-prepared*" and organized the elections "*hastily*" (Manning, 2004, p. 64). This resulted in manipulated elections, giving power to the ethno-nationalistic elites, which in turn allowed them to further their grip on power. While free, and fair elections are useful to enhance democratization, in the post-conflict setting of Bosnia this only impeded on the process. Indeed, as highlighted by Perry (2009), the actors failed to consider the long-term impact of elections, and did not consider the local conditions, structures, and the state of inter-group relations, which are important pre-conditions for the success of elections.

After the violence ended, Bosnia became what Perry (2009) qualifies as a "*frozen conflict*" (Perry, 2009, p. 36). Indeed, while the Dayton Accords (GFAP) were signed in 1995 by the warring parties and the violence stopped, the concerns of the former belligerents were "*neither abated nor addressed*", and Bosnian communities "*remained divided*" (Perry, 2009, p.36). This can be further highlighted by the plan for the General Framework for Peace, which was put in motion after the elections. In spite of the goals of this framework, which were to restore peace and stability, the GFAP led to more ambiguity, and instability. Indeed, while the point was to reunite an ethnically fragmented society under a "*common identity and society*" (Kostić, 2008, p, 385), the framework seemed to only fragment the Bosnian population more. As highlighted by Belloni (2001) the GFAP cut Bosnia into two sections, one dominated by the Muslim-Croat Federation, and another one dominated by the Serbs. This led to more partition of all three

warring ethnic communities, at the hands of the elites seeking to hold on to their power. This puts forward the lack of consistency within the democratization process, and the lack of acknowledgment of the importance of pre-existing ethnic groups, local structures, and the impact ethnicity had on the Bosnian population.

In terms of each of the categories (breadth, equality, consultation, and protection) of democratization analyzed in this research, Bosnia seems to be a failure. Indeed, Bosnia shows tremendous issues when it comes to the consolidation of democracy. The elitist and nationalistic form of governance within the country subjects the population to inequalities, political apathy, and mistrust, lack of representation, and poor levels of participation.

Peacebuilding processes

Peacebuilding processes are equally as important as democratization processes. Indeed, while democratization ensures a transition to democracy, peacebuilding seeks to build and strengthen peace for the society. The observed categories of peacebuilding (security and public order; justice and reconciliation; governance and participation; and socio-economic well-being) have indicators to show for its success. Some of these indicators would be a strong civil society, equal rights and opportunities, freedom of fear, and less or no animosity for the other warring parties.

Alongside efforts to make Bosnia transition to a democratic regime, the international community also started peacebuilding processes to appease the post-conflict society and bring stability.

One of the main aims and beliefs of the GFAP was to implement reconciliation between the three warring ethnic groups. In the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) redacted framework, the constitution of Bosnia states "*Dedicated to peace, justice, tolerance, and reconciliation*". In peacebuilding processes, reconciliation is a very important part as it allows

for the animosity, fear, and violence between warring parties to decrease. It also allows them and their population or group to heal and process the recent events. While reconciliation is stated in the constitution of Bosnia and in the GFAP document, it remained a very ambiguous concept for most of the Bosnian population. After the war ended, the international community focused on bringing about reconciliation through financial and economic aid. A reconstruction program aimed at rebuilding the economy in order to stabilize the country and facilitate the transition to democracy and peace, was put in place. Through these programs, the international community, such as NATO, the UN, or NGOs, believed they could achieve reconciliation. However, as highlighted by Belloni (2001), they original plan failed. Indeed, the concept of reconciliation was foreign for a majority of the population, as well as for the governing elites. There were various versions of what the conflict was, and who the perpetrators were. Kostić (2008) argues that each ethnic community sees the conflict and the role their community played very differently, which makes reconciliation much harder to engage in.

Here, the failure of the international community is again the consideration of the role ethnicity and community played during and after the war. With the partition of ethnic groups in two different "*entities*" (Belloni, 2001, p. 164), the concept of reconciliation remained very ambiguous. After failing to reconcile the warring parties through economic reconstruction and assistance, the international community turned to civil society building. In order for the population to open a dialogue with the government civil society must be constructed and play its part in linking the two through dialogue. With the signing and implementation of the framework for peace (GFAP), an Office of the High Representative (OHR) was created to manage all democratization and peacebuilding activities that concerned civilians in Bosnia. The GFAP document states that the High Representative must "*coordinate the activities of the civilian organizations and agencies in Bosnia and Herzegovina to ensure the efficient implementation of the civilian aspects of the peace settlement*" (UNSC, 1995, p. 112). This

entails that the OHR is in charge of helping civil society and civic activities to develop. However, with the ambiguity of the GFAP, the dominance of ethno-nationalistic elites, and the general lack of consideration for pre-existing local structures, support for OHR interventions was very low. Indeed, there seems to be an understanding that "*the OHR understands the situation in our country, but it is not interested in finding a solution to it*" (Kostić, 2018, p. 18). In the years following the war, the international community failed to implement policies to help develop civil society and to establish dialogue to begin reconciliation between warring parties. As highlighted by Perry (2009), there was a general lack of support for civil society, and political participation was based on "*fear driven by nationalist party campaigning*" (Perry, 2009, p. 40), who "*demonized*" other ethnic groups (Pugh & Cobble, 2001, p. 28)

In terms of the categories analyzed for peacebuilding, Bosnia has failed to reach them, entailing that peacebuilding has not been successful. For example, security and public order have not been attained by Bosnia. In fact, as Pugh (2004) highlights, Bosnia has become a significant center for organized crime. In terms of socio-economic well-being, the Bosnian population is subject to high levels of unemployment and poverty due to the persisting war economy. As highlighted by Džihić and Segert (2012) economic security is the main concern for much of the Bosnian population.

Impacts of democratization on peacebuilding

Most of the democratization process in Bosnia was done without considering long-term goals and consequences, and without paying attention to local groups, structures, and communities, and their capacities. While some of the goals and actions of the international community were useful and feasible in the short term, they had some negative consequences that impacted the sustainability of peacebuilding.

A first, and important failure of the democratization process was the 1996 OSCE-led elections. According to Manning (2004) the elections were rushed, and not well prepared, a statement that is supported by Perry (2009), who insists on the failure to consider pre-existing conditions for the elections to be successful. Perry (2009) further highlights this failure by explaining that these elections perpetuated a status-quo of the government, which was conducted by ethno-nationalistic elites. This, as he demonstrates, led to a general political apathy, mistrust, and overall fear of the other ethnicities which impeded upon reconciliation and long-term peacebuilding. Perry (2009) further argues that actors involved in post-conflict democratization and peacebuilding had small time frames in mind for a variety of missions, and the expectations of short missions burdened the successfulness of long-term peacebuilding.

Another short-term solution that has led to long term impacts on peacebuilding is the use of humanitarian aid and assistance. While, shortly after the war, it is a crucial tool to help the reconstruction of a war-torn country, on the long-term the impacts are more detrimental than helpful. In the case of Bosnia, as highlighted by Belloni (2001) humanitarian aid and international assistance have "*engendered negative effects on socio-economic development*" (Belloni, 2001, p. 165) which is an integral part of peacebuilding. The international community created dependencies within Bosnia that are proving to be harmful for the stability, consolidation of democracy, and sustainable peacebuilding. Here, during the democratization process, the international community should have considered the already existing local structures, and organizations, and reinforce and assist them in their development for the future. Instead, the Bosnian society is filled with external organizations, agencies, and actors and has become highly dependent on them for its proper functioning.

Mistakes made during the democratization process are proving to highly impact long-term peacebuilding within the country. From 2008 to 2021, the Global Peace Index (GPI) of Bosnia, which estimates the level of peace in countries, and ranges from 1 being the most peaceful, to

5 being the most violent, has only increased, going from 1,747 to 1,970. Furthermore, the Nations in Transit Index (NTI), which looks at the evolution of democracy within a country, shows that Bosnia's level of democracy has decreased between 2017 and 2021 of -.11 points. As highlighted by Perry (2009) Bosnia shows high levels of instability, crime and corruption, socio-economic inequalities, animosity, and ethno-nationalistic based conflicts. The partition of the three ethnic entities by the General Framework for Peace (GFAP) may have further fragmented the Bosnian society and impeded on its peaceful transition to democracy. As a result, Bosnia is considered as one of the least democratic and peaceful country of the former Yugoslavia. Another good indicator of Bosnia's struggle in terms of democracy and peace is the fact that it is not a fully pledged member of either the European Union or the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). Indeed, each of these organizations have conditionalities to their membership, one of them being the capacity to maintain democracy through domestic institutions. This further highlight Bosnia's struggle with the consolidation of democracy and its struggle to provide long-term peacebuilding to a deeply ethnically fragmented population and society.

Croatia

Democratization processes

In a similar context as Bosnia, Croatia experienced a war from 1991 to 1995 which started after its claim to independence from Yugoslavia. While another Yugoslav nation, Slovenia, also claimed independence and only suffered a minor conflict, Croatia was in a different situation. Indeed, as highlighted by the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY), there was an important Serb community within Croatia, who disagreed with its claim to independence. To prevent Croatia from leaving Yugoslavia the Serbs occupied Croatia, which led to increased tensions and a conflict broke out until 1995.

Szaz (1997) shows that what ended the conflict in Croatia was the signing of the Dayton Accords alongside Bosnia, and Serbia in 1995, as well as the presence of a United Nations-led peacekeeping mission called the United Nations Confidence Restoration Operation (UNCRO), which replaced an earlier peacekeeping force, UNPROFOR. The first UN interventions right after the end of the war were quite different from that of Bosnia, as the presence of its forces were to implement an already agreed upon "*cease-fire agreement*", (UNCRO, 1995) which was signed in 1992. Even before the conflict ended, Croatia showed willingness to cooperate and bring violence and resentment to an end, which strongly differs from Bosnia. After the war ended, and the UN peacekeeping forces implemented action, a plethora of actors intervened in Croatia to help the reconstruction of the nation, its transition to democracy and the building of long-term peace. A mission that remarkably helped recover stability in Croatia was the Basic Agreement on the Region of Eastern Slavonia, Baranja and Western Sirmium (UNTAES) which was implemented in 1995 to recover and reintegrate the regional territory to Croatia. According to Šimunović (1999) this mission was considered a success as it gave clear instructions, feasible, long-term goals, and led to the achievement of essential objectives, notably "*the territorial integrity of a state, a peaceful, negotiated resolution of a dispute*" (Šimunović, 1999, p. 128). This further enhanced the democratization of Croatia and allowed for all communities and groups to be represented within the country.

From the United Nations to the United States aid programs, Croatia saw high levels of international assistance and aid for its democratization and development process in the post-conflict period. Today these processes are regarded mainly as great success cases of democratization, development, and stabilization of war-torn countries. According to Grittersová (2013), the West played a major role in Croatia's transition to democracy, notably through economic, social, political, and military support. Firstly, what allowed the stabilization of Croatia was the military interventions launched by NATO and the UN in Bosnia and

Herzegovina, which caused insecurity at its borders. These interventions allowed for Croatia to focus on its economic, social, and political reconstruction, and on its democratization. In his article Grittersová (2013) describes two ways that external actors can engender democratization in post-conflict societies: through "*top-down*" and the "*bottom-up*" methods (Grittersová, 2013, pp. 4-5). He explains that Croatia was a mixture of both methods, which can explain why it was successful in its transition to democracy. Indeed, Croatia received both top-down pressures from international actors through "*political conditionality*" (Grittersová, 2013, pp. 4-5), for example the EU or NATO offering a membership on the condition of having consolidated democracy, and bottom-up support from actors helping the development of civil society and local structures (NGOs).

What made Croatia a success was the combination of external pressures and incentives from the international community, as well as strong support for pre-existing local structures, groups, and communities. As highlighted by Grittersová (2013), substantive change can come from political pressures but only if international actors give local "*civil societies and political parties*" support (Grittersová, 2013, p. 2). In terms of support, Croatia also received financial aid, and development assistance through loans, supervised elections, and civil society building. One of main actors in civil society building was the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). Heideman (2017) looks at the role that USAID played in building and developing civil society organizations (CSOs) and local non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to increase democracy and peacebuilding. Beginning in 1993, the USAID programs brought fundamental assistance to local structures of civil society and trained them to become stronger advocates for the population. This brought stability to the country in addition to increasing development, which further aids the consolidation of democracy in Croatia.

As a result of the efforts to make Croatia transition to democracy, in 2000, Croatia held one of the most successful elections of the region, which led to a to a proactive and efficient

government that acted in favor of the population. This government implemented a variety of reforms, whether economic, political, or social, which were motivated by the European Union's offer of a "*membership perspective*" (Börzel & Grimm, 2018, p. 117) and its conditionality of entry.

Peacebuilding processes

Alongside the democratization of Croatia, peacebuilding processes were put in place to enhance stability and peace in the nation. Two major missions helped strengthen peacebuilding: UNTAES AND USAID programs. Both programs had different aims however they both allowed for crucial parts of peacebuilding: reconciliation and civil society. Indeed, through their varied missions, UNTAES and USAID allowed the opening of dialogue and compromise between the Serbs and the Croats, and helped develop and strengthen existing local structures, organizations, and groups.

After the implementation of UNCRO, the United Nations sought to resolve another issue that fragmented Croatia's society and led to great tension, the region of Eastern Slavonia, Baranja and Western Sirmium. According to Šimunović (1999) this region was one of the "*most fiercely contested battlegrounds of the Yugoslav wars*" (Šimunović, 1999, p. 126). There was a considerable amount of tension between the Serb and the Croat community at that time, as each had strongly anchored positions on the region and more generally on the conflict. UNTAES most praised success was resolving this issue and safely reintegrating the region in Croatia. But it is important to look at what came after the resolution of this dispute, which is the opening of a dialogue between the Serbs and the Croats. As Audergon and Arye (2005) argue, in order to start reconciliation process, communities must be able to dialogue and converse about the events that took place. During and after the reintegration mission, UNTAES gave occasions for both communities to make reparations with each other. Šimunović (1999)

argues that during the mission, "*time and opportunities*" were given to Serbs and Croats and helped "*build nascent level of mutual trust and respect*" (Šimunović, 1999, p. 129). He further argues that without the involvement of UNTAES these advances in reconciliation would not have been possible. This was a very important contribution to the peacebuilding processes in Croatia, as reconciliation is a crucial part and foreshadows future relations between groups.

Another program that has tremendously helped peacebuilding in Croatia is the USAID program. Indeed, it brought strong assistance to the development and strengthening of local civil society structures, and organizations. One of the main aims of USAID is to "*support sustainable civil society by creating a favorable environment for professional non-governmental organizations (NGOs)*" (Heideman, 2017, p. 333). Starting in 1993 and still participating in civil society's life today, the program led by the United States has greatly participated in building a sustainable and resilient civil society, with support from the government and strong local structures. The success of USAID resides in the resilience of the Croatian civil society organizations since the former began, as well as its acknowledgment of existing local structures, groups, and organizations. Indeed, faced with the refugee crisis in 2015 and 2016, the Croatian civil society proved to be resilient and efficient in the face of challenge and difficulty. This crisis has highlighted the potential for cooperation within the network of CSOs and NGOs engendered by the program. It also demonstrates encouraging signs of independence, a good capacity for collective action, and adaptation. Furthermore, as highlighted by Heideman (2016), the USAID program aimed for the sustainability of CSOs which entails long-term thinking. By looking at the long-term possibilities, as well as local capacities, this program has contributed to long-term peacebuilding within the country. With governmental support and funding, the Croatian civil society continues to work for long-term peacebuilding in a more independent manner.

Impacts of democratization on peacebuilding

Democratization and peacebuilding processes have been praised for being some of the most successful processes to take place in former Yugoslavia. The plethora of international, and mostly Western, actors and the policies and frameworks they used proved immensely conducive for the success of both processes. As highlighted by the numerous examples above, democratization does have an important impact on long-term peacebuilding processes.

What makes Croatia a success begins with the UN-led peacekeeping mission UNCRO which supported prior agreements, most notably a cease-fire signed in 1992. Here, Croatia expressed signs of cooperation and agreed to let UN peacekeeping forces enter into its territory and enforce its mandate. International actors' interventions were facilitated by Croatia's willingness to resolve the conflict and start reconstruction processes. Although UNCRO did play a role in the stabilization of the country, the main actors were the European Union, NATO, UNTEAS, and USAID. Indeed, these four led democratization and peacebuilding processes to success.

The EU and NATO played an important part in the Croatian transition to democracy, more than in peacebuilding processes, although their actions did have positive consequences. As highlighted by Grittersová (2013) the success of post-conflict democratization and peacebuilding is due to top-down and bottom-up processes. With offers for membership and political pressure, the European Union and NATO pushed the Croatian government toward democracy, using conditionality. Indeed, the EU for example has conditions for becoming a member, known as the Copenhagen Criteria. As Dudley (2020) explains, countries willing to become part of the European Union are incentivized to "*establish stable democratic institutions, improve their human rights practices, and consolidate their democracies.*" (Dudley, 2020, p. 525). NATO has similar conditions upon becoming a full member. These conditions have participated in getting Croatia to become a "*liberal democracy*" (Grimm &

Merkel, 2008, p. 466). This in turn shows positive developments for Croatia's long-term peacebuilding. Croatia's Nations in Transit Index has slightly decreased of -0.04 between 2017 and 2021, which entails a slight decline in democracy. However, when looking at its Global Peace Index, it has decreased from 1,747 in 2008 to 1,470 in 2021 which shows an increase in peace within the nation.

UNTAES and USAID, as illustrated above, have also greatly participated in Croatia's democratization and peacebuilding. As highlighted by Šimunović (1999), without UNTAES the reintegration of the battled territory would not have been possible. Without it, this tension and animosity would still be present between Serbs and Croats. Through UNTAES' mission and USAID's assistance in developing the civil society organizations of Croatia, the once war-torn communist nation managed to become a peaceful, liberal democracy. The efforts to democratize Croatia have led to strong and long-term peacebuilding, which can be seen in terms of security, order, reconciliation, governance, participation, and socio-economic wellbeing of the population.

Croatia can be overall considered as a success case within Yugoslavia. Since 2009 it has been a full member of NATO, and a full member of the European Union since 2013. Croatia is one of most democratic and peaceful nations of the former Yugoslavia, as it is the only country that has reached the EU apart from Slovenia. Through the analysis, it can be said that democratization processes have an important impact on peacebuilding. If when democratization efforts are implemented local structures and communities, as well as long-term actions are not considered, it is most likely that peacebuilding will fail.

7. <u>**DISCUSSION**</u>

Bosnia and Croatia have similar and shared histories of violence, ethnic conflicts and tensions, and destruction, as well as attempts of democratization and peacebuilding. The ending of these conflicts is closely related, through the Dayton Accords of 1995, which played a major role in putting an end to violence. After the agreement was signed, reconstruction, democratization, and peacebuilding started in both war-torn nations. While the two conflicts were closely related, the ways in which the post-conflict reconstruction processes were conducted are very different.

Bosnia and Croatia are considered opposites when it comes to the success of democratization and peacebuilding processes. Indeed, while Bosnia's democratization process stagnated, Croatia managed to consolidate its democracy levels throughout the years. After the wars ended, both nations were faced with elections to allow new governments and to begin their transition toward democracy. While the first post-war elections were ultimately flawed, Croatia's following elections showed change and progress. However, Bosnia's following elections remained problematic as they continued to enforce the status quo in government. Indeed, while elections in Croatia brought change, reforms, and positive developments, Bosnian elections allowed ethno-nationalistic elites to remain in power and govern the countries to their advantage. This in turn, had serious consequences for long-term peacebuilding in the two entities. Indeed, while Croatia experienced reconciliation, higher levels of political participation, growing civil society, and more dialogue between the population and the government, Bosnia was faced with unattainable reconciliation and civil society building, political apathy, elitist governance, and continued animosity between ethnic communities.

A main cause for this stark difference between the two countries, is the aims and goals of the different processes, frameworks and structures implemented by external, and international

actors. Indeed, while the Dayton Accords allowed for the end of violence, for both Bosnia and Croatia, there is an important difference in how both countries were pushed toward democratization and peacebuilding. For Bosnia, external actors tried to quickly start the transition while disregarding the pre-existing structures, groups, and conditions of the country. The 1996 elections highlight this, as they were considered rushed, ill-organized and resulted in an even more elitist government, with the same governing parties and officials as during the war. Furthermore, despite reconciliation efforts through economic reconstruction from external actors, fundamental issues between ethnic communities and former warring-parties were never addressed. This led to a continued animosity between groups, a more elitist government, and an overall fragmented population. On the other hand, Croatia's democratization process was a considerable success. Indeed, the frameworks, missions, and mandates implemented by outside forces allowed not only political development, but also societal development. The main issue in Croatia, which was the disputed region of Eastern Slavonia, Baranja and Western Sirmium, was addressed by UNTAES, which engendered dialogue and compromise between the Serbs and the Croats. Furthermore, through USAID, Croatia's civil society developed and strengthened, and became a very important part of the country's political life. Although Croatia faces challenges in terms of socio-economic development, and has seen a decline in its democracy level, it can be said that post-conflict democratization processes have had a very positive impact on long-term peacebuilding.

What demarcates Croatia from Bosnia in terms of democratization and long-term peacebuilding is its current international positions. Since 2009, Croatia has been a fully-fledged member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), as well as a full member of the European Union since 2013. This highlights Croatia's considerable progress in not only democratic consolidation, but also peacebuilding. On the other hand, Bosnia is not part of either organization, despite being in both accession processes. From this, it can be assumed that there

is still progress to be made for Bosnia's democracy and peacebuilding. An important fact must be kept in mind, however. Although Croatia is a staggering success within former Yugoslavia, there are still important efforts to be made for Croatia's democracy and peacebuilding. As shown by the 2021 Nations in Transit Index (NTI), Croatia is experiencing democratic backsliding which will have a negative impact on peacebuilding if it is not resolved. Despite this, Croatia exemplifies the importance of considering long-term action, as well as acknowledging pre-existing local communities and structures in the democratization process, as it leads to long-term peacebuilding.

8. CONCLUSION

This research has analyzed the impact of democratization processes on long-term peacebuilding processes in post-conflict societies. The two case studies, Bosnia, and Croatia were selected based on the opposite results of both post-conflict processes. The analysis of this research supports the two theories, which entail that if long-term action and pre-existing local structures and communities are not taken into consideration, it is likely that long-term peacebuilding will fail. Indeed, when looking at the cases of Bosnia and Croatia, it is reasonable to conclude that democratization processes have an important impact on the success of long-term peacebuilding processes.

Further research on this subject can build on the conclusions, and findings of this qualitative research. In addition, using the qualitative data identified in this research, other studies could be made using quantitative methods of analysis.

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Coding frame

Category	Description	Code	Sub-category	Code
Democratization	Processes of democratization in post-conflict societies	DEM	Breadth	BDRTH
			Equality	EQLTY
			Consultation	CONSLTN
			Protection	PROTCTN
Peacebuilding	Processes of peacebuilding in post- conflict societies	PBD	Security	SEC
			Public Order	PO
			Justice	JUST
			Reconciliation	RCONLT
			Governance	GOV
			Participation	PRCPTN

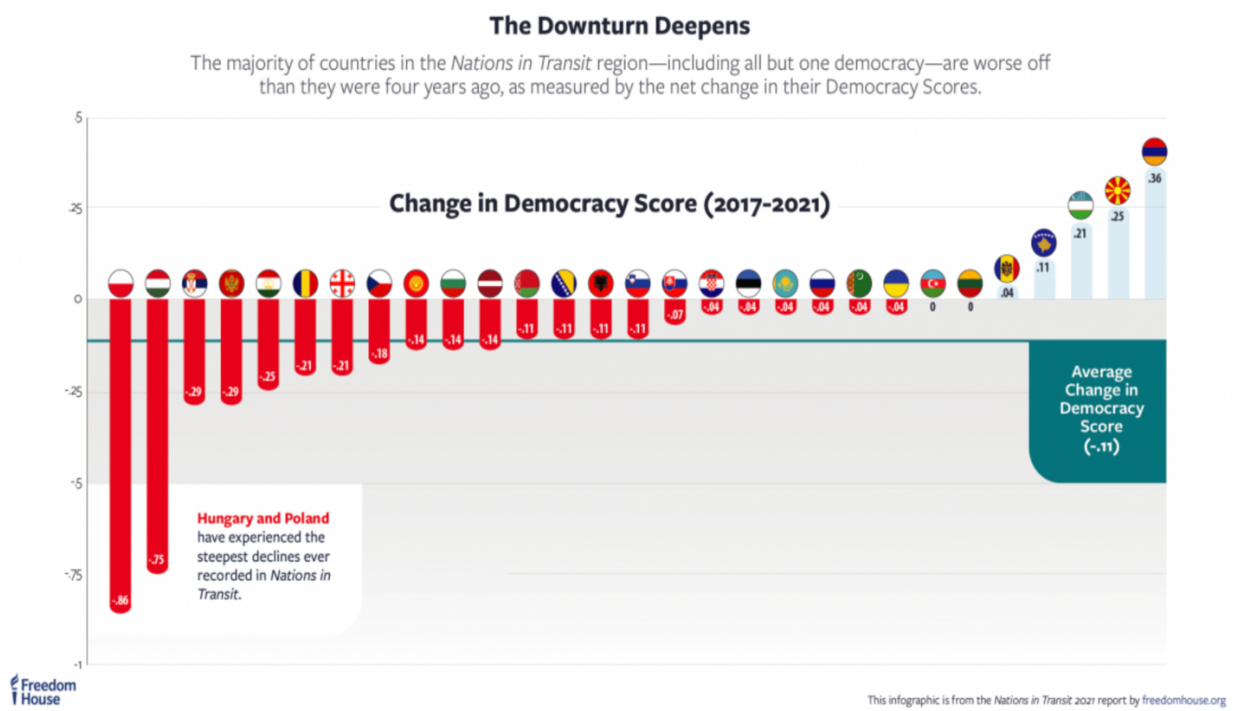|			Socioeconomic well-being	SOCECOWB

11. APPENDIX B

Figure 1. Change in democracy score (2017-2021) – Freedom House, Nations in Transit Index

Figure 2. Bosnian flag

Figure 3. Croatian flag

17	Belgium	BEL	1,488	1,498	1,508	1,495	1,497	1,474	1,435	1,413	1,399	1,470	1,536	1,531	1,485	1,496
18	Benin	BEN	2,174	2,174	2,174	2,222	2,178	2,084	2,061	1,947	1,973	2,000	1,937	1,938	2,161	2,093
19	Bhutan	BTN	1,911	1,936	1,985	1,966	1,785	1,713	1,694	1,672	1,598	1,620	1,533	1,510	1,523	1,510
20	Bolivia	BOL	2,035	2,114	2,151	2,079	2,156	2,198	2,132	2,103	2,043	2,040	2,061	2,072	2,099	2,140
21	Bosnia and Herzegovina	BIH	1,747	1,854	1,875	1,881	1,908	1,868	1,823	1,882	1,865	1,955	1,985	1,949	1,981	1,970
22	Botswana	BWA	1,833	1,795	1,773	1,794	1,779	1,756	1,857	1,751	1,714	1,717	1,763	1,760	1,772	1,753
23	Brazil	BRA	2,096	2,104	2,102	2,090	2,121	2,089	2,121	2,209	2,175	2,230	2,222	2,364	2,409	2,430
24	Bulgaria	BGR	1,681	1,711	1,687	1,629	1,671	1,696	1,597	1,668	1,623	1,617	1,621	1,599	1,628	1,577
25	Burkina Faso	BFA	1,849	1,788	1,792	1,749	1,766	1,899	1,819	1,891	2,040	2,069	2,073	2,166	2,273	2,527
26	Burundi	BDI	2,496	2,479	2,471	2,380	2,362	2,319	2,286	2,340	2,549	2,612	2,536	2,512	2,455	2,434
27	Cambodia	KHM	2,069	2,194	2,177	2,171	2,206	2,193	2,166	2,087	2,082	1,975	2,051	2,001	1,970	2,008
28	Cameroon	CMR	2,014	2,075	2,171	2,097	2,083	2,018	2,064	2,289	2,407	2,481	2,548	2,579	2,640	2,700
29	Canada	CAN	1,390	1,437	1,517	1,473	1,442	1,334	1,323	1,338	1,333	1,330	1,340	1,338	1,331	1,330
30	Central African Republic	CAF	2,803	2,724	2,669	2,711	2,779	2,986	3,158	3,288	3,238	3,228	3,228	3,231	3,174	3,131
31	Chad	TCD	2,891	2,963	3,021	2,775	2,645	2,467	2,500	2,448	2,408	2,498	2,443	2,461	2,492	2,489
32	Chile	CHL	1,728	1,750	1,784	1,813	1,706	1,676	1,656	1,649	1,638	1,626	1,669	1,666	1,831	1,831
33	China	CHN	2,080	2,043	2,161	2,183	2,169	2,077	2,084	2,109	2,094	2,104	2,087	2,056	2,070	2,114
34	Colombia	COL	2,812	2,750	2,832	2,739	2,675	2,627	2,677	2,713	2,685	2,720	2,692	2,641	2,632	2,694
35	Costa Rica	CRI	1,670	1,690	1,699	1,826	1,775	1,825	1,800	1,732	1,733	1,726	1,791	1,734	1,719	1,735
36	Cote d' Ivoire	CIV	2,530	2,408	2,279	2,422	2,464	2,544	2,359	2,160	2,193	2,219	2,238	2,223	2,161	2,123
37	Croatia	HRV	1,737	1,767	1,699	1,683	1,645	1,611	1,571	1,586	1,588	1,591	1,563	1,568	1,539	1,480
38	Cuba	CUB	2,061	2,056	2,055	2,030	2,071	2,057	2,027	2,032	2,015	2,018	3,228	2,028	2,029	2,042
39	Cyprus	CYP	1,752	1,757	1,941	1,929	1,957	1,910	1,974	1,934	1,922	1,910	1,874	1,884	1,882	1,912
40	Czech Republic	CZE	1,484	1,490	1,458	1,378	1,428	1,418	1,421	1,446	1,370	1,356	1,365	1,352	1,346	1,329

Figure 4. Global Peace Index for Bosnia and Croatia (2008 -2021) – Vision of Humanity